FORESTRY & TIMBER NEWS

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HUMAN RESOURCES

FORESTRY MANAGEMENT & DIVERSIFICATION

Confor
Promoting forestry and wood

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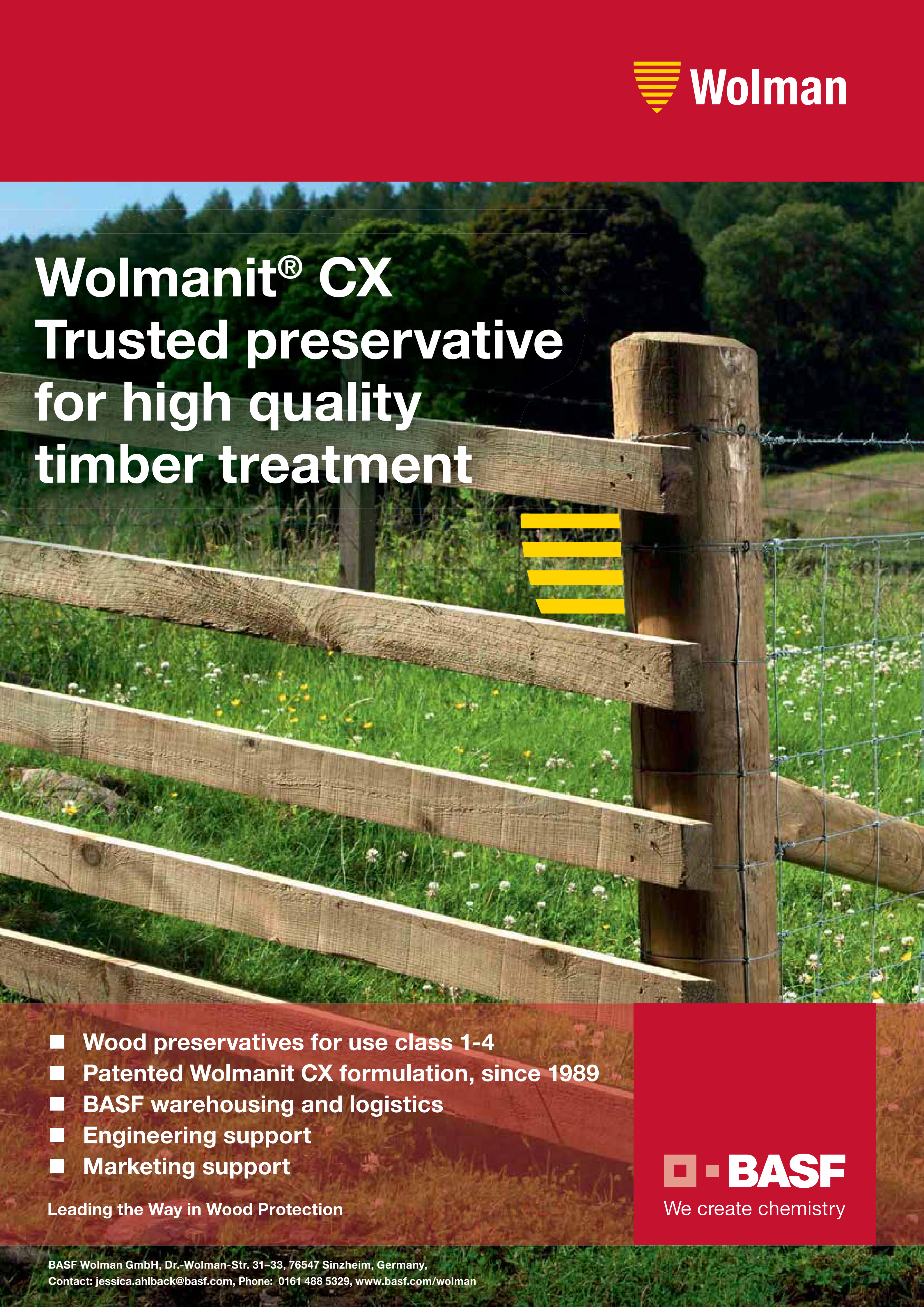
An international group of chainsaw users attending a technical demo at a Husqvarna product launch in Sweden.
Photo: S Kaiser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The year we could make a difference

STUART GOODALL CHIEF EXECUTIVE, CONFOR

It's an over-used cliché to talk about the importance of the coming year, but 2020 may just live up to its billing.

The UK Government is gearing up to make unprecedented funding available for forestry in England, especially tree planting and possibly nursery and seed supply, and it has signalled to the devolved administrations a desire to work with them – code for additional funding?

COP26 will take place in Glasgow in November, shining a strong spotlight on climate change. We're approaching the Scottish Government to run an event on UK trees and timber designed to increase the pressure for action across all four countries.

Wood for Good is developing a promotional campaign built around its registered collective mark 'Wood Co$_2$ts Less'. The aim is to unite the forestry and timber sector around common messages promoting greater use of wood.

