

# FORESTRY & TIMBER NEWS

December 2019 Issue 96

2019 ELECTIONS:  
MANIFESTO FOR FORESTRY  
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES  
WOOD SCIENCE





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Please contact [Liz@confor.org.uk](mailto:Liz@confor.org.uk)

## CONFOR CONTACTS



**Stefanie Kaiser**  
Communications and editor FTN  
T: 0131 240 1420  
E: [stefanie.kaiser@confor.org.uk](mailto:stefanie.kaiser@confor.org.uk)



**Caroline Harrison**  
National manager for England  
M: 07500 927482  
E: [caroline.harrison@confor.org.uk](mailto:caroline.harrison@confor.org.uk)



**Jamie Farquhar**  
National manager for Scotland  
M: 07817 374906  
E: [jamie.farquhar@confor.org.uk](mailto:jamie.farquhar@confor.org.uk)



**Anthony Geddes**  
National manager for Wales  
T: 074 94079305  
E: [anthony@confor.org.uk](mailto:anthony@confor.org.uk)



**Andrew Heald MICFor**  
Technical director forestry and Northern Ireland representative  
M: 07771 844653  
E: [andrew.heald@confor.org.uk](mailto:andrew.heald@confor.org.uk)



**David Sulman**  
Deputy chief executive  
T: 01786 449029  
E: [david.sulman@confor.org.uk](mailto:david.sulman@confor.org.uk)



**Dr Eleanor Harris**  
Policy Researcher  
T: 0131 240 1417  
E: [eleanor@confor.org.uk](mailto:eleanor@confor.org.uk)



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



0131 240 1410



[info@confor.org.uk](mailto:info@confor.org.uk)



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



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For advertising, contact Laura Munnings 01502 725866  
[laura.munnings@micropress.co.uk](mailto:laura.munnings@micropress.co.uk)

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An image from Confor's manifesto for forestry, a copy of which is enclosed with this issue of FTN  
PICTURE: SHUTTERSTOCK





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## An opportunity for change?

**STUART GOODALL** CHIEF EXECUTIVE, CONFOR

**T**his general election could mark a moment in time when things change fundamentally for the better. While the result isn't yet known, the party manifestos for once make great reading from a forestry and timber perspective.

Confor has built much stronger relationships with political parties, focusing on key messages linked to climate change:

- Plant more trees
- Bring more woodland into sustainable management
- Support more use of wood.

The growing clamour for tree planting has helped our case, but we've had to be clear this shouldn't just be of 'native' trees and that we need planting at scale if ambitious targets are to be met.

We've also made the link with producing wood so that carbon can be locked up and more energy intensive materials replaced.

In that context, it's great to see that parties are recognising the benefits of planting more trees specifically to produce wood.

The details of each party's commitment is explained on page ??

While it's not unknown for politicians to make election promises they then fail to deliver, we should see this as leading to a step change in planting in England and more planting in Scotland. I'm less confident in Wales, in the short term at least, and Northern Ireland will struggle without a government.

What makes the difference is real political leadership of the type we've seen in Scotland with Fergus Ewing and a recognition by agencies that the status quo has to change.

Land use change involves trade-offs. I don't expect carbon will trump everything, especially as environmental NGOs are successfully linking (and at times subverting) tackling climate change to action on 'Nature'. However, we will be pushing regulators in England and Wales to accept that the climate emergency means the benefits of tree planting are significantly higher than previously - without that it will be a small step change and that simply isn't good enough.

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# Will government follow Confor's roadmap for woodland creation in England and Wales... or have they lost their way?

Confor's **Caroline Ayre** and **Anthony Geddes** explore the steps needed to deliver on tree planting targets in England and Wales

New planting is growing to be an angst-inducing topic to industry, government and environmentalists, and more recently has been the subject of competition in the election pledges. The UK Committee on Climate Change directed the previous Westminster administration to plant 27,000ha per annum. With just over a third of this being delivered in Scotland, we ask: can this successful model be adopted to achieve the same south of the border?

England and Wales are only able to bask in the glow of the leading light that Scotland is shining on UK afforestation. In 2020 alone, Scotland is set to beat the 30 million tree planting commitment made in the Conservative manifesto. The required

mix of grit, determination and funding has created what some would call a perfect storm for tree planting. What are the steps needed to deliver on tree planting targets in England and Wales?

Forestry and timber processing accounts for £1 billion GVA and 25,000 jobs in the Scottish economy. It is of equal significance to the English and Welsh rural economies, accounting for £680m (estimated) and £520m, respectively. The value of the forestry and timber industry has not yet been sufficiently appreciated by either of these two administrations.

The most significant driver for tree planting has come from the climate change movement and decarbonisation. But the resource of timber as an industrial product and the benefits that harvested wood products deliver through carbon storage and material substitution, although fully understood, has not been embraced by Westminster or the Senedd. This fundamental loss of the link between tree and timber may be at the core of the difference in attitudes.



Where are we trying to get to?

In response to UK planting achievements to date (table 1) in summer 2019 Confor developed its Think Global, Plant Local campaign which created a target of 40,000ha per annum by 2030 (table 2). This is based on what is realistically achievable from seed stock, nursery capacity and the workforce, given required funding and land availability.

This target has been widely acknowledged as achievable and perhaps tellingly the Liberal Democrat manifesto pledge gets pretty close to the numbers that Confor published earlier in 2019 (fig 3).

## Political climate

With political change and the outcome of Brexit still hanging over UK land use policy, the political environment has become even more challenged.

Within the last Westminster parliament a strong policy statement was issued with a clear commitment to support funding for woodland creation through transition from the current Rural Development Programme (Countryside Stewardship) into the new Environmental Land Management Scheme.

The current administration in Wales

**Table 1: Actual planting** (hectares)

	England		Wales		Total
	Broadleaf	Conifer	Broadleaf	Conifer	
2015	100	2300	0.0	100	2500
2016	0.0	800	0.0	100	900
2017	100	100	200	200	600
2018	200	1300	100	100	1700
2019	400	1000	300	300	2000

**Table 2: What needs to be planted to meet Confor's planting targets, assuming 50/50 mix of productive Broadleaf and Conifer** (hectares)

	England		Wales		Total
	Broadleaf	Conifer	Broadleaf	Conifer	
2020-2022	4500	4500	2000	2000	13,000
2023-2025	9500	9500	7250	7250	33,500
2026-2028	13,500	13,500	11,250	11,250	49,500
2029-2030	10,000	10,000	9000	9000	38,000





of the public sector's emissions for a year. Continue this to 2030 and the cumulative effect is enough to offset the personal emissions of every resident of Sheffield, Bradford, Manchester, Liverpool and Bristol.

An essential element of this carbon benefit is the production of enough high quality UK grown timber to meet the UK housing need, ensuring that not only are these homes cost-effective to build and run but they are also positive contributors to locking up CO<sub>2</sub>.

With the increase in planting and maintenance, harvesting and processing required, the creation of another 9000 jobs in forestry and timber by 2030 (estimated using the agreed methodology of 150 jobs per 10,000ha created in Confor's report, *7000 Green Jobs*) will ensure that rural communities and economies remain vibrant and buoyant resulting in better standards of living and a reduction in rural poverty.

The government that acknowledges and invests in the forest and timber industry will receive the recognition that through having the foresight to back forestry and timber they have helped to mitigate climate change, create new and improved habitats and drive improvements in air and water quality as well as having ensured the industrial supplies are there to meet future housing demands and employment. Not bad for putting a few trees in the ground is it? *Continued on p9*

has been unable to provide similar commitments to its English and Scottish colleagues due to lack of assurances about Westminster funding in a post Brexit environment. The strength of commitment to the National Forest of Wales provides confidence that planting and specifically planting for productive purposes remains at the forefront of their thinking.

#### Requests to new government

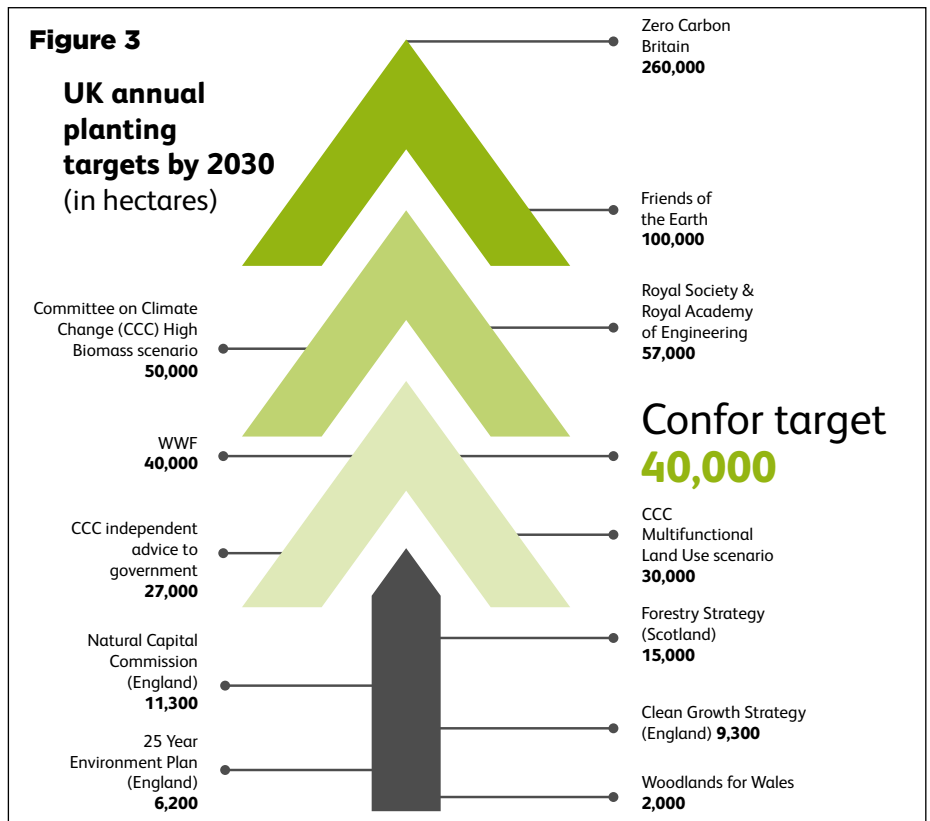
We have listened to members and have distilled their comments and feedback in a series of requests for our new government (fig 4, page 9). None of these requests are new and the echo of them has been heard over the previous decade. The difference now is that there is a more compelling supporting argument.

#### Positive outlook for an engaged government

We estimate that the government that achieves a target of 80 million trees per annum by 2025 of mixed productive forest under the UK Forestry Standard, would sequester an additional seven million tons of carbon. This is enough to offset the whole

**Figure 3**

### UK annual planting targets by 2030 (in hectares)







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*Continued from p7*

Planting is not the end of the story

Too much woodland in the UK, particularly broadleaf, is unmanaged or undermanaged. Managing existing woodland for carbon has several benefits: there is far more

existing woodland than any potential new planting scheme could create; established trees, when thinned, sequester carbon far more rapidly than newly-planted ones; there are none of the complexities of land use change which new woodland creation involves; and the co-benefits (improved

biodiversity, amenity value, etc) are immediate. Measuring carbon in existing woodlands, and rewarding landowners for management to increase it, will be an essential part of a woodland carbon strategy which delivers immediate and substantial carbon benefits, alongside new woodland creation.

**Figure 4 Requests to new government**

What do we want?	How can this be achieved?	
	England	Wales
Clear leadership from the English and Welsh Parliaments	Westminster must empower Forestry Commission to take responsibility for delivering planting	Senedd must prioritise immediate planting resources whilst developing a longer term strategy
A streamlined and simplified application process	A reworking of the current system to ensure applications are dealt with fairly and in a timely manner	
A presumption in favour of productive planting	Application scoring to reflect the benefits delivered from new planting including decarbonisation, habitat improvement and timber as a resource	
Secure funding through CAP transition and beyond	Matching the available funding to the cost of delivery and ensuring that incoming government supports industry through transition	
Long-term commitment to the delivery of planting	Development of and commitment to 25-year sustainable forestry and timber plans by Westminster and the devolved administrations	
Funding schemes that support innovation	Flexibility in silvicultural mixes, tree breeding and woodland design to meet landowner objectives within the principles of the UK Forestry Standard	

## Confor launches General Election manifesto

**The document presents a simple, three-point plan to PLANT MORE TREES, MANAGE OUR WOODS BETTER and USE MORE HOME-GROWN WOOD.**

You will find a copy of the manifesto with this issue of FTN - so please share it with parliamentary candidates in your constituency. While we are heartened by the inclusion of tree planting and home-grown timber in party manifestos, it is important that the importance of the sector is reinforced at every opportunity.

Stuart Goodall, Confor's CEO, says: "This has been called the climate election and it is great to see all the main parties recognising the vital role tree planting and wood use has to play in mitigating the damaging effects of climate change.

"The manifesto is very simple, with three key points. First, a large increase in tree planting across UK is needed to start making an impact - and this will require political leadership, improved approval processes and joined-up policy. We have seen this happen in Scotland and while there are some bold commitments in the manifestos, we need a real cultural change for this to happen in England, Wales and Northern Ireland."

Confor's planting ambition, outlined in Woodland Carbon Targets, released in April, is included in the

manifesto. It calls on all parties to commit to Confor's "ambitious but achievable" targets of 30,000 hectares of new planting annually across the UK by 2025 and 40,000 ha by 2030."

Mr Goodall added; "However, the manifesto is not all about new planting. It also calls for our existing woodlands to be better-managed, to unlock their potential to deliver a wide range of benefits.

"Managing our existing woods better can deliver speedier benefits in terms of mitigating climate change more effectively through tree growth and use of wood, but also delivering wider benefits in terms of biodiversity, rural employment, recreation and much more.

"Finally, using more home-grown wood can have a positive impact on reducing the UK's forest footprint."

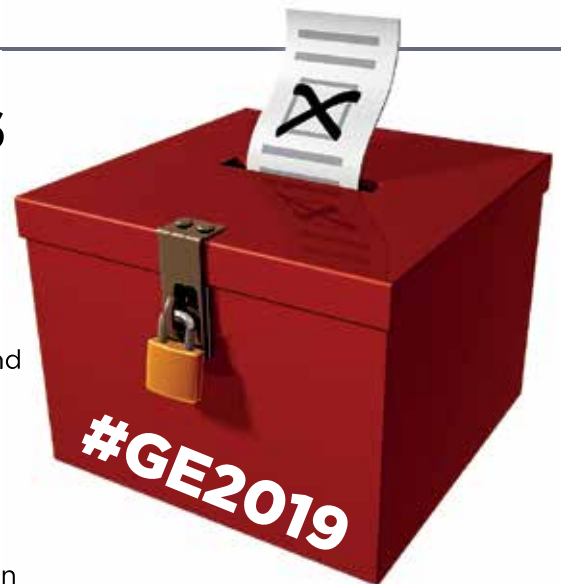
The manifesto also stresses that modern, mixed-species forestry can deliver on a whole range of economic, environmental and social agendas. It can also be found on our website under Publications, and we encourage you to share online copies with politicians and other interested parties.

If you would like more physical copies of the Confor manifesto, please email [stefanie.kaiser@confor.org.uk](mailto:stefanie.kaiser@confor.org.uk)





# Manifesto commitments to tree planting



Confor has analysed the main parties' manifestos for the General Election on 12 December. This has been described as "the climate election", with a YouGov poll identifying climate change as the second most important issue in the election for young people, after Brexit.

In recent years, Confor and others have lobbied for greater tree planting and increased wood use as a "simple, low-cost solution" to removing atmospheric carbon to reduce the damaging impacts of climate change. As a result, trees have a much higher profile in the manifestos than at previous elections. Here, we analyse what the main parties are saying about - and what it could mean.



## CONSERVATIVES Vote Blue, Go Green

The new £640m Nature for Climate fund will increase tree planting in England.

The government would work with the Devolved Administrations to triple UK tree-planting rates to 30,000 hectares every year - space for at least 30 million more trees - in line with recommendations from the independent Committee on Climate Change.

Existing woodland like the Northern Forest and Northumberland Forest would be expanded, new forests would be created across the country. Towns and cities would also benefit with more trees planted in urban areas to improve air quality.

The Nature for Climate Fund will be used to dramatically increase rates of tree-planting in England with more research into the most appropriate species to plant across the country, a scaling up the nursery sector to grow the saplings, new partnerships with landowners, and increased planting rates on sites.

Tripling tree planting rates to 30,000 hectares a year [75,000 acres] across the UK - equivalent to 46,000 football pitches.

The Government would accept the independent Climate Change Committee's recommendation to increase tree planting across the UK to 30,000 hectares a year and work with Devolved Administrations to achieve this goal. This will deliver new forests across the country, while expanding existing plans like the Northern Forest and Northumberland Forest.

**Confor says:** We welcome the greater ambition, but much more needs to be done to ensure these challenging targets are actually met - especially given the failure to plant the very modest target of 11 million trees in five years set by the previous Conservative government. The status quo has to change and that will require strong political leadership - if not, Vote Blue, Go Green is meaningless.

It is heartening the manifesto mentions scaling up the nursery sector and forging partnerships with landowners as regional partnerships are crucial to growing new forests at scale across England. The reference to working with the devolved administrations is interesting and England needs to learn from the positive experience of increased planting in Scotland. Indeed, England needs a Mackinnon-style review of processes (which helped turbo-charge planting in Scotland) to 'get tree planting done' - or we risk five more years of dither and delay.



## GREEN PARTY The Green New Deal

Plant 700 million new trees and aim for 50% of all farms to be engaged in agroforestry by 2030. We will encourage the planting of more trees in more towns and cities, including apple, nut and other crop trees than can produce food. The new woodland, when fully grown, will store carbon, provide home-grown timber and create new wildlife-rich environments. We will support farmers to diversify their

incomes through new forest management.

Introduce new support for small-scale family farms and for new entrants to farming. This support, including increased security of tenure for farmers, will help develop sustainable farming methods. Farmers will be supported to adopt diverse uses for agricultural land and buildings, such as fitting solar panels on farm buildings and planting orchards and other woodland. The incorporation of trees into farming will provide new crops such as fruits and nuts, as well as timber, linking forestry and schools to teach young people about the urgency, severity and scientific basis of the climate and environmental crises, and to ensure youth voices are heard on climate issues.

Costs: Research and development for farming & forestry: £1 billion; Tree and forest planting: £0.7 billion

**Confor says:** the commitment to plant 700 million trees by 2030 (about 35,000 hectares a year) is ambitious and like the Lib Dem target, is closely aligned to what Confor suggests is achievable. It shows the growing consensus among the environmental lobby that trees have a crucial role to play in tackling the climate emergency, also supported by Friends of the Earth's ambition to double UK tree cover, and includes recognition of the benefit of more home-grown timber.

