

FORESTRY & TIMBER NEWS

February 2019 Issue 91

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COVER

SUPERVISION OF
EGGER THINNING
OPERATIONS IN
YORKSHIRE.

PHOTO:
EGGER UK LTD





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Looking forward

STUART GOODALL CHIEF EXECUTIVE, CONFOR

This theme of a single, strong voice was emphasised strongly by Lord Deben, chair of the influential UK Committee on Climate Change, when speaking to our all-party Westminster group in January. As an ex senior minister, he stated very clearly that governments can't develop the details of policies and they need industry to present that in a clear, joined up way - as with other ministers I've spoken to, when industry came to him with different voices, he just made up his own mind.

Of course, Confor is also dedicated to providing members with services ranging from technical advice and representation to information (through FTN, Enews, social media, etc), high quality events and much more.

Confor remains a small team with a modest budget compared to the organisations we 'jostle' with for the attention and support of ministers or agencies, but we will continue to punch above our weight and endeavour to build the organisation further for the benefit of members.

One key role we'll continue to play is looking ahead on behalf of the sector to the challenges and opportunities that will arise in the coming years and decades.

Wood supply has been an

enduring priority. In an inter-dependent supply chain with customers relying on suppliers and vice-versa, we want to help give businesses the confidence to invest in the future. More planting and woodland management creates more activity for everyone.

Looking forward, we believe that climate change will become an increasing priority for governments as they struggle to maintain progress on meeting targets once the easy wins have been secured and harder choices have to be made. Lord Deben made clear an argument that we've put forward for some years - we cannot meet our targets by emissions reductions alone. We have to lock up carbon, and tree planting and timber are the only low-cost, proven methods to do that. As is protecting our valuable productive resource, both public and private.

As we see more activity in woodland and forests and on hillsides, and more timber being moved on public roads there will be resistance from communities and interest groups resistant to change. Confor has produced high-quality materials (videos, an animation, reports, etc) that we and members can use to explain why this activity is a good thing for local communities and society as a whole.

We recently established a pilot communications network of members to amplify our work and we're now meeting with them to discuss expanding the scope and membership of the network.

Image and reputation are a key part of modern business life, especially sectors like ours that are driving change. We've built a strong reputation that supports us in presenting a modern, and accurate, image of the sector - vital for businesses to succeed in the future.

I cannot say whether 2019 will see a 'smooth' Brexit, but I can say that Confor will step up its game once more to support members now and in the future.

www.confor.org.uk



Of brews and



Eleanor M Harris tells a gothic tale of monsters and potions – or is it really about human relations?

Say the words *Hylobius abietis* to a forester, and you are likely to meet with a similar reaction to the superstitious actors in *Blackadder* at the mention of *Macbeth*.

Sitka spruce is famously indestructible: unpalatable to herbivores, and, in Britain, with few insect or fungal pests. This is not to say it is untouchable. In March, isolated cases of Larch-nemesis *Phytophthora ramorum* were found on Sitka; and in December, the beetle *Ips typographus*, plague of European spruce, appeared in Kent.

But for now, *Hylobius abietis*, the Large pine weevil, reigns supreme as the terror of the timber trees, laying eggs in freshly cut stumps. On hatching, the hungry young feed on the bark of tender saplings which the obliging forester has planted across the site, destroying up to 100% of the crop.

Hylobius’ impact is exacerbated by the structure of UK forests. We have extremely low forest cover, dominated by the large-scale first-rotation plantations of the mid-20th century. We also have far milder winters than northern continental Europe, superb for growing trees in many ways, but also Weevil playtime.

Disquiet in Dalriada

In summer 2017, following concerns about Acetamiprid use on forests in Mull, a petition was launched calling for a ban on neonicotinoids in forestry. The campaign resulted in two cabinet secretaries, senior staff from Buglife, Confor, Tilhill, Bidwells, the Forestry Commission, and members of the local community convening on Mull for a fraught meeting.

Who will make the move to change the reductionist debate about pesticide, into a constructive conversation about what all these groups want: a thriving local community on Mull which develops economically by enhancing rather than damaging its environment?

Hopefully one day the forests which supply our timber will be larger, more mature, and more resilient, as European forests are. But there is no way to create a centuries-old forest except by waiting centuries; and there is no way to create a larger forest unless governments promote woodland expansion.

Meanwhile, we are where we are, and the only effective weapon in our armoury against weevils is pesticide. Trees can be pre-treated in the nursery, and if necessary, a top-up is applied to individual trees a year later. Previously, the main pesticide was Cypermethrin, but this requires great care in application, because even in tiny quantities it is extremely toxic to freshwater life.

Forestry pesticides – putting public ‘horror’ into perspective
Cypermethrin’s replacement, Acetamiprid, is deemed less hazardous to invertebrates, and there is no evidence of ill effects to humans from low concentration which could make its way into a water supply. Two people who suffered acute Acetamiprid poisoning in a suicide attempt made a full recovery and were discharged from hospital with no complications two days later. Acetamiprid is sprayed directly onto apples and hops destined for human consumption. If you read the ingredients on bottles in a garden centre, you will quickly find Acetamiprid to squirt on your roses.

But Acetamiprid is in the neonicotinoid group, three of which were banned last year by the EU following their notorious contribution to the catastrophic global decline of insects. Acetamiprid was not deemed so hazardous, and applied directly to a conifer is unlikely to contaminate pollinators. But the publicity surrounding neonicotinoids means that risk assessment is often less important than a much more human reaction: horror.

Last September, as a result of controversy on Mull (see *Disquiet in Dalriada*, left), the investigative journal The Ferret reported that ‘Scotland’s forests are sprayed every year with hundreds of kilograms of a toxic pesticide blamed for killing bees’. Communities are demanding that foresters guarantee, not that water supplies in their forest are safe and meet regulatory standards, but that they are 100% pesticide-free – an impossible guarantee. In 2017, Buglife reported neonicotinoids in a remote burn high in the Cairngorms: the likely source was a pet dog treated against ticks. Preventing people from walking dogs >>

Pesticide use in Scotland	
Number of sprays per year	Crop
4.7	Winter barley
4.4	Winter oats
5.3	Winter wheat
5.9	Winter oilseed rape
11.1	Seed potatoes
13.5	Ware potatoes
0.1	Harvested forest which could be restocked and sprayed
Scottish Government figures https://bit.ly/2RDRhXP	

beasties



Lowering the stakes: improving stakeholder engagement

WHETHER THE ISSUE IS PESTICIDES, HARVESTING OR WOODLAND CREATION, IT'S TEMPTING TO WAIT UNTIL THE ISSUE ARISES, AND WORK IN THIS DIRECTION...

You want to talk about *your* facts...

Drinking water is safe.

No pesticides within 10m of watercourses.

Operators spraying pesticide hold professional qualification.

Acetamiprid is sprayed directly on apples and hops for human consumption.

Trees are sprayed every 35 years at most, agricultural crops several times each year.

Acetamiprid is far less toxic than its predecessors, and we are developing even safer alternatives.

But you need to listen to *their* genuine concerns...

I don't understand it and don't trust any trace in my children's drinking water.

The first sign of forest management I saw is figures in white suits.

Neonicotinoids are killing bees.

The forest is run for someone else's profit.

I don't know these people.

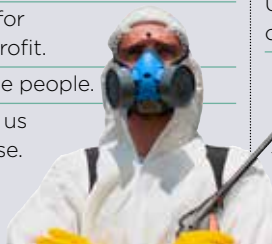
No-one talked to us until an issue arose.

And start conversations and build trust *before* the issue strikes...

Tell positive stories about the forest: a photo of you at work today, the local mills it supplies, the products its timber will become, its history, how its management has improved.

Use the community facebook group and on-site signboards.

Meet key stakeholders through small, face-to-face meetings rather than big public debates. Invite them to the forest for a visit.



... BUT THERE'S A LOT OF TIME AND MONEY TO BE SAVED BY STARTING TODAY, AND WORKING IN THIS DIRECTION

>> in forests would hardly be progress.

Toxic chemicals slosh around food, pets, gardens, houses and fields, are boom-sprayed out of sight on our food, or displayed beside tills with jaunty colours and dynamic names. But in forestry, it is the very rareness and regulation of their use that causes that horror reaction: what people see is a forest that stood in peace for decades suddenly felled, and then swarming with white suits and respirators. Going back to *Macbeth*, it all looks uncannily like the witches brewing mysterious potions on the blasted heath.

We know it is not like this. Chemical use in forestry is very low compared with other land uses, and what is used is carefully regulated. Timber production removes atmospheric carbon, replaces polluting and non-renewable materials, and provides an alternative to exploiting global natural forests. The by-products of timber production are jobs, habitats, landscapes, buildings: good places to live. Forestry offers such strong answers to such big questions, that society should not be hindering, but helping to promote it at every opportunity.

Getting stakeholder engagement right

But asking for help means starting conversations, whether with the local community or with the Cabinet Secretary. And that gets us into a process Confor has talked about before, and will talk about again: stakeholder engagement. The infographic (see *previous page*) provides another way of thinking about the issue at local level. At national level, *Hylobius* is one of a range of technical issues on which Confor is working with other stakeholders to develop solutions (see *Working with Weevils*, right).

We began with weevils, but the example could have been timber harvesting or haulage, grey squirrel or deer control, woodland creation, tree-breed-

Working with Weevils

For the past ten years, a coalition including the Forestry Commission, NRW, Forest Research, Confor, and representatives of the private sector, have explored and tested a wide range of methods of *Hylobius* control. These include physical barriers like wax or plastic, biological controls like nematodes or wasps, and management techniques like leaving land fallow before restocking or monitoring weevil activity to predict better when and where they will attack. However, none have yet been effective enough to make more than a small dent in the need for pesticide, many are prohibitively expensive, and many also have environmental risks which are arguably greater than those posed by pesticides.

Nevertheless, the industry is still optimistic that a solution is waiting to be found, and in August, Scottish Rural Economy secretary Fergus Ewing announced a fund of £550,000 for innovative research into *Hylobius*.

Poisoning the procession

An invasive invertebrate pest, the Oak Processionary Moth, has become established in London and the neighbouring counties. It is not only a serious threat to England's national tree, it is also a major public health risk due to a chemical irritant found in the caterpillars' thousands of fragile hairs. It is likely that a reluctance to use pesticides contributed to a failure to exterminate this non-native pest when it first arrived on imported plants.

ing, sawmill investment, the use of timber in construction, or the protection of native woodland from invasive invertebrate species (see *Poisoning the procession*, above). Wherever we are in the industry, our new year resolution should be to reach outside it: to listen, to understand, to teach, to learn, to make friends, and to ask for help.

Lord Duncan sees forestry at work in Lothians

On 14 December 2018 Confor arranged a day of visits to the sector for Conservative politician and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Scotland, Lord Duncan of Springbank. Accompanied by Jamie Farquhar, Confor's National Manager for Scotland, he visited East Lothian forest nursery Alba Trees, Glennon Brothers' sawmill at Windymains, and the Spurway family's Christmas tree business on their Harburn Estate near West Calder.

At Alba the party was welcomed by General Manager Chris Allan, Nursery Manager Derek Stewart and Sales Executive Margaret Allan. Lord Duncan was given an introduction to the business, before taking a nursery tour and meeting staff. Amongst the topics discussed were the future of Scottish forestry, the continued expansion of Alba Trees and Brexit and its potential impact upon the company and wider sector.

At Windymains, Glennon Brother's Chief Executive Scott Shiells gave Lord Duncan

an overview of Glennon's business in Scotland and Ireland, followed by a tour round the mill. Lord Duncan was much impressed by the slick operation, commenting that things have come a long way since his grandfather operated a mill in Angus.

Reaching the Harburn Estate, owner Charlie Spurway welcomed Lord Duncan to the family's Country Business. The Christmas tree yard was almost empty following the last major dispatch of trees the day before. Charlie drove the party round their extensive plots of trees (over one million of Nordman Fir, Norway Spruce, Fraser Fir and Lodgepole Pine), explaining the intensive management required at different stages of growth to produce top quality trees for the wholesale and retail markets.

As night fell, Jamie Farquhar thanked the PU Secretary of State for spending the day with our sector, and is following up Lord Duncan's kind offer to help on issues like continued availability of migrant labour.



Lord Duncan at Alba Trees

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Conference heralds golden era for forestry



David Lee reports from the Confor Superwood conference

Confor is determined to build on a very positive day of discussions at its Superwood conference last December, where a room packed with a wide variety of delegates heard that the “stars are aligned” for the forestry and wood-using industry. However, the event at Northumbria University in Newcastle upon Tyne was told that there was no time to spare - the sector must take advantage of an increasingly favourable climate towards tree planting and timber construction right now.

Delegates from the entire forestry and wood supply chain - plus politicians, environmental NGOs, academics, students, timber construction experts and more - discussed how forestry and wood could drive a low-carbon economy and make a significant impact on climate change targets.

Paul Brannen, MEP for North East England, said:

“The sector has never been in a better place and must not miss the opportunity. The stars are aligned and we need to make it happen - but in terms of climate change, time is running out. We need to plant more trees now.”

Confor is putting climate change at the heart of its activity in 2019, while Friends of the Earth (FoE) is also placing a major emphasis on the issue. Its head of science, policy and research Mike Childs said his organisation wanted to double tree cover and Confor is discussing how it can work with FoE to deliver a step change in productive planting.

Stuart Goodall, chief executive of Confor, welcomed Mr Childs’ positive comments and the growing recognition that forestry and wood are crucial to meeting climate change objectives. “We have made good progress, but need to develop more partnerships to deliver more tree planting, build more with wood and have a real impact on climate change,” he said.

Adam James came all the way from Canada to describe the wood-first construction policy in British Columbia. Mr James, who worked on the project to create the tallest wooden building in the world (an

We are all part of the Superwood campaign. It’s a campaign to plant more trees, do more with timber and create jobs and the greener economy we want to see.

Paul Brannen, MEP (Labour), North East England

SPEAKING OUT FOR FORESTRY



Global demand for timber is rising dramatically, everybody thinks planting trees is a good idea ... so everything must be rosy? No - we are only planting 1000 to 2000ha in England each year. It is very difficult to get approval.

Simon Hart, EGGER Forestry



As you build more with timber, it becomes part of the culture and as that grows, it becomes commonplace.

Adam James, Ryder Architecture, talking about British Columbia



18-storey student accommodation block in Vancouver, built in just nine weeks), said: "If you don't build with wood, you have to explain why. We have public policy in favour of building with wood and an education and skills system aligned with that. When you have that, projects happen in the middle."

Neil Sutherland of MAKAR, based in the Scottish Highlands, reminded delegates that 80 per cent of homes in Scotland were made using timber frames, but only around 15 per cent in England. There was a real challenge in breaking through in terms of using much more timber because high-volume house-builders were not bought into the timber agenda, he added.

Rob Allen, of Citu, outlined his company's vision of using timber to unlock the carbon-negative home. He said continuing to build traditional masonry houses was totally unsustainable in terms of tackling climate change - as a typical house 'costs' 65 tonnes of carbon dioxide, while Citu had calculated that one of its homes could actually 'save' 23 tonnes of carbon when all factors were taken into account.

Backing investment

Peter Jackson - leader of Northumberland County Council - backed moves for a Forestry Investment Zone (FIZ) in the county to drive more productive tree planting in the North East. Councillor Jackson said he wanted to make Northumberland "the forestry friendly county" and pledged to work with the industry to make it happen.

Beccy Speight, CEO of the Woodland Trust, said there was a definite place for commercial forestry in delivering the Northern Forest project, which aims to plant 50 million trees across the North of Eng-

land. She said it was important to build on positive collaboration with Confor to make this happen and urged the industry to come up with projects to plant at scale - and to identify a site for a FIZ in the Northern Forest area.

A central theme of the event was the rapidly increasing demand for wood. Simon Hart of EGGER said a strong, long-term wood supply was crucial to businesses like EGGER - which employs almost 650 people at its chipboard factory at Hexham in Northumberland - and more sites must be found to ensure this happened.

Mr Hart said that we had to look very carefully at the wide range of designations [in areas like Northumberland] which made it difficult to plant trees - and ensure these designations were fully justified, and balanced against the multiple benefits delivered by forestry.

Dr Dan Ridley-Ellis, of Edinburgh Napier University, said there was a strong push for wood use in the growing bio-economy. While there were huge opportunities, he stressed that we had to be realistic: "Wood is abundant - but abundant does not mean limitless."

EVENT RESOURCES



Presentations from the conference

Photo gallery by Andrew O'Brien

Delegate feedback

Social media highlights and relevant links

www.confor.org.uk/news/latest-news/stars-aligned-for-forestry-and-wood



We want the presumption shifted towards, not away from, forestry.

**Beccy Speight, CEO,
Woodland Trust**



Wood is abundant - but abundant does not mean limitless.

**Dan Ridley-Ellis,
Edinburgh Napier University**



The Government is starting to recognise it has to help by addressing some of the barriers that are currently putting a brake on productive woodland creation in England.