At the same time, we're watchful of a potential backlash. Popular and news media reporting has been on the whole positive about the need for more trees, but the signs are there. Farmers are challenging the need to move away from grazing animals. Some environmental interests are criticising tree planting for its use of plastic tree shelters and are calling for rewilding or natural regeneration alone to establish new woodland.

Confor has developed a number of links into the media and our networking with key groups and people has come a long way in recent years. That has taken time and resource, and we need to maintain that activity, if only to avoid going backwards. In that vein, I was heartened to read that The Woodland Trust have publicly recognised the need to plant more productive woodland and use more wood in its high-profile call for action in January to tackle the climate and nature emergencies.

I wrote this article while travelling back from London after the launch of Committee on Climate Change report on land use. It makes stark reading and has clear recommendations – trees and timber are firmly in there, and governments should be listening. However, there is a proposal to raise funding for new planting from a new carbon trading mechanism based on a levy of polluting businesses, such as airlines.

For me, there is a danger that placing the onus on carbon trading will produce unintended consequences. I have already warned against 'charismatic carbon' where businesses only want to plant native woodland and do it near communities – they are more interested in the perceived PR benefits for their business than offsetting carbon.

The report also highlights locking up carbon in wood products (something we lobbied them very strongly on), but then it lacks detail on how that will be stimulated.

Clearly the picture is mainly one of 'work in progress'. We need to keep making the case for action and advising on what that action should be... and push on in 2020!

www.confor.org.uk

'Get tree planting done': delivering on the rhetoric

David Lee asks whether or not the new Conservative Government can live up to its positive rhetoric

Boris Johnson and the Conservative Party won the General Election by promising to Get Brexit Done. With a stonking majority, they can now deliver on that pledge, but they will also come under fierce pressure to deliver on manifesto commitments - and that includes a promise to Get Tree Planting Done.

For the first time in modern politics, trees were an important subject of an election campaign, with all parties promising to ramp up existing woeful planting rates in England.

The Conservative Party pledge was 30,000 hectares of new woodland creation (or, as they seem to prefer, 75,000 acres), to be delivered "by the end of the next parliament". Assuming two full five-year terms (a big assumption after three general elections in less than five years, but much more likely with a majority government in place), that would take us to December 2029.

But will the Conservatives turn words on paper into trees in the ground - and are they serious about meeting these planting targets?

The available evidence suggests grounds for optimism. Barely had we shaken off our New Year hangovers that Environment Secretary Theresa Villiers was talking trees at the Oxford Farming Conference (OFC). It's worth looking carefully at what she said:

"I very much hope we can engage the knowledge and expertise of our farmers as we deliver our big promises on trees.

"This was the first election where there was a bidding war between the parties on tree planting. Our manifesto commits us to stepping up planting across the UK to reach up to 75,000 acres a year by the end of this Parliament.

"Supported by our £640 million Nature for Climate Fund, we will overhaul our approach to tree-planting and in the spring we'll launch our consultation on the English Tree Strategy.

"I urge you to take up whichever tree offers – the one which fits your business best … whether it's woodland creation grants or the Woodland Carbon Guarantee."

The language is positive - "big promises", "stepping up planting", "overhaul our approach" - and the specific mention of the 'bidding war' and different funding pots suggests the commitment is truly there to try to change things for the better.

Mantra

We are in a very different world from 2015/16 when Forestry Minister Thérèse Coffey constantly repeated, without much conviction, the mantra that 11 million trees would be "planted in the lifetime of this parliament" (theoretically five years). This was a mere rollover target from what was planted in 2010-2015, with no clear link to policy objectives and no obvious roadmap to get there.

Four key ingredients for planting

1. **Strong political leadership:** Fergus Ewing MSP provided this in Scotland by making a firm personal commitment to tree planting and driving forward the agencies needed to make it happen. Lord Goldsmith's enthusiasm and energy suggests he might do the same in England.

2. **Link tree planting targets to wider policy objectives:** Until the 2019 election, UK tree planting targets existed very much in a vacuum, with no clear policy rationale. This has changed, with climate change mitigation repeatedly highlighted as the main reason for planting trees, following Scotland's lead. As a result, environmental organisations like Friends of the Earth have focused more on tree planting, starting to create the kind of broad coalition needed to make a real change.

3. **Partnership between industry, government and agencies:** political leadership in Scotland has gone hand-in-hand with a pragmatic approach, including listening carefully to what the industry says is achievable. We hope this is replicated in England, with industry playing a central role in new Regional Forestry Partnerships.

4. **Simplifying processes for planting applications and approvals:** All the above will have no impact if systems are so complex and timescales so long that those who want to plant trees are put off. The Mackinnon Review has kicked off improvements to the Scottish system and a similar approach is needed in England, plus a change in mindset, where we think how to create an environment where the presumption is to plant, not find reasons not to plant.