The Greens also want a much greater emphasis on integrated farming and forestry, a policy we are pleased to support as part of a more sustainable and diversified approach to rural land use after Brexit. The call for more zero carbon homes, while not specifically promising to increase the use of timber in construction, offers real opportunities for building with wood.

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## LABOUR It's time for Real Change

We will embark on an ambitious programme of tree planting, with both forestry and native woodland species.

We will ensure our NHS becomes a net zero-carbon service with an NHS Forest of one million trees.

We will introduce a zero-carbon homes standard for all new homes.

**Confor says:** We welcome the recognition that ambitious tree planting is needed and that productive forestry is part of the answer. Labour's 2017 manifesto mentioned planting "a million trees of native species", which was disappointingly modest. Having engaged with Labour closely since then, we are encouraged it has raised its ambition - though it would have been positive to put targets behind the ambition to show Labour recognises tree planting's role in tackling the climate emergency and provide for future accountability. There is also a missed chance to link its green jobs agenda to rural economic opportunities offered by enhanced tree cover.

An NHS Forest of one million trees is an eye-catching proposal which recognises the positive link between trees and positive physical and mental health.

We want the new zero carbon homes standard to ensure much more home-grown timber is used in construction.



## LIBERAL DEMOCRATS Our plan to plant 60m trees a year

A Liberal Democrat government will plant 60 million trees every year, increasing UK forest cover by 1 million hectares by 2045.

Our plan to tackle the climate emergency will involve the largest tree-planting programme in UK history. Planting trees is one of the most viable ways of removing carbon from the atmosphere and is vital for achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions.

Reforestation will have other benefits

such as helping reverse our declining biodiversity, reducing air pollution and improving public spaces. It will also increase the use of timber products in construction, which capture carbon and reduce construction emissions.

*From Liberal Democrats manifesto: Combat climate change, and benefit nature and people by coordinating the planting of 60 million trees a year and introducing requirements for the greater use of sustainably harvested wood in construction.*

**Confor says:** The Woodland Creation Targets we published this year, suggest 40,000 hectares of new woodland should be planted every year by 2030 to make the contribution needed to reduce atmospheric carbon. The Lib Dem pledge to increase UK forest cover by 1 million ha by 2045 equates to 40,000 ha a year for 25 years - in line with the Confor target.

This is very positive, but the same caveats apply as to the Conservative targets - processes must be improved and all agencies must pull together to make it happen. However, if the Lib Dems hold the balance of power in a new government, we look forward to them pressing for these ambitious targets. As a staunch, pro-EU and Stop Brexit party, they will be aware UK forest cover (13 per cent) is only one-third of the EU average - and that this has to change.

Plans to increase the use of timber in construction are very welcome and we will press to make sure this is home-grown timber whenever possible, reducing the needs for imports.



## PLAID CYMRU Wales, it's us.

**Increasing Woodland:** To make our contribution to tackling climate change we need to substantially increase the acreage of Welsh forestry. Since Natural Resources Wales took over responsibility for forestry in 2013, new woodland planted has been less than 1,000 hectares a year, and in some years has been below 500 hectares. We should aim for a minimum planting rate of 2,000 hectares a year from 2020, a target recommended by the UK Climate Change Committee.

We will examine the case for establishing a dedicated forestry

organization to undertake the urgent task of addressing the Climate Emergency by planting more trees. We will ensure that this policy is closely connected with agri-environment incentives for farmers. Increasing our native tree woodlands not only has a major part to play in terms of carbon capture, but offers many other benefits including flood control, providing wildlife habitat, improving the quality of our landscape, and creating useful timber products.

**Confor says:** It's great Plaid Cymru recognises much more needs to be done to increase tree planting rates as a means of fighting climate change. There's a recognition Wales has been languishing behind other parts of the UK on tree planting. The measures put forward closely align with Confor's vision for forestry in Wales, though it will set itself up to fail on planting targets if only 'native tree woodlands' are to be created, as well as miss the opportunity to create 'useful timber products'.



## SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY

We will press for an increase in new woodland creation, working towards a target of 60 million trees planted annually in the UK by 2025, with 30 million of these in Scotland to help tackle the Climate Emergency and to support biodiversity and rural employment. We will share Scotland's success in this area in an effort to drive up planting rates across the UK."

**Confor says:** This is a very positive statement and it is encouraging the SNP is keen to share the successful Scottish tree planting formula with the rest of the UK. While some improvement is still required, the progress made has been based on a structured approach to streamlining processes around application and approval (the Mackinnon review), strong political leadership and joined-up policy - with both tree planting and increased wood use linked to wider policy, notably climate change targets. The real key is the strong relationship between industry and government and its agencies in a shared national endeavour to plant more trees, and to work together in future to use more home-grown wood.





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# New awards for Confor dinner 2020

**New awards for leadership, innovation and communication are to be presented at Confor's expanded Forestry Dinner & Awards Evening in February 2020.**

The new prizes join the well-established Dedicated Service to Forestry Award as the programme is expanded to reflect the growth of the industry.

Confor CEO Stuart Goodall said: "The 2019 dinner was a great success, the forestry and wood sector is buoyant and we want to reflect that by recognising excellence. The Dedicated Service to Forestry Award is the premier industry award, but we

wanted to reward excellence more widely across the sector. We are delighted that we are able to award three new prizes, thanks to great support from our sponsors."

Mr Goodall urged the industry to make nominations for the new awards to ensure they go to truly worthy winners at the dinner, at The Sheraton Grand Hotel in Edinburgh on Tuesday, 25 February.

Fergus Ewing MSP, Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy for the Scottish Government, is guest of honour at the dinner, alongside Sir Harry Studholme, who is stepping down as chair of Forestry Commission.



## The three new awards

### Future Forestry Leader Award

*Sponsored by James Jones & Sons Ltd*

For an individual with outstanding skills, who has the potential to be a leader in the forestry and timber sector - someone showing initiative, passion and making a real difference to the sector.

### Changing Attitudes Award

*Sponsored by Scottish Woodlands Ltd*

For an individual or business promoting the forestry and wood sector in a positive and impactful way - through personal engagement, campaigning or communication, social media or other ways.

### Innovation and Research Award

*Sponsored by Forestry Commission and Forestry & Land Scotland*

For a business or individual delivering successful innovation and/or research which has clearly demonstrated greater productivity or efficiency in the forestry and wood industry.

## GET INVOLVED

If you wish to nominate someone for one of these Awards, please send the following details via email to [stefanie.kaiser@confor.org.uk](mailto:stefanie.kaiser@confor.org.uk) no later than 28 January 2020.

- Name of person nominated
- Organisation and job title of person nominated
- Which award you are nominating them for
- Reason for nomination (summarise in 150-200 words, adding any relevant links if necessary)
- Name, mobile number and email address of person nominating.

For full details, see the Latest News and Events pages of the Confor website [www.confor.org.uk](http://www.confor.org.uk)

# New plant passporting arrangements start soon

Members are reminded that the new arrangements for plant passporting will be introduced on 14 December 2019. Plant passports will be required to accompany the movement of all conifer roundwood and roundwood of Sweet Chestnut and Plane in the UK, together with bulk bark, brash and wood chipped on harvesting sites. Christmas trees over three metres and decorative foliage from such trees are also covered by the new controls.

Sawdust, wood chips and slabwood with bark are currently considered to be a lower risk and are not expected to require Plant Passports.

Companies responsible for issuing Plant Passports will have to

become Registered and Approved Professional Operators. Such companies can now apply to the Forestry Commission for provisional authorisation. Companies that are already FC Registered Forestry Traders will be able to use their current registration reference, until a new system is introduced by Defra, which will then provide a new RAPO number. The requirement to demonstrate competence can be best met by completing the on-line learning resource which FC have developed and retaining a copy of the test score.

Due to the General Election, Forestry Commission are in Purdah and are not authorised to answer any detailed questions on plant passporting at this time.



After Purdah, please contact Ian Murgatroyd at FC, tel: 07767 251379, e-mail: [ian.murgatroyd@forestry-commission.gov.uk](mailto:ian.murgatroyd@forestry-commission.gov.uk)

Read all you need to know about plant passporting in your print copy of FTN October or online [www.confor.org.uk/news/ftn-magazine](http://www.confor.org.uk/news/ftn-magazine)





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# FTN in 2019

FTN is mostly a feature magazine – even back issues make for an interesting read, as a lot of the articles are not time-sensitive.

Remember that back issues and individual articles are available on our website – you can conveniently browse by topic, country, or keyword!

## Themes this year

### Industry funding

Confor is facilitating the process of creating an industry contribution mechanism to finance our sector's progress in the future. In 2019, we have started to introduce the concept to readers and have presented case studies of funds in other countries.

### Climate change

This has been an ongoing theme this year, and will continue to be a thread that underpins most of our communications. What could be more important to us as a society at the moment?

### Forestry century

**February:** A perspective from processor Charles Ransford and Son (below)

**April:** Wyevale Nurseries talk about “sowing the seed for the next 100 years”

**June:** Grey squirrels damaging UK timber

**August:** Taking the long view – Francis Fulford gives a landowners perspective

## FORESTRY & TIMBER NEWS

February 2019 Issue 91



### FEBRUARY

**Theme article:** Of brews and beasts: Stakeholder engagement

**Features:** Forest management and Diversification, Human Resources

## FORESTRY & TIMBER NEWS

April 2019 Issue 92



### APRIL

**Theme article:** Timber in construction – is the UK forestry sector up to the challenge?

**Features:** Timber in Construction, Skills and Careers

## FORESTRY & TIMBER NEWS

June 2019 Issue 93



### JUNE

**Theme article:** Do we have the right data to support a growing data?

**Features:** Technology and Innovation, Firewood

## FORESTRY & TIMBER NEWS

August 2019 Issue 94



### AUGUST

**Theme article:** The Forestry workforce of the future

**Features:** Forestry investment

## FORESTRY & TIMBER NEWS

October 2019 Issue 95



### OCTOBER

**Theme article:** Biosecurity and trade – strategy to secure forestry's future

**Features:** Environmental Innovation

## FORESTRY & TIMBER NEWS

December 2019 Issue 96



### DECEMBER

**Theme article:** Planting - delivering planting targets in England and Wales

**Features:** Professional services, Wood science



## GET INVOLVED AND WIN

Give us your feedback and win a [#ThinkGlobalPlantLocal](#) thermal mug

- Which was your favourite cover in 2019?
- What content did you find most interesting in 2019?
- What have we missed out on in 2019?
- Do you use QR codes?

stefanie.kaiser@confor.org.uk



In 2020, we would like to trial using QR codes again, to link our print content to our digital resources.



# This was 2019

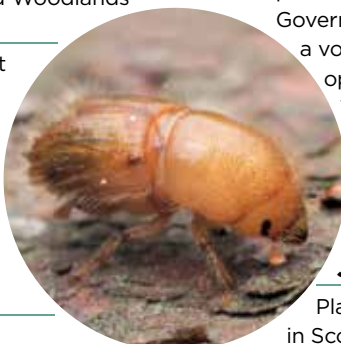
## JANUARY

Merger between Confor and UKFPA comes into effect.

Woodland Carbon Guarantee Fund announced in England

Consultation on Protecting and Enhancing England's Trees and Woodlands is launched

Measures to protect the country against the larger eight-toothed European spruce bark beetle (*Ips typographus*) are introduced following an outbreak in Kent



## FEBRUARY

Guy Watt wins Confor's prestigious annual award for Dedicated Service to Forestry for 2019

Coalition calls for Northeast Forestry Investment Zone

Scotland launches Forestry Strategy that calls for tree planting, woodland creation and maintenance to become a "shared national endeavour"

## MARCH

Confor steps up its 2019 focus on climate change with feature articles in The Herald and the Scotsman

## APRIL

Confor sets climate change target of a total of 40,000 hectare of new plantings every year by 2030 in effort to urge Government to #ThinkGlobalPlantLocal



Forestry Commission becomes an England-only body

The Forestry Commission agency that manages the Public Forest Estate changes its name to Forestry England

## MAY

Confor holds a successful and informative members event on "The practicalities of the management of European Protected Species in a woodland situation"

Confor leads a forestry and wood processing delegation to meet the Welsh Government - after the industry delivered a vote of no-confidence in the timber operations of Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

CCC publishes report Net Zero - the UK's contribution to stopping global warming

## JUNE

Planting target of 10,000 ha 'smashed' in Scotland.

Confor holds a successful and informative members event on ash dieback and hosts Katharina Schwanda on the Austrian experience of ash die-back and in particular the impact of Honey Fungus

## JULY

CCC report Reducing UK emissions - 2019 progress report to Parliament published on 10 July

Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal: Plans for a Forestry Innovation Centre covering the north of England and south of Scotland have been unveiled as part of a major funding package worth almost £400m

Tighter restrictions on oak imports are put in place

Confor pressure secures doubled funds for forestry in Wales

**EVENT:** Forestry presence at Royal Welsh Show bigger than ever

## AUGUST

Confor presses forestry case with the new ministerial team around Zac Goldsmith MP

**EVENT:** Forestry Expo becomes key forestry event in Scotland

The Woodland Carbon Fund is extended with an additional planting season

The new timber plant passporting arrangement is trialled in Kent in the control of *Ips typographus*

## SEPTEMBER

Scottish Government allocates additional £5m to increase tree planting to 12,000ha of new woodland in 2019/20

**EVENT:** Confor Woodland Show 2019 attracts rave reviews

Confor welcomes Scottish whole-farm carbon accounting

First phase of Northumberland Forest announced

FC publishes 2019 Forestry Statistics

Zac Goldsmith becomes new 'Forestry minister' (Minister of State at DEFRA)

## OCTOBER

Cornwall Council proposes to create an additional 8000 hectares of forest cover by 2030

Confor calls for case study for major report on Biodiversity in working forests

Brexit delayed until 31 January and general elections announced



## NOVEMBER

Zac Goldsmith (above) issues a strong statement reassuring the forestry industry that there will be future public support for planting trees.

Confor urges political parties to commit to ambitious tree planting targets in their General Election manifestos

Woodland Carbon Guarantee Fund is launched.

## DECEMBER

General election on 12 December

New timber plant passporting arrangement comes into effect on 14 December

David and Dorothy Sulman retire from Confor at the end of the year

# Workington supersize

The Confor team (right) recently enjoyed a fascinating visit to member site Iggesund Paperboard in Workington – about as far north and west as it's possible to go in England.

**Stuart Goodall** reports.

The Workington site is strategically located to a port and plentiful supplies of fresh water that are a crucial element of the process to produce 200,000 tonnes of paperboard a year under the market leading brand name Incada.

The area had been home to iron and steel mills, so investment in a new manufacturing process in the 1960s has helped secure relatively well-paid jobs in a geographically remote location. Originally Thames Board Mills, Workington has been producing high quality folding boxboard since 1967.

We were welcomed to the site by Gavin Davidson, who as well as being a Board member of Confor is Forestry General Manager and Fibre Buyer at Iggesund Paperboard, and our entertaining tour guide for the

day Phil Baggley, Technical Service Manager.

The Workington mill (not to be referred to as a factory!) is an integrated pulp and paperboard mill. Since 2013, it has been powered entirely by bioenergy, producing around 50Mw of electricity and 150Mw of steam. A further 7Mw (approximately) can be exported to the grid to coincide with periods when electricity demand is high and it's relied upon as base-load energy for times when, for example, it's frosty and the wind isn't blowing.

The site consumes one million tonnes of virgin fibre a year, with two-thirds of that being utilised in the biomass boiler. The feedstock for the site is diverse, including small roundwood, sawmill co-product and willow coppice. For the latter, Iggesund enter into agreements with lo-

cal farmers to guarantee to buy their crop for the predicted life-span of the biomass boiler.

The remaining volume is Spruce fibre in the form of roundwood and sawmill chips that are used in the production of Folding Box Board (FBB). Iggesund Forestry have been pioneers in transporting roundwood by sea dating back to over thirty years. The material is shipped from







“

The size and complexity of the equipment required to produce the board is quite staggering



a variety of locations up the west coast of Scotland and as far north as Caithness and round to Aberdeenshire arriving at the nearby Port of Workington.

Workington's sister mill in Sweden (Iggesund is part of the Holmen group) produces Solid Bleached Board (SBB) and Phil explained the key differences between the two products and the various other forms of board that is popularly produced in Europe and globally. These embrace everything from 'utilitarian', lower-quality board that is used for items like cereal boxes to the FBB and SBB that Iggesund produce that ends up as packaging for medicines or whisky - neither of which were on offer through our tour...

The size and complexity of the equipment required to produce the board is quite staggering as is the many interconnected stages that the fibre passes through before it emerges as clean white sheets measuring 5.5 metres across wound onto massive rolls at typically 40 tonnes per hour. These are then cut to size and shipped to their customers in either reel form or sheet form, depending upon the type of print

process they employ. Around 60% of Incada is exported.

Repeated multi-million pound investments have been made to ensure that the mill is competitive in an international market. The process is linear, meaning addressing bottlenecks can significantly improve output, uptime and quality.

The process uses Sitka spruce because customers demand the quality that the longer fibres and the whiteness produce - spruce needs less chemical to whiten. Timber is ideally 'hot-harvested' as it's more efficient to start the process with green wood.

UK grown Sitka spruce is fundamental to the manufacture of Incada. Logs and chips are reduced to pulp in a mechanical process that retains Lignin. The combination of Lignin and the Spruce fibres facilitate the production of a light weight, high performing boxboard. Since customers are always looking for greater quality, consistency and value, Iggesund are committed to sourcing from UK forests in the pursuit of long term, sustainable manufacture. With the global switch away from plastic based packaging and fossil fuels they are particularly well placed to face future challenges

It is always important for the Confor team, especially those who spend nearly all their time in the office, to see and experience some of the day-to-day work of the businesses operating in our sector, and everyone left hugely impressed by the professionalism of the people we met, and the welcome they provided us with.

It also demonstrated the continuing reliance of significant parts of the UK's wood processing industry on Sitka spruce and its superior performance as a manufacturing feedstock for high value products - products that are a great advert for our industry.

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



A short video on The Workington Mill provides an excellent overview of the process.