**Peter Jackson, Leader,
Northumberland County Council**

Sector must present united front to win Government support

The Chairman of the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) says the forestry and wood industry is in a “very strong position” to drive up planting to reduce atmospheric carbon – but has laid down a challenge to the sector to speak with a unified voice.

Lord Deben told the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Forestry (APPGF) that the UK Government could not meet its climate change targets without a major shift in land use policy – including significant increase in tree planting and far greater use of timber in construction.

He said that more land traditionally used for agriculture would become unprofitable under likely post-Brexit changes to farm subsidies – but he warned the industry there was hard work ahead to seize the opportunities.

“There is a context where forestry is in a very strong position but the coda is this; ministers want to have industries which are united in what they ask for,” Lord Deben told the APPGF. “This is a crucial part of what the forestry industry has got to do and includes reaching out to the agricultural community.”

Upbeat

Responding to an upbeat briefing that Stuart Goodall gave earlier to the APPGF on climate change policy, tree planting and wood use, Lord Deben said “You have a real opportunity, you are right to be enthusiastic – but the Government is not good at finding answers in detail. It’s the industry that provides answers, but you have to convince the government that the whole industry will back [those ideas]. You have a really important job to deliver one voice, one programme, and get the government to take action.”

Stuart Goodall said the private sector was ready to rise to the challenge – but he urged the Forestry Commission, with its huge role as regulator, grant provider and manager of publicly-owned forests, to work more closely with the private sector. He added: “Unlike other industries, forestry has this influential public body that is in a key position to work with us to develop solutions and then to help drive them through – to make planting happen. We have to make the planting processes simpler and more certain; things have improved but not yet far enough.”

In a year when Confor is putting climate change right at the heart of its work, Mr Goodall also urged the environmental benefits of forestry to be fully appreciated: “There appears to be a complete focus on any potential environmental loss from land-use change, and not on the long-term environmental benefits. Where there is overwhelming environmental benefit against limited loss, we would expect a presumption to plant. At the end of the day, tackling climate change requires change.”

After the meeting, Mr Goodall said Confor and the wider industry would work with government to agree, and meet, ambitious targets for tree planting, based on potential scenarios laid down by the Committee on Climate Change.

Confor’s initial calculation is that it is feasible to push up planting rates to 40,000 hectares per year across the UK by 2030 – with 50% of that delivered in Scotland, 25% in England, 20% in Wales and 5% in Northern Ireland. The UK is expected to plant over 10,000 hectares in 2018/19, overwhelmingly in Scotland which has a stepped target increasing to 15,000 hectares per year by 2025.

At the APPGF meeting, Lord Deben had said that taking carbon out of the atmosphere was crucial to moving towards the targets and trees were vital to delivering this. “We need to sequester carbon and we need a regime that allows people to invest in sequestering carbon in a way that is not unprofitable,” he added.

“We need the structure to make it possible. (And) we need to get more wood into the building industry to lock up carbon.”

The real opportunity for forestry, he said, came from post-Brexit funding proposals for agriculture, which could represent the biggest change to the countryside in almost 200 years. “No living farmer has ever worked in a situation where they do not get any production support,” he said. “If you look at the profits of farmers and you take away subsidy, agriculture is in a very different position.”

Public good

“We have to plan for the fact that there will be a substantial amount of land which will no longer be viable for the traditional kind of agriculture. We have to help the government to find a process where land which is not going to support people through traditional farming can support people through forestry. That needs a package that enables people to do it – because forestry is a public good, as is taking carbon out of the atmosphere. As the effects of climate change become more obvious, I think the argument [for forestry] becomes more acceptable.”

Lord Deben said Philip Hammond’s £50m in carbon guarantees to provide liquidity for tree planting top-up payments – announced in his November 2018 Budget – was highly significant because it recognised the long-term value of planting trees in terms of carbon sequestration.



Stuart Goodall (left) with Lord Deben (centre) and Chris Davis



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Confor's Wales manager **Anthony Geddes** interviews well-known agent and manager Andrew Bronwin.

Andrew is the owner of Andrew Bronwin & Co Ltd, a well-respected mid-Wales based forestry agent and management firm. The company employs a team of qualified forest managers based in Powys, covering all of Wales and the border counties. Furthermore, he performs a valuable role as vice-chairman of the Confor Wales committee. I have had the pleasure of working with Andrew in a previous life with John Clegg & Co. and now as a member of the Confor team.

AG: Andrew, for our members who don't know you, can we have a little background of where you've come from?

AB: I did a degree in rural land management at Reading then, combined with a move to Scotland, I completed a postgraduate in agriculture and an MSc in Natural Resource Management.

Was forestry a chosen career path for you?

My career started in the highlands of Papua New Guinea in the early 80s as

'Subsidised farming can't continue and forestry can be part of the longer-term solution'

a VSO volunteer working in agriculture. Prior to that I worked with single homeless people in London for a few years. They were both quite character forming experiences! The point then came when I couldn't delay choosing a career any longer so here I am. I worked for ADAS, then Tilhill and set up Andrew Bronwin & Co. in 1996

What was it about the other organisations that made you strike out on your own and what is it that you feel makes Bronwin & Co stand out from other firms?

Tilhill had merged with EFG and was then nearly taken over again. I didn't want to go through the merger process for a second time. When I left, Tilhill shut down the branch where I was district manager, quite a few clients came with me and that set me up.

I like to think we can do the whole thing from planting through to harvesting. We work on a lot of traditional estates which are complicated and have very specific requirements so if you don't have that eye for detail you can come badly unstuck. These estates are often multi-purpose, have numerous stakeholders with very complex forest structures. Our success is reflected by the long-term nature of our involvement in many estates. On these properties, we prepare budgets, implement agreed work programs, employ and supervise contractors and negotiate with the relevant government organisations.

Where I believe we excel is in doing our best to make forestry pay for the owner. We have invested quite a bit in technology – drones, computerised measuring equipment, digital mapping so that we

can offer up to date and well-presented information.

I notice that Bronwin & Co are registered drone pilots – (have you been to Gatwick recently?) Do you feel that the future of the industry will be driven by digitisation/technology?

No airport jobs thankfully!

Of course, technology will play a big part of the future. It's a challenge for small companies to keep up with all that, especially when technology moves so quickly. Fortunately, we have technically able and, dare I say it, younger people who are very capable. We listen to them and get the cheque book out when it's needed.

It's important to acknowledge that the technology and investment in forestry extends beyond the drone or the desktop. When I reviewed one of our client's sites back in 2018 following a thinning operation, I thought the figures must be wrong. The forest had yielded double the volume that we would historically have expected. When they proved to be correct, I contacted Forest Research to tell them I had some exceptional, fast-growing trees.

There are many plant breeding programs and the effects of years of research are now being seen. We ensure that we work closely with the growers and monitor what is going on in the wood so we can help owners take advantage of these developments.

If there would be one thing that you could change about forestry in Wales at the moment what would it be?

Where to start with that one! No one thing will make a big enough change,

what is needed is a step change in policy, financing and regulation.

Welsh Government must recognise the need to create rural wealth post Brexit. Agriculture in terms of sheep and cattle is going to be challenging when the money stops coming from the EU. The chances are there will be much less coming from London. Subsidised farming can't continue and forestry can be part of the longer-term solution alongside other diversification opportunities.

We will have to see what happens once the Brexit mists clear. If there is still public funding for agriculture forestry needs to get more than the historic 2% of rural funding! Currently forestry gets nothing and that's a pretty bleak picture that Welsh Government aren't seeing.

Over regulation continues to be a serious challenge. Huge areas of Wales are under non-statutory designations and NRW's restrictive rules are resulting in decent planting schemes failing. Planting isn't happening because of NRW and the Welsh Government aren't making funding available to pay for the public good which is preventing the landowner from making the best of their land.

Finally, Rural Payments Wales is another organisation that isn't working and needs to be made more flexible, less bureaucratic and faster to respond.

Apart from all that it couldn't be better!

What do you feel is the biggest opportunity for foresters or forestry today?

Move to Scotland or Ireland! In Wales there are possibilities but at present our hands are feeling tied. As a country we are in a period of political change and it's all there to play for, after all we are part of the second biggest timber importer in the world. There is a huge domestic market and in a world of Brexit and climate change, national timber supply has no export tariffs and is carbon-friendly!

We really need the policy to change so that scale of public money invested in creating non-productive liabilities is acknowledged; combating the public belief that broadleaved planting, PAWS restoration and the restriction on planting conifers are always 'good' things.

www.bronwin.co.uk

New Yorkshire Dales woodland set for planting

EGGER Forestry has secured approval and grant aid for a 40ha woodland creation scheme in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The upland woodland will be created in accordance with the UK Forestry Standard following stakeholder consultation part-funded by the Forestry Commission's Woodland Creation Planning Grant, which also contributes towards the woodland design. Tree planting will be grant aided with European funding.

Dave Robson, area manager for EGGER Forest Management explains: "It can be very difficult to gain approval for productive woodland planting schemes in England, which is a great shame as there is a real need to plant more trees in the UK. In this case, the support of the Forestry Commission's Woodland Creation Planning Grant was fundamental – essentially, it went some way to de-risking the planning process".

The scheme identified and developed opportunities to expand on adjacent existing woodlands as it joins up with an important neighbouring red squirrel habitat where there is a visitor centre with viewing points. To the south there also exists a



Dave Robson (left) with Robert Smedley at an existing plantation owned by Mr Smedley and managed by Dave Robson.

black grouse habitat, and the design of the woodland edge is sympathetic to this.

Land owner Robert Smedley said: "I am delighted with the outcome that EGGER Forestry has achieved for Mirkpot Allotment. Whilst it has been a lengthy process, I had confidence that the potential Dave initially identified would be realised. Dave and his team recognised the opportunity, valued the land and carried out the initial scoping regarding potential afforestation."

Work is scheduled to begin in November and tree planting will start in March 2019.

www.egger.com

UKFCG signs up to PEFC

UKFCG has achieved PEFC certification on behalf of its members. The Forest Certification Group is run by directors Paul Sandys and Phil Webb, who launched the company in early 2012.

UKFCG is the largest independent forest certification group in the UK. Current membership comprises 140 private forests and estates, totalling around 60,000ha with annual timber production of around 500,000 tonnes. UKFCG's decision to seek PEFC certification was prompted by a number of members who perceived the need for dual certification in response to market demand. Phil and Paul also decided it was important to be able to give UKFCG members the same timber marketing opportunities as other large dual certified forest managers.

PEFC UK's Alun Watkins said, "I am delighted that UKFCG has achieved PEFC Forest Management certification for its group scheme and are now members of the world's largest forest certification scheme. The additional hectareage brings the PEFC UK certified area in the UK to

close on 1.5m hectares. This is also excellent news as the group includes Sheffield City Council and also Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust, PEFC UK's home city. In addition, seeing Ecclesall Woods become PEFC certified is particularly satisfying as this was the very popular venue for our annual general meeting in 2018."

forestcertification.org.uk



L-r, Phil Webb, Paul Sandys, Alun Watkins, John Gilpin (Sheffield City Council's woodland officer), and Dave Aspinall (Sheffield City Council's countryside manager) at the presentation of the certificate to mark Ecclesall Woods, Sheffield becoming PEFC certified.

Timberwolf 'shares facts' on emissions regulations

Timberwolf, Europe's leading manufacturer of commercial wood chippers, is launching a campaign to help the arboriculture industry understand the key information surrounding the latest round of emissions legislation.

As part of the Government's commitment to reduce engine emissions, non-road mobile machinery, including wood chippers, will be affected in the latest round of changes known as 'Stage V'.

The recently launched 'All the Facts, #NoOmissions' campaign sets out facts and information about 'Stage V', which takes effect in January 2019. Timberwolf, which has more than 30 years of industry experience, is taking the lead in providing clarity over the legislation, following speculation and misinformation surrounding the new rules.

Pre-Stage V diesel engines used in machines above 25hp, such as wood chippers, mowers and stump grinders, will no longer be produced after this year, so when manufacturers have used their stocks of these engines, new diesel machines will be fitted with Stage V-compliant engines that produce less emissions.

www.timberwolf-uk.com

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Top award for Timber Festival in National Forest

Timber, the new outdoor arts festival celebrating the story of the National Forest, has won the highest accolade in the festival world, taking Best New Festival at the UK Festival Awards ceremony held in London last week.

John Everitt, Chief Executive for the National Forest Company, said: "We are thrilled with this array of awards for Timber in its first year. We wanted to make something truly exceptional that would engage people in the National Forest's unique story, and inspire people to reconnect with trees, woodlands and the natural world.

The National Forest Company worked with award-winning festival producers Wild Rumpus to create the three-day camping festival, which took place in July this year at Feanedock Woods on the Leicestershire/Derbyshire border. Through music, art, woodland activities and a lot of fun, it celebrated the transformative impact of forests.

www.nationalforest.org



ANDREW ALLCOCK

Jas P Wilson branches into sustainable future

Jas P Wilson, supplier of forestry equipment and machinery, is positioning itself for growth by investing in new sustainable measures, following a £695,000 funding package from Bank of Scotland.

Headquartered in Dalbeattie in Dumfries and Galloway, the business will grow its green credentials and increase efficiency, after benefitting from the bank's £2bn Clean Growth Finance Initiative (CGFI).

Over the next four years, the firm will implement a range of green infrastructure improvements to its production processes and heating of its factories. This includes new insulation, glazing and cladding, and the installation of a new biomass boiler fuelled from sustainable sources.

The project will also see new recycling systems installed and the modernisation of its water management process. A new pur-

pose-built training centre will also be built to provide the firm with a dedicated space to help improve ongoing learning and development programmes as well as helping to attract new staff. This new building will house new offices and a showroom for customers.

The new green measures are funded by the bank's new Clean Growth Finance Initiative, which provides discounted funding to help businesses transition to a lower carbon, more sustainable future. The funding supports a range of investments in sustainable business including small improvements in environmental impact through to large-scale renewable energy infrastructure.

Plans are also underway to grow the £11m turnover company to £14m by 2021 and increase team members from 55 to 75.

www.jaspwilson.co.uk



Billy Wilson, director at Jas P Wilson with Stephen Owens, relationship director at the bank



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Steven Hole, Monmouthshire

New appointment at Global Recycling

Global Recycling Solutions Ltd are delighted to announce the appointment of Dean Ashton as Business Development Director, to help strengthen their business operation. Dean has 38 years' experience in all aspects of engineering, operations and sales, and has a track record of delivering solutions and taking the lead in major multi-million projects, both in the recycling, waste management and waste-to-energy sectors.

www.globalrecycling.eu



How can forestry and wood processing help deliver a Green Brexit and a more sustainable society in the UK?



Lorna Johnson, a Masters student at Harper Adams University, has won Confor's first Future of Forestry writing prize

Forestry has indeed profited from European standards; however, Brexit provides the UK with the opportunity to not only uphold these standards but to improve and strengthen them. Forestry is valued throughout Europe and has been affected by an array of Community Policies yet there has never been a common forest policy. In total, 90% of EU funding for forests comes from Pillar 2 of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP); however, significant amounts of the budget are used in Pillar 1 for direct payments for farmers. Plans to reform CAP could lead to further investment in forestry.

Investing in the sector is an investment into a Green Brexit and the 25-Year Environment Plan proposed earlier this year (European Parliament, 2018). Figure 1 is an infographic designed to demonstrate that trees can contribute to some of the goals set in the Environment Plan. The value of forestry to sustainability post Brexit has already been recognised by bodies such as the Soil Association who noted that bringing trees onto farms can be a 'game-changer' for land-use policy.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove expressed his views on the opportunities Brexit could provide during his speech at UK Prosperity in March, as he said, 'Britain has the potential to be an innovator, setting new global gold standards in sustainability'. The following essay will cover just some of the reasons forestry could be valuable to the Green Brexit Michael Gove envisages. Table 1 demonstrates a few of the ways forestry is already contributing to environmental improvement.

Value of forestry to wildlife
 Worldwide, forests are home to 80% of all terrestrial species of animals, plants and insects yet tropical, temperate and boreal forests cover only 30% of the Earth's

land (WWF, 2018). UK woodlands are no exception, they host fungi, hundreds of invertebrates, nesting birds and mammals. One ash tree (*Fraxinus excelsior*) supports 1058 species at some point of their life cycle and 45 depend on ash for their existence (JNCC, 2018). Most of the UK's forest estate is plantation-based; whilst they are not as ecologically rich as ancient woodlands, they provide habitats for an array of flora and fauna including protected species such as the Red squirrel, Pine Marten and Black Grouse. The plantation forest in North Wales, Coed Llandegla, provides the woodland edge favoured by the Black Grouse and has been described by the BBC as a "haven" for the birds. Increasing forest cover will support wildlife important to the British Isles for generations to come.

Forests products as a carbon store
 One of the goals set in the Environment Plan is to use resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently (UK Government, 2018). Research and innovation is

expanding the range of sustainable products on offer from timber. Wood is one of the most versatile materials on earth. Traditional construction materials can now be replaced with engineered wood such as glue-laminated (glulam) timber, cross-laminated timber or *brettstapel*. Glulam is 20% lighter than steel but remains as structurally strong, it is also 60% lighter than concrete and sequesters 734kg of CO₂ for every metre cubed of the material (HESS Timber Limitless, 2018). It has successfully been used to construct numerous pieces of infrastructure across the UK such as the John Hope Gateway at the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh and the visitor centre for the Savill Gardens in Windsor Great Park.