Tree planting in England, Scotland & Wales 2010-2019 (in hectares)

Since then, Confor has worked hard with Dr Coffey's successors, first David Rutley MP - who backed our drive for greater planting in Northumberland enthusiastically - and then Zac Goldsmith, who was challenged by our CEO Stuart Goodall to pick up the baton and run with it, which he did. His promise of a new 'Northumberland Forest', and more significantly the creation of a Northumberland Forest Partnership, was the most eye-catching forestry announcement of his pre-election stint, but arguably far more significant was his reassuring call, in early November, to "plant trees now", with funds to be made available.

The language in a Defra news release was as positive as we have heard from a Minister in a very long time: "I want to reassure you that support for tree planting and woodland creation will continue to be part of this government's agenda. There is no need for concern about how woodland created now will be treated under Environmental Land Management (ELM) in the future and certainly no reason to delay tree planting. To respond to the climate emergency, we need you to plant trees now."

It's worth noting the emphasis on responding to the climate emergency and planting trees now - suggesting a sense of urgency which has been notably lack- >>

Five key Confor priorities for 2020

1. Work closely with ministers and officials across UK to lay the groundwork for delivering the 30,000 hectare target, including future nursery supply;
2. Get the message across that this can't happen without productive planting at scale;
3. Create private sector-led partnerships to deliver planting in Northumberland and then elsewhere;
4. Continue to play a central role in shaping ELMs;
5. Work hard on the other key planks of our election manifesto - urging the Government to support more effective management of existing woods and use more home-grown timber.

>> ing in forestry policy in recent years. The table shows the woeful planting figures in England (and Wales), while Scotland races ahead - planting 84% of the trees in the whole of the UK in 2018/19.

So how optimistic can we be that the positive language can be translated into action, to set us on the road to that annual 30,000 hectare planting target?

The fact that Zac Goldsmith is back as Forestry Minister is not without controversy, as he has been elevated to the House of Lords after losing his London seat. However, the decision to keep him in post looks positive for our industry, as his energy and enthusiasm for trees was notable before the election. Confor chief executive Stuart Goodall met him last autumn and has secured early meetings with Lord Goldsmith and senior officials - with a focus on discussing, in detail, how to push planting rates up.

Northumberland is an important starting-point as there is clear interest - and opportunity - from a wide range of groups to deliver significant new planting there, and to establish a model to be replicated elsewhere in England. The Goldsmith announcement in September 2019 suggested the first stage of planting in the county would consist of a million trees, mainly on public sector land - with planting starting later this year and finishing in 2024.

There are some interesting and important questions raised by the Conservative Party manifesto which need answering quickly:

1. Why did it equate 30,000 hectares of new planting to only 30 million trees? This implies a density of only 1000 trees per hectare, when 2000 is much more standard for modern, mixed-species forestry. Without including a decent percentage of conifers in large-scale planting schemes, it's hard to see how targets can be met.

2. What does the intriguing promise to "work with Devolved Administrations to achieve this goal" mean in the context of planting targets? Could the UK Government pay the other countries to plant trees on its behalf?

Engagement

Confor will work hard to get this early stage planting moving quickly, while seeking to create an industry-led Northumberland Forestry Partnership to develop longer-term plans and engage all interested parties - including local residents, farmers, landowners, environmental groups and the forestry and wood-using industry. Explaining carefully what is planned to local people and working with them to deliver planting is vital after the lessons learned by the FIZ project in Cumbria.

In that vein, Stuart Goodall organised a very successful visit to Wallshield in Northumberland for the local National Farmers Union committee and staff team in December to see a recent productive planting scheme. There was real positivity and interest, and a desire to work with Confor to learn more and to engage with a local Partnership.

If a successful forestry partnership can be created in Northumberland, the partnership model could be adapted in other parts of England to deliver planting in a structured, collaborative way. Confor will argue industry must be at the heart of this partnership, as it has been in Scotland, where 90 per cent of new planting in 2018/19 was done by the private sector.

It is important to look at what has worked in Scotland and how that might help drive up planting in England. There are arguably four key areas: strong political leadership; linking planting targets to wider policy objectives, especially climate change mitigation; a genuine partnership between the industry, government and agencies; and simplifying processes for planting applications and approval (see panel 1).

As Confor drives progress in all these areas, the clock is ticking to develop ELMs for a post-Brexit world. Confor's National Manager for England, Caroline Harrison, is leading our efforts to ensure the wide-ranging benefits of forestry and wood are fully considered and rewarded at the heart of ELMs as we shift to a 'public money for public good' funding model. The publication of the Agriculture Bill promises a new system which will treat forestry fairly, as opposed to the Common Agricultural Policy, which discriminated against planting trees.

There is also the delayed Tree Strategy to consider, and we understand the consultation will now begin in the Spring. Confor will engage at every stage to ensure what emerges delivers meaningful outcomes and commitments rather than platitudes.