[www.iggesund.com/about/global-presence/the-workington-mill](http://www.iggesund.com/about/global-presence/the-workington-mill)



## Galbraith appoints new head of forestry

Land and forestry consultancy Galbraith continues to expand across Scotland and into the north of England, following its merger with Land Factor in April 2019. Newly appointed partner, Athole McKillop, joined Galbraith from April and has now stepped into

the role of head of forestry. Athole is a previous chairman and remains a board member of Confor. He has a wealth of specialist forestry and rural land management experience across Scotland and northern England.

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

## Wyevale formalises plant health expertise

Kyle Ross from Hereford-based Wyevale Nurseries has successfully completed a competency exam to become an Associate on the Plant Health Professional Register last October. He joined the register organised by the Royal Society of Biology, which aims to develop plant health skills and create a community for plant health professionals.

The 25-year-old explained: "I hope that this achievement will show our customers and other horticultural business' that, at Wyevale Nurseries, we are 100% dedicated to plant health.

"I will use this platform to enhance our already robust biosecurity protocols even further and develop the plant health skills of our on-site staff. I would highly recommend other growers in the UK to have a representative on the Plant Health Professional Register if possible."

The Plant Health Professional Register demonstrates skills against the GB Strategy for Plant Health and Biosecurity and encourages continued professional development in plant health. There are three levels of the register - Associate, Registered and Senior.

[www.wyevalenurseries.co.uk](http://www.wyevalenurseries.co.uk)



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## Timberwolf joins Made in Britain initiative

Timberwolf has been recognised as a member of the Made in Britain organisation.

Accredited to businesses selling goods that have been manufactured or have undergone a final substantial change in Britain before sale, Made in Britain is the official collective mark for British manufacturers.

From its purpose-built manufacturing facility in Stowmarket, Suffolk, Timberwolf specialises in the design and manufacture of professional wood chippers for the arboricultural and horticultural sectors.

For over 30 Years, Timberwolf has manufactured industry defining commercial wood chippers to meet the needs of the arboriculture industry, promoting and embodying British engineering and manufacturing excellence.

An innovative business ap-

proach is at the heart of Timberwolf's success and longevity and is clearly demonstrated by its position as the only UK manufacturer in its sector to use a flow line system, increasing flexibility and efficiency through production.

As products move down the production line they can be adapted at short notice according to the needs of customers. A high standard of manufacture is maintained through an in-house Quality Control department, ensuring all components are fitted correctly to the machines as they are assembled down the production line. The change to a flow line system has revolutionised Timberwolf's output, improving production capability from 20 machines a month to 30 machines per week, an increase of 640%.

[www.timberwolf-uk.com](http://www.timberwolf-uk.com)



## Egger awarded ISO 38200

EGGER implements a new, globally valid standard for the transmission of information along the supply chain of wood and wood-based products.

With the ISO 38200, the International Organization for Standardisation (ISO) has created another crucial internationally recognised and globally valid standard. It regulates the transfer of information along the entire product chain of wood

and wood-based products. The traceability of wood or wood-based products is made more transparent, and proof of origin and legality is maintained through continuous monitoring of the supply chain. In addition to general aspects of control and inspection, the standard also categorises social criteria, environmental criteria, and DDS requirements.

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



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# Closing of a chapter in the forest products sector

The impending conclusion of the Brexit saga is not the only seismic shift occurring in the United Kingdom at present, *write Rob Gordon (John Gordon & Son) and Gavid Davidson (Iggesund Forestry)*. Within the forest products Industry, the tectonic plates are about to move, as the curtain is brought down on the distinguished careers of David and Dorothy Sulman, who after a lifetime of service, have decided it's time to retire and turn to the next chapter of their lives.

Over the last quarter of a century, David and Dorothy have been the face for many, of the forestry sector. Initially this has been through the United Kingdom Softwood Sawmillers Association, which developed into the United Kingdom Forest Products Association, before latterly coming together with the Confederation of Forest Industries. Along the way, this most talented of duos have also found time to represent the interests of numerous other organisations including the Scottish Timber Trade Association.

It is perhaps in the two decades at the helm of UKFPA that their reputation for professionalism and service has been established and their corresponding legacy preserved. Supported at all times by Dorothy in her secretarial and administrative role, David as Executive Director, has

engaged to great effect with decision makers in the corridors of power at Westminster, Holyrood and the Senedd, winning their trust by dint of his strong grasp of the subject matter in hand and how it related to the forest industry.

Through his encyclopedic knowledge of all things timber, David has been particularly effective in forming positive relationships with regulators such as the HSE and EPA/SEPA, and in so doing, always protecting the commercial interests of the members and the industry he and Dorothy have served so diligently.

Whether through attending the regular regional meetings held throughout the UK, or by simply picking up the phone, members have always been looked after extremely well by the Sulmans, with their approachable informative style ensuring that no question or query is considered too technical or insignificant to elicit a helpful response.

**A lifetime of service: David and Dorothy Sulman**



While annual subscription income at UKFPA would only just amount to a six figure sum, David and Dorothy were consistently able to demonstrate great value for money for members, through their thrift and high degree of personal responsibility, demonstrated year in year out. In so doing the organisation consistently 'punched above its weight'.

Despite the obvious time pressures for everyone in the modern business world, Dorothy was excellent at maintaining a healthy mix of social events to set the calendar by. The December Christmas meal at the George and Dragon in Clifton was a particular highlight, as was the annual autumn day out at Ludlow Races, which saw already hard up members of the timber trade leave with their wallets a little lighter, but suitably enriched from a day of laughter and fellowship.

As the UK forest industry finally appears to be getting the economic, social and environmental recognition it so richly deserves, it is only right to record the debt of gratitude it owes to the combined contributions of David and Dorothy Sulman in setting it on this path.

While the old adage that no one is irreplaceable rings true for every generation, the Sulmans leave a huge void to fill. We will not see their likes again.

## As the Sulmans retire, their member services will continue

It is a feature of the forestry and timber industry that many people spend most, or even their entire, career in the sector and, in doing so, they can make a significant contribution to the sector's success - this is particularly true of David and Dorothy Sulman.

Their considerable knowledge and experience have proven invaluable on many occasions and, as it's been said to me a number of times, if David and Dorothy don't know the answer to a question, they know someone who does!

I was very aware of the high regard in which David and Dorothy were held prior

to the merger with Confor and that fact has been reinforced in the time since. I have welcomed the opportunity to work with David, in particular to call on his experience and knowledge when there have been thorny and important issues to deal with, as well as tapping into his wider knowledge of our industry.

The industry has come a long way since the formation of the UK Forest Products Association in 1997, and David and Dorothy can look back with a sense of pride in having contributed to that journey.

Confor is already working to identify

a suitable successor and to ensure that the important services to members that they provide continue. I hope that by the time you receive this magazine we will have something ready to announce to members.

In the meantime, I would like to take this opportunity to thank David and Dorothy for their hard work during their time with Confor and, on my part, to acknowledge their valuable contribution over so many years to the industry. And, of course, to wish David and Dorothy a well-deserved and very enjoyable retirement.

*Stuart Goodall*



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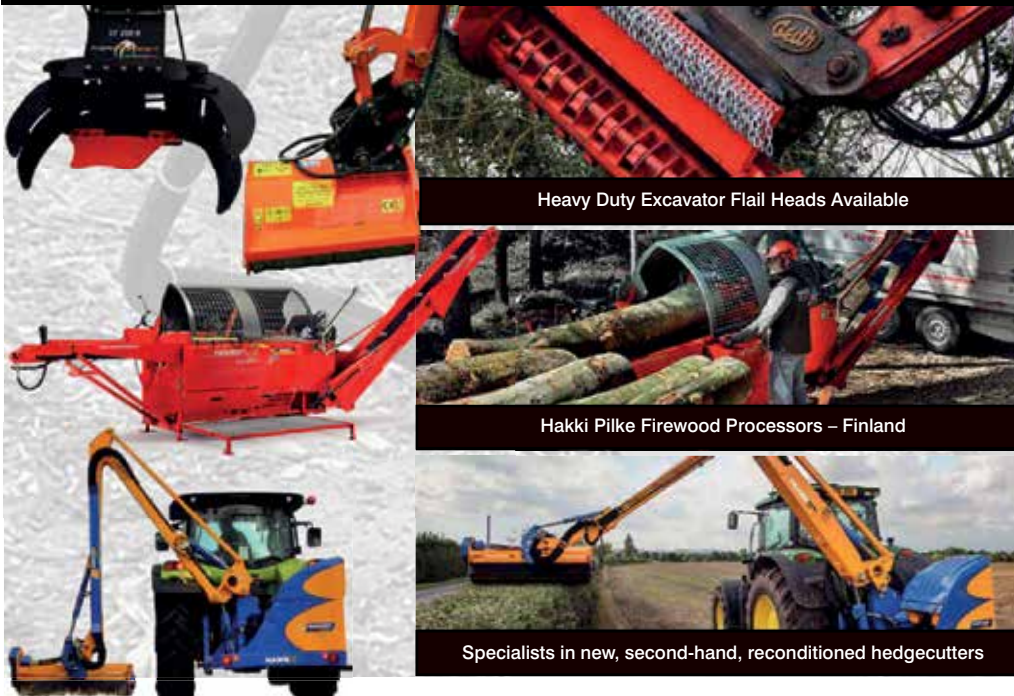
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PAUL NEMETH

# QA &



with **John Dye**,  
President of the  
Timber Packaging &  
Pallet Confederation  
(TIMCON)

### **What key changes do you anticipate will Brexit bring for businesses in the British packaging and palleting sector?**

The biggest possible change for the industry and wooden packaging materials (WPM) users would be the fact that the UK will no longer be part of the current EU Plant Health Standard ISPM 15 exemption. This means any WPM being used to export goods/products to an EU country would have to be ISPM 15-compliant (heat treated) and this would also be the same for EU goods coming into the UK.

As in many other businesses, the lack of clear guidelines is causing much frustration. To prepare for a scenario where heat-treatment facilities were needed immediately following Brexit, for example, we would require significant capital investment.

As TIMCON has previously reported, the risk to trees and forests from the flow of WPM within the EU is extremely low -

and there is no reason why this will change overnight on the day Brexit happens. Therefore, plant health inspection agencies in the UK (the Forestry Commission) and many EU countries have advised that they will continue to consider the risks as they do now - as 'low' - and will not divert resources away from inspecting higher-risk goods in order to check WPM.

Frustratingly, WPM manufacturers cannot advise users that it will "probably be OK" to continue to ship products to and from the EU on non-compliant WPM - because after Brexit the rules will by default be that they must be compliant.

This is by far the major change.

### **How are companies in the sector future-proofing their business?**

The former Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and now Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Rt Hon Michael Gove, recently hailed >>



As in many other businesses, the lack of clear guidelines is causing much frustration



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[www.rtsforestry.co.uk](http://www.rtsforestry.co.uk)

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In joining RTS the successful candidates will develop their forestry careers within a company where individual talents and skills are fully recognised and rewarded. We will want you to convince us that you are ready, keen and able to join and contribute to our dynamic and progressive company.

The position is based within our Head Office in Crieff providing a service to clients through Highland Perthshire to Oban/Fort William. Applications from those living within the working area with an element of remote/home working would be considered.

For the above position the salary package will be commensurate with the individual's experience and their potential to quickly develop and contribute to the continuing success of the company. The company will provide a competitive salary, company vehicle, pension contribution and participation in the company's annual bonus scheme.

To find out more about this exciting role please write or email (enclosing a CV) to: Harry Wilson, Director, RTS Ltd, Earnside House, Muthill Road, Crieff, Perthshire PH7 4DH. Email: [harry.wilson@rts.ltd.uk](mailto:harry.wilson@rts.ltd.uk)

Closing date: 13th December. Interviews will be conducted on an ongoing basis. The position may be filled before the closing date if an exceptional candidate is identified.

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## Forestry machinery specialists

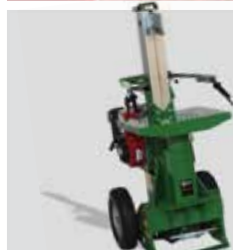
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>> the work that the WPM industry led by TIMCON has been doing “as an excellent example of good practice” and added that he wished that other policy areas could adopt similarly pragmatic approaches.

A working group has been formed of representatives of the major pallet pooling companies, WPM manufacturers, reconditioned pallet businesses, Forestry Commission and DEFRA. This gives a platform for the industry to explain the potential challenges facing the industry and users, and the importance of WPM to people in the UK – particularly the fact that the vast majority of pooling pallets bring in food and drink, so any issues affecting these could, for example, affect quantities of goods on supermarket shelves.

The work done by this working group has put the industry and the challenges much higher up DEFRA’s and the UK Government’s list of priorities. Pallets have even been discussed during a session of Parliament.

The working group produced a joint statement (a first for industry and the UK government) explaining the situation; this led to a European statement being released by the European Federation of Wooden Pallet & Packaging Manufacturers (FEFPEB).

#### Other work being done:

- Many manufacturers have been increasing their heat-treating capacities with new investment in equipment
- Increasing the capacity of current equipment - moving to 24/7 shift patterns, for example, which in many cases more than doubles capacity without major investment.
- In Wales, a scheme has been set up for small- and medium-sized business to seek grant monies to invest in increasing heat-treatment equipment.
- Work has been carried out in conjunction with the Forestry Commission, the UK Wood Packaging Material Marking Programme advisory council, TIMCON and the major pooling companies, allowing the use of heat-treated repair boards. This again will go a long way to boost the availability of compliant pallets.

#### How is Brexit going to affect the timber supply to the packaging and pallet sector and how are companies responding?

Thankfully, we do not foresee any issues regarding supplies of timber. For many years, additional volumes have been sourced from the Baltic States as required, and we see no reason for these supplies



## TIMCON... will continue to build links with other organisations and regions

dropping. With the current slowdown in demands on their production - due to the falloff in demand from China and mainland Europe – they will continue to look to supply.

Price, of course, is the unknown factor following the outcome of Brexit.

#### With the UK trading from outside of the EU in the future, how will regulations on quality and biosecurity change for the pallet and packing sector?

With regards quality, we do not see any changes in current standards.

With regards regulations, the major change will be regarding ISPM 15 exemption (see answer to question 1).

Going forward, TIMCON will remain a prominent and active member of FEFPEB and continue to work closely with the other member country organisations. We see this as being very important as any changes made in Brussels to packaging regulations and legislation will continue to affect UK businesses.

#### How will Brexit affect the organisation structure and business strategy of TIMCON, considering that the organisation represents businesses in

#### both the UK and Ireland?

TIMCON has for many years had members from both northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, including WPM manufacturers, sawmills and Coilte. Indeed, two of the current TIMCON executive board work for Irish WPM businesses.

Going forward, the TIMCON board will look to continue to grow our Irish membership, which we believe can only benefit the industry. There may be political differences we have to work to as nations, and in accordance to the outcome of Brexit, but we believe the sharing of information and the good working business practises will continue.

TIMCON also has members from the Baltic States and the EU and will continue to build links with other organisations and regions. We have close relationships with international associations such as the NWPCA in the US and the CWPCA in Canada and were one of the founders of the newly formed Global Wood Packaging Forum, made up with representatives from Europe (including UK), USA, Canada, China, Korea, Brazil, Malaysia, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia; again we see this as being a positive for the industry.



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# Government channels £50m into Woodland Carbon Guarantee scheme

An effective financial incentive to significantly boost tree planting?

On 4 November, government launched a £50million Woodland Carbon Guarantee scheme to encourage farmers and landowners to plant more trees and help tackle climate change. Successful participants will be offered the option to sell Woodland Carbon Units to the

government over 35 years at a guaranteed price set by auction, providing new income for land managers who help businesses compensate for their carbon emissions.

This is great news, but what could be the wider implications on woodland

creation, and the emerging forest carbon market? Within the wider context of climate change policy, how effective is this financial incentive to give planting in the UK – in particular in England – the boost it needs? Two of our members give their perspective.

## Our members comment

### John Lockhart

Chairman Lockhart Garratt Ltd

It is excellent to see an initiative coming forward that aims to fairly recognise the real value of the carbon sequestration that will be secured by the creation of new woodlands. This new guarantee is very much a starting point and so we hope to see a resulting stimulation of the market. However, the success of the scheme will depend on the levels of funding that can be secured, which will need to recognise the alternative revenue opportunities that can be secured from the land and the cash flow and timing

requirements associated with a conversion to a long-term investment in forestry, including the validation and certifications costs associated with carbon.

One critical issue will be the risk of excluding woodland supported by the Woodland Carbon Guarantee from other payments, possibly through the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS), for the wider suite of public goods they will deliver, such as air and water quality, recreation, flood alleviation, landscape and biodiversity.

Undoubtedly, investors and companies looking to mitigate their carbon emissions, see real value in locally based woodland

creation for the whole suite of public benefits it delivers and as such it must be hoped that the Woodland Carbon Guarantee would see real shift in the expectation of value for locally secured carbon offsets.

We are still at early days, but we are also seeing a real appetite for new woodland creation, to mitigate development impacts, both for carbon and more widely. If the Woodland Carbon Guarantee is able to establish a baseline of value for woodland carbon it is hoped that this would see a real shift in the woodland carbon market in the UK.

### James Hepburne

Director of Forest Carbon Ltd

I am hesitant to comment before the first auction has taken place and we can see what volume is offered and what price is achieved (if indeed this information will be made public).

But I am prepared to say that I am not pleased about this government intervention in an emerging market for the following reasons:

The Woodland Carbon Code (WCC), and indeed this voluntary market itself, owe their existence to the initiative and 13 years of hard work by our business, Forest Carbon Ltd.

The UK's Clean Growth Strategy commits the government to "create a stronger and more attractive domestic offset market that will encourage more businesses to support cost-effective emissions reductions, such as through planting trees". We see no evidence of this action.

We now have mandatory carbon reporting for 12,000 UK businesses but no obligation, or even encouragement, for businesses to offset as indicated in the Strategy.

Even without government action, 2019 has seen a rapid increase in demand from businesses to support woodland creation (through the purchase of woodland carbon credits), especially in the south of England. As a result, transaction prices (in the carbon market) are beginning to rise. This is why we believe the timing of this initiative is inept. It will not raise the voluntary market traded price. Only sustained private sector demand will do that.

This is a voluntary market so businesses are not obliged to buy. If the price of English domestic offsets rises beyond what they consider affordable, or the government buys up most of the available supply, they have a choice:

- Buy from Scotland where supply is plentiful and the price will be lower

- Buy overseas verified carbon credits where the price is lower
- Do nothing.

Government could greatly improve planting rates in England by following Scotland's example and introducing a more welcoming and workable grant scheme without spending yet more money and imposing further administrative burden on farm businesses. Achieving registration, validation and successive verifications under the WCC is no small or inexpensive matter. Forest carbon does all this for them and pays for it. Government should allow the WCC to flourish by stimulating demand. This is how markets work, not by this heavy-handed intervention.