Biomass utilisation has been on an upward trajectory as the UK energy sector as a renewable, low carbon alternative to fossil fuels. A new opportunity is arising to reduce fossil fuel reliance as developments are being made in the biofuel sector. Alaska Airlines have used a blend of jet fuel and a wood-based biofuel to power some commercial flights and are now pioneering emission reductions in their aviation sector (International Timber, 2018). In Finland, UPM are utilising their own BioVerno diesel for road transport and maritime vessels, cutting emissions by 10%. UPM have also developed the biocomponent BioVern which can be transformed into renewable resins to create bioplastics for the packaging industry. Currently, UK biofuels are contributing just 4% of total road and non-road mobile machinery fuel. Investing in the wood processing industry could mean reducing the UK's reliance on plastics and fossil fuels, meeting goals set in the Environment plan and simultaneously contributing to carbon and waste reduction targets (DT, 2018).

The value of forestry to air quality
 A variety of air pollutants such as SO₂, NO₂, CO₂, Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC), such as Methane and Ammonia (NH₃) are affecting the quality of ambient air in the UK and contributing to the greenhouse gas effect. Trees can uptake, transport, assimilate and decompose countless gaseous or particulate pollutants. Carbon is not simply stored in living trees but in deadwood, for-

Table 1
UK Woodland Ecosystem Asset Values

Service (£million)	2015
Biomass from timber	6,582.9
Carbon sequestration	42,857.3
Pollution removal	24,951.3
Time spent at habitat	13,193.2
Total	87,584.7

Source: Office for National Statistics



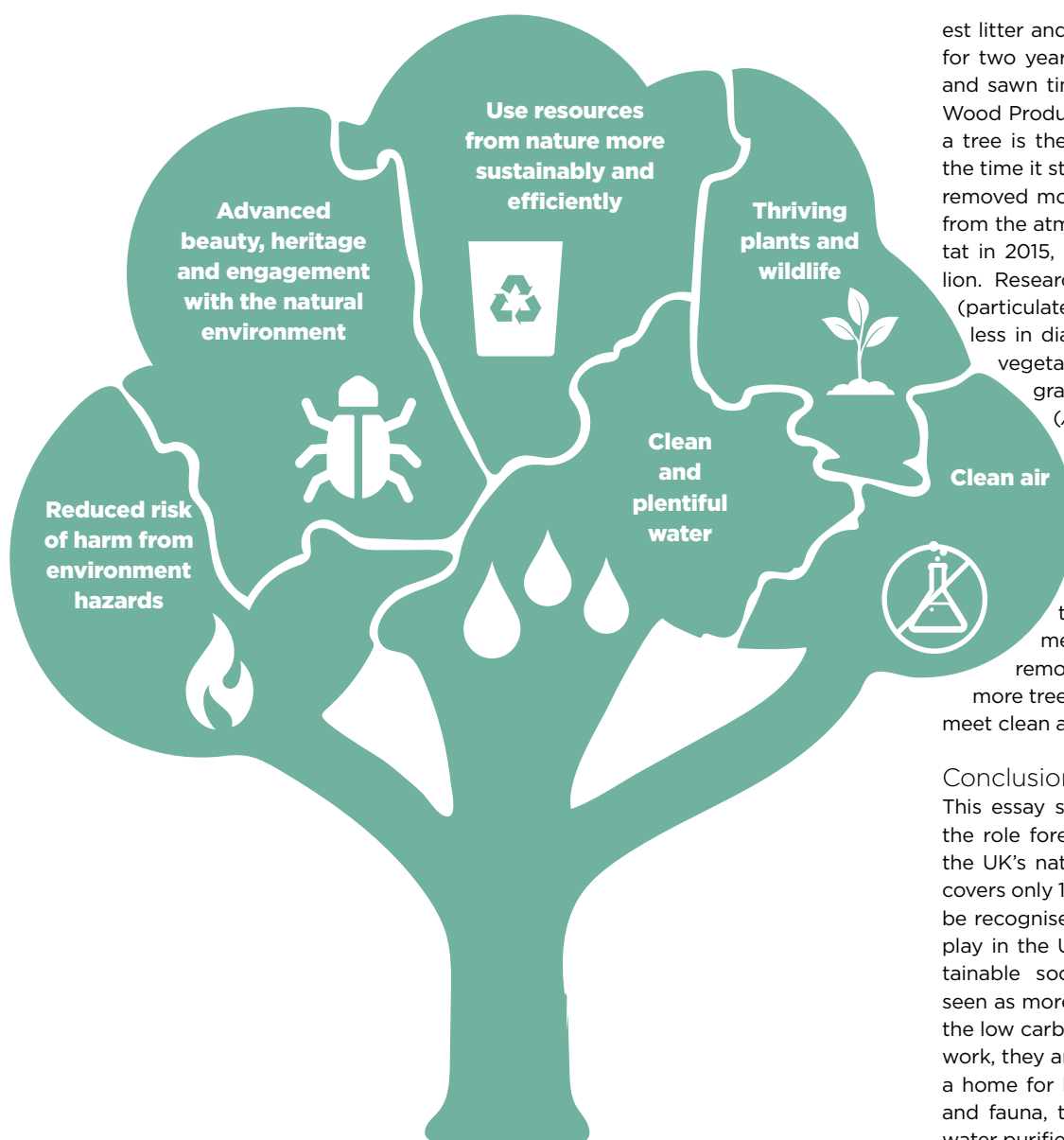


Figure 1
Forestry Infographic: The graphic was designed to display some of the goals listed in the executive summary of the 25 Year Environment Plan to which forestry can contribute.

Source: (Authors Own, 2018)

est litter and soils, it is locked up in paper for two years, particleboard for 25 years, and sawn timber for 35 years (Harvested Wood Products, 2018). The 'carbon life' of a tree is therefore extended well beyond the time it stands in the forest. Woodlands removed more harmful pollution and CO₂ from the atmosphere than any other habitat in 2015, which was valued at £1.8 billion. Research found that enough PM10 (particulate matter 10 micrometres or less in diameter) was captured from a vegetation matrix comprising 75% grassland, 20% sycamore maple (*Acer pseudoplatanus L.*) and 5% Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) to prevent two deaths and two hospital admissions related to respiratory illness each year (Sinnott et al., 2009). Whilst a study in the US found a total of 711,000 metric tons of air pollution is removed by urban trees. Planting more trees could be a viable solution to meet clean air standards (Nowak, 2006).

Conclusion

This essay simply touches the surface of the role forestry could play in protecting the UK's natural resources. Forested land covers only 13% of UK land area but should be recognised for the pivotal role it could play in the UK's road to becoming a sustainable society. Woodlands should be seen as more than woodlands. Forests are the low carbon diesel used to commute to work, they are air filters, as strong as steel, a home for humans and a home for flora and fauna, they are soil remediators and water purifiers. Woodlands can provide resilience against climate change, they can help meet the goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan and they are fundamental to a Green Brexit.

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Confor in the media



Confor will build on its reputation as the 'go-to' forestry and wood authority in the media throughout 2019. **David Lee** summarises Confor's media work in 2018.

After another very positive year of coverage in 2018, Confor will take key messages - especially about changing attitudes to the sector and the vital link between forestry and climate change - to the broadcast, on-line and print media in the coming months.

Stuart Goodall, Confor's chief executive, said: "Confor continues to seek media opportunities to take modern messages about forestry and wood to new audiences - but increasingly, we find the media coming to us for expert comment. We will build on this in 2019, concentrating on coverage that is married up to our campaigning activity, especially around increased tree planting - and on communications which help people to better understand modern forestry and the enormous range of benefits it can deliver.

"Another significant focus will be positive messaging about the increasing evidence linking forestry, wood use and climate change."

Chief Executive Stuart Goodall was interviewed for BBC Radio 4's *Farming Today* programme ahead of the Superwood conference in December, discussing a range of issues, including the opportunities for farmers to diversify their businesses after Brexit by planting more trees.

This was fourth time that Confor had been invited in 2018 to contribute to the early-morning programme, a crucial outlet in taking the forestry and wood message to a largely agricultural audience - and an important part of Confor's efforts to change attitudes towards the sector.

Earlier in 2018, Confor's national manager for England, Caroline Ayre, was on *Farming Today* talking about plant health - and was also called upon as an expert by BBC Radio Kent after the discovery of spruce bark beetle in south-east England in December.

Technical director Andrew Heald appeared on the programme to discuss timber markets and biomass and has also featured on BBC Scotland radio and TV programmes throughout 2018, along with Stuart Goodall, on a range of forestry issues.

Stuart also continues his regular column in *The Scotsman*, which in 2018 covered a broad range of issues including the new Scottish Forestry Bill, forestry and climate change, the Scottish Forestry Strategy and again, the importance of tackling perceptions among the farming community and the wider public.

These regular articles were supported by pow-

erful regional coverage across Scotland, with both Stuart and national manager for Scotland Jamie Farquhar tackling the biggest issues in *The Herald* (Glasgow) as well as *The Press & Journal* (Aberdeen and the North-east) and *The Courier* (Dundee, Perthshire and Fife).

There was also a stronger focus on taking the forestry and wood messages to the different regions of England, with Caroline Ayre contributing an article to the Bristol-based *Western Morning News* on the need to burn locally-sourced firewood and several articles appearing in *The Journal* in the north-east in the build-up to the Superwood event in December.

Wales has also been an important area for forestry and wood messaging, with a regular column in the *Western Mail* by Confor's late national manager for Wales, Martin Bishop. Since Martin's death in a flying accident in June 2018, Confor's policy researcher Eleanor Harris continued to raise the big issues in the column, along with Andrew Heald, who wrote an excellent article on 'Super Sitka'. The column will be picked up by Anthony Geddes, Confor's new national manager for Wales, in 2019.

"After the huge breakthrough of the *Countryfile* special in 2017, we had another very positive year of media coverage in 2018," said Stuart Goodall. "We focused on taking our messages to a wider geographical audiences and focusing on our key areas of activity. We will develop that approach in 2019 and ensure that even more people understand why the modern forestry and wood sector is so important to our economy, environment and communities."



Increasingly, we find the media coming to us for expert comment.

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Plant health
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More about Forestry in the media
www.confor.org.uk/ftnweb

A business steeped in history keeping pace with change

In the first of a series of articles this year celebrating The Forestry Century, **Norman Maitland** traces the history of Charles Ransford and Son

In 1876, a timber and coal yard was set up on our present site at Station Street, Bishop's Castle by one Stanley Gwilt, almost 10 years after the opening of the railway line in 1865 – a development which no doubt made the timber business viable. Charles Ransford took over the Station Street timber business in 1936 and in the early 1970s it was in turn taken over by his son John. By 1978, the business was in financial trouble and, on the brink of bankruptcy, it was taken over by the Evans family, themselves local to Bishop's Castle. It is still in their ownership.

When the Evans family took over the mill, it employed over 120 people, all of them local. Had it gone under, all of those jobs would have gone with it. On the face of it the purchase was a bargain: the price was £100, but along with the purchase came £1.5million of debts incurred by the previous owners. This was a huge sum in those days – but every penny of it was paid off over the following few years. By 1982 the family were investing in the mill with the installation of what was then a state of the art Swedish sawing line. Further substantial investment came later and continues to take place. In the 40 years since taking over, around £25 million has gone into improving capacity and efficiency including £10 million on plant which incorporates 3D laser scanning and optimising technology, combined with sophisticated re-sawing, board recovery and product handling systems. In addition, a new Timber Treatment Centre built at a cost of £2.75 million will shortly be completed and this will dramatically increase both the efficiency and efficacy of our timber treatment processes. All of this makes ours one of the most accurate and efficient operations in the UK in which no part of the log is wasted and every effort is made to reduce our environmental impact.

The Forestry Century we are now celebrating falls just seven years short of us marking 150 years since our original establishment – 40 years before the passing of

the 1919 Forestry Act. In the time since its first days the milling operation has been transformed. Logs that were cut, first, by hand, then steam power, then rapidly changing technologies now pass through a sawmill that is, in part, solar powered. Think of it: the same energy that made the trees grow is now harnessed to process the logs.

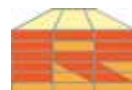
Rural economy

The business is still an important part of its local rural economy. Whilst the number directly employed is smaller at 60, employment is also still supported indirectly in the forest and in haulage and other local businesses with whom we have close and long-standing relationships: as a family business, we are part of a family of businesses creating work in our area. Working conditions and wages have improved dramatically and the skills required at every stage of the operation from harvesting, through production to sales and logistics have changed in ways that the founders could never have imagined.

In addition to continuous investment, the mill's success has been achieved by better use of co-products, and the creation

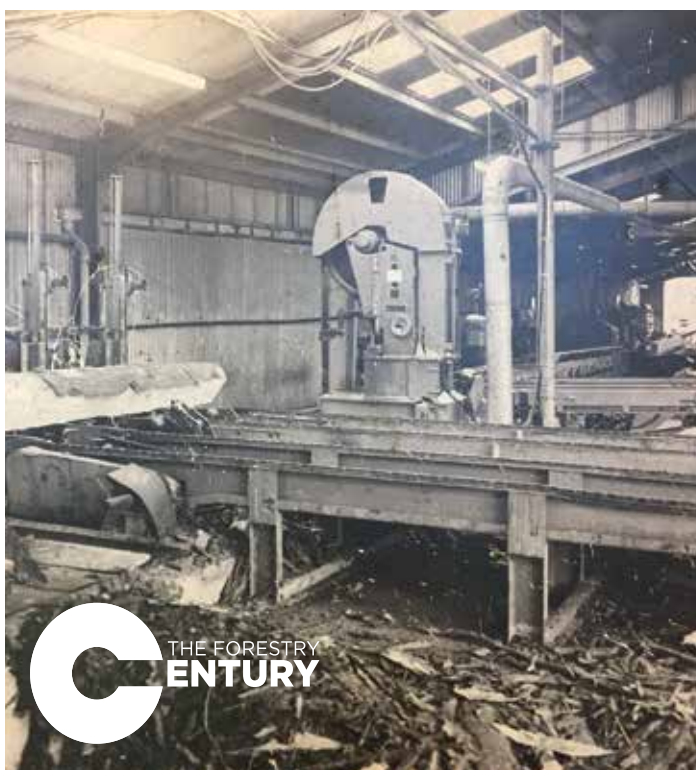
of added value products. Bark is processed to become growing medium through Melcourt Industries, chips are dried to power boilers on nearby farms, wood fibre is used on gallops that train some of the world's most famous thoroughbreds. We have moved from being a mere producer of commodities like pit props to, in many cases, a supply partner to long-standing customers for whom we produce tried and tested products like acoustic fencing panels to consistently high, measurable and recognised standards.

This is all well and good: but despite the passing of Forestry Acts and the publication of more reports on the need for the creation of more forests than you could shake a stick at, not enough new forests have been planted. The plain fact is that log supply may well be as big a threat in 2019 as it was in 1919. Perhaps, as a nation, it is time for us to see the wood for the trees on this matter.



CHARLES RANSFORD & SON
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“

Logs that were cut, first, by hand, then steam power, then rapidly changing technologies now pass through a sawmill that is, in part, solar-powered.

The Ransford sawmill in the 1960s and today



Evolving the Forest

by **Jez Ralph**, Timber Strategies

As most will be aware by now 2019 marks the centenary of the Forestry Commission and it seems the time is right to take a hard look at where the forest industries have come from and where we are going.

1919 was a critical turning point in revitalising a land-use and an industry that had fallen apart. With little remaining forest standing, demands on timber high and difficulties importing sufficient volumes radical steps had to be taken. Publicly, this was spelt out through the Forestry Commission and the need for a "strategic reserve" whilst privately many estates embraced the new era of tree-planting and some such as Dartington become innovative leaders in a new paradigm for forestry.

A hundred years later and 2019 seems like it needs to again be a critical turning point in revitalising a land-use and an industry. Climate, pests, technology, a new dawn for timber use; a public acceptance that we still have too few trees. The issues are different (but also the same?) and point to a need for a re-invigoration of the word "silviculture" and new paradigms for forestry once again.

Evolving the Forest was conceived as a platform to meet and discuss these issues, these opportunities and solutions in a format that allows critical discussion and an airing of opinion. Between 19-21 June 2019 Evolving the Forest becomes a major conference spanning the diversity of past and future forestry. The future of forestry and timber in the UK will be discussed through the eyes of policy, science, silviculture and the arts bringing together over 50 protagonists and 200 attendees.

Call for ideas

The mere act of formulating the event has been a fascinating insight into how different parts of society view forestry now and in the future; from a call for ideas over 250 submissions were returned from people passionate about the future of UK forests. The organising team comprises the Royal Forestry Society, one of the oldest and most reputable membership organisations in forestry; Art-

dotearth, whose membership and focus is in pushing the boundaries of ecology and the arts and Timber Strategies whose work concentrates on innovation in the forestry and timber sector. Confor member Dartington Estate will provide the setting, with its unique link back to the experimental planting of the early 20th Century and a modern context of highly ambitious innovative land-use on an estate level. The conference will act as a platform for the launching of their forestry manifesto that will set out how the estate believes its forestry needs to evolve over the next century and how it will act as an innovator and leader in forward-looking silviculture.