There is much to be done, but for the first time in decades, it feels the stars might be aligned for forestry and wood. There is a more positive attitude towards planting across the political spectrum and an understanding that the climate change imperative means we must plant far more trees - and quickly. Arguably, this is the best time in the last 30 years to Get Planting Done.

SNP backs Confor planting targets

Confor's long-term planting targets have been backed by the Scottish National Party, with a pledge to plant 36 million trees every year in Scotland by 2030 to tackle the climate emergency.

Fergus Ewing MSP, Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Deidre Brock, MP for Edinburgh North and Leith and party spokesperson on Environment, Food and Rural Affairs at Westminster, signed the pledge with Confor CEO Stuart Goodall.

Planting figures across the UK to the end of March 2019 showed 84 per cent of new woodland creation happening in Scotland. The annual planting target in Scotland of 10,000 hectares (ha) - roughly 20 million trees - was surpassed, with 11,200ha of new woodland planted - while other areas of the UK fell well short of their targets.

Confor's targets, set last April, include 18,000ha of new planting annually in Scotland by 2030 - 36 million trees at a planting density of 2000 trees per hectare.

Stuart Goodall said: "I'm delighted the SNP has shown long-term commitment to new planting by signing up to our targets."


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Andy Leitch to join Confor in April

Confor has now signed a contract with Andy Leitch to take over from David Sulman as Deputy Chief Executive with the same key roles and responsibilities. Andy will join Confor In April. He brings a wealth of experience and knowledge.

Andy has been involved in the industry for nearly 35 years and is well respected for his strategic perspective as well as his ambition and determination for growth and success in the forest and wood-based industries.

For the last 12 years, Andy has been based in Silvan House (working for Scottish Forestry and latterly Scottish Enterprise) where he has focussed principally on working with industry at a strategic level.

In that time, Andy's responsibilities included managing the Strategic Timber Transport Fund facilitating over £20m of support to the industry over five years, managing a three-year £1.5m programme at Edinburgh Napier University delivering continued research in wood science, new wood product development for construction and the promotion of timber as a construction material.

Andy's work promoting timber as a sustainable construction material has been recognised by the construction/architecture communities and he was recently awarded an Honorary Fellowship to the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland.

In his role with Scottish Forestry, Andy worked with senior politicians in Scottish Government, senior management in the economic development agencies and other public sector organisations, and established successful working relationships with senior managers not only from the forest industry, but other associated industries such as construction and biotechnology. He has also acted as a special advisor on Forest Industries to Scotland's economic development agencies which has enabled the sector to access funding for various company and sector support.

Andy is known outside of Scotland for his work with the Wood for Good Campaign and close working with Wood Knowledge Wales, TRADA, the Timber Trade Federation, Wood Protection Association and Structural Timber Association.

Andy's current and previous roles include:

- Chair of the Strategic Integrated Research in Timber (SIRT) programme at Napier University
- Chair of internal stakeholder group for Forest Research Tree Breeding and Timber Properties research programmes on behalf of GB partners.
- Executive to Scottish Forest and Timber Technologies (SFTT) Industry Leadership group
- Chair of the SFTT ILG Skills Group and Forest Machine Operators Development Group
- Managed the Timber Development
- Programme which supports/co-funds research and development activities that add value to Scotland's forest and wood based sector.

In addition, Andy has been part of:

- Expert Group for Timber Trade Statistics
- UK Timber Grading Committee
- Active member of the Wood for Good Campaign Committee
- Represent UK Government on EU Expert Committee for Forest Based Industries
- Forest Value (European research programme aimed at adding value to wood supply chains) Steering Group
- Scottish Biorefinery Working Group
- Mass Timber commercialisation project steering group
- Materials Library Stakeholder Group
- Lantra Stakeholder Group
- Sitka spruced genomics project Impact Advisory Group
- Scottish School of Forestry Advisory Group.

Andrew Heald moves on to consultancy roles

Andrew Heald will be leaving Confor at the end of February to become a full-time consultant, working initially with WWF International on their New Generation Plantations platform, and with Edinburgh University's sustainability team as their forestry advisor.

With David and Dorothy Sulman having retired and Andy Leitch scheduled to join Confor at the beginning of April, it is a time of change in the Confor team. The intention is to secure temporary cover for Andrew and to let Andy bed in for a few months before defining the role to replace Andrew and begin the process of recruitment.

Andrew joined Confor in February 2014 as a consultant and became the full time Technical Director six months later. In his time with Confor, Andrew's key work areas have included certification, forestry statistics, plant health issues and representing members in Northern Ireland.

Thanking Andrew for all his work with Confor, CEO Stuart Goodall said, "Andrew has been a valued and valuable member of the Confor team. He brought to the team a wide knowledge of practical forestry matters and experience in working with topical areas like certification and sustainability, as well as community engagement. I will be sorry to see Andrew leave, but pleased that his time with Confor has helped him prepare for the exciting opportunities he's now embarking on."