If the Guarantee is successful in driving up woodland creation by land owners who are prepared to wait for a long time for their money I will be as pleased as anyone. But this will not help those who need cash up-front to enable them to cross the threshold.

# Taking a specialised approach to forest machine finance

by **Gordon Larson,**  
**EFT Finance**

The forestry market has long been recognised as something of a ‘perfect storm’ for anyone trying to secure or offer funding. It is a widely underserved market from mainstream lenders as many just do not understand how the market and the industry works.

Firstly, the machinery is expensive in comparison to other industries’ essentials – a brand new harvester from any of the leading brands will cost more than £400,000 with ease, but a groundcare contractor will generally have change from £100,000 after buying a new excavator. That price tag can put lenders off immediately if they don’t understand the industry and the earning potential for the machinery.

Then there is the job they do.

Lenders like to lend on assets which they can touch, feel, and repossess if need be, and that they know where they will be at any given time. A forestry machine tends to live a hard life – outside all the time, often in difficult conditions, and if they ever need to be located, it will take some finding.

Paying cash and buying a machine outright from the start is always an option, but there most likely there aren’t many forestry players in the UK which have access to up to half a million in cash; therefore, the second-hand market often becomes the first port of call. This of course comes with restrictions of its own, but it can be a useful option for those who want to keep their costs down and could not quite stomach paying a high six-figure sum for something that does not boast five bedrooms, two reception rooms, double garage, and an impressive

outlook in a popular locale.

Even for those who look first in the second-hand trade, is paying cash always the best option? Almost every business in the UK has a common first problem: cash flow. This is particularly so in an industry such as forestry, where income can be seasonal and affected by a variety of external factors.

It is those eccentricities of the marketplace in which we operate – the seasonal and often cyclical nature of incomes; reliance on other industries; influence of political factors on the industry such as weakness of the Pound and import conditions – which means that a specialised and individual approach is not just preferred, but essential for building a sustainable model for operating in forestry. Even something as simple and becoming commonplace like a VAT deferral or a seasonal payment



## Alternative funding methods

Determining which method is the most suitable one for each purchase comes down to various factors, including the end goal (e.g. ownership), the tax implications, and the all-important cash flow. More businesses than ever turn to commercial asset finance to support their needs – the asset finance market funded over 41% of machinery investment in Q2 2019. According to the FLA, this represented an 11-year high.

### Bank debt

There was a time when if a business wanted to purchase anything, they would make an appointment with their bank manager and discuss their options. Those days seem to be far behind us now for all businesses, as traditional banking is often too cautious and tied up in regulation to take a risk on something that they will never fully understand. High-street lenders tend to overlook forestry, making it difficult to secure funding in this way.

### Hire purchase

Hire purchase allows the customer to purchase the asset outright by making a fixed monthly payment over a pre-determined

length of time (three, four, five years or more). The finance company owns the asset throughout the hire period and when the final instalment is paid, the customer is given the option to purchase, usually for a nominal sum.

Minimum deposit is usually the full VAT associated with the purchase, although in some cases VAT deferrals are also considered. In the wider commercial vehicle and machinery finance market, more than 58% of debt advanced for asset purchases was through hire purchase (FLA, 12 months to August 2019), and it continues to be the most popular method of funding in forestry, with fixed repayment, and the security of ownership at the end of the term.

### Leasing

While leasing has gained popularity in the personal vehicle market, it is yet to catch on in other sectors. Most would write it off because they expect to have to hand the asset back at the end of the rental period, but if put in place correctly, leasing provides similar levels of flexibility to hire purchase.

**Finance Lease:** The leasing company owns the equipment and effectively the

buyer pays a rental for the use of it over a pre-determined period. Generally, the full value, plus some interest, will be paid to the financier over that term, and at the end the “renter” can either continue using the asset and enter a secondary rental period; sell the asset on and keep a portion of the proceeds; or return the asset to the owner/finance company.

**Operating Lease:** This would be the best option only if the buyer has no desire to continue using the equipment at the end of the rental period. Payments or monthly rentals tend to be slightly lower as the leasing company does not need to achieve the full cost of the equipment over the term as a residual value is built in when they retake possession at the end of the lease.

Leasing can be a useful alternative to Hire Purchase (HP) for the purposes of spreading the payment of VAT. On an HP deal, the buyer must pay the VAT up front but on a finance lease contract, there is VAT added to each monthly rental payment and so effectively the VAT is spread across the lifetime of the agreement, again helping cash flow. Other important features of each option are shown in the table opposite.





schedule can be an extremely useful tool to protect cash flow requirements and help with weathering difficult market conditions.

A specialised finance approach is therefore essential for any business operating in forestry, particularly with current market conditions making things difficult for many, and impossible for some. In order to find the right option for each individual set of circumstances, it is important to seek advice from accountants on the various treatments, but it helps also to have an advisor who can help to put in place the right option for each circumstance, and at the best rate available.

EFT Finance is an independent finance brokerage, with a particular interest in the forestry industry. We can help with any new or used asset purchase including harvesters, forwarders, woodchippers, access and material handling, and any vehicles such as vans, pickups or trucks. We can arrange facilities on both new and used assets, and whether purchasing from a dealer, or in some circumstances when buying from another operator or private individual.  
[gordon@eftfinance.co.uk](mailto:gordon@eftfinance.co.uk)

Products	Hire Purchase	Finance Lease	Operating Lease	Cash Purchase	Comments
Initial Deposit Required?	Often VAT only	No	No	Yes	VAT is usually the minimum required on an HP contract, however there are often opportunities to defer the VAT
Treated as Capital Expenditure?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Depending on the accounting standards employed, a finance lease can in some cases be treated as capital expenditure for relief.
Regularity of Payments?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	There may be documentation fees at the beginning and option to purchase fees or balloon/residual payments at the end, but these are usually clearly defined and set from the start.
Early Exit or Extension Options?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	All can generally be extended, but leases are traditionally a bit trickier to exit than Hire Purchase. On an HP agreement, the borrower can effectively ask for a settlement at any point within the agreement, usually without lease, they are likely to be required to pay at least 50% of the remaining rentals to exit the contract early.
Balance Sheet? Entry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Traditionally, an operating lease would not have shown on the balance sheet, but would instead have rentals affecting only the P&L. However as of January 2019 under IFRS16, most leased Plant, Property and Equipment (PPE) now have to be included as an asset on the books, following the new 'right of use model.



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# Changes ahead in workforce contractual documentation

**Gillian Mair,**  
Brodies Solicitors

**F**rom 6 April next year, the information that employers are legally required to provide in writing to their workforce will change.

## Current position

Under current legislation, employers must give employees whose role will last for at least one month a written statement of certain terms of their employment: this is sometimes referred to as a 'section 1 statement' as the obligation to provide this statement comes from section 1 of the Employment Rights Act 1996. Except in limited circumstances, employers must give this statement to an employee within two months of the beginning of their employment.

## Changes from 6 April 2020

From 6 April 2020, the right to be entitled to a written statement of certain terms of engagement will be extended so that all 'workers' will be entitled to receive such a statement, in addition to employees. Additional information will also require to be provided to employees and workers in this 'section 1 statement' over and above the information that must be provided to employees under current legislation. The format in which some of the information has to be provided will also change.

## What is meant by 'workers'?

There are three basic categories of individuals who provide services in the UK:

- **Employees:** At one end of the spectrum, these individuals have the most comprehensive employment rights and protections.
- **Self-employed:** By contrast, the genuinely self-employed have very little protection; they are in business on their own account but have the advantages of flexibility and paying different levels of income tax and national insurance contributions.
- **Workers:** Somewhere in the middle sit 'workers', an intermediate category created by employment legislation. Workers' employment rights are more limited than employees but, for example, they have the right to paid annual leave and the minimum wage.

A number of different factors are relevant when determining employment status, including the level of control operated by the employer; whether there is an obligation to offer and accept work; and whether the individual has to perform the work personally.

In some cases, an individual's employment status will be straightforward. However, there are many grey areas, particularly around casual workers and contractors and these individuals may, depending on the circumstances (and regardless of what is stated in any contractual documentation), be 'workers'.



## So what do the changes mean?

Essentially, from 6 April 2020, a significant number of individuals who form part of the workforce (ie workers) will have a new statutory right to be issued with certain written information relating to their engagement.

Employees and workers starting work on or after 6 April 2020, will also have to be provided with more information in writing than what is currently provided to employees at present. For example, employers will have to provide additional particulars in relation to:

- the days of the week the employee/worker has to work; whether or not such hours or days may be variable, and if so how they vary or how that variation is to be determined;
- any other paid leave (including, for example, paid family leave such as maternity and paternity leave);
- any other benefits that are provided by the employer that are not already included in the statement;
- any probationary period including any conditions and its duration; and
- any training entitlement provided by the employer.

The format in which the information contained within a section 1 statement has to be provided is also changing. In some cases, the section 1 statement itself won't have to provide the detail of all of the particulars, and can refer the employee or worker to the

provisions of other documents, as long as these are reasonably accessible.

The obligation to provide the section 1 statement to workers and employees will apply regardless of the length of the engagement and most of the information will need to be issued no later than the start of the engagement, which is earlier than required at present.

As most employers tend to include the required information in contracts of employment, it is likely that as a result of these changes, employers will need to update their contractual documentation for employees and workers, and review their timescales for issuing contracts.

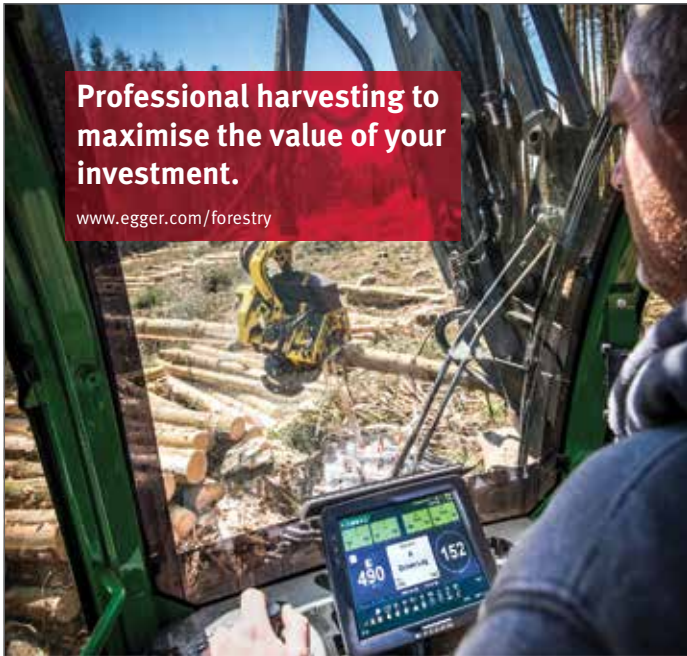
Failure to provide this information may result in an employee or worker making a complaint to an employment tribunal, seeking a declaration in relation to the terms of their engagement. In some circumstances where an employee successfully raises another type of employment tribunal claim against their employer (for example, a claim for unlawful deduction of wages or unfair dismissal), an employee or worker may also be awarded compensation of up to four weeks' pay for the failure to provide information (capped at the relevant statutory rate for each week's pay) in addition to a declaration.

## INFO

If you would like to discuss any of the above or would like help with revising your contractual documentation, contact Gillian Mair, Senior Associate at Brodies LLP. [gillian.mair@brodies.com](mailto:gillian.mair@brodies.com) 0141 245 6250.

## Brodies Workbox

Guidance on recruiting employees and workers and drafting associated contractual documentation can also be found on Brodies Workbox, an online platform that provides up-to-date, practical HR advice, templates and tools. Members of Confor can sign up for a free trial by contacting Gillian Mair or emailing [employment@brodies.com](mailto:employment@brodies.com)

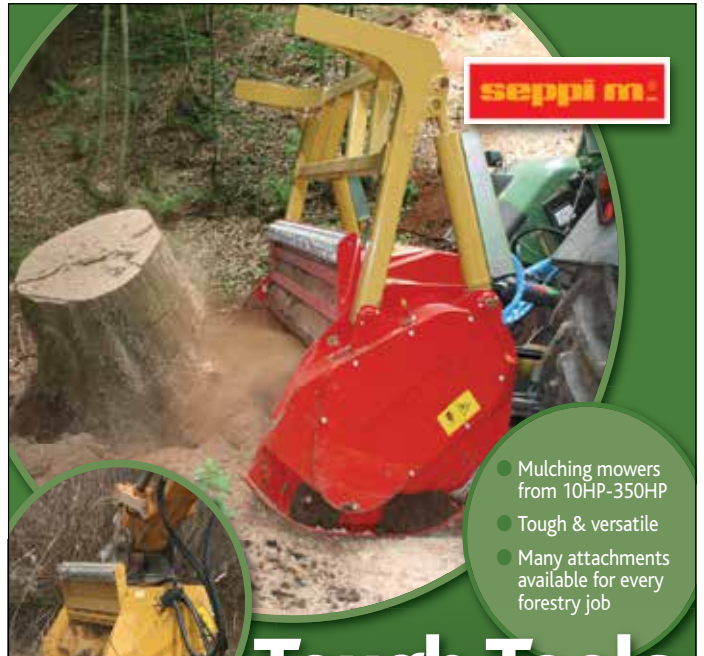


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# Diversifying into ecotourism? Protect your income

**James Innes**  
of Lycett's Rural  
Division

The introduction of the post-EU Environmental Land Management System (ELMS) that will essentially reward landowners for delivering environmental benefits also opens up opportunities for woodland and forest owners looking to diversify into tourism-related activities.

The prolonged uncertainty over Brexit has had an unprecedented impact on the UK's rural economy forcing many to re-evaluate and dramatically shift their long-established business models. Protecting and bolstering future income means that diversifying into unknown territory is often the most viable option.

The good news is that all around the UK, diversified businesses are indeed thriving - offering rural enterprise a much-needed lifeline outside their limited or declining traditional income.

The Farm Business Survey 2015/16 claimed the total income from diversification activities was £580m, demonstrating that generating alternative revenue from the land can be a lucrative move.

Go green to get out of the red  
The obvious transition is tourism - but with a green twist. Eco-tourism will ensure that landowners are fully exploiting the current zeitgeist of more people wanting life-changing adventures, authentic experiences and staycations, not package-holidays. Diversifying into environmentally positive activities can also help secure much-needed environmental 'rewards' during and after the transition to ELMS.

Eco tourism is defined by The International Eco-tourism Society as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education". And few are better placed than woodland owners to use this perfect platform of nature and wildlife in their business reincarnation using the vast acres of trees and arboreal knowledge already at their disposal.

As the UK population becomes more environmentally conscious and aware of the detrimental effects of mass-market tourism, this opens



**Woodland owners can exploit the current zeitgeist for more adventurous 'staycations'**

up opportunities that make the tourism industry more sustainable culturally, environmentally and economically.

This is supported by a recent Booking.com survey which found that 86% would engage with activities that counteract the environmental impact of their trip - whether that be helping with countryside clean-up projects or consciously booking more eco-friendly stays.

Protect the environment, protect your income  
These political and social trends certainly pave the way to make money from woodland.

From forest schools to glamping holidays, trekking and wildlife retreats to treetop zip wire adventures, food and music festivals, diversifying into new, greener tourism-related activities can secure a long-term business future.

However, these new ventures come with new risks and challenges - financially and environmentally. Critical gaps in knowledge and experience are inevitable during the >>





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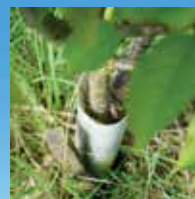
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>> set-up and transitional period.

Diversification can create substantial revenue returns but it requires shrewd business planning along with judicious risk management. Stringent health and safety assessments and prudent insurance arrangements are essential in protecting against potential liabilities and unforeseen uninsured risks and public liability claims.

For any business looking to use green credentials as a proposition, protecting the world's natural capital (natural assets such as geology, soil, air, water and all living things) must be a business priority - particularly to comply with new agri-environment schemes which will be prioritised under ELMS regulations.

Woodlands and forests provide vital ecosystem services such as climate regulation and natural flood defences, habits for wildlife and the pollination of crops by insects so their protection must be at the forefront of all eco-tourism initiatives.

## Onwards and upwards planning

Getting the right planning permissions from the council is a top priority but early intervention from The Environment Agency will also ensure a treehouse project or treetop adventure complies with sustainable development.

As landowners fulfil the demand for more unusual experiences - such as woodland yoga, and llama trekking - and niche accommodation such as activity lodges to holistic retreats and luxury treehouses, gaps in knowledge will become even more pronounced and varied, and the need to seek specialist advice will become greater.



**Some new ventures come with risks and challenges that will require the help of expert professionals**

Be mindful that from a business insurance perspective, holiday-let policies may not be adequate for the more non-traditional accommodation types - specialist cover may be needed.

From a risk management perspective, with the increased risk of fire in woodlands, it's essential to have a fire plan in place and growing timber is adequately insured. A specialist broker can offer valuable consultancy advice, helping to identify such liabilities and avoid the pitfalls of venturing into an unknown field of business.

Lycetts has almost 60 years' experience advising and insuring rural and diversified businesses. From risk management, HSE compliance and specialist insurance advice, we can help identify and avoid costly risks and business-damaging downfalls.

After all, forewarned is forearmed and working closely with experts who can offer impartial advice from the offset will make diversification damage limitation a priority for any new tourism venture.

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## FISA refreshes 'Guidance on Managing Health and Safety in Forestry' (GMHSF)

Everyone in the forestry industry has a part to play in making the industry a safe place to work; read this guidance and know your own responsibilities.

The refreshed 2019 FISA GMHSF is the core guidance for the forest industry. This guidance informs all those working in the timber supply chain and their stakeholders, by clearly setting out roles and responsibilities for all, from landowner/agent; forest works manager; contractor (including hauliers and industry supporting trades) to workers. This is the main guidance that you should refer to in the industry. The guide is now clearly split into sections making your responsibilities clear and easier to follow.

The guide reinforces the message of the need for site planning, competence and maintaining competence for all roles.

## The 'hot topic': 806 Welfare Guide published

Forestry workers often work in isolated and challenging locations and are expected to undertake difficult tasks to a professional standard. The provision of facilities

for their general welfare has been required by law for over 20 years. The FISA Worksite Operations Working Group in consultation together with forestry safety professionals and the wider industry have produced the FISA 806 Welfare Safety Guide to assist duty holders to understand what the existing Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 require. This FISA guide also gives clear examples of types of welfare provision that are considered reasonably practicable on forestry sites. These examples demonstrate how on larger and more complex sites welfare facilities can, as well as provision of welfare facilities, provide space for seated team discussion, planning and meetings, an area to store site paperwork and host drying facilities.