Why trees matter

The breadth of ambition and thinking of the conference can perhaps be seen through the opening afternoon and keynote speakers. The two keynote speakers for the conference pitch Fiona Stafford, Professor of English Language and Literature at Oxford with Professor Kathy Willis, biologist with research interest in biodiversity in changing climates, both talking about why trees matter and the future of forestry. Alongside these speakers the highlights of the opening day include a roundtable discussion with Sir Harry Studholme, Chair of the Forestry Commission; Piers Taylor, high-profile architect and advocate for increased timber use and Beccy Speight, Chair of the Woodland Trust. With both Tilhill and the Woodland Trust on board as event sponsors along with organisers Artdotearth and the RFS, we hope the breadth of speakers will be matched by the breadth of experience in the audience so that all can participate, air an opinion and be challenged in their thinking.

Registration for the event is now open and details of the programme can be found at evolving-theforest.uk. We are also actively seeking further sponsorship and more organisations that would like to exhibit at the conference. Contact details for sponsorship and trade stands can be found on the website or contact jez@timberstrategies.com directly.

SAVE THE DATE
19-21 June
Devon

Q&A



with **David**
and **Dorothy**
Sulman, UKFPA

While 2019 marks the centenary of the Forestry Act, it also marks the coming together of Confor and the UK Forest Products Association (UKFPA). A legal agreement to merge the two organisations was signed on 21 December and David and Dorothy Sulman have now become employees of Confor, working out of the former UKFPA office in Stirling. David and Dorothy are well known in the industry, but the following Q&A may still contain a few new nuggets of information.

Can you give a little history/background to your time before joining the industry?

David: I was born in Hertfordshire; having considered farming or construction, I decided that the timber industry would be an interesting career. Dorothy: I was born in Bridge of Allan and my first job was as a secretary in a Fife paper mill. My mother had worked for the Forestry Commission.

Can you give a little history/background to your career in the industry?

David: I have worked in the forest products industry for more than 30 years, starting with a major timber group and later with the Timber Research & Development Association (TRADA). I have qualifications in wood science, timber technology, management and business administration. I joined the UK Forest Products Association as its Executive Director on its formation in 1997.

Dorothy: As well as paper sector experience, I have worked in estate agency and in an architect's office, before joining TRADA to establish and manage its office in Stirling. I joined UKFPA on its formation.

What are the big changes you have observed in your time at UKFPA?

We have witnessed the growth and maturing of the UK timber sector, which has been fascinating and exciting. Continued investment throughout the wood supply chain has certainly paid dividends, in terms of improved efficiency and product quality, together with doubling of market share for sawn softwood, to about 40%, which has been achieved largely by import substitution.

What big challenges do you see on the horizon for the industry, from nurseries to wood processors?

Continuity of wood supply is now the biggest item on every wood user's agenda. As we approach peak wood production, the sector's efforts to encourage a significant increase in productive woodland creation must be redoubled; working with a range of partners in the public and private sectors. The Scottish Government's recognition of

the value of the sector to the economy, especially in rural areas, together with its increased woodland creation targets are welcomed, but this needs to be mirrored in England and Wales, where, for various reasons, planting levels remain at historically low levels. There is some light on the horizon; with an increasing number of landowners and land managers recognising the benefits of productive woodlands.

In addition to encouraging woodland creation, we must also be mindful of the ever-present threats from tree pests and diseases. Continued focus on pests and diseases, biosecurity and resilience must be maintained and in the case of resilience, we hope that research in tree breeding can deliver benefits for future crops.

We would also like to see the Government giving greater recognition of the role that trees and wood products play in combating climate change and the creation of a low carbon economy. This would provide a real spur for woodland creation and sustainable forest management. Allied to this, there needs to be increased public awareness of the benefits of trees, woods, forests and forest products. Many people profess a love for trees, but many fail to make the connection between trees and the products and benefits they provide to us all.

There is also scope for increasing the proportion of British-grown timber used in the UK, especially in the construction sector, where UK timber can play a major role in delivering new homes, especially if more British-grown timber can be used in timber frame construction.

Whilst trees are a major focus, we must not overlook the importance of people - not only just in terms of recruiting people to make a career in the sector, but also in developing the skills of those already working in the sector. Time is of the essence as we have an ageing workforce. We must also ensure that a safe and healthy workplace is provided.

This merger is between organisations with complementary skills and experience - what excites you about the new organisation's benefits to members?

Given the various opportunities and challenges facing the UK forestry and forest products sector, the merger of the two well established and well regarded organisations is eminently sensible and timely. We have an opportunity to build on their acknowledged strengths, whilst at all times maintaining strong focus on serving our members. Our work with TRADA instilled in us the importance of membership organisations 'keeping their feet on the ground' and addressing members' needs in a cost-effective manner. The sector has a good story to tell, but it needs a stronger and louder voice. The new, merged organisation will be ideally placed to do this. It is an exciting time for our industry and we are looking forward to the challenge. Onwards and upwards!

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Biggest-ever celebration of Scotland's Finest Woods

A Forestry Act centenary prize and two farm woodlands awards are the highlight of the largest-ever celebration of Scotland's best and most inspiring woods.

Scotland's Finest Woods Awards 2019 will present a one-off 1919 Forestry Act Centenary Award in a year offering more prizes than ever before. Angela Douglas, executive director of Scotland's Finest Woods Awards, said: "The one-off centenary prize is to celebrate woodland created during the past 100 years that has evolved through careful and skilled management, has resilience to face the future and justifies the title of one of Scotland's finest woods."

The Farm Woodland Award was introduced for the 2018 Awards and attracted a high standard of entries in 2018, with judges full of praise for the winner, Peter Gascoigne, who farms at Broughton in Peeblesshire. He said creating a woodland shelter belt on his farm had led to heavier and healthier lambs.

SAC Consulting, part of Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), is sponsoring the Farm Woodland Award, while Scottish Woodlands Ltd is supporting a 'youth award' for farmers or crofters and/or their forest or woodland managers aged 40 or under – also for three years.

The popular Crown Estate Schools' Trophy is back, won last year by St Mary's School in Melrose, which has just planted a Centenary Avenue of trees to mark the First World War with part of its prize money.

Other returning categories are: Community Woodlands (two competitions: small and large community woodland groups); New Native Woods; and Quality Timber (three competitions: new commercial wood; multi-purpose forest or whole estate; and a single stand/compartment or small wood).

The winner of the centenary award will win £1000 and specially commissioned trophy. All winners re-



ceive £1000 and there is a different trophy for each category.

Malcolm Young, senior forestry consultant at SAC Consulting, said: "The 2018 competition showed real quality in Farm Woodland and it's clear there are a lot of other great examples out there - and we look forward to finding out about them and rewarding them in 2019."

Ralland Browne, managing director of Scottish Woodlands, said: "We are starting to see barriers between different land uses breaking down - and an understanding that farming and forestry can work very well together. Scottish Woodlands wants to recognise the younger generation who are embracing this and creating high-quality woodland on farms."

This year's winners will be honoured at the annual Scotland's Finest Woods Awards ceremony at the Royal Highland Show on Friday, 21 June 2019. Entries must be submitted by 31 March 2019.

For the full list of awards, criteria and entry forms, go to www.sfwa.co.uk

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

Above: **Peter Gascoigne, winner of the 2018 Farm Forestry Award, pruning trees he planted on his farm at Broughton, Peeblesshire.**

Below left: **Pupils of St Mary's School, Melrose, are congratulated by teacher Tom Rawson after winning the Schools Award 2018.**

Below right: **John Strachan, runner-up in 2018 Farm Forestry Award, in his woodland at Tullo Farm, Oldmeldrum, Aberdeenshire.**



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Shooting and forestry – a match made in heaven?

by **Huw Lloyd**, Lockhart Garratt

There are very few pheasant or partridge shoots in the UK which do not rely on woodland. Indeed there are many farms and estates whose only use of their woodland is to sustain the shoot and yet for many shoots there often appears to be a hesitation to actively manage woodlands. I suspect that this is partly due to a lack of experience, the result of low value timber products and sometimes not having the courage of your conviction to undertake the right operation at the right time and to the desired extent. What forester hasn't gone back to a woodland, the year after it was thinned, and thought 'I wish I had thinned this a little more!' What also seems apparent is that there is an opinion within the shooting fraternity that thinning or clear fell areas will harm the shoot and conversely the forestry industry that 'the shoot are in the way'!

Like all important arguments of recent time, there are extreme opinions on both sides but I have grown up immediately in-between the two and for the life of me I cannot see why there should be any conflict.

I manage woodlands for clients for a variety of purposes across central and southern England but in my spare time I also help to run a shoot in Oxfordshire and previously worked for the British Association for Shooting and Conservation for six years. I see what the gamekeeper and the forester require from the woodlands. The sporting and silvicultural objectives should benefit each other, and most of the time I think they actually complement one another. The reason I say that is because forestry focuses on the long-term objectives for the woodland and relies on short-term operations to achieve these, whereas a gamekeeper focuses on the day-to-day tasks of the current season which in turn will look after the longer term objectives of the shoot. Seems like a good fit!

Aligning silvicultural and sporting objectives in woodland management
Thinning woodlands are the bread and butter of silviculture. I probably do not need to explain this to

the readers of this magazine but timely operations not only provide useful periodic income (especially due to the current buoyancy in the markets) but improve the form and vigour of the remaining stand of trees. By letting more light into the stand to invigorate the trees we are also allowing light to the woodland floor and encouraging ground flora (biodiversity term) or shooting cover (sporting term). When the ground flora prospers and the keeper starts to hear grumbling from the beating team on a shoot day about the dense brambles in 'Winford Wood', then he knows that he may have to start cutting the cover back to be able to beat the drive effectively thus retaining access for any silvicultural operations when required. All mutual benefits.

Importance of infrastructure

Internal infrastructure, whether tracks or rides, are essential for active management of woodlands and indeed the capital value of woodlands can be greatly influenced by the existence (or not) of good quality tracks and rides. These are also hugely important to the keeper for a number of reasons including:

- access to and from pens and drives;
- to feed birds, manipulating their habits and attracting them to areas to drive;
- to provide the birds with open, warm sunning areas protected from wind and rain; and
- to create openings in the canopy to position guns on the shoot days.

From a purely silvicultural perspective, the annual management and maintenance of rides and tracks can be a hindrance because they may only be used for operations every five to ten years and therefore the mutual benefits of tracks and rides to the shoot justify the annual mowing and rotational cutting etc. It's not only the pheasants that benefit from the rides, these hugely valuable open spaces are where the majority of all woodland biodiversity can be found too.

In order to benefit the shoot, the location and orientation of rides in relation to the sun is important. Most woodlands have an existing ride network but when creating new rides it is essential to work out where these should be placed in order to benefit all





parties. For example, a well-positioned curved east-west ride can receive early morning and late evening sun for pheasant poults which can be vitally important to dry poults after or before a heavy night's rain. This not only helps with the health of the poults but also to keep them in, and near, the woodland as they mature because they know they can sun themselves each day.

Deer and squirrel control

Lastly, and possibly the most important, the mutual benefit of sporting and silvicultural management of woodlands is deer and squirrel control, which probably warrants an entire book on the subject. Controlling these is essential for woodlands to establish, regenerate or mature and therefore in order for the woodland to provide the long-term benefits to the shoot they should be a major priority for every keeper. Reducing or maintaining a low deer population is essential to creating shooting cover in a woodland, but will also enable natural regeneration or reduced costs when restocking woodland; mutual benefits. The blunt cost of high populations of fallow or red deer comes into focus when the 1.5m/1.8m tree guards (£2.50 each) are costed for 2500 stems/ha



The sporting and silvicultural objectives should benefit each other, and most of the time I think they actually complement one another.

over a 4ha planting. The knees start to shake!

Trapping and shooting remain the most effective control methods for squirrels, and to be effective they are required on a daily basis, not once or twice a year on an annual squirrel shoot. This daily labour makes the task costly and therefore many woodland owners do not control squirrels in sufficient numbers to reduce their populations. However, many keepers will undertake control as part of their daily tasks, which is hugely valuable to the shoot and to the health and prosperity of the woodland.

Closing thoughts

To some I may have painted a rosy picture of the mutual benefits of shooting and silviculture, but I would challenge anyone to contest these. No doubt, there are individual occasions where one hinders the other, but as foresters we should look at the long term picture and remember what work the keeper has done or can do to benefit the woodland. I suspect, if we think long and hard about those previous conflicts between keeper and forester most are probably as a result of clashes in personality as opposed to silvicultural differences.

lockhart-garratt.co.uk

CASE STUDY

Woodland creation and modern forest design at Knowes and Keltie

by **Neil White** MICFor,
senior forest manager at
Scottish Woodlands

Scottish Woodlands, on behalf of an investor client, is in the process of establishing a new woodland creation scheme in the Ochils, near Dunning in Perth and Kinross. The woodland will be approximately 450ha and, when planted, will deliver almost 5% of the Scottish Government's annual target for forestry expansion as well as contribute to national targets for carbon storage.

The site is split into two sections by an existing stock fence. To the east lies the Knowes portion and to the west, the Keltie section. Knowes farm (*below*) was purchased through an open market sale and purchase of the adjacent 'Keltie' section was then negotiated with a neighbouring owner. Across the site, topography varies from 270m to 475m above sea level, while soils are mainly peaty podzols, peaty gleys and brown earths. Once the site is planted, part of the farmed land will be retained for livestock production with this land benefiting from the new shelter provided by the trees.

Most of the vegetation across the two sites is unimproved acid grassland, with dry heath, improved grassland, marsh and bracken habitat types also being present. The current land use is rough grazing. The land capability for agriculture scores range between 5.2 (improved grassland), 6.1 and 6.2 (rough grazing). The land capability for forestry scores are F4 (moderate flexibility for trees) to F6 (very limited flexibility for trees).

As part of the planning and preparation for the creation of this new woodland, sev-

eral surveys have been undertaken by specialist contractors – birds, botanical and groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTE), as well as a landscape appraisal. Moreover, archaeology and deep peat were assessed in-house by Scottish Woodlands. In addition to the surveys undertaken, consultation was made with Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), RSPB, Historic Environment Scotland (HES), Perth and Kinross Council and the local community.

Since the introduction of changes to the application process following the Mackinnon Review, and with good input and support of the local Conservancy staff, the timescale to get this proposed scheme through the approval system (approximately 12 months), has been much quicker than other similar developments. This has been much appreciated by all parties involved. The timing was helped by the fact that time-specific surveys, eg breeding birds were able to be carried out early in summer 2018.

The final proposed planting design takes into consideration any sensitive factors identified through the surveying and consultation processes. Ground preparation will be primarily by forestry ploughing with some areas of excavator mounding and some pre-plough mulching of rank heather growth in parts of the site.

The main management objective is to create a top-class commercial conifer woodland using species which are suitable to the site conditions. Commercial objectives will be realised through the establishment of a high-quality timber crop on a site which is easily accessible for timber

harvesting and well positioned in relation to a wide range of timber markets. In addition to this, the site design is sympathetic to the landscape, the biodiversity and the archaeology of the site.

Based around a core of Sitka spruce, the planting design also incorporates a mosaic of diverse conifer areas, native broadleaves and open ground. The proposal creates habitat connectivity through the development and expansion of forest habitat networks whilst maintaining zones of adjacent open ground. Forest areas will be expanded through the creation of significant areas of diverse conifer and broadleaved woodlands. New habitat will also be created for a range of species.

The scheme will promote public access and enjoyment through formalising the use of the forestry roads and tracks and linking these to an existing network of core paths. There has been good communication with the local community over developing the site for mountain bikes and walkers particularly.

The Scottish Government has committed to a target for the whole country to become carbon neutral by 2050. The capture and storage of carbon through forestry expansion is expected to play a significant role in reaching that target. The new woodland development at Knowes & Keltie is expected to add approximately 3,150 tonnes CO₂e every year by way of climate change mitigation.

With all the planning now completed, planting is expected to begin early in 2019 with some further planting in 2020.

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Triumph over pests, pathogens and policy

The forestry sector must wake up and face the growing number of issues that lie ahead, says **Ben Anderson** of Abbey Forestry, who makes the case for woodland diversification.

There are many objectives for woodland management, but it is the three Ps; Pests, Pathogens and Policy, which often influence, or sadly impede, progress. The key objective in any woodland management plan should be timber production. Income from timber enables secondary and tertiary management objectives to be achieved. Recent timber prices have proved this, enabling previously unviable operations to be completed.

Currently, one of the most important issues for the forestry industry is the future supply of both softwood and hardwood timber. Until the sector can surmount the three Ps, in particular Policy, the road ahead will be difficult. The forestry policy framework, including the UKFS, is for the most part, outdated, dogmatic and cumbersome. Policy makers must be forward thinking and have the courage to be radical, and not simply cling to a very different past. Darwin's insight portrayed this perfectly:

"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change".