In the short-term, Confor will call on temporary external support and Andrew's key responsibilities will be picked up by Andy Leitch and colleagues in the Confor team, with Caroline Ayre taking a lead on plant health and biosecurity.

While Andrew may be moving on from Confor, he has assured us that he will continue to tweet about forestry, trees and timber!

Confor Business Plan 2020

Our business plan for 2020 has been developed with, and signed off by, the Board. The following is a summary of the priorities and key work areas.

Member and business priorities for 2020

As a members organisation, Members must always be seen to be at the heart of Confor and their continuing support can never be taken for granted. In 2020, Confor will aim to improve communication with Members alongside representing and promoting their interests and providing valued member services. This will mean ensuring Confor staff are accessible to Members through regular regional meetings and by phone and email to support with relevant technical advice and information as required. There will also be a review of the Board to ensure that Confor is seen truly as being the voice of the whole Forest Industry, delivering value to all parts of the supply chain and across the UK.

Reflecting its increased scope and scale, Confor will ensure through a review that it has strong financial management in place. A review of the larger company subscription mechanism will ensure that Confor provides value for money for these Members following the recent merger with the UK Forest Products Association (UKFPA), and in 2021 this review will be extended to embrace all Members - developing an integrated and fair subscription mechanism.

In 2020, Confor will seek to retain the trust and support of those businesses who joined Confor from the former UKFPA, particularly important given the retirement of David and Dorothy Sulman at the end of December 2019. Confor will also strengthen its membership engagement generally through improved communication and a new integrated Member database and website, the latter will feature additional functionality for Members. These developments will support continued improved performance on Member retention, and aid with further Member recruitment, especially, it is intended, of woodland owners.

As well as adapting to the retirement of David and Dorothy, Confor will also see its Technical Director, Andrew Heald leave at the end of February to take up a new role with Edinburgh University. Therefore, the internal focus in the first half of 2020 will be to bed in new systems and people, while keeping a focus on improved Member engagement and on delivering the campaigns.

Led by the Board, Confor has identified the following priorities:

- Securing future wood supply
- Changing attitudes through offering Climate Change solutions
- Better industry statistical Information
- Plant health
- Skills training
- Growing and promoting markets for timber
- Aiding the economic development of the industry

These priorities will be expanded on in Confor's campaigns with appropriate stretch targets and clarity on what will be delivered in-year and what will likely continue beyond end-2020, as well as greater detail on what will be delivered, how and by when.

Confor operates in a dynamic political and timber market environment and aims to retain a focus on supporting Member businesses through advice, information, lobbying and promotion.

The full business plan is available to read on the Confor website (under About Confor/ This is Confor)


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CONFOR EVENTS CALENDAR 2020

NATIONAL

CONFOR ANNUAL DINNER AND AWARDS
25 February
Sheraton Grand Hotel & Spa, Edinburgh
Confor's annual dinner event and awards ceremony will feature three additional new awards this year: for a Future Leader, for Changing Attitudes and for Innovation and research.

TIMBER TRANSPORT CONFERENCE
20 March
The North Lakes Hotel & Spa, Penrith
This year's Volvo-sponsored conference is held in the North of England with a focus on forestry expansion to diversify land use, sustain the timber industries and address the Climate Emergency.

ROYAL HIGHLAND SHOW (forestry day)
19 June
Royal Highland Centre, Ingliston, Edinburgh
www.royalhighlandshow.org

ROYAL WELSH SHOW
20 – 23 July
Royal Welsh Showground, Llanelwedd
The largest event for forestry and woodland in Wales for 2020.
https://rwas.wales

APF EXHIBITION
24-26 September
Ragley Estate, Alcester
Confor's flagship event and the UK's largest forestry, woodland, arboriculture, fencing and biomass show.
www.apfexhibition.co.uk

Below: APF is Confor's flagship event – and the UK's largest forestry show

REGIONAL SPRING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

SCOTLAND

Scottish Forest and Timber Technologies meetings - spring

North-east
5 March
Thainstone House Hotel, Inverurie

South
11 March
Sure Queens Hotel, Lockerbie

Central
17 March
Stirling Court Hotel

ENGLAND

Regional meetings

Southeast committee
13 February
Deers Hut, Liphook, Hampshire

East committee
27 February
Corby, Northamptonshire

Southwest committee, Devon & Cornwall
11 March and 27 May
Great Fulford, Devon

North committee
21 May
FC offices, Penrith, Cumbria

Marches committee
May (date TBC)
Mascall Centre, Ludlow

Southwest committee, Wessex
May (date TBC)

CPD events

North members event
23 March
Warren and Lalbuss Woods, Cumbria
Topic: Practical management of forestry and wildlife

Southwest members event
27 April
Barton Farm, Witheridge
Topic: Small woodland silviculture, resilience and innovation with a visit to a local arboretum