This FISA guide is new to the forestry industry and is released with request for feedback to FISA. Comments will be fed back to the Worksite Operations Working Group and the guide will be reviewed eighteen months after release. Having this review period will assist in getting the guide right for the industry; this is important as we want to encourage the industry to step forward and improve the approach to welfare provision on forestry sites.

## Coming soon: FISA 505 Traction Assist Guide

Traction winches are now out in the industry, and this guide



outlines the key safety points with this type of kit. This document considers traction winches when used to reduce the tractional force transmitted by the machine to the ground surface. It is useful for forestry and other tree work applications including harvesting, silvicultural and ground preparation operations.

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# Uncertain present but positive future



**TIMBER AUCTIONS MARKET REPORT**  
**Oliver Combe**  
 Timber Auctions

## Global factors

The major influence on the UK market remains beetle damaged spruce timber from Central Europe and Scandinavia which is causing an oversupply of spruce timber on the global market.

Whilst elsewhere in the world timber prices have stopped falling and there are signs of modest increase in prices, the situation in Western Europe is one of oversupply.

The scale of the sanitation felling's to try and recover timber damaged by the Ips typographus outbreaks in central Europe is huge.

Hardest hit has been the Czech Republic and Germany although there also outbreaks in Austria, France, Slovakia, Poland and Sweden.

In 2018, the Czech Republic reported 18 million m3 obs of damaged timber to be felled, this year it has reported 30 million! The total standing resource is 384 million m3 so felling is substantially outstripping growth.

In Germany, the situation is equally dire with 11 million m3 of beetle timber harvested this year, which is a 50% increase on last year although the standing volume of spruce in nearly one billion m3.

The fragmented nature of German forest ownership has also meant that many damaged stands have been abandoned as smaller owners are unwilling or unable to stand the cost of felling and restocking so choose to close the gate and let nature run its course.

Throughout Europe, there has been a massive and concerted harvesting effort to clear damaged spruce and supply it to industrial wood uses.

This has created a massive oversupply of spruce saw logs at regional sawmills leading to substantial price reductions. Roundwood prices have crashed to the point where in some areas beetle damaged timber is worth less than the cost of harvesting it. Production curtailments are now the norm in most North European and Scandinavian mills for the next six months and predictions are of falling log prices as we move into 2020.

The price crash has forced log sellers to look for alternative markets, although the high harvesting costs and long transport distances have made this challenging. Many countries are also wary of importing beetle damaged timber so the sellers have had to



continue to cast their nets further afield.

In this case, all roads lead to China and there has been a massive increase in the shipments of beetle damaged spruce logs to China from central Europe. Exports to China have increase by around 400%.

The Chinese market has been saturated with both roundwood from Europe and sawn timber at the same time as domestic demand has fallen as tighter environmental controls being to have an impact, to the point where prices have been steadily falling in 2019. However, the recent weeks have seen a pronounced upturn in demand for softwood logs in China and there are already signs that

The US softwood market is showing signs of starting to improve with prices now at around the \$400 mbf (million board feet) for 4x2 Kiln dried material, which is a 7% increase on the previous month. However, this is on the back of much reduced production levels from the sawmilling sector. There are now signs of an improvement in US house-building starts which may now begin to lead to increase in both price and demand levels

## Roadside hardwood prices (£ hft) November 2019

	Oak planking	Oak beam	Oak fencing	Oak Cordwood	Export ash & beech	White ash sawlogs	Export sycamore	1st grade firewood
High price	£15.00	£10.00	£6.00	£1.40	£3.25	£4.50	£5.00	
Mid price	£12.00	£8.00	£4.50	£1.25	£2.75	£4.00	£4.00	
Low price	£9.00	£7.00	£3.50	£1.00	£2.00	£3.00	£3.00	

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

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

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

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

Product	Lower price	Upper price	Trend
Log 18	£60.00	£75.00	=
Bar / pallet 14	£55.00	£65.00	=
SRW	£40.00	£55.00	=
Fencing	£55.00	£65.00	=
H Wood firewood	£45.00	£55.00	=





and have served to put a floor in the market in most areas, fortunately at very reasonable prices. In England chip wood is being shifted from roadside as fast it can be produced whereas the saw logs are now sitting at roadside waiting for space in the sawmill stockyards.

The elephant in the room remains the UK wood for energy market, there has been substantial capacity installed in the sector over the last five years and Drax's recent announcement of an increase in wood pellet capacity from 1.5 million to five million tonnes has to have an impact on the wood fibre market. The proliferation of small local biomass plants is all putting pressure on available supplies of small roundwood and now saw logs for traditional markets.

The strength of the biomass demand and prices has held prices up in England and will start to have an impact in Scotland as roadside stocks of small roundwood drop and seasonal demand for energy wood picks up, there are already signs of some buyers looking for volume for next spring.

The supply picture remains much more interesting with the falling prices significantly reducing volumes offered and sold into the market in the second half of 2019. This coupled with reduced harvesting activity and reduced availability of sawmill co-products may see increased short-term demand for standing crops with a high spruce small roundwood content over the next couple of months.

With reduced volumes offered and reduced volumes being sold, buyers are seeing their bought ahead supplies reducing as pricing is driven by demand factors. In the short term, this may not be a big concern but as we move past Christmas, supplies will need to be secured for spring 2020. It will be an interesting spring if we get a run of bad weather and pricing starts to be driven by availability.

In summary, for demand, the short-term outlook remains pretty pessimistic, except for small roundwood where local biomass is providing a floor to the price decreases.

In the longer term, it will only take a modest upturn in demand levels in China and the USA to start to see a firming of prices again.

in the US and may start to draw European volumes away from the UK.

The effects of Trumpism on the timber sector have been particularly pronounced in the US hardwood market where the US v China trade war has caused havoc with American hardwood lumber producers.

China had become a major export market for many US producers over the last 10 years and accounted for 50% of their production with a value of around two billion dollars per annum.

For 12 months, export volumes have fallen steadily and from June onwards when the full tariffs came into play the export volumes have fallen to half their peak.

This has had a significant effect on many small local family mills as they begin to lay off staff to deal with a significantly reduced market volume and value. How will Trump

react to layoffs amongst the blue-collar voters as a result of his policies?

It will be interesting to see where the Chinese buyers go to replace the US volumes, these are significant quantities and would have an immediate effect on the European and UK markets if they started to replace US volume with North European temperate hardwood. Domestic market

In the UK, this international context has led to a substantial build-up of both imported and domestic stocks of sawn whitewood timber, at the same time as demand has fallen due to political uncertainty.

After a spike of activity in the summer, there has been a slowdown in the autumn as political uncertainty leads to low confidence. Sawmills are struggling to move stock and face a constant battle to match import prices, the very modest recent improvement in the strength of the pound against the euro will not have helped either. It is tough times for the sawmilling sector.

Finished product prices have fallen steadily since the market peaked in late 2018 with most sawmills reducing prices by £5 per tonne per quarter throughout 2019. This has had a drastic impact on the prices of standing timber with good spruce parcels with a high saw log content now back to £40 to £45 per tonne standing. Difficult sites with a high mixed conifer content will be much lower than this.

Pallet wood processors have followed with their own price cuts but have now reached price levels where local biomass markets are starting to win volume and so are faced with seeing pallet logs being chipped if they reduce prices any further.

The local biomass (energy) markets have remained locally very competitive



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# Growth in forestry values outperforms London house price index



**FOREST MARKET REPORT**  
**Fenning Welstead**  
 John Clegg & Co

We have just completed the UK Forest Market Report for 2019. This joint production by Tilhill and John Clegg & Co gives a summary of activity in the forestry market and has now been doing so for over 20 years. For the year ended September 2019, it records £126m of traded forestry property. This comprises 81 individual forests all in excess of our minimum 20ha threshold. The gross area traded was 14,235ha of which 11,024ha were stocked. The average value is arithmetically £11,475 per stocked hectare.

Compared with 2018, when the average was £9332, this equates to an arithmetic 23% increase in value. But this is not to say that the whole market has moved by this much. It is a function of the quality and location of the properties traded during the year. It cannot be used to accurately reflect the overall growth in values.

Our joint conclusion is that from 2002 to 2019 the compound growth in forestry values has been in the order of 12.9% per annum. Over those 17 years, a value of £1000 in 2002 has grown to £7867 – almost an eight-fold increase – by 2019. That is a very impressive performance. It may be of interest to consider the chart showing the growth in forestry values against the London house index since 1992.

## Highlighted sales in 2019

Knock Moss in Galloway offered 180ha of simple P84 conifer crops with a net stocked area of 153ha. As its name implies the soils varied from knolls of mineral brown earths and peaty flats. Basic access is in place but further expenditure is required before major harvesting. A successful marketing campaign resulted in a sale at close to £11,000 per stocked hectare.

Glenshamrock & Coup Bing Moss, in East Ayrshire, comprised 120ha of mid-1970s plantation and some recently felled land awaiting replanting were presented to the market by John Clegg & Co. The competitive closing date in June resulted in a sale at a price under £9000/ha. This was a mixed quality property with a good loca-

tion and markets very close to hand, but the peaty soils constrain yield class. The contrast between these two sales reinforces the importance of the individual characteristics of properties which have a major impact on both crop and solum values.

Letters Forest, overlooking Loch Fyne, extends to 556ha. Established in the late 1980s, it is rapidly approaching the start of a planned harvesting programme. With a net stocked area of 368ha and a developed access this was sold at over £18,000 per hectare. The range of value across these three forests reflects the quality of the soils and consequent crops, the state of the access, their scale and location. All three attracted interest and sold competitively with satisfying results for the sellers.

On a similar scale to Letters, Bidwells have presented Ewich Forest at Crianlarich in Stirlingshire. This 632ha forest is on the market with a guide price of £5.75M. Composed of mixed coniferous species with significant proportions of larch and lodgepole pine, the guide price is just over £9000/ha. This seems a very competitive price for a plantation now 40 years old.

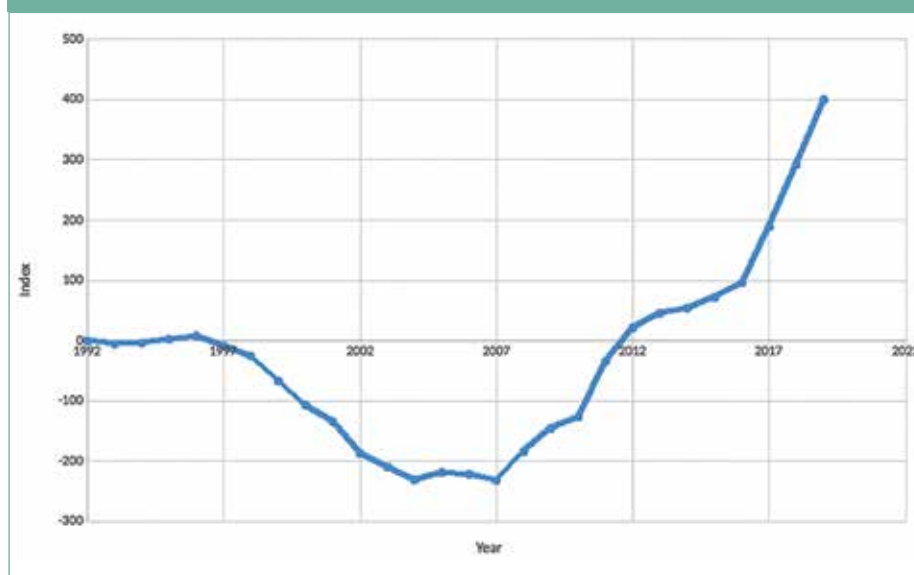
What is interesting about Ewich is its location at a major junction in the west of Scotland road network. Crianlarich represents a meeting point of the road north from Glasgow and the road coming west from Edinburgh/Stirling. There is also a railway station and the popular West High-

land Way passes through the forest. This all seems to provide something of a focus for tourism and visitors and there must be some potential to consider developing this forest to cater for that traffic. It will be intriguing to see how the market responds to this opportunity at the closing date on Tuesday, 26 November.

John Clegg & Co offered Watermeetings & Hitterill Hill in south Lanarkshire during September/ October. Extending to 729ha, this is a well-known and extensive commercial plantation lying just to the west of the main M74 in the hills surrounding the source of the River Clyde. The original conifer crops yielded high tonnages per hectare, 500 tonnes and better. The replanted forest, now average age 12, promises to do better given improved planting stock. The sale generated a strong level of interest from the active investors seeking purchase in the commercial forestry market. The competitive closing date resulted in very healthy bidding and the final sale price, at comfortably over £20,000 per conifer hectare, sets a very confident benchmark for the future.

Following on the same agents have just presented High Cairn – 338ha of restocked commercial forestry with a fully developed access but slightly younger than Watermeetings. With a guide price of £3.7m, equivalent to £14,682 per commercial hectare, this looks to be very competitively >>

Forestry relative to London house prices 1992 - 2019





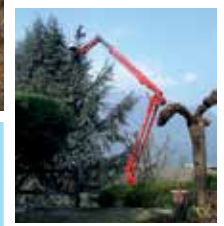
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## Watermeetings

>> priced and further strong interest is anticipated.

We could not write a market report this quarter without mentioning the presentation by Savills of Llanbrynmair. This is the largest individual forest to be presented to the market for some time at over 2160ha. With an extensive network of roads and now in the productive phase, this is a forest that should generate net income for many years to come. Interest has been growing over the last month and a closing date has been set for Tuesday, 3 December. The opportunity to invest in UK forestry is often constrained by scale. Llanbrynmair clearly offers the chance to buy in at a significant level and as such it is anticipated that a wider range of investors may present offers for consideration.

As always, the attention to long-term management boosts market value. Woodlands that are clearly being cared for present themselves so much better than those abandoned. For commercial woods particular importance is attached to replanted crops. A recent example of forest mid-way through restructuring with exemplary young crops is Blaentafalog which sold off market, despite a mineral issue in the title, before we had finished the sale particulars.

### Mineral rights

The question of mineral rights is worth mentioning. Several forests, notably in Wales,

have crossed our desks recently where the mineral rights are not included in the title being in the ownership of a third party. It is commonly believed that this does not prevent the forest owner from using stone dug within the title boundary for the construction and repair of forest roads, again within the title. However, there appears to be a degree of uncertainty. We know of one large sale (c£1.2m) that was derailed by the purchaser losing confidence as risk was hard to quantify. There is a live legal case involving NRW the outcome of which will hopefully clarify the situation.

Turning to smaller woods and broad-leaved mixes there is a continued interest from people wishing to own and enjoy their sylvan glade. Recent sales in England have shown what can be achieved by very attractive broadleaved woodlands. Even if

limited timber value, and indeed with ash dieback liabilities present, well presented woodlands have been achieving up to £18,000 per hectare where there is strong demand. However, lower values may apply as beauty lies in the eye of the beholder.

The effects of ash dieback become ever more apparent and it is a real wake-up call to the need to properly care for the natural world. It is enormously encouraging to see the higher profile forestry now has in the media. While expressing great sympathy for those affected by the November floods it is to be hoped that this stimulates real action in terms of approvals for new planting in upland areas. Trees, woodland and forest answer so many of our objectives for water management, biodiversity, carbon sequestration, livestock shelter and timber supply.

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Harry Toulson, Somerset  
Albion Timber, Yorkshire  
Esther Bloor, Gwynedd  
Dormont Estate, Dumfriesshire  
Wildland Ltd, Scottish Highlands  
Plumpton College, East Sussex

# Anti-afforestation campaign threatens new planting



**Seán Lenihan**  
Kestrel  
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The campaign against afforestation, especially coniferous afforestation, in Ireland shows no signs of abating. In certain counties like Leitrim and Sligo there has been an intensification of the rhetoric all through 2018 and 2019. It is generally accepted now that it is having a detrimental effect on planting levels. It may not be the only factor causing a major reduction in afforestation, but its impact is certainly not insignificant. The main focus of the attacks is not surprisingly Sitka spruce, and the volume of misinformation, half-truths and statements with no scientific basis concerning the species continues to appear almost on a weekly basis in the media.

Emotive, exaggerated and sensational catch phrases are being used liberally and often, and are gaining credence among the general public as both the mainstream media and social media seem to be lacking any desire to filter the message prior to publication.

It has to be stated clearly, how-

ever, that the industry's failure to respond, and vigorously challenge the rhetoric has not helped, and this lack of response has been dismal and disappointing to say the least.

A wide range of groups, associations and even political parties are now aligned against Sitka spruce, these include:

## Save Leitrim

According to their website, the group which was established in 2018 claims that "it was set up to fight for the survival and future of Co. Leitrim, which is being decimated by the relentless, subsidised Sitka spruce afforestation programme".

The website encourages members to raise multiple objections to proposed new forests and includes instructions for members and non-members on how to object to afforestation applications with a list of criteria/grounds for objection. It also has a sample objection letter published on the website which people can utilise when they are objecting to a proposed afforestation licence.

## Irish Natura and Hill Farmers Association (INHFA)

INHFA was established in 2015 to represent Irish hill farmers in all aspects of farming and have been particularly vocal at protest meetings

against Sitka spruce - even organising a special conference in 2018 where the guest speaker was Luke Ming Flanagan MEP. Another MEP from the northwest Marian Harkin has also engaged with the INHFA and issued anti-Sitka spruce statements including the following: "One EU official described Leitrim as a national sacrifice zone for Sitka spruce and I fully agree with this sentiment"

## Sinn Fein

One of Ireland's best known political parties have been to the forefront in the campaign against Sitka. In 2018 they called for afforestation applications to be included in the full planning permission process similar to housing and other infrastructural developments. In August 2019 they went even further by demanding that Sitka spruce be blacklisted, and deemed an invasive species by the Department of Agriculture, and for the payment of grants and premiums for coniferous afforestation to be stopped.

## Green Party

Not a surprise that the Green Party are against Sitka spruce, but they recently got a motion passed in Dáil Eireann in October calling for a move away from monocultural Sitka spruce plantations. What makes this ironic is that monocultural Sitka plantations have not been established in over 20 years, as all new plantations since 1998 have had to feature 15% broadleaves, 10-15% biodiversity and 10-20% conifers other than Sitka or Lodgepole pine.

## Extinction Rebellion

The latest group to join the fray is Extinction Rebellion some of whose supporters at a recent protest march in Dublin featured a banner stating "NO MORE SITKA". Considering that climate change is at the core of Extinction Rebellion's raison d'être, and tree planting is one of the accepted means of countering climate change it seems bizarre to have a banner demanding a cessa-







tion on the planting of any individual tree species.