Adaptative through multi-objective woodland management

So, what can we do as woodland managers? Strength and intelligence are questionable; however, adaptability is the key. For the most part, being adaptable will comprise multi-objective woodland management and/or creative and novel silvicultural systems, operating within the narrow policy parameters.

Multi-objective forestry is not new; timber with shooting, biodiversity, paint-balling and even wind farms, being ubiquitous and commonplace.

We are now also seeing growing potential for other secondary and tertiary objectives (see panel). These are examples of diversification projects we have seen and helped to facilitate. The success of these projects will be dependent on the same factors all new businesses and enterprises face, coupled with the unknowns of the natural environment.

Future-proofing silviculture

Silvicultural systems and species choices have also been hot topics for many years; however, we still hit stumbling blocks with policy and policy enforcers not understanding silvicultural terminology such as select fell (now regeneration felling) and the un-

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Carbon credits with new woodland planting

knowns surrounding market potential of alternative species, let alone nursery availability.

We are increasingly trying alternative approaches such as CCF and providing uses of species such as Eucalyptus, Liriodendron and sequoia sempervirens. As well as alternative species, mutually advantageous mixes have proved beneficial and helped to build resistance into woodlands, especially where under-management has led to a monoculture.

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How my pension plan helped me make my forest dream come true

With a passion for low-carbon living and circular economy, **Daniel Iddon** used his small self-invested pension plan to invest in his dream of a small forest delivering a sustainable set of diversified outputs.

In 2018, I used 100% of my modest Self Invested Pension Plan (SIPP) fund to purchase a 15-acre commercial standing woodland. Getting the blessing of my wife was an achievement in itself! I am a stress engineer and know nothing about pensions, woodlands or ecology per se. The side effect of such a bold investment venture is that in my “new life” as a woodland owner, I am now constantly thinking about how to use wood differently to maximise sustainability in what is a global and competitive supply chain.

I grew up in the northwest as part of a family who ran a plant nursery. We were surrounded by woodland and I thought it was normal to spend time out of school making new adventures - building rope swings, zip lines, tree houses and just playing outside. As much as I wanted to follow the family tradition and grow plants it was suggested I get a trade - I chose engineering and until recently never looked back.

Aspirations

I set myself the challenge to buy a woodland with aspirations to create a microversion of a diversified forest, including timber but also activities such as forest schools or a tree nursery.

Well, it turns out that buying woodland with a SIPP in Bedfordshire and on a small budget (£60k in land ownership terms at least) is actually very hard. The large landowners are not interested in hosting a forest school or selling a parcel of woodland and local authority forests come with restrictions. Investment Trusts specific to woodland investment seem to have a minimum investment of £96k.

Couple that with an amenity woodland ownership that has grown over the years which meant I didn't have enough money to buy commercial woodland and no real project within a small amenity wood to get my teeth into.

At my first attempt to purchase a woodland using my SIPP, the vendor turned my offer down and I lost out to a cash buyer. I approached woodlands.co.uk to see if they had any woodlands that would suit my ambition for a project with opportunity for further growth within the same woodland using timber sales to purchase more land - all through a SIPP. Chris Colley and his team supported my naivety as we

worked through various options and to my surprise, I found a needle in a haystack in West Wales.

But finding land was still easier than navigating the pension regulations and the rules surrounding SIPP: what a pension can buy, what it can and can't pay for (eg professional fees and boundary liabilities). The trustee service I used who specialises in SIPP had brought woodland, land and commercial properties into SIPP but not commercial woodland ventures. A SIPP can't own any tangible movable assets (timber) and while HMRC don't tell you what you can invest in, commercial forestry is acceptable.

What are my plans for the forest?

So now that my pension owns some woodland and I have leased it to myself - what do I plan to do with it? It's a site surrounded by SSSI and I would like the forest's timber to be marketed regionally and rather directly, for example to go into a timber house project in the region, therefore reducing transport miles and carbon emissions through the supply chain to the end customer. Sustainability shouldn't just be replanting trees it should recognise and include 'tree miles' adding value to the British grown timber.

I am planning on resurrecting my retired father's plant nursery in Lancashire to grow trees for re-stocking. With greenhouses capable of switching over to cell trees my aspiration is to find customers for young trees for local planting projects. Again, it might be my naivety but wouldn't it be holistic to use a peat-free medium manufactured from the mill waste from any felled trees from the woodland? Will this idea fit into the reality of the supply chain?

I am looking forward to sowing and planting the trees as a family, with us all taking pride in the project as it grows for my children, likely as inheritance.

I have a dream (naivety kicking in again) to build a wooden house in the vicinity of the woodland and develop an agroforestry system and set up a woodland chicken company. Owning a woodland offers so many options and Brexit is an opportunity I am looking to take on. Again this achievement is subject to my ability to persuade my wife.

I have since set up a management company to support other willing SIPP endeavours to bridge the gap for collaborative woodland purchases through SIPP for larger commercial woodlands. I have never considered leaving my pension interests at the mercy of London types or the geopolitical ups and downs which are out of my control.



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Sylva launches premium account for myForest

Since its launch in 2009, Sylva Foundation's myForest web tool has been growing steadily, just like the woodlands it exists to support. myForest is used by thousands of woodland owners, managers and educators, to map and manage more than 75,000ha of woodland across Britain. Its development has been supported in part by charitable trusts, government bodies, corporations, and individual donors. However, myForest requires regular funding to support maintenance and development, and the Sylva Foundation receives frequent requests for new features.

Thanks to core support from The Dulverton Trust, the Sylva Foundation has been developing a range of additional premium-level tools which it now hopes some woodland owners and managers will opt to use. Paul Orsi, who manages myForest, explained: "We have introduced these additional tools in response to demands by users. We have kept the costs as low as possible, at only £24/year for a Woodland Owner account and £120/year for an Agent account. We hope that some owners, managers, and agents, will subscribe to a premium account. The income generated will support ongoing maintenance and allow us to invest further in the future of myForest."

The most significant addition to the service, accessed via the new premium account, is access to digital mapping from the Ordnance Survey (note that additional costs apply dependent on usage). This is likely to be popular with those requiring maps for formal applications, or where existing aerial mapping imagery is poor. Alongside OS mapping, other options offered include: advanced printing, overlaying of data layers such as ancient woodland boundaries, plus a range of reports such as summary reports for species and age-class distributions. It is also possible to export a work programme to a spreadsheet so that it can be taken into the field or shared with others. More features will be added to premium accounts over time and the charity will be developing a myForest mobile app by the end of the year.

www.myforest.org.uk



MEMBER OFFER

Confor members can take advantage of a 20% discount for a myForest premium account by using the following code before the end of March: CONFOR20.

FAQs

What is it? It's an online tool for woodland management.

What can I do with it? Produce sub-compartment maps, forest inventories, management notes, a UKFS-compliant management plan, a deer management plan, and much more...

Who uses it? 4,601 woodland owners and 1,046 agents to manage 77,175ha (189,850 acres) across Britain. 823 businesses listed on a free directory.

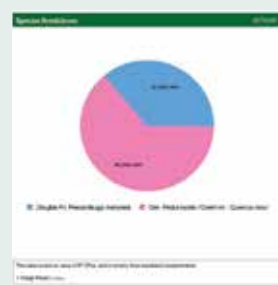
Is my data secure? Sylva Foundation never shares personal data without user's permission. You can download your data, in various common formats, at any time.

Why is much of it free? myForest is run by Sylva Foundation, an environmental charity which supports sustainable forest management.

FEATURES

	Lite	Premium
Basic Mapping	✓	✓
Woodland Star Rating	✓	✓
Management Plans (compliant with FC England and FC Scotland)	✓	✓
Felling licence application (FC Scotland)	✓	✓
Deer Management Functions	✓	✓
Plan of Operations (compliant with FC England)	✓	✓
Sub-cpt plan (inventory, work programme, management notes) pdf output	✓	✓
Print Management Plans	✓	✓
Collaborative Management Tools	✓	✓
Printing maps - basic	✗	✓
Advanced Mapping Features	✗	✓
Ordnance Survey Mapping Functionality (*additional costs apply)	✗	✓
Links with Felling Licence Online (FC England)	✗	✓
Overlaying with additional data layers eg ancient woodland	✗	✓
Work programme - export to spreadsheet	✗	✓
Species report	✗	✓
Age-class report	✗	✓
Printing maps - advanced	✗	✓
£ cost per month (owner/agent)	Free	£2/10

DATA & REPORT EXAMPLES



Above: **The myForest premium account allows users to download automatically-generated reports for a woodland**

Left (from top): **myForest Woodland Manager showing OS background**

A new measuring tool is just one of the new features added to myForest through a premium account

With a myForest premium account users can now view data layers such as ancient woodland

Nervous times



TIMBER AUCTIONS MARKET REPORT

Oliver Combe
Timber Auctions

2018 will be remembered as a very good year for the growers, prices and demand reached unprecedented levels. However, there are signs that maybe prices have plateaued towards the end of the year and we now need to plan for a period of consolidation.

Uncertain domestic demand but erratic supplies maintain price levels

Short-term demand for all timber products remains good as the weak pound has protected domestic producers from the impact of the global timber market slowdown.

The pattern of supply seems to be split north and south of the central belt of Scotland.

To the north, supplies remain strong and have possibly exceeded demand allowing processors to get raw material prices under control which has led to modest falls in standing timber prices from the heady days of spring 2018.

Sawlog prices have fallen by around £10 per tonne and a fall in the global price of chemical pulp of around 10% has put downward pressure on small roundwood prices.

Whilst there has been some downward pressure on standing prices, overall timber prices are excellent and growers are taking advantage of it to put parcels to the market.

South of the central belt, supplies are

GLOBAL TRENDS

Global demand for timber appears to have declined in the final quarter of 2018 whilst production has continued to increase. This has led to build-up of stock and downward pressure on prices for most finished products in most markets.

Whilst demand in the US and Europe rose there was falling demand in China, Japan, UK and MENA region leading to an overall decline in traded volumes of 2.5% compared with 2017.

Chinese demand slowed noticeably in the tail end of 2018 as domestic spending slowed down, this had a knock on effect as the main suppliers looked to place surplus volume into other markets.

So demand began to decline noticeably in the third quarter whilst production was running at full capacity, this is most noticeable in the USA and Canada.

Lumber production in the USA increased by 4.4% and in Canada by 7.7% during the first 10 months of 2018 and reached their peak just when the seasonal slowdown occurred in October 2018.

Overproduction had led to falling prices since June 2018 with major grades falling by up to 40% in the last three months of the year

The major producers were quick to

react to this collapse in prices with reduced production to reduce stocks and stabilise prices once the market started to slowdown.

After three months of falling prices there are now signs of a firming of framing lumber prices on the US market.

The Scandinavian and European producers have reported a similar slowdown to the US market but have reacted to slowdowns in China, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, China and Japan by increasing sales to Europe and the USA.

Some estimates have Finnish export volumes declining by 10% and Swedish by 6% in the second half of 2018.

Despite the difficult market conditions at the end of 2018 the fundamental market drivers of increased wood use for construction, industrial products and energy have not gone away and will continue to underpin market growth,

It appears that after a market correction in late 2018 the global timber market will return to growth in mid 2019 and the ongoing increase in demand will continue to put pressure on available raw material supplies and ultimately continue to drive up timber prices.

more erratic, demand is stronger, distribution costs are lower, there is more competition and more diversity of markets, all of which is keeping prices at record levels.

The pattern of timber sales being front loaded in the year carried on in 2018 with

large volumes offered in the first six months of the year followed a pronounced reduction in the second half of the year. With the private sector now being the dominant force in the timber market this has major implications for timber processors who are

£ per tonne delivered to customers in Wales, central and south England (January 2019)

Product	Lower price	Upper price	Trend
Log 18	£80.00	£95.00	=
Bar 14	£75.00	£85.00	↑
SRW	£60.00	£65.00	↑
Fencing	£65.00	£75.00	↑
H Wood firewood	£60.00	£70.00	↑

£ per tonne delivered to customers in north England and Scotland (January 2019)

Product	Lower price	Upper price	Trend
Log 18	£75.00	£90.00	=
Bar / pallet 14	£65.00	£75.00	=
SRW	£45.00	£65.00	= ↑
Fencing	£55.00	£65.00	= ↑
H Wood firewood	£50.00	£60.00	↑



HARDWOODS

Oak continues to dominate the hardwood trade, global supplies remain tight and demand is increasing particularly from France where the wealthy and millennials have developed a taste for oak furniture leading to a surge in demand. This has occurred when oak is becoming increasingly fashionable in most developed economies leading to a perfect storm of rapidly rising demand and constrained supply.

While the USA remains the major supplier, France has jumped ahead of Russia to become the second largest supplier of oak to China.

French log exports to China rose by 35% in 2017 and have a similarly meteoric rise in 2018 and now account for 80% of all France's oak saw log exports.

This has had the effect of reducing supplies available for the French mills and for the UK whilst increasing prices that UK buyers have to pay, this coupled with the fall in value of the £ has caused a double whammy.

UK processors have increasingly had to secure their raw material from the UK which in turn has led to UK oak saw log prices virtually doubling in the last 5 years and demand being very strong for all grades of oak.

As the menace of Chalara becomes more real for woodland owners we have

seen a noticeable increase in the amount of ash being offered to the market. The best quality material is being taken by UK mills, the exporters are taking the 2nd grade saw logs and the firewood markets are well prepared for the processor sized material below 40cm diameter which leaves the oversized poorer quality material as a potential problem. Hopefully the board mills and biofuel industries will see this as an opportunity they can capitalise on and will look to integrate ash into their supply mix.

Beech and sycamore saw log demand remains very flat with only the very best material attracting interest. Sadly firewood is often the best bet for 2nd and third grade stems of saw log size. The wise growers will hold onto these stands as fashions do change and the we hope demand for these species will pick up.

There is now concern as to whether there is enough oak sustainably supply the current levels of demand and maybe now is the time to look at alternative species such as sweet chestnut and Douglas fir to replace oak in some markets.

The firewood market remains very good, stocks in the supply chain are very low and the current spell of cold weather is bound to see an increase in sales so hold onto your seats!

forced to buy hard in the first half of the year and then sit on expensive timber until they can work it in the second half of the year.

So at the start of 2019 timber purchasers' inventories have fallen back due to reduced supply at the back end of 2018 and they now have to buy timber for the spring upturn in demand.

This has led to some very strong prices being achieved in Wales and North England, recent examples being £77t standing for a mainly spruce parcel with a high saw-log content in North Wales and £58t standing for a spruce parcel containing small sawlogs, pulpwood and biofuel in the Yorkshire Dales, £69t for Douglas fir clearfell in the Marches with difficult access and £63t for a nice Douglas fir thinning parcel in the Marches, even pine is selling well.

These prices are right up with those achieved in the spring of 2019. It may be that these are price spikes caused by buyers desperate to secure volume but the general consensus is that supplies are very tight and this is holding prices up.

The biomass market in particular seems to be struggling to secure volume and I am continuously taking calls from biomass supply companies looking to purchase standing or roadside timber. Roadside stocks of small roundwood is non-existent in England and Wales and most crops are forward sold. Whilst the high prices have brought more timber to the market in 2018 it was not enough. The current situation is

Roadside hardwood prices (£ hft) January 2019

	Oak planking	Oak beam	Oak fencing	Oak cordwood	Export ash & beech	White ash sawlogs	Export sycamore	1st grade firewood
High price	£10.50	£10.00	£6.00	£1.40	£3.25	£4.50	£5.00	£2.60
Mid price	£9.00	£8.00	£5.00	£1.25	£2.75	£4.00	£4.00	£2.25
Low price	£8.00	£7.00	£4.00	£1.00	£2.00	£3.00	£3.00	£2.00

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

a golden opportunity for woodland owners to bring woodlands back into management and thin or fell compartments that previously had been ignored. When the high prices for conifer energy wood and hardwood firewood are taken into account it should be possible to thin almost any block and produce a reasonable cash surplus.

There is also considerable merit in smaller owners working with their neighbours to consolidate or group together their timber sales to reduce working costs and increase the volumes available to maximise revenue.

Whilst buyers remain concerned about the very high price of raw materials and are seeing their operating margins being eroded there is simply not enough timber coming to the market to meet current demand so lack of supply is holding the market up.

Summary

Availability of supplies remains the key driver in the market but Brexit uncertainty is now starting to impact on demand and business confidence and is looking likely to put downward pressure on price.

It has never been more important to have an effective timber marketing strategy and to offer timber to the "open" market.

TIMBER AUCTIONS



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The future is timber, but is it bright?



by **Harry Stevens**,
timber buying
director Tilhill /BSW

What will 2019 hold for the buyers and sellers of standing and roadside timber? Unfortunately, my crystal ball stopped working several years ago, and after a quick consultation of what Nostradamus had to say, I find that I am back to looking at the recent past to try and predict trends through the start of this year.