Southeast members event
May
Gravetye Manor, Sussex
Topic: Climate change resilience, disease and trees in the landscape

Marches members event
Details to follow

WALES

Confor Wales Committee

19 February
Royal Welsh Showground
10 June
Venue TBC

CPD events

Increasing the value of your timber
24 March
Ruthin
Institute of Chartered Foresters & Confor

Understanding welfare units
March 2020
Venue TBC

EPS for contractors
Spring 2020
Venue TBC

Writing site specific risk assessments
Spring 2020
Venue TBC

Machinery checks and records (PUWER)
22 July
Venue RWAS

Modern methods of working
Summer 2020
Venue TBC

More info on Confor events at
www.confor.org.uk/resources/events

Q&A

with **Mike Seddon,** chief executive Forestry England

Mike started his career studying forestry at Aberdeen University. He then joined the Forestry Commission as forester working in the Exeter and East Devon beat, then moved into grants and regulations work. A move to the role of head of recreation in the New Forest and Dorset was followed by secondment on forestry policy in Defra, London, supporting Ministers to sponsor the National Forest and working on community forestry.

He then spent 12 years as deputy surveyor of the New Forest and South England Forest Management Director before being seconded to support the Bishop of Liverpool and the Independent Panel on Forestry (IPF) to create their recommendations following the 2010 'sell-off row'. Bringing the IPF's vision into being, guiding operational performance and preparing Forest Enterprise for its metamorphosis into Forestry England have been areas of focus for Mike as Chief Operating Officer, prior to taking up the Forestry England Chief Executive role in August 2019.

What excites you most about taking the reins at Forestry England?
I'm excited by the opportunity to influence how the more than 250,000 hectares of forests in our care can do the best they can for people and the environment. My forestry career has been influenced by the colleagues I have been privileged to work with, so my role gives me a unique position from which to support the development of future generations for forestry people.

You worked with the Independent Panel on Forestry, how has its report shaped forestry in England?
At the heart of the Independent Panel on Forestry's report was the urge for society as a whole to value woodlands for the full range of benefits they provide. Since then, societal, policy and government drivers have, I think, led to a much greater appreciation of this value. This was clear in the manifestos for the recent Westminster elections and drives Forestry England's own natural capital account.

But this remains an area where more action is needed and there are excellent opportunities for this in the 25-Year Environment Plan and the developing England Land Management Scheme. As I mention in my answer to question 5, there is a way to go to mobilise society to support sustainable forest management and create the woodland culture envisaged by the Panel.

More practically, the Panel was looking for more woods in management, ready access to woods to provide health benefits for society, woodlands to be part of a coherent and resilient ecological network at a landscape scale, a stronger supply chain and better promotion of wood products, and evolution of the Forestry Commission including cross-border capability.

There's been progress across all these areas: more woodland area is in management, there are forestry investment zone pilots, commitments to expand forests and create resilient landscapes, Grown in Britain is established, and the Forestry Commission governance has changed including agreement with Welsh and Scottish governments about cross-border capability and investment in forest research.

Given the enormous climate change challenge and the big roles trees and woods can play in mitigation, is this a time for revolution in Forestry England?
Yes, in the sense that a revolution is about 'a turn around' or a complete change in something. For the last 20 years or so Forestry England has not been regularly active in creating new woodland and expanding the nation's forests. That's changing as we use income from our trading activities to buy land for new productive, accessible and biodiverse woodlands. We stand ready to play our part alongside private owners, NGOs and others in the public sector to ramp this woodland creation level up substantially and contribute to government commitments to net zero.

Forestry England is the second biggest individual supplier of wood in the UK. How do you see that role developing over the next 5-10 years?
100 years ago, the Forestry Commission was formed to create a strategic reserve of timber for the nation. Since then, woodland cover in England has doubled as a result of the efforts of the Forestry Commission and others. So growing and supplying timber has, and continues to be, at the heart of what we do. Sustainably managed, productive forests are the foundation on which £26.1bn of natural capital benefits are delivered today from the land managed by Forestry England. The nation's forests are at a mature stage of production, so we will continue as one of the biggest suppliers of wood in the UK. In the context of increasing global demand for timber, plus the climate emergency, it's foreseeable that long-term carbon sequestration will further affect the market.

Remember too, as well as being the second biggest individual supplier of wood in the UK, we are also England's largest provider of outdoor recreation, are proud of the excellent conservation work we do

> “I’d love Forestry England to be a household name for all the right reasons!”

and business opportunities we offer to national and local businesses. It’s this unique position we hold that gives us so many opportunities to promote forests, forestry and timber to so many people.

What do you see as the biggest challenges facing forestry in the UK, and how can we best tackle them?
Short term, and related to aspirations to see a much higher rate of woodland creation, the industry will need a robust, biosecure supply of tree seed and plants, including a diversity of species and provenances that are fit for the future climate and end product needs of the country. In the medium to longer term, I’d highlight two challenges. Firstly, a likely shortfall in adaptable forestry skills, from practical to managerial. Secondly, a growing need to tell the story of sustainable forest management to get understanding and support from a society that is readily able to mobilise opposition to tree felling through social media and other channels.