The anti-Sitka campaign picked up by The Guardian It's a measure of how successful the anti- Sitka spruce campaign has been, and the media coverage of it in Ireland that the topic has featured twice in The Guardian in the past 15 months. The first piece written by Mary Colwell in October 2018 featured the heading: "A forestry boom is turning Ireland into a dead ecological zone"

with the sub-heading "Subsidised spruce plantations cover vast tracts of the Irish countryside. They don't offset carbon emissions and are driving bird species to extinction"

The second article was published in July 2019 and written by Rory Carroll . It was notable for the amount of typically emotive, sensational, exaggerated quotes attributed to Save Leitrim campaigners including: "You couldn't live in the middle of this thing unless you were Grizzly Adams"

The trees eclipse sunlight, exude mist and block Wi-Fi and phone networks, inducing isolation, he said. "It's a death sentence for the townlands."

When machines chop down swathes of forest, a controversial process known as clear-felling, the landscape is devastated, said Stewart. "It looks like Hiroshima."

"A lot of people find them spooky because they don't have life in them"

### Conclusion

It is difficult to predict where all this will end. Afforestation planting levels continue to drop at an alarming rate and may only reach 3000 to 3500 hectares in 2019. In an attempt to provide balance to the debate the Minister Andrew Doyle commissioned a study of the Economic Benefits of Forestry in Co. Leitrim this year. The results of the study were interesting and found that in 2017 over 300 full-time jobs were associated with forestry in Co. Leitrim, and that value of the economic activity generated by forestry to be worth €26.5m. It also found that Sitka spruce accounted for 61% of the species mix in the county and that 25% of all objections/appeals nationally to afforestation since 2018 related to Leitrim.

One thing is certain, unless the Irish forest industry gets it act together, and seriously challenges the misinformation, rhetoric and fake generalisations emanating from the anti - Sitka brigade - as a matter of urgency, the situation will get a lot worse before or of if it gets better.

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“  
Sinn Fein demands that Sitka spruce be blacklisted as invasive species



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# Cracking down on degrade

by **Dan Ridley-Ellis**  
NapierUniversity

**T**imber processors have always been concerned with timber defects that relate to issues in the tree, but accelerating changes in climate, silviculture and the drive for increased growth rate, give cause for concern that certain problems may be coming more common. These kinds of defects manifest as cracks, malformed wood, discolouration and increased susceptibility to rot. They cause increased reject, and in the worse cases can interrupt the sawing process. Sometimes these defects can be seen on the logs or standing trees, but often it is not apparent at the time of harvesting, and only becomes visible when cutting. Despite the headaches this causes, there is currently little documented

information on the nature of these degrade issues, prevalence, causes and impact on timber. It is not even known whether there is more than one underlying cause.

There are three aspects to the research problem:

- What are these degrade issues?
- And what causes them?
- Where do these degrade issues occur?
- What is the impact? And how can it be mitigated?

This kind of research is best done as a collaboration between researchers, growers, harvesters and processors. The Strategic Integrated Research in Timber (SIRT) network has started work on this and if you are willing to help with this study you can use an online form to report instances of cracks, shakes, splits, and similar defects, as and when you encounter them.



The study is interested in defects that occurred before the timber is dried, and that were present in the living tree (even if not visible on the standing tree or log at the time of harvest). Your descriptions and location reporting will be used to research this issue, better understand the causes, and reduce its effects in future. This survey is the first stage of research, to help plan more specific work looking at the frequency

**Above: two downgrade close ups** (picture Dan Ridley-Ellis)  
**Above right: Tiling batten end grain** (picture Napier University Allan Shedlock)



beX student **Greg Campbell Andrews**

## Rate of growth and density - a ring of truth?

It is widely thought that growth ring width is a good indicator of wood density - that wider growth rings mean the wood is of low density. In many species there is, in fact, no correlation between ring width and wood density. In some, it is even the other way around. But for spruce, we do expect wider rings to mean lower density. Indeed, we have known for more than half a decade that for UK-grown Sitka spruce the latewood width is relatively constant, meaning wider rings are proportionally more of the lower density earlywood. But, this is not quite the whole picture when it comes to grading for density using ring width. When grading we are not concerned with average density, but rather the lowest density we can expect (quantified by the characteristic, lower 5th percentile, in modern standards).





of degrade events, the types, causes and consequences of the degrade, and to avoid or reduce the degrade.

The SIRT network is a long running collaboration focused on understanding the physical and mechanical properties of wood and how these affect its performance in different applications. It provides support in two work packages:

**Work Package 1:** Applied research and knowledge transfer address-

ing industry needs – as set out by the SIRT management board. This includes providing information and advice to industry sponsors.

**Work Package 2:** Timber products standards support ensuring standards are good for the domestic timber industries, and supporting industry in using them.

<https://blogs.napier.ac.uk/cwst/downgrade/>

This is because it is the lowest density pieces that give us problems for things such as connections made screws, bolts or nails.

Alexandre Monseau, a student from CESI École d'Ingénieurs in France, took a close look at this question during his recent research placement at the Centre for Wood Science and Engineering, Edinburgh Napier University. Alex made new measurements, and combined them with a large dataset from previous research. The conclusion is that, while there is indeed a correlation between ring width and density in the spruce ( $R2 = 0.2$ ), this is not actually very useful for strength grading. The first reason is that rejecting pieces with large rings does not work very well to remove the lowest

density pieces. This means the uplift in characteristic density is modest, even with high reject rates. The second reason is that, for strength grading of home-grown spruce, the density is the least critical of the properties. Even before grading, the characteristic density is more than enough to meet the strength class requirement that the timber is limited to by its stiffness.

The work done by student projects is extremely useful, often bringing new perspectives and areas of expertise from students on a diverse range of courses. Industry can take this opportunity, too – most easily through the award winning Built Environment Exchange (beX) platform led by Robert Hairstans at Edinburgh Napier University.

## RESOURCES

Alex also looked at other species, and you can read his report here: <https://blogs.napier.ac.uk/cwst/rings/>

For a closer look at expected relationship between ring width and density see: <https://blogs.napier.ac.uk/cwst/growth-rate-and-wood-density/>

And for a discussion of why ring width is, anyway, not really linked to growth rate see: <http://blogs.napier.ac.uk/cwst/speed-of-growth/>

# First UK-grown hardwood CLT trials



With the support of a grant from Forestry England's Innovation Fund, Immanent Associates has undertaken a feasibility study exploring the viability of using UK grown hardwood timber in the manufacture of Cross Laminated Timber Panels.

To take the project forward Immanent Associates drew together a team consisting of Grown in Britain (GIB), Edinburgh Napier University's Centre for Woods Science & Technology (ENU), the Construction Scotland Innovation Centre (CSIC) and East Brothers Timber (EBT). The study aim was to explore the potential to utilise UK grown hardwood timber in the manufacture of Cross Laminated Timber panels.

As a Feasibility Study, the scope of the project was limited to testing beech. Beech is the one UK timber that is not fully utilised. Note 1: FC Timber Utilisation Statistics 2015

Work was divided into six packages:

**Package 1:** Desktop study of hardwood cross laminated timber production.

**Package 2:** Delivery of first beech shipment to CSIC

**Package 3:** Gluing trials, to determine procedure and adhesive, edge bonding.

**Package 4:** Delivery of second shipment of beech

**Package 5:** Production of full-scale beech CLT panels

**Package 6:** Testing for adhesive bonding, rolling shear and flatwise bending.

**Package 7:** Progress reports, final evaluation and dissemination.

## Constraints

- Processing beech requires historic and half forgotten skills
- UK beech is a very variable timber
- Careful selection prior to felling and processing is required.
- Beech CLT an expensive product.

## Advantages

- It is a very attractive product
- It has higher levels of stiffness than softwoods, capacity of rolling shear and negligible flatwise bending.

After almost two years of work we have concluded that beech can be processed for CLT. The early results show that it is a viable, but expensive, new product. However, further research would be required before it could be guaranteed as compliant against British Standards and Building Regulations.

Significant cost reduction would be needed to make the product an economically viable, mass-market product.

## Laser incision

# Modern technology for future wood products



**Morwenna Spear**

The BioComposites Centre,  
Bangor University

Laser cut wood is everywhere at this time of year. Wandering through my local food festival I spied plenty of examples of laser cut plywood decorations and trinkets. You'll have seen the same if you've been to your local Christmas market or garden centre. It seems that everyone knows how easy it is to laser wood into pretty shapes and intricate designs.

A recent project has put the precision of laser technology to innovative use in incising wood for chemical or preservative treatments. Here the challenges were slightly different - not cutting the nice thin, flat, plywood, but making incisions part way into rough sawn timber planks, with all the twist, bow or cupping that might be expected. The project team developed a system which could accommodate the irregulari-

ties of sawn timber, focus the beam at an optimal distance into the plank and cleanly create minute holes in the surface.

The hole size is important. Many of you will already have seen the resurgence of mechanical incising. This is also an excellent technology, and has boosted preservative retention in difficult to treat species such as spruce. It is typically used on green timber or timber still near fibre saturation point (the point where the wood cells are empty but the wood cell wall is still wet). It has greatly assisted preservative uptake for fencing and landscaping timbers. Here the depth of incision can be a centimetre or two, depending on the geometry of the pins or knives used. It gives a relatively thick envelope of treatment, but may leave some of the core of the post untreated. In fencing applications a

moderate sized incision is perfectly acceptable, and the regular slit pattern in fence posts and strainers has become a mark of quality in the market.

There are other applications where slot-shaped incisions, or the splitting which sometimes accompanies them, are not acceptable. One is window joinery - a smooth planed finish is highly desirable for solid wood joinery in this market. One joinery manufacturer I spoke to mentioned the large quantity of timber they reject or cut out of their bought timber, due to knots and blemishes, simply to keep the customer satisfied. Another application might be decking - this market seeks uniform timbers with tight grain so that splintering is not an issue. After all, the customer wants to wander barefoot on the deck in summer without issues. An incision system with sub millimetre holes could inconspicuously improve the preservative uptake for treated softwoods in this market.

### Perfectly uniform

In the modified wood market mechanical incision won't suffice either. Here the impregnation of treatment agent must be perfectly uniform (no envelope treatments allowed). Wood modification technologies such as acetylation (Accoya), furfurylation (Kebony) and resin modification (Lignia) often use Radiata pine sapwood, due to its exceptionally good permeability. This timber is sourced from New Zealand, or sometimes Chile and Spain, but cannot be grown in the UK. It would be very interesting to improve the permeability of other timbers to a level that is suited to these high performance modification systems. Laser incision is one strong contender for this. The technology allowed great freedom for those involved in the LaserCure project to experiment with hole spacings for individual



**Inspecting the first planks from the laser incision machine**

**Left: Laser hole in poplar wood**







species of timber, to optimise fluid uptake and distribution along naturally occurring flow paths within the wood.

Take the softwoods for example. Almost everybody will have heard the cells of wood described as being like drinking straws, aligned longitudinally in the plank, with the grain. This reflects the direction that the tree needs sap to travel while it's growing. In some species this main route gets closed after felling, as the timber dries. The bordered pits aspirate and close the path from one cell to the next (spruce is the classic example). Some species, like pine, have stiffer fibres in the pit

membranes on latewood and don't aspirate as easily. If a small amount of assistance can be given to these timbers to get fluid into the plank, then some flow is possible, over a reasonable distance.

Or consider the hardwoods. Few people ever consider preservative treatment of hardwood timbers, so we forget that the wood anatomy is very different to the softwoods. In broadleaved trees most flow occurs through vessels. These are formed as wide cells join end-to-end to form broad pathways over long range. Some have perforation plates of large openings between cells, so flow is very fast. The adjacent tissue

can be almost completely resistant to flow, with the tree simply relying on small quantities of sap or soluble food, hormones etc being passed from cell to cell through very small pits. Often the fibre cells are much thicker walled than the equivalent tracheid cells in softwood. Many hardwoods have prominent rays, visible to the eye in beech, oak, elm. But these rays are very poor for fluid conduction. In hardwoods the LaserCure project team spent time considering wood anatomy and which flow paths were open in each timber, to fine tune the spacing of holes to ensure greatest uptake of fluids.

#### Wider variety

All this may be good news to the forester. Aided by laser incision we expect to be able to treat a wider variety of timbers grown in the UK, either with traditional preservatives or with new wood modification agents. Timbers which are moderately permeable may become permeable when laser incised. Timbers of poor permeability may be upgraded to an acceptable level or treatment. Some timbers will remain out of scope however. Unfortunately, one of these is likely to be Sitka spruce, with its high degree of pit aspiration and very closed internal structure. Even with deep incisions, the preservative may access only a few millimetres from the incision. Here mechanical incision will offer just as effective an envelope treatment.

So which species can we think about? Timbers like Scots pine where latewood remains open may be greatly assisted, with long distance transport of preservative. Diffuse porous hardwoods like beech, birch, sycamore, alder. Possibly also ring porous species such as ash and sweet chestnut, depending on the proportion of libriform fibres present and their distribution. We could be looking at a new chapter for many of the timber species we currently see as minority options, or only suited to firewood. There will come a time when well managed stands of mixed broadleaf will have more available options for markets after harvest. Straightness of grain and silvicultural characteristics such as pruning and growth rate will then come to the fore.

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# Tanasote: keeping wood as the sustainable choice

If the timber industry is to keep wood as a primary material of choice in important high-risk applications, it needs to be bold and adopt modern, innovative, Biocidal Products Regulation (BPR)-approved alternatives that will confidently deliver both high performance and sustainability.

Tanasote is an alternative to traditional creosote treatments that will meet these criteria. Tanasote is a preservative system from the development team at Lonza Wood Protection, designed to meet the future needs of the high-performance timber sectors with attributes that will suit the agricultural, utility pole and railway sleepers industries while meeting the stringent risk assessments of the BPR.

Andy Hodge, Lonza's marketing director, said, "Tanasote is now a real alternative for our customers involved in the supply of heavy duty timbers. It has been developed as a hot copper oil technology with a powerful co-biocide to protect against a wide spectrum of aggressive copper-tolerant decay organisms. It has an excellent industry fit because it can be used in existing or

new creosote-type plants. We are looking at 40-year service lives for poles and sleepers."

## Excellent life cycle analysis (LCA)

Three independent life cycle studies have been conducted with excellent resulting credentials across the board for Tanasote compared to competing materials such as steel, concrete and fibre glass, says Andy Hodge. And all the ancillary properties such as conductivity and corrosivity of metal fixings highlighted by the markets sectors are all similar to creosote treated timbers.

"Tanasote developments are at an advanced stage and we have gained a wide range of data from our optimising work," said Mr Hodge. "The consistent results we are seeing are providing a great deal of confidence that we will meet the long-term protection requirements expected. The product is currently continuing through its authorisation process within the BPR and we are extremely optimistic on the outcome. We are then looking to move forward with a commercial launch in



**Field testing of modern and traditional preservative treatments for communication poles.**

**Left: Commercial trials under way for Tanasote treatments.**

the early part of 2020."

Lonza says it is ready to talk further with key stakeholders and ask that any interested parties who wish to discuss their particular requirements for Tanasote should contact them "to explore how we can work together to build these into our testing and assessment trials".

Lonza recently held a webinar to introduce Tanasote to European markets. A recorded version is available here:

<https://youtu.be/G9Rluw9LtCo>



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# Case studies sought for report on biodiversity in working forests

**Eleanor Harris**  
Confor policy researcher

Confor is preparing a report on how forests contribute to the health of global biodiversity, both by providing systemic solutions to climate change and global forest loss; and by creating habitat in the forest itself. We need your help! We are looking for wide range of case studies from Confor members around the UK to illustrate the importance of forests for wildlife.

Confor has been highlighting how forests provide systemic solutions to climate change, the biggest global threat to life on earth. Yet the biggest barrier to increasing planting and timber production is concern that it could be at the expense locally of that life on earth - of bio-

diversity. Views like 'native is best', 'conifers are barren' and 'harvesting destroys wildlife' gain credence, not because they are backed by robust evidence, but because they have not been challenged with it.

To address this, Confor is preparing a report to explore the value of working forests as habitat, delivering net biodiversity gain; as well as demonstrating the essential importance to global biodiversity of the forests' carbon capture and sustainable timber production.

This report will have two main evidence-bases:

1. A literature review
2. Case studies from across the industry, providing examples of working forests delivering biodiversity benefits.



## GET INVOLVED

### I am looking to include numerous case studies:

- Some very short - a quote, statistic, or captioned photo; some more extended
- From all parts of the UK
- From all forest types (large, small, conifer, broadleaf, upland, lowland) with timber production as the primary objective

- Fungi, moss, invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians, ferns, flowers, birds, mammals...

### Case studies might include:

- How the forest sustains habitat for particular species of conservation concern.
- How new woodland creation, or bringing neglected woodland into timber production, delivered net biodiversity gain.
- How timber production (planting, thinning, harvesting) accelerated the natural ecological development of a young forest, through provision of deadwood, light, structural diversity.
- How you have collaborated with local conservation or community organisations, or landscape-scale projects, to deliver biodiversity aims or educate people about wildlife.
- How the forest has enhanced adjacent habitats such as freshwater or ancient trees. Are natural habitats within the

forest better protected than those in surrounding open land?

- How UKFS regulation or UKWAS certification have improved the biodiversity of an existing forest over the long term - and how they could be improved.
- What synergies or trade-offs you have encountered locally between biodiversity and carbon capture / timber production, and how you have balanced and maximised all three.
- Pictures - worth a thousand words!
- Quotes - from the forester, owner, scientists or conservationists.

You can email material to [eleanor@confor.org.uk](mailto:eleanor@confor.org.uk) or ring me to discuss (0131 240 1410). Don't worry about providing finished text: bullet points or existing articles/ reports are fine. The intention is to circulate a draft before the end of the year, for publication early next year.



# Austria's cooperation platform: **Forestry Wood Paper**

**Thomas Leitner**, forestry expert at the Chamber of Agriculture, explains how the Austrian forestry and wood industries are organised and funded.

**F**irst Holz Papier (FHP) is a cooperation platform for forestry, wood and paper which relies on several host organisations. Established in 2005, its main objective is to combine the full financial power of the wood sector and to promote the use of wood using a joint up approach. The vision is for FHP to be seen as a positive creative force that represents the interests of the whole supply chain at all times.