2018 was characterised by an extremely strong demand for all roundwood products, which included all allied products within the wider fibre basket, such as recycled fibre. As a direct result, prices rose strongly for all product categories, from small roundwood through to sawlogs. This dynamic has also influenced standing sales prices, which reached record levels. Indeed, even poorer quality or badly presented parcels received strong interest.

The market's strength has continued since October with small roundwood users continuing to buy heavily in order to build stocks prior to the onset of winter. Meanwhile, the number of available parcels gently declined, especially across southern Scotland and Wales and most notably toward the end of the year.

Demand also remained robust among the individual product categories. The panel board sector enjoyed strong end product prices both nationally and internationally where, for example, OSB demand had climbed strongly. These price increases are mirrored with chipboard and MDF. Consequently, all plants are running at full capacity.

The biofuel sector has sustained a strong demand which undoubtedly will continue as a substantial number of new entrants constantly come into the market. Indeed, by some measures it would appear that there is a further two million tonnes of new demand either commissioning or due to commission through 2019.

Although this is based largely on burning recycled fibre, it seems likely, either directly or indirectly, to place further pressure on the small roundwood market. However, we should remember that some small-scale biofuel plants are clearly finding life difficult with the existing market prices for raw material so it is possible that we may see plants mothballed or even exiting the market if prices continue in the current trend.

Sawmills have had a busy period in the run up to Christmas: UK demand may have been unremarkable but so too were import volumes. Domestic mills therefore had a large demand gap to fill. Their willing-

ness to do so has been boosted by strong price rises for carcassing and fencing timber through 2018 which allowed sawmills to remain profitable in the face of sharply rising sawlog prices.

However, the current situation regarding the exchange rate makes it hard to see the sawn market moving further. Indeed, there are indications that imported supply may increase over the medium term which could exert some downward pressure on the market. Initial indications for the market in the early part of 2019 indicate solid demand for sawn and panel products so, at the very least, standing timber prices are likely to remain static and may edge up yet further.

I have not mentioned the Brexit word yet, but I am afraid I must. Should we see major movements in currency this will completely alter the dynamics of the market.

Any weakening of Sterling will have a positive impact on demand for UK products. Conversely, a rise in Sterling will improve the competitive position of imports and negatively impact on both sawmills' and panel products which would force producers to try and reduce their raw material costs.

The market is always difficult to predict but this is one of the most uncertain periods I can recall in my 25 years in the round timber sector.

www.bsw.co.uk/www.tilhill.co.uk

Timber prices continue 'to reach for the sky'

The significant rise in UK timber prices experienced at the end of 2017 and first half of 2018 has levelled off but, experts say, values have remained at this elevated level.

Bidwells' latest Timber Price Database tracked returns from the sale of almost 800,000m³ of private sector coniferous timber grown in Scotland, Northern England and a small amount from Wales, between April and September 2018. Data submitted from the 121 coniferous transactions, with a standing value to the grower of £29.8m, suggests that prices have risen slightly during this period.

"Although we have recorded a rise in values during the six months of analysis, it's probably more accurate to say that values have been maintained at their previously high level," says Raymond Henderson, head of forestry with Bidwells property consultants.

"Continued weakness of Sterling remains a major factor in UK-grown timber prices but high global demand and tightness of supply suggests no reason why the big picture will change in the foreseeable future."

Mr Henderson acknowledged that we are experiencing an unpredictable political environment but is confident that the UK timber market will continue to perform:

"We do, of course, live in strange times where informed projections are apt to be overtaken by events and the ongoing uncertainties created by the unfolding drama of the UK's withdrawal (or not) from the EU make crystal-ball gazing murkier and less certain than ever. That said, the fundamentals of timber sales should not alter too drastically regardless of our membership of the European club."

The overall uplift in the Scottish for-

estry sector, in no small part bolstered by Scottish Government's enthusiasm for the industry, has impacted on the forestry team at Bidwells. More staff have been, and continue to be, appointed to meet the rise in demand for forestry sales and acquisition.

"The upsurge in the sector has resulted in our team here at Bidwells experiencing high levels of demand for our professional services, including sales and purchasing. Thus, our department has been expanded and we are delighted to welcome Angus Grey to our Perth based forestry team. Angus has experience in both operational forestry and regulatory requirements which will complement our existing expertise."

A copy of the latest Timber Price Database report can be downloaded here:
www.bidwells.co.uk/timber

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Spirited bidding sees good results at hardwood auction

There was a packed sale room for the 31st Annual Hardwood Auction by DJ&P Newland Rennie in Cirencester. Keith Spencer took the rostrum and conducted spirited bidding which resulted in a highly successful day with 97% of volume on offer being sold. The highlight of the day was a new sales record of £515 per m³, realised twice and £505 achieved once. These prices over doubled the previous 30 year

record of £242 per m³ achieved last year.

The auction day morning was devoted to two speakers, Dougal Driver of Grown in Britain and Gillian Clark of Forestry Industry Safety Accord, who both gave very interesting and well received talks.

The auction was again divided into Standing Sales, Felled Logs and Softwood with oak continuing to be the predominant hardwood species.

Full auction results available on www.djandp.co.uk

For details of the next sale, the 32nd, apply to Keith Spencer or John Jenkins at: DJ&P Newland Rennie, 87 Monnow Street Monmouth NP25 3EW
Tel: 01600 712916

SECTION RESULTS

Standing Sales

Eight Lots reached a top price of £64 per tonne for beech from Collingbourne, Wiltshire with a 1.29m³ mean tree size measurement and sold to Woodgate. A mixed broad leaf stand in the Dean 13-36 dbh made £40 per tonne purchased by Mendip. Other prices were in the range of £31- 34 per tonne.

Logs

There were 32 Lots of logs of which just four lots weren't oak. There were seven outstanding lots from Clipsham in Leicestershire with the best oak lots achieved £515 (twice) and £505 (once) purchased by Brooks and Sommerscale respectively. These lots were among top quality, much of which fell into the planking bracket. However good lots were making £300-£350 per m³ including from Millichope Estate, Shropshire and FC at Hazelborough, Northants.

Dean oak reached £185 per m³ sold to Pontrilas and New Forest over £130 per cm, Chiddingfold made £170 per m³ and Cumbria at £125 per.

In other species ash achieved £90 per m³ again from Clipsham and sweet chestnut £75 per m³ from Sherwood.

Firewood

Three Lots made £60 per m³, for MB from Dartmoor and oak from the Dean sold to Tilhill and Woodgate respectively.

Softwood

Four Lots with Douglas logs from Wyre at £105 per m³ sold to East Bros. and E. Larch Logs at £70 per m³ sold to Aldridge.

Pictured right from top: **Lots 8, 23 and 46**



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TAKING THE STEEP IN OUR STRIDE



Traction aid winches are helping to make difficult sites more accessible. **RAB Easton** reports

Forestry, like many industries, is extremely competitive and to be successful large volumes of timber are required at roadside each week. Most of the easiest timber to access has been felled and is now replanted; it will be a quite a few years before it is ready for clearfelling again.

With the rising demand and prices of timber at an all-time high, we have to consider more awkward and steeper sites to satisfy the timber markets.

The steepest sites had previously been hand-felled and extracted by skylines; however, this method of harvesting requires a lot of skilled manpower (which is difficult to find), is expensive, and requires a lot of setting up/taking down time, which has a negative impact on production.

Skylines are expensive to purchase and can incur high operating costs per tonne of timber harvested.

When hydrostatic transmissions were introduced into harvesters and forwarders, it became possible to work safely on steeper ground than before but we were still unable to harvest and extract timber from steep, uneven mountainsides.

Consequently, excavators were adapted and developed to be able to high lead and skyline the steeper areas. They had the advantage of being able to track under their own steam to the inaccessible timber. This reduced the length of the skyline extraction distance, which increased production but still involved another expensive machine on site and the trees still had to be felled manually.

Many of our European neighbours working in Alpine regions and areas in North America, Canada and New Zealand were experiencing the same problems but on a much bigger scale than us.

They began experimenting with new technology that would allow the machines to work on steeper ground than before while also reducing the risk to operators and equipment.

Traction assist winches were developed that were either attached to the machine or integrated into the machines chassis. The winches were synchronised with the transmission speed of the machine, however, if there were multiple active machines working the same site, either the winches had to be changed >>

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>> over or, in the case of chassis mounted winches, many expensive units had to be purchased.

The solution has been to introduce an independent traction winch aid carrier which could be remotely operated from the machine working onsite (harvester, forwarder, skidder, feller buncher, processor etc).

Using a traction aid winch prevents wheel spin and damage to the ground, providing a remarkable increase in traction in areas where there is poor soil stability. Rather than waiting for dryer conditions, these areas can be worked throughout the year.

The system will also increase access to timber in areas affected by heavy snowfall.

In the event of a malfunction or failure on the machine or the carrier, the winch rope is locked in place and the machine held in position until mobilised again. Timber fallers working on steep sites are at a much greater risk of being injured or killed due to the severe conditions.

Mechanised logging has significantly reduced the number of accidents but risks and danger still need to be intensively managed.

Manufacturers of this type of equipment are increasing as it is becoming a more economical and safer solution for steep ground harvesting and we will look at three different types that are currently available for purchase in the UK (some models will be available on a hire basis).

Timbermax

There are three models of this winch: the T10, T14 and T20, available for all sizes of timber harvesting equipment.

This is a relatively easy winch to install and it is attached to the boom of a 20 tonne plus excavator. The digging bucket is removed and there are very few modifications required to install the winch. Conversion of the carrier between an excavator and traction aid winch is a quick and simple process.

The Timbermax uses tried and tested Rexroth components powered by a variable displacement hydraulic motor, which allows high torque or high speed under low load conditions. The drum transmits power through a three-stage planetary gear system and a multi-disc spring applied brake secures the drum. The unit has a reliable and robust spooling system that has been designed to prolong the cable's lifetime, thus reducing operating costs.

The I-winch control system has been designed to be intuitive and user-friendly. It is fitted to the steep slope machine and relays information essential for the safety of the operator onto a high contrast 12" monitor. The system recognises which direction the slope machine is travelling and it can be set to three different tensioning settings: uphill, not moving and downhill. The operator can reduce the pre-set tension with the potentiometer and it is also possible >>

**T Winch on a steep
Jim Wilmer site near
Moniaive (left)**

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>> to test the traction capacity by having the cable tension reduced to zero to determine whether the machine will hold unassisted. Safety is the priority. It is paramount to sustain safe communications between the winch and slope machine and the operator in the slope machine can monitor the fuel level, engine oil pressure, hydraulic oil levels and temperature levels of the winch carrier.

The winch is designed to be used with both tracked and wheeled machines; tracked machines require a high pull and lower speed compared to wheeled machines, which require a faster cable speed. The optimum work slope is between 35% and 70% with a 500m rope capacity.

RJ Fukes Forestry Services are the UK sales and service distributors for the Timbermax Traction Aid Winches. They plan to have two winch units available for hire, one at Llandovery and the other at Carlisle.

www.rjfukes.co.uk

T Winch

I first saw a T Winch working at the Austrofoma exhibition in Austria in 2015. It was attached to a John Deere forwarder on a wet, greasy slope. Wood had been laid out at intervals all the way to the top and it was reversing up the hill and loading until fully loaded. I was amazed as there was no tracks or chains on the forwarder and, apart from a small amount of surface mud (walking down alongside the forwarder would have been difficult without skidding as the ground was sodden due to heavy recent rain), there was no rutting whatsoever. Since then I have seen two of these winches working on severe slopes in the UK; Mike Gillet was using one in mid Wales attached to a Ponsse Scorpion and I recently watched Jim Wilmer's at work near Moniaive, attached to a John Deere 1510.

The T Winch is a tracked, remotely operated unit which is powered by an Iveco 143hp diesel engine and weighs up to 7800kg (depending on the specification). With an 8-tonne pulling force at a speed of up to 4km/h and a 500m rope capacity, there is also the option of an ancillary winch which will manoeuvre the T Winch into the optimal position. Once in position, stops are used to secure the winch and it has a dozer blade fitted to improve the stability of the carrier.

It is amazing to see this equipment in action as no matter whether you are manoeuvring forwards or backwards the rope is always taught and pulling/releasing smoothly.

For sales and service in the UK contact

www.bioequipmentltd.co.uk

For enquiries regarding hiring a T Winch contact

www.envirotecsiteservice.com

Herzog 500 Synchronwinch

This traction aid winch is generally mounted onto a used Ponsse Ergo, although a HS16 or a Cobra with a HN125 or HN200 can be used as well. The winch replaces the harvester crane and is mounted directly on to the tilt, slew base. An added benefit during challenging conditions is the ability to rotate and level the winch into the desired position. There are



Ponsse Ergo with the Herzog Forsttechnik AG traction aid winch

two additional remotely operated anchor winches, enabling the traction aid winch to be used at a right angle to the work area. It is fitted with a dozer blade which adds extra stability when lowered. The winch unit is remotely operated and driven from the steep slope machine, therefore allowing the operator to slacken the anchor cables, lift the blade and drive the machine out of the way from the cab of the attached machine if it is blocking the exit.

A handheld radio for external use and a touch-screen cab control unit (fitted with a display unit for all the important safety parameters, including the camera for remote driving) are fitted to the steep slope machine and can both be used for operating/driving the winch vehicle.

The Herzog has the capacity for 500m of cable and has guided cable spooling for smooth operation and maximum cable life. In addition, this winch has the benefit of being able to winch out timber due to its high tower.

Again, this is a small selection of the equipment available and the ones above are well represented in the UK. They are known as traction aid or assist winches as they allow safe working on steeper ground than would normally be possible and to help facilitate timber extraction with minimal impact on the environment. They must only be used by trained experienced operators used to working safely in extreme conditions. When used properly and within their capabilities, they are an excellent safeguard for protecting operators.

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)

Facebook: [@forestmachineoperatorjobs](https://www.facebook.com/forestmachineoperatorjobs)



Insight into influe



The new generation of Husqvarna chainsaws, launched this year, is more than a new product line: it is promoted as a new generation of chainsawers, represented by the H-Team ambassadors in what is a brilliantly executed influencer and content-focused marketing campaign. Can our sector learn from this contemporary marketing strategy based on transparency and peer-to-peer communication? **Stef Kaiser** reports.

When you are invited to a corporate press event, you know what you have signed up for: someone wants to sell you something. But there are different ways of achieving this end goal, and Husqvarna's recent chainsaw launch illustrates how a contemporary approach building on honesty, transparency and customer involvement goes a long way in product marketing or campaigning these days.

Can our sector learn from this example when it comes to conveying a public-close image of brands and the sector as a whole, breathing new life into an industry that has so much potential for honest communication?

H-team: the power of influencers and ambassadors

A group of over 80 delegates from all over Europe were gathered in Sweden to hear about the new generation of Husqvarna chainsaws. I left the first press event with a powerful and lasting impression of a brand that had real people behind it – the developers and the chainsaw users, working closely together to develop a tool that meets the need of arborists and loggers.

After some truly passionate engineers had given a media-supported presentation of how the product was developed and thoroughly tested, a gender-balanced selection of members of the H-team – the ambassadors for the “new chainsaw generation” campaign – were invited on stage. Each of them was introduced with a funky, fun and uplifting video showing who they are as people – where they live, what their hobbies are and what their work involves. The public already connected with them after this and anything that followed became ‘peer-to-peer’ communication – an effective strategy. The four



FOCUS ON PEOPLE AND GIVE BEFORE YOU GET

Influencer marketing is like a hybrid of old and new marketing tools, taking the idea of the celebrity endorsement and placing it into a modern day content-driven marketing campaign. The main difference is that the results of the campaign are usually collaborations between brands and influencers.

Content-driven marketing is not a tactic – it's a strategy. It's a commitment to using content to reach and engage with the audiences that are important to your business or campaign. It's a commitment to give first, before you get. It's a commitment to educate before you sell. It represents an understanding that consumers are intelligent, discerning people who are going to choose your product or service only if it's the best option, and not because you had the most money to spend on a fancy advertising package. (*Rightsourcemarketing.com*)

ncer marketing



#newchainsawgeneration

THE H-TEAM

Linn Arvidsson @logginglinn

During the World Logging Championships in Lillehammer 2018, Linn became the very first female World Champion. She's worked with chainsaws for the better part of a decade, the last two years professionally. She believes her background in sports – both soccer and hockey – accounts for much of her success.

Anton Petersson @husqvarnaanton

22-year-old Anton has been a forestry professional for three years and today he manages a felling contractor business. His time off duty is spent hunting, exercising and training with his chainsaws. His passion for chainsaws is evident in his time spent training and the two times he's competed in the World Logging Championships.

Olivia Eggen @olivia.eggen (pictured far left)

Olivia has inherited her interest in forestry from her father and she's followed him, working as a forestry professional for five years. The passion for her work is based on its ever-changing nature and the opportunity to stay active. Staying active is also something she does in her free time, that is spent travelling, climbing, riding, running, doing yoga or exercising her dogs.

Martin Götz @goetzbaumpflege (pictured left)

Martin is a Board Master Arborist, a tree climbing and chainsaw instructor, who has worked in tree care since 2000. For the last 12 years, he's managed his own tree care business with four employees. Besides chainsaws, his passion is horses and riding.

were interviewed about their work as arborists, their opportunities and challenges, and their involvement with product development and testers as part of the H-team.