Forestry England is investing in improvements to seed supply, modernising nursery production, supporting apprenticeships and trainees, and in telling the story of contemporary forestry. This is a work in progress and there are opportunities to work with others in the industry more closely to have a greater impact.

What advice would you give to someone starting out in a forestry career?
Persevere. My school days are a distant memory but I distinctly remember the first career discussion I had with my form teacher Miss Russell when I said I wanted to work in forestry. She was blunt in telling me how hard this would be, but then pointed me towards the O-level choices I’d need to make. The other piece of advice I’d offer is to remain open to job possibilities; contemporary management of forests involves a wide range of roles as my own biog illustrates.

Where do you see Forestry England in 30 years’ time?
I’d love Forestry England to be a household name for all the right reasons! And if that’s to be the case then we must connect more people with forests. This means working at the cutting edge of our industry; constantly evolving our offer and the products associated with that; working efficiently with resilient finances, and a being a great employer.

PERSONAL INTERESTS

Favourite film/ TV show?
A fistful of dollars

Favourite music?
Varied but I’m a fan of The Cure

Favourite tree?
Douglas fir

Favourite forest walk?
Alongside the River Severn in the Hafren forest, mid Wales

Favourite holiday destination?
Switzerland

Favourite sport?
None – my bucket list includes bobsleigh

What are you most likely to be found doing when not working?
Trying to grow things in an allotment

Using biochar to tackle climate change

Biochar information event, 25 April
Say it with Wood, Herefordshire

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time, and so Herefordshire based forestry and timber company, Say it with Wood, have been exploring the different solutions British woodlands can offer.

One of the best methods for carbon sequestration is using biochar to build soil carbon. In celebration of this wonderful material Say it with Wood (SIWW) will be holding a Biochar information event on the 25 April 2020.

Biochar is biomass heated in the absence of oxygen to make charcoal. When charged with nutrients and used in the soil it becomes a perfect habitat for soil mycorrhizal fungi, which provide plants with essential nutrients in exchange for carbohydrates. Aly May, partner at SIWW explains," We are very excited about biochar, many of our customers care deeply about sustainability, and adding biochar as a product is a logical step. Using charcoal in soil firstly locks that carbon away for thousands of years. It regulates water and nutrients in the soil, but it's mycorrhizas that do the magic. They have a symbiotic relationship with plants - as the plants flourish from easy access to nutrients, so the Mycorrhizas use the carbohydrate from the plants to grow underground. Unlike other soil additives, it doesn't break down and the effects get better over time."

Say it with wood are welcoming anyone wishing to learn more to attend the information day at their Herefordshire premises.

The day will cost £20, food and refreshments included. Booking is highly recommended. For more information about biochar, or to book a place on the day, please email, **info@sayitwithwood.co.uk** or call 07958345833

The day will cover:
- Introduction to Biochar and the many benefits to society, the environment and the importance of soil carbon.
- A demonstration of different methods of making biochar.
- Demonstrations and talks on different uses of biochar for agricultural, horticultural and domestic situations.

Scotland's Finest Wood Awards open for entries

Scotland's Finest Woods Awards is celebrating its 35th anniversary with a call to tree-lovers to help shine a light on the country's most wonderful woods and finest forests.

Two **Farm Woodland Awards** return for 2020 - including Scottish Woodlands' Young People (Farm Woodland Award), won in 2019 by the outstanding Lynn Cassells and Sandra Baer for Lynbreck Croft, Grantown on Spey. The overall Farm Woodland Award was won in 2019 by John Drysdale and Kieran Kelly for Kilrie Farm, Kirkcaldy.

The **Crown Estate Schools' Trophy** returns, won in 2019 by Earthtime Forest School Nursery in Duffus, Moray, where pupils can spend their entire session playing and learning in the woods.

Earthtime and runner-up Levenmouth Academy in Buckhaven, Fife - where pupils have helped to plant 8,000 trees beside the school - were presented with their Awards by Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon MSP.

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

Entries must be submitted by 31 March 2020. Full details: **www.sfwa.co.uk**

Pupils at Levenmouth Academy, runners up in the Crown Estate Schools Trophy category in last year's Awards.

Confor forestry dinner and awards 2020

25 February, Sheraton Grand Hotel & Spa Edinburgh

As well as celebrating the UK's highest annual award to an individual for Distinguished Service to Forestry - we are introducing three new awards:

- Future Forestry Leader Award
- Changing Attitudes Award
- Innovation and Research Award

SELLING OUT EVENT – BOOK YOUR TICKET NOW!