## Structure and governance

At the head of FHP is the executive committee, which is the decision-making board of the cooperation. This group consists of representatives from all of the host organisations and industry types under the direction of the FHP chair. The Strategy Group, which consists of the chairs of the cooperation partners, is responsible for preparing the strategic orientation and for the

decision-making basis. The organisation, coordination and monitoring of activities, including actions in the working groups, fall to the FHP office with the support of the cooperation partner offices.

## Collection of funds

The levy is voluntary for the forestry sector, but mandatory for the processing sector.

## Sawlogs - Forestry

When a forest owner sells sawlogs to the industry in Austria, they can voluntarily pay 30 cents/m<sup>3</sup> (Holzcent). Around 80% of the forest owners are willing to pay this levy. The money is collected by the industry and transferred quarterly to the federal Chamber of Agriculture.

When the forest owner sells his sawlogs for export and is willing to pay this levy, the trader has to collect this money and also transfer it to the federal Chamber of Agriculture.

## FACT BOX

### Cooperation Partners

#### Forestry

- Austrian Chamber of Agriculture
- Austrian Forest Cooperatives
- Austrian Land and Forest Owners Association

#### Wood

- Association of the Austrian Wood Industries

#### Paper

- Association of the Austrian Paper Industry

#### Associated Members

- Austrian Association of Construction Materials, Hardware and Timbertrade
- Austrian Professional Association of Timber Construction
- Forest Worker Association

### Principles

**Secure supply** - to improve and protect sustainable and efficient availability of wood as a raw material in Austria

**Promote selling** - to lobby for timber sales and in each case to identify the most attractive uses along the value chain

### Strategic priorities of FHP

- Optimising wood availability
- Positioning wood as a basic and building material
- Focusing on wood and its role within the energy system
- Providing market information about the timber industry
- Advertising and providing information about wood
- Internal marketing and communication

### Working groups

To fulfil the principles and strategic priorities, working groups are formed and organisations of common interest are financed or supported.

- Dataservice and Wood balance
- Harvesting and delivery
- Woodflow and logistics
- Measurement and classification of round wood
- Energy

The working groups are staffed in a balanced way with experts from the forestry, wood and paper sector.

### Organisations of common interest

- *proHolz* - Image campaigning
- PEFC - Certification system
- Professorship (Vienna and Graz)







Depending on the federal Chamber of Agriculture, between 8 and 22 cents can be used at federal state level for the federal *proHolz* organisations or for its own projects.

The difference between the levy raised and the 30 cents is transferred once a year to the Austrian Chamber of Agriculture.

The Austrian Chamber of Agriculture retains €150,000 for its own projects; the rest is transferred to FHP.

Austrian State Forests pays the 30 cents/m<sup>3</sup> levy directly to the Austrian Chamber of Agriculture.

#### **Sawlogs - Sawmill industry**

For each processed m<sup>3</sup> (domestic and import), the sawmill industry has to pay 25 cents to the federal association of the Austrian Wood Industries.

An additional 5 cents are raised by different projects within the sawmill industry, resulting in the sawmill

industry sector paying the same 30 cents/m<sup>3</sup> levy as the growers sector.

The other wood processing industries, such as the furniture industry, have to pay a fee calculated on the basis of the number of employees to the federal association of the Austrian Wood Industries.

Around 20 % to 25 % of the money is used at federal state level for federal *proHolz*; the rest is transferred to the Association of the Austrian Wood Industries.

The board industry also participates with a small amount being paid directly to the Association of the Austrian Wood Industries.

The Association of the Austrian Wood Industries retains around €900,000 for its own projects, such as the timber college in Kuchl/Salzburg.

The rest is transferred to FHP.

*continued on p59*

## QA

### **Has there been controversy or opposition with regards to the fairness of the collection system?**

Of course, from time to time there is a discussion about fairness, especially when the market is imbalanced, as it is at the moment due to climate change.

### **How do you avoid free-riders?**

You can't avoid free riders, especially in the forestry sector, as the fund is voluntary. There will be always a group of operators who want to do things differently from the rest. Fortunately, the number of free-riders is not very high. As this system is obligatory for the wood processing industry, there are no free-riders at all.

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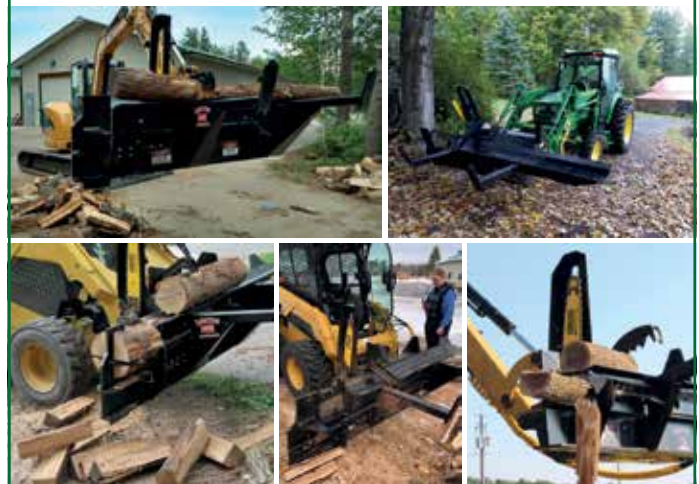
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continued from p57

## **Pulpwood – Forestry**

Forest owners voluntarily pay 7 cents/m<sup>3</sup> of pulpwood sold.

The money is collected by the paper industry or from Papierholz Austria, the purchasing organisation of the paper industry.

The money is transferred to the Association of the Austrian Paper Industries (AUSTROPAPIER), which transfers the money to FHP.

## **Pulpwood – Paper industry**

For each processed m<sup>3</sup> of domestic wood, the paper industry voluntarily pays 10 cents to the Association of the Austrian Paper Industries (AUSTROPAPIER), which transfers the money to FHP. For imported pulpwood, 1 cent/m<sup>3</sup> is transferred.

## **Engaging stakeholders**

The main driver to set up this fund collection system was to promote and increase the use of wood. Since its inception, FHP tries to work in an efficient way, so a continuous improvement process is part of the strategy.

Stakeholder engagement is secured by the structured budget preparation as well as by stakeholders being members of the executive committee. Stakeholders are also members of the working groups. The structure has been the same since establishment, with the exception of the strategy group, which was established later as a means for discussing strategic topics.

People are regularly informed about the results of research projects. They get regular information about the additional benefits of FHP. For example, a focus on research into new tree species, silvicultural systems and forest genetics will deliver answers to the issue of climate change in the coming years. In this way, we can preserve the system, as the forest owners will get new knowledge about forest management and the industry will enjoy the secure availability of wood in the future. A win-win situation. In this market situation, the forest owner will not have to pay for image campaigning but will benefit from the focus on research.

## **The impact of the levy**

Over the last few years, the share of wood buildings has increased significantly and will continue to grow. The cooperation platform is unique in Europe. It has the huge advantage of enabling the sectors to work together on topics for which they have the same view and objectives, thereby allowing existing strengths to be bundled and focused.

[www.forstholzpapier.at](http://www.forstholzpapier.at)

## Industry funding **UK update**

Since October's FTN, Confor has focused on step two of a six-step plan, which is to undertake an initial discussion with members. The aim has been to get initial feedback on the potential mechanism and to learn what it is that people would like to know, and what questions they would like answered about an Industry Fund before they would feel comfortable supporting it.

Cancellation of some scheduled member meetings has meant that discussions have been more limited than planned, and time will now be taken in early 2020 to secure further feedback from more members.

One clear message from the discussions held so far has been a request for more detail about what specific activities would be supported by a potential Fund. In response, Confor will, in consultation with a number of active businesses put together a proposed programme of work, prioritised and with approximate costs.  
[stuartg@confor.org.uk](mailto:stuartg@confor.org.uk)



## **Use of collected funds within the industry**

Once a year, the FHP office prepares a budget in coordination with the working groups, organisations of common interest and the cooperation partners' offices. This budget is intended to reflect the principles and strategic priorities. The priorities for allocation are reviewed each year when the budget is prepared.

This budget must be approved by the strategy group, in the decision-making bodies of the cooperation partners and finally by the executive committee. As the budget has to pass many committees, fair and ethical use is ensured.

### **Examples of activities**

- Image campaigning
- Information for professional audiences, such as architects
- Research projects concerning logistics, forest management, forest genetics, harvesting
- Co-financing professorships in timber construction or timber architecture
- PEFC – Forest certification system – Austrian forest owners incur no direct costs for certification of their forests
- Creation of education and training documents (these are also used in Japan, for example)
- Supporting standardisation processes for timber construction
- Regular auditing of the acceptance of pulpwood



# Fire danger



**RAB Easton**

on the threat of forest fires – and how we deal with them

**F**orest fires are large, uncontrolled fires which are extremely difficult for fire fighters to contain due to the amount of dry, inflammable fuel found in the forest. They can have devastating effects on forests, woodland wildlife, forest dwellings and even human lives.

When I was working for the Forestry Commission in the 1970s, one year we attended three forest fires in succession.

The largest of the three was in Gwydyr Forest, close to Betws Y Coed in North Wales, and this fire was completely out of control. Forestry squads were drafted in from all over Wales to fight it and they were backed up by both the Fire Brigade and the Royal Engineers with Green Goddess Fire Tenders. Hundreds of people were involved and it took al-

most two weeks to get it under control. With forest fires, the fight takes place on two fronts: the ground fire, which feeds on the combustible deadwood, mosses, grasses and peat found on the forest floor, and then the tree crown fire, which spreads from tree to tree depending on the direction of the wind. This is what makes tackling forest fires extremely difficult and dangerous as the two fires can spread in different directions.

As a young, fit chainsaw operator, my duties were to fell trees in front of the fire to try and create a fire break; the idea was to create a gap wide enough to contain the spread of the crown fire. Sometimes the fire would travel faster than we anticipated and we would be engulfed in smoke, which was absolutely terrifying. I would find myself literally run-

ning for my life, unable to breathe or see properly while wearing full PPE and carrying felling accessories, a fuel combi can and my chainsaw. Hitting clean air was such a relief that I could almost cry – my heart felt like it was trying to burst out of my chest and every breath felt like it was scorching my lungs.

Luckily, I have never attended fires as significant as this since then and there have not been as many big forest fires in the UK in recent years. However, this could all change in the future.

There are factors we are unable to change which could contribute to an increase in forest fires in the coming years.

Climate change will have a massive effect on our forests and there is nothing we can do to reverse this as the Earth's climate system responds





# extreme

slowly to past emissions. Regardless of our future emissions, we are locked in for the next few decades. With climate change comes global warming and this will increase summer droughts, which could lead to a large increase in fires. For example, droughts can make some tree species more susceptible to infestations from insects such as beetles; the warmer climate increases their reproduction cycle, ultimately killing more trees and leaving forests much more combustible. The warmer, dry conditions will also increase the hazard of lightning storms, which have been a natural cause of ignition for many forest fires in the past.

People's lifestyles have changed recently and this has led to an increase in the number of people using the forests for recreation and leisure. This might exacerbate the

problem with accidental and sometimes malicious fires.

Warm dry weather in early spring, just before the growing season begins, is the most hazardous scenario for forest fires, and this is when everyone has to be most vigilant.

If you see smoke coming from a forest or land nearby at any time of the year please don't assume that someone else has reported it; call the emergency services immediately. It is much easier to contain a small fire that has just ignited rather than a full-on forest fire.

Fighting forest fires is a nightmare for the emergency services as lack of water can be an issue and the rough terrain means that many fires have to be fought manually. >>



**The Rosenbauer Polaris Ranger 900EPS EFI 4x4 and 800EPS EFI 6x6 (above) are both fitted with the Poly ATV SL100**





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## >> Bijol MTF 240 Fire Combi Truck

Some manufacturers have been exploring ways to convert off-road vehicles and forestry equipment so that fires can be contained much more quickly.

This October, while visiting Austrofoma (Austria's main forestry exhibition which is held every four years), I spotted the Bijol MTF 240 Fire Combi Truck.

Bijol have used their large forwarder, the BWS 240, and converted it into an off-road fire fighting machine. Band tracks and/or wheel chains can be used to provide added traction and lower the ground pressure when needed. All the components used in this build are to the highest standards available as reliability is a major factor for this type of machine. It has a Deutz six-cylinder 240hp motor and a powerful load sensing hydraulic system with a working pressure of 250 bar. Mounted on the front is a 2.3m wide mulcher capable of dealing with good sized trees for creating fire breaks, while the rear holds two 11.5 tonne Uniforest winches. It can be fitted with either a 5000 or 10,000L water tank and has plenty of storage for other fire fighting equipment, gas masks and hoses.

Another feature is a Palfinger Epsilon 11m reach crane with a tilting king post for steep conditions, which

includes has a fire fighting hose with a 60m water jet attached for precision fire fighting. Fire fighters can use an additional three water hoses simultaneously. A lot of thought has gone into the fine details; for example, the tyres are fire retardant, there is a smoke filter in the cabin to protect the operator, and it has a self-extinguishing system fitted around the entire machine. It has a higher road speed than some other similar sized machines and will achieve 30km/hr. Another clever feature is that it can be remotely driven from outside the cabin. My only concern with this machine was that, for the large part of the year when the risk of fires is non-existent, it would be a lot of money standing idle. I spoke to the people at Bijol and voiced my concerns and they were quick to point out that it is not difficult to remove the fire fighting equipment, facilitating use as a forwarder or clam bunk skidder.

This model was a prototype and Bijol are happy to work with customers to build these machines to their individual requirements. The Bijol, although an excellent machine, may not be practical and is probably far too expensive for some smaller forestry estates.

Other manufacturers have seen this as well and designed much smaller, affordable units which can be trailer or quad mounted.

## **Bijol MTF240 Fire Combi Truck in action**

## Rosenbauer

One such company is Rosenbauer, the world's leading manufacturer of fire fighting equipment and protection. They are an Austrian company with over 150 years history in fire fighting technology and they have a UK base in Yorkshire. Their products include two Poly ATV SL100 based conversions, a four-wheel drive and a six-wheel drive. This type of vehicle is invaluable as many replanted forests have had quad tracks created for re-stocking and fencing. Their low ground pressure, compactness and rapid speed makes them ideal for travelling along grass rides and through standing plantations to help contain the fire.

The Poly systems are independent and, with their own 6ltr compressed air bottle, do not require any external energy or technology. The system is fitted with a 100ltr water tank with a flow rate of 22ltr/min, allowing it to spray at a distance of 16m or a height of 10m. It can spray either water or a foam compound through its 19mm diameter x 40m long hose reel. A fixed or adjustable nozzle is available.

The company uses two models of the Polaris Rangers. The first is the 4WD 900XP EPS EFI, which has a 900cc two-cylinder petrol engine, PVT automatic transmission with high and low speed, and switchable all-wheel drive. It can carry three people including the driver and will reach speeds of 68km/hr.

The 6WD version has an 800cc two-cylinder engine with the same type of transmission and seats but has a lower top speed of 40km/hr.

Perhaps the fires that I attended would not have escalated so dramatically if these vehicles had been available.

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.

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# Supply and demand, demand and supply

by **Andrew Heald**

*“Just to settle it once and for all: Which came first, the chicken or the egg? The egg – laid by a bird that was not a chicken.”*

Neil deGrasse Tyson

I am very lucky to be able to occasionally take time away from my Confor role, and work with WWF International on their New Generation Plantations (NGP) Project. Whether it is Uganda, Uruguay or UK, many of the sustainability challenges facing forestry companies and local communities are very similar.

On a recent visit to Uganda, I was struck by the parallels with the UK and the issues and the need for predictable long term timber supply. When I first visited Uganda in early 2018, the UK timber market was strong and prices for home grown timber were high. In November 2019 the market has moved considerably and we are seeing the full impact of very large scale sanitation felling in parts of Europe to control *Ips ty-pographus*.

The supply and demand puzzle in the forestry sector is a key challenge whether your rotations are ten years in Uganda or 40 years in the UK. People won't plant trees unless there's a reliable future market demand for timber – and people won't invest in sawmills and processing unless there's a reliable future timber supply.

In 1919, the UK Government decided to tackle this conundrum by passing the Forestry Act and founded the Forestry Commission, thereby driving the creation of large-scale plantations directly funded by public money. In 2019, Uganda faces similar challenges with an increasing demand for forest products, but compounded by rapidly disappearing natural forests. In the early 1990s Uganda had 24% forest cover, it is now 8%.

## Unregulated

With a large percentage of the timber market being unregulated it is challenging for legitimate businesses in Uganda to invest and expand. The post-colonial history of East Africa has not been stable and

Uganda's political and population challenges often begin outside its borders, adding risk for investors.

In a country with one of the fastest-growing populations in the world, with a huge demand for timber in construction and whose natural forests are rapidly disappearing, there would seem to be a huge opportunity to develop sawmills and expand the plantation sector.

If we want to support and expand sustainable plantations and a sustainable timber supply chain in Uganda (and the UK), then we need to support the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the supply chain. It is SMEs that will grow much of the timber, harvest the timber, haul the timber, replant the plantations and maintain them, and use the secondary products.

If we can support an economy where these SME have the confidence to invest and grow, then we have some of the key building blocks for a sustainable forest economy. A wide range of small businesses is also more resilient to changes in economic fortune. These SMEs will probably need the 'heft' of a bigger



## MAIN CHALLENGES FOR UGANDA'S FORESTRY SECTOR

**'Informal' timber:** There is a big demand for Ugandan timber in the 'informal' sector – often sold at the roadside without the usual accounting procedures. Timber sold without VAT will be 18% cheaper than identical timber in the formal sector.

**Export ban:** The Ugandan government has imposed a ban on timber exports, to tackle rampant deforestation and encourage investment into Ugandan sawmilling (although timber exports are a minor driver of deforestation, behind clearance for farmland and local charcoal and fuelwood demand). This limits market development for Ugandan companies.

**Data:** Investment in timber processing requires a knowledge and confidence in future timber supply. On my visits to Uganda I have been told that there are 60,000ha of plantations; I've also been told that there are 120,000ha. Any investor needs reliable information onha, location, species and growth rates.

**Standards:** Timber and forest products are usually cut to standard sizes and graded by strength. If an architect or engineer specifies that a roof truss is built with C24 100mm by 50mm timber, then that is what will be supplied. The size of the informal market in Uganda undermines much of the price premium for quality graded timber. There is a role for government and trade associations to more closely regulate timber quality, to level the playing field and improve construction standards.

**Expertise:** Many Ugandans who own plantations aren't forestry specialists. They have been encouraged to plant trees usually through an incentive scheme (from government or other agencies) and are often unaware of how best to market their timber or trends in market prices. Bringing timber to market only occasionally, perhaps once every 10 years, they are not in a strong position to negotiate. Many also lack silvicultural knowledge on how best to manage their investment in plantations.