The ambassadors are the faces of a professional and visually-striking campaign – they appear on banners, in videos and brochures; but they were mingling with guests at the event and were as approachable as anyone could be. When we talked to them informally, they came across as 'pal' like, private people one can easily connect with. They were passionate when talking about their work and happy to be part of the Husqvarna engagement strategy. They seemed to feel a strong sense of belonging and ownership for the brand which, of course, translates

● How could this marketing technique be used to change attitudes towards our sector, convey an image of a modern, green sector and get more young people interested in forestry and timber?

● Have you used influencer marketing before? Tell us about your experience.

into excellent marketing results for Husqvarna.

Most H-team members are very active on social media using their personal accounts. Brands increasingly use such influencers to link their brand to content provided by bloggers, youtubers and instagrammers who act as role models for potential customers and many more across the world.

>>

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>> The impact

You would expect the editor of *Forestry and Timber News* to be as commercially unbiased as possible. Why am I giving a chainsaw manufacturer this much coverage? I do, because I want to highlight the impact of a well-achieved contemporary marketing campaign that really connects with the client base. I feel that Husqvarna has created a sense of community around its product and brand, linking it to an image of a young, attractive sector. I have not elaborated on the specs of the product itself in this article; but I have linked the brand to a positive story of real people, and this might well shape your perception of it.

Husqvarna's next generation of 50cc chainsaws are out! The 550 XP® Mark II and the 545 Mark II are redesigned from scratch, resulting in a new level of cutting capacity, maneuverability and endurance, making them optimized for harvest forestry and urban forestry applications including felling, limbing, removals or cross cutting of small and mid-sized trees.

We have asked chainsaw instructor David Rossney to test the chainsaw and publish a bluntly honest product review in FTN April 2019.

Available in UK from 15 March.

www.husqvarna.com/uk/dealer-locator

For details, news and videos visit:

www.husqvarna.com/uk/products/chainsaws/newchainsawgeneration

[@Husqvarna UK](https://www.facebook.com/HusqvarnaUK)



FTN WEB RESOURCES



Watch the funky video introducing the new products and the H-team
www.confor.org.uk/ftnweb

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HUMAN RESOURCES

Engaging a consultant or contractor?

Points to consider from an HR perspective

Consultants are usually self-employed independent contractors engaged to provide specific services. Before entering into a contractual agreement with a consultant, it is important to carefully consider the pros and cons of doing so and what is the right form of contract for them, says **Gillian Mair** on behalf of Brodies LLP.



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USING CONSULTANTS: THE PROS AND CONS

What are the advantages of using consultants?

- It is a more flexible relationship than an employment relationship.
- A consultant is often used to cover a particular skills requirement for a specific project or on an 'as required' basis.
- A consultant may not benefit from the statutory protections of employment status.
- A consultant may be able to claim more favourable tax treatment.
- A consultant can usually work for a number of organisations at the same time.

What are the disadvantages of using consultants?

- Consultants, particularly those with particular skills or experience, often charge high fees.
- The consultant or HMRC may challenge the self-employed basis on which the individual has been working. The fact that an arrangement is structured and documented as a consultancy agreement (ie a contract for services) and not a contract of employment will not always be conclusive.
- If an individual succeeds in proving employee or 'worker' status for employment legislation purposes, the individual will have additional statutory protections and rights.
- If an individual succeeds in proving that they are an employee for tax purposes, organisations that engage consultants may have tax liabilities and penalties.
- By the nature of the relationship, those who engage consultants will have limited control over how, when and where the services are carried out. This can be addressed to a certain extent in the consultancy agreement but imposing too much control can risk a challenge to their employment status.
- A consultant may have protection under discrimination legislation if their contract obliges them to do the work personally, even if their status is not that of an employee or a 'worker'.
- In some circumstances, a consultant could be considered a 'worker' for pension auto-enrolment purposes.

DRAFTING A CONSULTANCY AGREEMENT

Consultancy agreements can be with either the individual consultant directly or via a service company.

Factors to consider when drafting a consultancy agreement include:

- What services is the consultant going to carry out? Make sure these are properly defined in the agreement.
- Does the consultant need to have any qualifications? If any training is needed, who is meeting the cost? Do you want to include a provision for the consultant to repay any training costs if these are being paid by you?
- Is it for a fixed term? If the agreement can be terminated by notice, how long do you want the notice period to be?
- Do you want to include a provision that the agreement will terminate if the consultant does not provide services for a certain period e.g. eight weeks?
- Is the consultant going to work from home and provide their own equipment? This is a good indicator of self-employment, but is it appropriate?
- Is there a normal working day, or minimum and maximum number of weekly hours, or does the consultant have complete control over their hours?
- The fee structure and rate. Will the consultant have to complete time sheets? What is the timescale for submission of invoices and payment? Are expenses going to be reimbursed?
- Entitlement to sick pay, benefits, holidays, and grievance procedures should be avoided as this suggests an employment relationship.
- Can the consultant appoint a substitute? At any time or in restricted circumstances? Do you need to approve a substitute?
- Which policies is the consultant going to be asked to comply with? For example, social media, data protection, health and safety, use of IT systems, workplace security.
- Is there any particular information which you need to be kept confidential during and/or post-engagement?
- What insurance cover will you need?
- Data protection: is personal data being transferred? Do you have adequate privacy notices in place? Are you protecting data that the consultant will have access to in course of providing the services?
- If the consultant carries out creative or inventive work, is there a need to protect intellectual property or decide who will own it?
- Can the consultant supply consultancy services to other organisations at the same time?
- Do you want to impose any post-contract restrictions? Bear in mind this can point towards employment status.

To discuss any aspect of this article or if you would like help with drafting a consultancy agreement, contact Gillian Mair, Associate at Brodies LLP.
gillian.mair@brodies.com 0141 245 6250



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Members can get 30 minutes of free legal advice from our associated specialist solicitors Brodies LLP and Atkinson Ritson. This is meant as a first guidance and does not constitute a full client-solicitor relationship.

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Scotland:

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0131 656 3795 Confor@brodies.com

FISA Forest Industry Safety Summit 2019

Royal Highland Centre, Ingliston, Edinburgh

The 2019 FISA Forest Industry Safety Summit is for forest industry leaders, FISA members and the wider forestry industry.

Chainsaw incidents continue to be the major part of the injuries in tree work with approximately a third of all fatal and major injuries in tree work occurring during chainsaw operations. Investigations into these accidents regularly identify a failure to plan, implement and follow safe systems of work; along with a failure to effectively challenge unsafe practices. This summit will re-focus on the urgent need to improve forestry safety.

- A revised Guidance on Managing Health and Safety in Forestry (GMHSF) will put greater emphasis onto the roles of the 'Duty Holders', and reiterate the crucial need to ensure early safety planning ahead of work.
- HSE will bring an insight to their recent inspection programme of 50 forestry visits which focussed on the planning, supervision and competence of chainsaw



operations. The inspection programme also challenged the industry's widely-held view that it's not reasonably practical to provide welfare facilities on its forestry sites.

- Load security for timber haulage will also feature. Loads must be safe for transport; safe for offloading – reducing the risk of shifting / dropped loads. As updated legislation encourages more straps, the industry needs to ensure drivers have a safe area to fasten straps both in forest and at the mill.

More detail and registration for the summit will be available soon at www.ukfisa.com

FISA will be holding a series of eight UK Safety Health Awareness Days (SHADS) during 2019. The SHADS will be resourced and hosted by supporting FISA members. SHADS offer opportunity for Contractors and FWMs to learn about safety and site planning; support for safe use of chainsaws; use of traction assist and winching. SHADS dates and venues will be widely circulated shortly.



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Taking the strain for foresters

Julia Hayne, director of services at Perennial explains how the charity can help and guide workers through times of uncertainty, change and financial hardship.

When life takes an unexpected turn due to illness, injury or loss of income, the effects can be devastating and long-term.

Perennial is the forestry industry's trade charity. Originally set up 180 years ago to help retired gardeners, we now support people working in all branches of horticulture, forestry and arboriculture.

Our experienced team of friendly, professional advisers understands the challenges and financial pressures that forestry workers and contractors can face. We offer a lifeline, delivering tailored financial, practical and personal support and advice directly to people in trouble. People we help have often experienced a life-changing event, for example, serious injury, long-term illness, family bereavement, redundancy or family breakdown. They need help coming to terms with and navigating their new situation. In the wake of ongoing welfare support changes, and the continued roll-out of Universal Credit, the issues people face are becoming more complex. Many people simply cannot afford to

live on their regular wage but don't want to plunge themselves into debt to supplement their income. Our team has the knowledge and experience to help people through a whole range of issues and will support them for as long as help is needed.

If you are facing difficulties or are struggling financially, physically or personally, asking for help can be very difficult. People often tell us that making the first phone call to Perennial was the hardest thing to do but no one ever regrets it and in the vast majority of cases we are able to make a positive difference to someone's life.

Our online budgeting tool is a great place to start if you are concerned about money, or just want to get more organised this spring. It is free, completely confidential, and will give you the confidence to adapt your monthly budget throughout the year. However, we understand that, in most cases, financial pressures are very personal and often lead to other issues. Our team is ready to listen and we recommend you call or email us as soon as you feel you need some advice so we can talk things through and help you decide on next steps, before a situation may spiral out of control.

Some people want reassurance about a benefit application they are making, need advice about eligibility criteria for a grant they are applying for or want to know if Perennial can help pay for a training course they need to stay compliant. In these cases, telephone sup-

port may be sufficient, but in all cases Perennial's team will assess whether a home visit would be worthwhile.

In many cases, the issue that has prompted someone to contact Perennial (eg an unpaid energy bill they are worried about or a broken pair of glasses they need to drive to work but can't afford to replace) is just the tip of the iceberg and their overall situation requires more in-depth support. In these cases, Perennial will arrange to make a home visit, usually within 10 working days of their initial contact.

We help people both in work and retired from forestry, as well as their dependent family members, for as long as they need, even if that means a lifetime. Last year Perennial helped people access £2.9M in direct financial help.

We are here for anyone facing uncertain times – please don't be afraid to get in touch if you have any queries or concerns, you don't need to be in crisis to access our help, we're here for you whenever you need a listening ear. We also need your help in spreading the word to everyone working in forestry so if someone you know is struggling, please encourage them to contact us. If you tell just one other person, it won't take long to significantly increase the number of people in forestry who know they can turn to Perennial when life becomes hard.

GET IN TOUCH

If you or someone you know needs Perennial's help, please get in touch. All advice is free and confidential.
Helpline 0800 093 8543
Debt advice 0800 093 8546
General 0800 093 8510
services@perennial.org.uk
www.perennial.org.uk/help

CASE STUDY **Marek and Ann-Marie**

Marek was a tree surgeon and conservation manager working for a local golf course. He suffered a life-changing head injury while helping a friend at the weekend that required brain surgery with a long-term recovery period. Due to his injuries he is unable to return to work and still suffers regular seizures. We were able to help him, and his partner Ann Marie, overcome the many challenges that a life-changing injury presents. We helped them with financial arrangements, including navigating the benefits system, as well as being there to provide the support the family needs for the long haul. Marek's partner, Ann Marie, said: "They were like cuddly arms, giving a big hug and taking away all the pressure of everything else I had to deal with to survive. If it wasn't for Perennial, I just don't know how I could have dealt with it all."

▶ Watch Marek and Ann Marie talk about Perennial at perennial.org.uk/marek





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Breaking the silence

“It’s ok to say I’m not okay”

Gillian Clark highlights the importance of breaking the mental health stigma in rural, male-dominated sectors.

The forestry sector is well known for demonstrating great resilience during adversity (and often awful weather). The relentless work ethic of forestry workers can at times come at a price and that price can be deterioration of mental health. The stigma surrounding mental health is still widely at large in rural areas. For many it remains still unspoken about, being ignored, often due to embarrassment. There are very few out there who cannot honestly say that they have been touched by mental health issues, either within their family or through their friends.

A New Zealand farmer, Doug Avery, recently completed a tour of Scotland, where he challenged Scottish farmers to open up and talk about their mental health concerns. There has been wide-spread reaction to his talks and this has delivered a clear message – that many in rural Scotland are ready and willing to start addressing their own mental health issues.

Through raising this issue, FISA hopes to keep the conversation going about mental ill health, through sharing experiences within the community on how they have coped with their own battles with mental health. As Mr Avery said: ‘it’s okay to say I’m not okay’. We hope this will help those who are facing similar challenges to realise they are not alone.

Mental health awareness and support for rural areas

We know that approximately one in four people in the UK will experience mental ill health each year. The National Rural Mental Health Forum aims to raise awareness of mental health in rural areas, bringing together more than 60 membership organisations, such as RSABI, SAMH and Samaritans, offering a range of expertise and guidance on different matters. The Forum has grown over the last 18-months under the guidance of Jim Hume, reflecting a commitment and willingness from our rural communities to tackle the stigma around mental health and wellbeing. The forum is run by the mental health charity ‘Support in Mind Scotland’, who counsel around 1300 people per week across Scotland living with mental ill health. Around 80% of those it assists are in rural Scotland. One project which is now progressing to the next stage is The Highland and Islands Connections project, for which Support in Mind are looking to appoint three additional support workers.

Mental ill health can be prevented and can be treated, especially with early intervention. The Forum and its members are keen to take action by raising awareness in rural communities and normalising talking about mental ill health.

Those who think they need help with their mental health need to do so as soon as possible. Neglecting wellbeing can lead to a deterioration in mental health and can also lead to more serious mental (and physical) health problems.

GETTING HELP

For further help and advice, get in touch with the following organisations:

SCOTLAND

The Royal Scottish Agricultural Benevolent Institution (RSABI) Helpline open seven days between 7am–11pm on 0300 111 4166 or rsabi@rsabi.org.uk

Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH) Call the info service on 0141 530 1000 Mon–Fri between 9am–5pm or enquire@samh.org.uk

Breathing Space Lines are open are open Mon–Thu between 6pm–2am and from Fri 6pm–Mon 6am

Samaritans Helpline open 24/7, on 116 123 or 08457 90 90 90 or jo@samaritans.org

Support in Mind Scotland (NRMHF) Call on 0131 662 4359 Mon–Fri between 9am–5pm or info@supportinmindscotland.org.uk

If you need **urgent medical attention**, then please call NHS 24 111 or call emergency services on 999.

WALES

C.A.L.L Mental Health Helpline for Wales Freephone 0800 132737 or text ‘help’ to 81066

NORTHERN IRELAND

General Practitioner (GP) The first step can be to talk to your GP who can help you decide what level of support you need and will be able to refer you to other forms of help.

Helplines Network contact details for a range of Northern Ireland based helplines, offering free information and advice, are available at www.helplinesnetworkni.com

Lifeline is a crisis response helpline service operating 24/7. If you are in distress or despair, you can call Lifeline on 0808 808 8000 and talk to an experienced counsellor in confidence. Deaf and hard of hearing Textphone users can call Lifeline on 18001 0808 808 8000. Calls to Lifeline are free to people living in Northern Ireland who are calling from UK landlines and mobiles. Visit the Lifeline website at www.lifelinehelpline.info

Talking Therapies Well-Mind Support Hub offers advice and support on a range of issues that can impact on mental health and wellbeing. Ask your GP for details or contact the Hub directly at wellmind.hub@southerntrust.hscni.net about a referral.



Gillian Clark is CEO of the Forest Industry Safety Accord (FISA)

www.ukfisa.com

Forest soils: are they an undervalued resource?

Dr Jens-Uwe Haufe, MICFor,
Technical Development Forester
at Forest Research

No forester will deny the importance of soils for forest management. As Cyril Hart put it in his classic *Practical Forestry for the Agent and Surveyor*¹: "Soils: These are the foundation of tree life." But why is this and how much understanding and appreciation of forest soils is finding its way into day-by-day forestry practice?

Soils and tree growth

As a site factor, the soil is first and foremost the source of nutrients required for tree growth. Depending on the nature of the underlying parent material, soils vary in fertility. Tree roots absorb nutrients in solution only, therefore it is the availability of water which dictates how much of the inherent soil fertility can actually be used for tree growth. Roots depend on respiration in order to fulfil their biological functions, hence a sufficient air supply within the soil is also essential. Root growth, and therefore tree performance, primarily depends on a complex balance of soil fertility, moisture, and aeration.

Of course, soil also constitutes the rooting medium, i.e. it literally forms the 'foundation' in which trees grow. Adequate rooting depth is an essential pre-requisite for good tree stability, and is particularly important in a windy climate like the UK's. Rooting depth may be limited by 'rootable' soil depth to an impenetrable soil layer – this may be solid bedrock on shallower soils but is more often formed by glacial induration, heavy ironpans or permanently waterlogged soil horizons. Other factors such as root deformation due to poor planting technique or practice, unsuitable ground cultivation are also likely to negatively affect rooting depth. However, it should be noted that tree performance and tree stability are not necessarily linked, i.e. vigorous growth or high yield class are not indicators for good rooting depth and therefore tree stability.