**Alan Ralph Powell**

Alan Ralph Powell was born on 14 September 1936 in Flintshire, North Wales, the eldest of four children belonging to Ralph and Annie Powell. When Alan was a boy, the family moved from Wales to Manchester. In Manchester, Alan passed his 11+ and attended Burnage Grammar School for Boys. He left in 1953 armed with 6 O' Levels and enough money for a train fare to get to leafy Taunton in Devon to start training for a career in Forestry with the Forestry Commission (FC).



However, on the 25th September 1954, Alan enlisted in the Army, joining the 3rd Battalion of the Parachute Regiment in Aldershot. Whilst in the Paras, he trained in Cyprus and was deployed in the ill-started Suez operation, being one of the lead troops on the assault and capture of the Egyptian Airfield at El Gamil.

After his service in the Paras, Alan left to complete his training with the FC in Taunton, qualifying in July 1959. In 1961, he left the FC and joined the fledgling company Forest Thinnings Ltd.

Alan met his future wife Ruth in Taunton in the summer of 1961 and they married in March 1962. They subsequently had three children. The family moved to the South East of England when Forest Thinnings moved to Alton, Hampshire, finally settling in Four Marks, Hampshire in 1967.

In 1962, Alan showed his vision for the future of Forestry, writing to the head forester of Cowdroy Estate asking to demonstrate a new Hiab loading system mounted on a lorry. Alan later joined forces with Swedish manufactures to develop mechanical harvesting and forwarding machines for the south of England. He provided loans from Forest Thinnings to the contractors to enable them to invest in the new development in machinery. Alan's role in Forest Thinnings progressed to directing their Scottish operations, and he was a key player in developing the export of timber from the UK to other parts of Europe. Forest Thinnings was recognised for the Queen's Award for Export.

Alan worked for Forest Thinnings for over 25 years becoming a respected innovator. He was instrumental in the growth of the business to make it the leading Forestry company in the UK at that time.

Alan was also part of the team that set up the first APF Exhibition (or APF Demo) in 1976 and was an active Demo team member until 2002. He was also chairman of the APF and involved with the FTA and BTMA.

In 1986, he left Forest Thinnings (then part of the Economic Forestry Group, and later Euroforest) and set up Powell Forestry, assisted by his wife, Ruth. He operated as a sole trader until 2012 when his son Neil joined the business to form the company into a partnership. In 2018, Powell Forestry went Limited, and the following year the business merged under a holding Company Land & Forest Ltd. Alan was still working in the company when he suffered a major stroke whilst playing racket ball. He did not recover and passed peacefully on 23 October 2019.

player - like a large plantation company or sawmill (or the government) - to act as a keystone business to give everyone else the confidence to invest and grow.

Many of the challenges in Uganda aren't really forestry challenges: they are business challenges, compounded by operating in a rapidly changing country where regulations are sometimes unevenly applied.

There may be no neat, simple solution. But that doesn't mean there is no way forward, and increased urgency is needed, because the scale and speed of landscape change and forest loss are acute.

A lot is written about the need to take a landscape-scale approach to tackle big issues like deforestation, climate change and sustain-

able development - and that type of thinking is needed in Uganda. That requires different actors within the landscape to work together towards a common vision.

In the UK, in a potential post-Brexit and post-CAP world, with increasing demands for very large-scale forest creation we also need a common vision and for stakeholders to increasingly work together. On the hundredth anniversary of the forestry act, we should perhaps be more grateful that back in 1919 the building blocks were put in place for the dynamic forest industry we have today. In Uganda we know what building blocks we need, the challenge is whether we can simply rely on the 'free market' to pay for those blocks.



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# Pressing the button on multi-purpose forestry

## CASE STUDY

Crofthead feels like the missing piece of a forest jigsaw: in a valley between spruce-covered hills (being harvested and restructured), surrounded by old riparian woodland and undermanaged farm woodlands. The sheltered, temperate climate is there; the woodland ecology is waiting to move in; and the timber extraction routes are in place.

Or Crofthead might be more of a button: being pressed to draw the landscape into the twenty-first century, employing dynamic silviculture to tackle big challenges: resilient forests which rapidly sequester carbon to supply renewable, low-carbon resources. At 18 months old, the site is already visibly 'enriching' in nature, but this is no rewilding project.

The diversity and speed of woodland creation at Crofthead is thanks to four human interventions.

First, species choice. Oak, cherry and hornbeam in a productive mix. Norway spruce to encourage Douglas fir to root firmly. Amphibious red alder giving a hand to spruce in the wet clay. Mimicking Pacific Northwest forests, aspen mingled with conifers to bind soil and fix nitrogen like a farm 'cover crop' between harvests.

Second, quality stock. Cherry bred for timber, quite distinct from branchy, fragile fruiting varieties. Oak and Douglas from three provenances - Scotland, England and France - Andrew MacQueen, Tilhill (left) and Richard Davidson (right) with one of the new oaks planted for timber at Crofthead mingled across the site for climate resilience, and marked in sample plots so that the most successful can be monitored. Improved Scottish birch from Future Trees Trust, already above our heads, competing with improved birch of Scandinavia.

Third, a strong management regime. Professional wildlife management, including for grey squirrels. Short tubes on semi-productive broadleaves will be pushed up as trees grow, to encourage wind resistance. Pruning and subsequently thinning will ensure the productive broadleaves produce quality timber.

Fourth, a clear business plan. The faster-growing conifers will yield regular income to fund management of the Oak and slower growing species into the next generation. While unmanaged broadleaf becomes a liability, a well-managed one begins to grow in value, so that although some timber may not come to market for over a century, the land itself will have a growing timber, carbon and amenity asset value which can be bought and sold.



**Andrew MacQueen, Tilhill (left) and Richard Davidson (right) with one of the new oaks planted for timber at Crofthead**

The real secret to Crofthead is the partnership between Richard Davidson and Andrew MacQueen, who pooled their silvicultural and business knowledge and experience, and passion for trees, to create a hobby woodland, a timber plantation, a biodiversity habitat, and a carbon sink, all from the same trees.

Newsworthy heroic tree planting feats are often either epic solo efforts, or mighty national collaborations. But perhaps in the UK, while there is ample scope for new forestry investment models, the 'bread-and-butter' of the modern, multi-purpose forest will be the creative, efficient, and human owner-manager double-act.

## CROFHEAD FACTS AND FIGURES

**Location:** Dumfries & Galloway, near Moffat

**Area:** 54ha

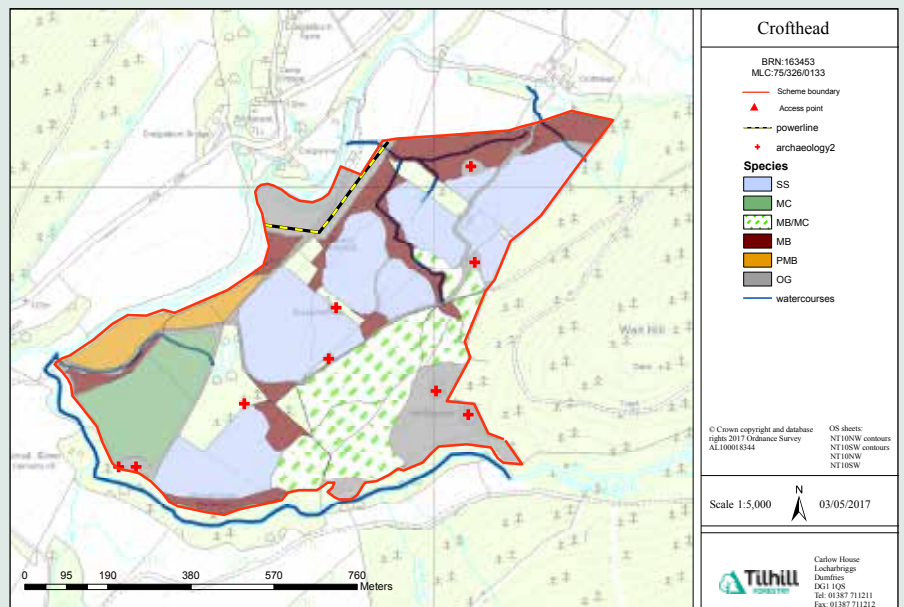
**Owner:** Richard Davidson

**Manager:** Andrew MacQueen, Tilhill

**Planted:** 2018

**Composition:**

- 4.5% productive broadleaf
- 31.5% Sitka spruce (some in mixture)
- 9.5% pure mixed conifer
- 17.5% semi-productive broadleaf
- 20% mixed conifer/broadleaf
- 17% open space





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# Arboriculture is trending – how can we inspire young people to choose forestry?



by **Sean McLaughlin**

In response to the article on 'the forestry workforce of the future' in the August edition of *Forestry & Timber News*, I'd like to share some thoughts.

I'm currently a forestry and arboriculture instructor at Plumpton College but I was previously a hand cutter working alongside a timber harvester and forwarder for a tenant farmer responsible for around 4000 acres in Kent who also worked for The Montreal Estate. As a self-employed forester I also ran a lucrative logging business and during my time running the business I took on unemployed workers from a local charity who needed an opportunity to get back into leading a productive life. I had various people come to work with me, some then going on to find jobs of their own.

This gave me a heart to want to teach others forestry skills and I started to enquire about being an assessor for NPTC, but this is a very difficult field to break into unless you're sponsored. But during my enquiries an opportunity arose at Plumpton College. I love teaching and I have already passed a Level 3 teaching qualification and now I have started a Level 4. I have a real passion to try and inspire fu-

ture generations, especially forestry workers, and I try to tell the students that they not only can be manual workers but have high aspirations, especially with all the opportunities to be had in forestry.

However, it seems that many of the students who I teach aspire to be tree surgeons as it's an obvious source of employment in the south east. This also means that currently our department is very arboriculture heavy with less focus on forestry.

Plumpton College recently hosted the Royal Forestry Society (RFS) and the Forestry Commission who initiated a new scheme for those leaving the Forces could be offered the opportunity to retrain in forestry, helping address the much recognised skills gap that currently exists across the sector. A colleague and I also attended the RFS Skills Day at Shuttleworth College with some of our apprentices.

Since the skills day I've been in contact with John Deere's Country Manager and I'm in discussions to secure a laptop simulator to use at some of the college STEM events and also at the shows we attend (Heathfield Show, South of England Show, Kent Show, Plumpton College Open Day and Bentley Wood fair.) I did enquire if the students could have the opportunity to have a go at showcasing the larger TimberMatic! Simulator but I believe this would be too costly to move to the South East.

In conclusion, I believe Plumpton



College are working hard to improve the forestry education provision via training and industry partnerships but there is still a lot more that could be done. Students, especially based here in the South, can see obvious links to employment in the arboriculture sector and less so in forestry. I am keen to nurture partnerships with forestry organisations and Confor by showcasing forestry to my students to inspire them to pursue careers in the sector. I would be delighted to explore partnership opportunities, please do not hesitate to contact me to explore ideas.

## GET INVOLVED

If you would like to collaborate with Sean and Plumpton College to promote forestry as a career, please get in touch [sean.mclaughlin@plumpton.ac.uk](mailto:sean.mclaughlin@plumpton.ac.uk)



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# Follow the Code

**Roland Stiven**

Timber Transport Forum

One of the more memorable quotes from *Pirates of the Caribbean* is in response to a plea from a captive to follow the pirate's code. The response, said in a suitable pirate drawl, is that "the code is more what you'd call 'guidelines' than actual rules".

Wikipedia is slightly more helpful; "A code of practice can be a document that complements .... laws and regulations to provide detailed practical guidance on how to comply with legal obligations ... and should be followed unless another solution with the same or better ... standard is in place".

The Road Haulage of Round Timber Code of Practice is such a document and the Timber Transport Forum is about to embark on a 5th edition. The first was produced back in 1996 and the most recent in 2012.

The code covers a specific set of forestry and timber related operations involved in getting timber from the forest to the mill. In turn it draws on and tries to distil the essentials from various other laws, regulations and codes of practice covering areas such as Vehicle Construction and Use, Health and Safety, Working at Heights, Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment, Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regula-

tions, Safety of Loads etc, as well as some of our own industry guidance.

Government departments tend to be taciturn when asked for advice on such matters and usually refer you back to the original wording of the regulation or their own generic codes. A recent request to the Department of Transport for details of any amendments to a particular regulation were met with the terse advice to visit the public library! Ultimately, we are the practitioners and only we know the detail of the operations we undertake. So, it is up to our industry to take what advice we can and agree on a set of practical standards and methods of workings that we can assure ourselves and others, comply with the law. We will only know for certain if we got it right if it were to be tested in court and, of course, the aim of the code of practice is that we never are.

I was thinking of such things on the journey back from the Irish Forest Industry Transport Group conference where the boss of a quality haulage company had posed a question to Deirdre Sinnott McFeat of the Irish Health and Safety Authority. He wanted to know how to persuasively respond to the old experienced haulier who, having never lost a log from a load and never had an accident, doesn't see why he should use more straps.

There are various possible responses of course: We can be lucky - but we have all

had close shaves; we can be unlucky and we know of people and situations where people have been hurt or killed. However, there are some fundamentals about transporting timber and we can apply both calculations and industry experience in coming up with a prudent approach. We are trying to set a safe standard as a basis for training, a process we can monitor and evidence to demonstrate to ourselves, our staff and others that we are taking due care. The standard can also provide the basis of a level playing field in which all can compete in delivering quality haulage.

The other related focus of presentations in Ireland was the skills shortage, noting that the average haulier is in their 50s and that more people are retiring than are passing their HGV licenses. Ireland is just about to double its harvested timber volume in 10 years and already there are lorries parked up for want of a driver. The situation is not dissimilar in Britain.

The big challenge for us all is to create a workplace that young people want to join and stay in. Work that is interesting, reasonably rewarded, well equipped, safe, not stressful and, for those that want it, has scope for advancement.

A draft of the 5th edition of the Code of Practice should be out for your discerning review in time for Christmas - if you are not being distracted by the Black Pearl.

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# A story from the past

**T**he best loved Sunday School story in Wales is about Mary Jones who, as a 15-year-old girl in 1800, walked barefoot along the tracks and over the hills from her home at the foot of Cadair Idris to the town of Bala to buy a Bible. She had been saving up for at least six years and finally had enough money to set out on a very long day's journey to go to the home of Rev. Thomas Charles to obtain the treasure she sought. I've known these details since childhood and a few weeks ago visited for the first time the remote village of Llanfihangel-y-pennant where the remains of the tiny cottage where Mary grew up with her mother (her father died when she was five) are preserved and the story commemorated. In the picture you can see the memorial, and in the background a big beech, some sycamores and a patch of unthinned Scots pine and larch to the left.

My visit to what is left of Mary's cottage set me thinking of what her surroundings would have been like 200+ years ago. And this was brought into sharp focus when reviewing for ICF's Chartered Forester the fascinating book, *Trees in England - management and disease since 1600* by Williamson, Barnes and Pillatt. (I apologise to myself and everyone else who is Welsh or of Welsh extraction for citing from a book entitled, 'Trees in England', but the silvicultural parallels are surely there!).

What Williamson et al do so well through their detailed and exhaustive research of estate records, archives, maps and contemporary accounts is to show how widespread both coppicing and pollarding used to be in the 17th and 18th Centuries. Every field would have many hedgerow trees that were regularly pollarded for sticks and fuel - by 'many' I mean around 20 per hectare. Every hedgerow would be full of pollards to the point of complaints from farmers that their crops were shaded and interfered with. Indeed, around three-quarters of all trees on farms were pollards. From the 1780s, the authors relate how a decline began and such trees were lost from farms and timber production, limited as it was, was gradually transferred to the new plantations that began to be established.

Often in this piece I have urged readers to get to



know their woodland's silvicultural history, to take time to learn how what we have today has come about. I wonder how many surviving hedgerow pollards still display their now long-since deceased use? Huge multi-branched crowns emanating from two or three metres above ground is one giveaway.

But back to Mary Jones: I am sure her scenery would be very different from that of today. One of her jobs to earn a few farthings in saving up for a Bible was gathering firewood. And I must own up too: the Rev. Thomas Charles of Bala, to whom she went to buy a Bible, is my ancestor, my four greats grandfather. Today, you can have lovely coffee and Welsh cakes and visit a modern visitor centre, 'Mary Jones World', at the old St Bueno's Church, Llanycil, just outside Bala. And you don't have to walk 26 miles to get there.

I remains for me to wish readers Happy Christmas or perhaps I should say, Nadolig Llawen.



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Every year, wildfires destroy vast areas of semi-arid regions. As of early November 2019, over 100,000 hectares of land were burned in California alone, according to Cal Fire and the US Forest Service. This summer, the Guardian reported that “Spain battled biggest wildfires in 20 years immense amounts of forest to fire each year.

Higher than average temperatures and periods of drought are increasingly causing wildfires in the UK as well. On page 60, Rab Easton advises the forestry sector on how machinery can be adapted to allow for a quick response in case of wild fires.

The photo shows a group of firefighters performing a burn out operation in a shaded fuelbreak at Kenai National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. Over five days, the fire grew to over 80,000ha. Pre-constructed fuelbreaks provided an opportunity for firefighters to successfully defend.

Source: Flickr, US Fish & Wildlife Service

#### Want to see your picture here?

Forestry in Pictures is a regular feature in FTN. For every issue, we select the most impactful photograph sent by a reader. If you have a photo you would like to see published here, please send your file to [Stefanie.kaiser@confor.org](mailto:Stefanie.kaiser@confor.org). Please include your name, brief description of yourself and the picture and a credit. Photos should relate to forestry and timber and be of high-quality (minimum resolution 300dpi). Exceptional pictures might be considered for the front cover of a future FTN issue. *By submitting a picture to Forestry in Pictures you give Confor permission to use the file for non-commercial purposes in Forestry and Timber News or the Confor website. Photos will always be credited.*

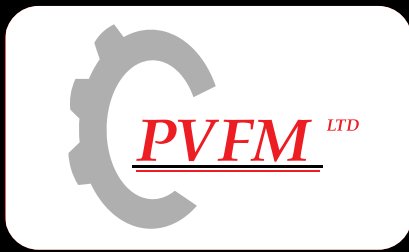
## COMING UP IN FEBRUARY – GET INVOLVED

In February, we will run our traditional feature on Forest management and diversification, plus a feature on Human Resources. Please get in touch by the end of December if you would like to submit an article or news item for either of the two.

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.

Confor members, send us your company’s news updates!





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*Merry Christmas & Happy New Year*



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