Classifying forest soils

The main soil characteristics affecting tree growth are expressed as:

- Soil Nutrient Regime (SNR, fertility)
- Soil Moisture Regime (SMR)
- Soil texture
- Rootable soil depth

These factors interact with each other and are also dependant on other site characteristics such as stoniness, climate, topography, and cultivation type.

The Forestry Commission's soil classification system² has been developed since the 1960s and provides a set of seven soil classes, 15 soil groups, and 50 soil types. Although the system had been developed mainly for surveying the National Forest Estate it has been used on private land as well and now constitutes the standard forest soil classification in the UK.

Soil types characterise soils according to their main physical properties and are sufficiently precise to describe many soils. For further details a set of 14 soil phases can be applied to the main mineral soil types. The illustration on the right (*General relation between soil type, fertility and moisture*) shows an overview of main forest soils and their relation to soil moisture and fertility.

Forest soils as an ecosystem

The factors responsible for tree performance are generally considered in tree species choice; for example SNR and SMR have been implemented in Decision Support Systems such as the Ecological Site Classification tool (ESC, www.forestdss.org.uk/geoforestdss/)³. Other factors however, mainly those which determine tree stability and the ones which are difficult to assess, are often neglected in forest management decision-making.

To be sustainable, the selection of tree species must take into account the suitability of the soil for tree growth as well as for tree stability and potential for natural regeneration. It should also be stressed that interaction between soil and trees is a two-way process – trees alter soil structure and affect drainage by their rooting and contribution to humus build-up by tree and roots litter production. Tree species selection should therefore be guided by the objective to ensure the sustainable management of the soil as a natural resource, and not by the productivity of the forest crop alone⁴.

In this way, forest soils should be considered as natural ecosystems where the cycle of nutrient uptake and decomposition, water availability and aeration is the result of complex interactions between trees and other plants, microbes, fungi and soil fauna. The ecosystem services of forest soils extend far beyond providing anchorage and nutrition for tree roots – they contribute to water filtering and decontamination, regulate water flow, contribute to carbon sequestration, climate regulation and nutrient cycling, provide habitats for organisms and act as one of the largest pools of biodiversity.

Forest soils fundamentally differ from agricultural soils in their much lower degree of disturbance, higher content of organic matter, better soil structure, larger spatial variability and more natural biotic



Interaction between soil and trees is a two-way process



		Soil nutrient regime					
		Very Poor	Poor	Medium	Rich	Very Rich	Carbonate
Soil moisture regime	Very Dry	Rankers and shingle					Rendzinas
	Mod Dry	Gravelly or sandy podzole and ironpan soils	Gravelly or sandy brown earths				
	Sl Dry				Loamy brown earths of high base status	Calcareous brown earths	
	Fresh	Loamy podzoles and ironpan soils	Loamy brown earths				
	Moist	Podzoic gleys and peaty ironpan soils	Brown gleys	Brown gleys of high base status	Surface-water gleys of high base status	Calcareous brown gleys	Calcareous surface-water gleys
	V Moist						
	Wet	Loamy podzoles and ironpan soils	Surface-water gleys				
	Very Wet		Flushed peaty gleys and deep peats	Humic gleys of high base status and fen peats			



Above: General relation between soil type, fertility and moisture

Left: Good selection of tree species (Douglas fir on a brown earth) spoiled by poor choice and implementation of cultivation technique

Far left: Identifying the soil type correctly is the first step to successful forest management

All images
© Forestry Commission

balance; this enables them to deliver these benefits much better than agricultural soils^{5,6}.

Maintaining the integrity of soils through forest management practice

The functionality of the ecosystem forest soil is based upon its integrity, which depends in turn on forest management practice. Choice of tree species has already been mentioned, other risk factors to soil integrity include ground preparation, thinning and harvesting, whole tree harvesting and short rotation forestry.

Reality suggests that many forest managers and agents have only superficial knowledge of the UK's soil classification and its implications for sustainable forest management. Tree species selection relies heavily on decision support software such as ESC which is very helpful in some respects but limited

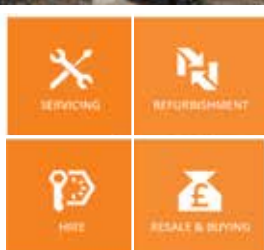
in others. Often the choice of ground preparation technique is driven by default procedures or economic considerations rather than by soil conditions. The vast benefits of functional forest soils are, on the whole, not understood and overly intensive cultivation methods are commonly chosen. The long-term negative effects of cultivation on tree stability and future forest operations are often ignored.

The UKFS (www.forestry.gov.uk/ukfs, Forests and Soil guidance) lists four 'good forestry practice requirements' which aim to:

- Protect the physical structure and chemical properties of forest soils,
- Maintain soil fertility,
- Avoid damage to soils, and
- Avoid water run-off, erosion and carbon release from soil.

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>> bance, erosion, loss of soil fertility and organic matter have been specified as potential threats to our soil resource, and guidance has been issued to eliminate or mitigate these. The guidance is applicable to all aspects of forest management from planning via establishment operations to thinning and harvesting.

More detailed guidance for specific operations or certain soil types would be desirable. Some of this will need to be underpinned by further research, for example on soil disturbance from ground preparation practices. To be fully effective this guidance also needs to be accompanied by an upskilling of our professional expertise so that forest managers are better able to identify soil types correctly. Ultimately it needs to be supplemented by a cultural change so that the values and expectations of forest management are guided by the principle of sustainable resource management.

For further information on Forest Research's work on soils see www.forestresearch.gov.uk/research/soil-sustainability and for information about Technical Development at Forest Research see www.forestresearch.gov.uk/services/technical-development-services

Right: Sitka spruce on peaty gley is a common choice – promising reasonable yield class but bearing a stability risk. © Forestry Commission



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Sharing roads in 2019

by **Roland Stiven**,
Timber Transport Forum

After a decade of austerity, the country may just be waking up to the realisation that maintaining and modernising infrastructure is a basic necessity for the economy to grow sustainably. In November 2017, the UK National Infrastructure Commission was tasked with reporting on the Future of Freight producing their interim report a few days before Christmas. The Timber Transport Forum made a submission to their call for evidence but, suffice it to say that, while London gets 35 mentions in the report, forests and timber get none. The report talks about 'Freight Blindness' – the inability of both the public and strategic planners to recognise the requirements of freight transport.

Confor continues to tackle that blindness and campaigns for the modernisation of rural freight infrastructure – for roads that are stronger, safer, more reliable and more efficient to use.

Forestry is one of the very few sectors that takes an active interest in the public transport infrastructure it uses. This is out of necessity as our supply chain relies on the periphery of the network at the limits of its carrying capacity. Where we go beyond these limits there are impacts on our business, on the roads, on communities and on other road users.

The same roads are used by local people and by other rural freight. In some parts



Carefully driven rural freight

of the country they are also attract numerous visitors in cars, motorhomes and bicycles. In Scotland, the North Coast 500 has been a success in drawing visitors up into the Highlands and the South West Coastal 300 seeks to do something similar for the backroads of Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway. The introduction of road equivalent tariffs on some ferry routes has increased traffic heading to and from the island ferries. Rural cycling seems to have blossomed dramatically across the UK and the National Cycle Network has designated both long distance and more local routes to attract cyclists and walkers.

All this means, we need to share the limited road space with others.

The Strategic Timber Transport Scheme in Scotland has been successful over recent years in targeting investment in many peripheral timber routes. Often this means

strengthening carriageways, improving sightlines, creating passing places and widening corners – generally increasing the capacity of the roads. There is a natural response by all users to take up that extra capacity and to drive faster.

In recent weeks there have been several specific complaints from the public about inappropriate behaviour from the drivers of timber lorries – driving too fast, haranguing car drivers and squeezing cyclists into verges. It is a handful of cases, a tiny proportion of the 1000 lorry loads of timber being carefully moved each day. But, as the biggest and most identifiable vehicles on some of our smallest roads we can't rely on 'freight blindness' to avoid criticism. It is incumbent on all professional timber hauliers to drive to the highest standards, sharing our precious road space with all.

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Vitara ticks the boxes

Eamonn Wall discovers some of the reasons why the Suzuki Vitara is Hungary's best selling car

I bet you did not know that the Suzuki Vitara is the best selling car in Hungary. Of course the main reason for this is that the vehicle is built at the Magyar Suzuki plant in Hungary. And, out of interest, the Audi TT is also assembled in Hungary and Land Rover have just opened a plant in Slovakia.

However, it is not too surprising to see the Vitara sell so well in Hungary as it is a very sensibly sized and a nicely designed vehicle. The current model was introduced in 2015 and is now a common sight on the roads of Scotland if not also elsewhere. In fact, 2018 was a very good year for Suzuki sales in the UK and the recent introduction of the much sought-after Jimny is helping to raise their profile even further.

The Vitara looks a bit like a shrunk Range Rover Sport with its clamshell bonnet, side profile and one-piece rear door. It is lower than previous Vitaras, is 4175mm long and 1775mm wide with 185mm of ground clearance making it a tough estate-type vehicle rather than a real tough off-roader. It was originally available with a 1.6 litre engine and a more powerful S version was added with a 1.4 litre booster jet turbo engine developing 140bhp.

As is now the trend with motor manufacturers always tweaking their designs, Suzuki has introduced a refreshed range for 2019. The main visual changes are a redesigned front grill sprouting six vertical bars instead of the horizontal design of the original, new front bumper with running lights, and at the rear the reversing lights have moved down to the centre of the bumper just where it will be obscured by the tow bar. A few tweaks to the interior include softer dashboard plastics, a central armrest, redesigned grey instrumentation and a new central information display. Not really a lot to write home about. But the main change has been the deletion of the 1.6 litre engine replaced by the 17% more powerful 1.4 litre turbo and the introduction of a smaller 1.1litre version of the same engine, and thus the deletion of the now



defunct S model.

There are three models on offer, manual (5-speed on the 1L and 6-speed on the 1.4L) and automatic gearboxes (six speeds), and either two or four-wheel drive. Suzuki now have no diesel models at all on their UK fleet. Prices start at £16,999 and move up to £25,649. The cheapest 4WD version is the 1.1litre Allgrip at £20,799 and the cheapest 1.4litre Allgrip is £24,299.

As a general workhorse the 1.4 litre version is the one to go for. It can tow 1200kg being itself a light 1200kg. It covers 0-60mph in 9.5 seconds. Suzuki is good at keeping its vehicles light thus reducing

fuel consumption. Average mpg should be in the low 40s and supplied from a 47 litre fuel tank.

I drove both versions and in particular the 1.4litre drove very well with a nice gearbox. The 1.1litre was okay but its gearbox is notchy. The Allgrip 4WD system provides power to the front wheels under normal conditions and then shifts power to the rear axle as grip is compromise at the front wheels. The Allgrip is actually more advanced by the addition of a feed forward system that allocates torque to the rear wheels before any slippage can occur. How well this works I did not get the chance to try it out.

Four 4WD modes are available, Auto or normal, Sport, Snow for loose surfaces which uses 4WD by default, and Lock mode for extricating the car from snow, mud or sand. A limited differential is fitted which helps brake any slipping wheel and transfers torque to the gripping wheel. Hill Hold Control is a very welcome device now fitted to most cars on the market making hill starts much easier preventing the vehicle from rolling backwards for two seconds. First developed by Subaru using a mechanical set up, nowadays the system uses the brakes to temporally hold the car on a hill. Very handy!

Vitaras come well equipped but it is a shame the analogue clock is only on the top of the range model. Nice car, nice size! Happy motoring in 2019.

Eamonn Wall FICFor is an arboricultural and forestry investment consultant, and managing director of Eamonn Wall & Co Woodland Design and Management.





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Essential reading on tree-roosting bats

Bat Roosts in Trees: A Guide to Identification and Assessment for Treecare and Ecology Professionals

Review by **Andy Carr**, ecological consultant at Lockhart Garratt

The objective of this book was to produce a set of instructions that would enable anyone with an interest in tree-roosting bats to make an objective assessment of any wooded habitat type and its potential to hold bat roosts. The book succeeds in meeting its objective using a well-structured approach with a myriad of visual examples. The amount of evidence collected and synthesised is a noteworthy achievement that will be apparent to anybody who has spent time searching for bats in trees. I encourage all ecologists, arboriculturists, foresters and bat enthusiasts to read this book.

The photographic examples accompanying each tree roost feature are excellent and will allow the most novice of enthusiast to clearly understand the types of features that may, or may not, be of value to bats. It also raises a larger point that a tree does not necessarily need to be dead or of great age to provide value to roosting bats. Tear-outs, wounds, cankers in otherwise healthy relatively young trees may harbour important bat colonies.

The book promotes categories such as 'reasonable likelihood' to assess bat roosting opportunity which will be useful to ecologists and woodland managers. There are informative tables throughout that can be used as an aid to better inform a surveyor to the suitability of a tree for bats;

which is currently under appreciated when considering the current national guideline requirements for surveying a building against the requirements for surveying a tree or collection of trees for bats.

Although the book has drawn on many hours of observations and years of survey effort to identify the suitability of a particular tree feature to a particular bat species, the recorded entrance heights, cavity openings and internal measurements, for example, are so variable through a season I am left feeling that reasonable likelihood of use should only be made at a broader cavity type and not at the finer roost character scale. The inclusion of smell as an indicator of current or past use by different bat species is interesting but maybe a step to far; a tree roost used by brown long-eared bats may smell sweet, spicy or smokey!

The book is full of important and informative points. For example, ash and oak (pedunculate and sessile) trees would appear to provide the broadest range of roost feature types, whereas turkey oak trees provide only butt-rot! And who would consider a common toad would find itself three metres up a tree in a bat roost?



Tear-outs, wounds, cankers in otherwise healthy relatively young trees may harbour important bat colonies.



The book does arrive at an important point that a potential tree roost feature should be closely inspected to fully appreciate its value. However, given that this requires a surveyor to climb the tree, visual observation (ie emergence surveys or video monitoring) is the only practical solution available to consultants for assessing potential roost features in trees. The book does however provide good justification by clearly documented the strengths and weaknesses of different survey methods. The warning that visual emergence surveys alone may ignore important evidence should be made clear to all surveyors.

In combination with the Bat Tree Habitat Key this book should be a go-to guide for all ecologists and land managers that are considering surveying trees for bats.

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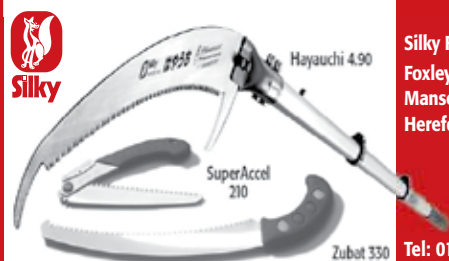
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Security at the entrance

Over the Christmas break someone stole the latch from our newly installed entrance gates. It was unscrewed and removed with nothing else seemingly disturbed. This got me thinking about how best to secure entrances to woods, so I thought I would go over the basics for us all.

The first question is whether to have a gate or barrier of some kind at all. While a gate may invite theft of itself, it does deter casual access, it announces ownership and, importantly, it demonstrates usage. Where entrances are remote and not overlooked it is easy enough for someone to park up and do mischief, but just like keeping things tidy robust well maintained gates, which are always kept locked, diminish the risk of fly tipping, casual theft - especially from within a wood, and incursion by travellers. A gated entrance is to be preferred.

The second question concerns type of gate. If denying unauthorised vehicle access is the priority then heavy duty steel barriers are admirable with locks placed inside a protective casing to prevent their being forced. As a countryside feature such barriers are less attractive than traditional steel or five-bar wooden farm gates. Most small woodland owners will prefer the latter for appearance sake.

I have used the last precaution on my list of tips successfully for more than 10 years which was the last time I had one of my gates stolen!

Finally, I would advocate having a sign saying, 'Please keep gates shut' and other information to demonstrate regular usage and other pointers to activity to further deter mischief. Sorry to start 2019 on a rather depressing note, but I hope it may help.



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MAKE YOUR GATES MORE SECURE

Attach the simple pin hinges with one pin pointing up and one down so that the gate cannot just be lifted off.

If hinges have a plate that is screwed in place attach it to the inside face of the gate post, assuming the post is square shaped, so that on closing the gate itself may help cover two of the four bolts.

With shared access, when using a chain and padlock(s) for security, remember that if others have their own lock always make sure the lock shanks are interlinked so as not to cut out another user.

To prevent a gate(s) being stolen, try securing it with a hardened steel chain (and padlock) where the chain goes round inside the gate and through the gatepost - see photo.

In this way stealing the gate requires taking or sawing through the gate post too, unless the thief has an angle-grinder and time to cut the chain! When fixing, let the chain have plenty of slack to allow the gate to open to its full extent unhindered.



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COMING UP IN APRIL – GET INVOLVED

In April, our annual feature on Skills and Career Development will return, together with a feature on Timber in Construction. Please get in touch before 20 February if you would like to submit an article on the topic or simply if you have ideas on aspects that should be covered.

Remember that FTN is your magazine – get in touch if you want to suggest editorial or give us feedback on articles we have published in the past.

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