Details and booking on www.confor.org.uk/resources/events

CONFOR WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Brandl Jonas, Devon
Mike Gardner, Devon
Orri Stevens, Devon
Lord Roborough, Plymouth
Thomas Bartlett, Gwynedd
Oakover Nurseries Ltd, Kent

Climbing the forestry

Douglas Mathison (31), founder of young company Agriforest in the Scottish Borders, bridges the gap between arboriculture, forestry and farming. **Stef Kaiser** learns about a tree surgeon's reason to choose forestry as a career.

Founded in 2016, Douglas describes his business as a "client-focused timber harvesting & forest management company". He has managed to bring a people-oriented tree surgeon perspective to commercial forestry and targets mainly farmers as clients. At present, Douglas employs two regular harvesting contractors, two haulage firms, and one full time member of staff, along with one part time.

A bigger ladder to climb

Douglas' initial choice of career was arboriculture. "You get to the end of the day and can see what you ve done, there is an immediate reward to the effort. The money is also quite good for this area of Scotland and there was plenty of work when I started out. "

While at Barony College, he got a job working for a forestry contractor who mainly did Scottish Power line clearances. He was able to use his new tree surgeon skills but also got a first taste of commercial forestry. He worked his way up to foreman level and then decided to enroll in a three-year SRUC course in Rural Business Management while continuing to work part-time. Upon graduating in 2011, he worked as a tree surgeon for a while but then got a job as contracts supervisor at Euroforest. By the time he left to start his own business, he had progressed to area manager.

"Career opportunities were a key motivation for me to go into forestry." It had been in the back of his mind that tree surgery wasn't really a future proof job; tree surgeons start to feel the effects of physical work on the body at a young age, plus the job offers little career growth potential.

Arboriculture vs forestry

"For me, the big positive of forestry compared to arboriculture is that the projects are more complex and interesting. There are more opportunities, more of a career path. It is very diverse, covering aspects such as machinery, environment, planting, haulage, planning, mapping, and also dealing with people."

His secret of success is probably combination of people skills acquired from his time as a tree surgeon, and the experience working as a harvesting manager for Euroforest – the best of both worlds. "A lot of forestry contractors want to just get on their machine in the morning and leave in the evening, but we are quite involved with customer service and engagement. We are good with people. We understand that people want to know about operations that are happening in their area, so we make the effort to speak to them personally, whether this is next door neighbours, or farms further down the road. It's good manners and has even brought us business!"

Working with farmers

"During my time at Euroforest, it started with friends or my own clients mentioning their farm woodlands to me and asking for informal advice. Typical perceptions would be 'I have this woodland and don't think it's worth doing anything with it'; 'There isn't probably any money to be made from it'; 'It is difficult to access". However, they would ask me to assess their woodland anyway, because I was now the 'local guy' with experience working for a large harvesting company. They trusted me as a peer and small business, rather than a large corporation, to deal with their woodlands." I think many clients appreciate the fact that we've got real practical hands on experience too, and not just managerial.

> "The irony is: There is a limited ladder to climb in arboriculture. You climb up to the top of the tree and you climb back down again at the end of the day. In forestry, you can keep climbing.

Since these initial requests, Douglas has assessed many farm woodlands and trees, trying to think outside the box to find solutions

ladder

that work for his farmer clients, despite the small scale of operations and the management objectives atypical for forestry.

To give an example, last year, while engaged in a small harvesting job, Agriforest got approached by the owner of a neighbouring farm. The land owner mentioned he had two hectares of spruce windblow amongst his shelter belts, over a total area of 5.5 hectares. The trees on the farm had never been managed in 55 years and the site was needing clear felled, drained, and replanted. The main objective of the farmer was to tidy up the area, and also for safety reasons given the close proximity of a public road. When Douglas gave him an estimate of the *value* of the timber, he was genuinely surprised. The site ended up yielding 2400 tons of timber, including a significant amount of sawlogs and lots of chipwood to be sold at a good price. In seven weeks, the site was completed including all haulage of timber to markets which involved working around awkward phone and power lines. “The client got his money quickly and will now be draining the site, mounding it all, fencing it and replanting it. We will look after that aspect of the work too, although he is doing to the fencing himself. He was keen to get the shelterbelts established again quite quickly for livestock and drainage. The farm itself is not very productive (cattle and sheep) but he was pleased that there was a substantial return from trees so he is now putting the money back into the farm.”

Douglas says that he gets the feeling that farmers are waiting to see what happens with grants for planting trees on farms.

“At the moment, farmers would still rather spend the money in investments that fit in with their more short-term orientated business model. Managing existing woodlands is of more interest to them. They can get a bit of a return from the timber to pay for farm improvements. However, my clients are often disappointed when I tell them the little money they will make from thinning on a small scale. But again, it’s the long-term benefits they are struggling to consider, as it won’t necessarily affect them. What we try to do is to suggest a plan where we have an area of clearfell to generate income and an area that generates less income but where woodland improvements can be made.“

Douglas believes that if the forestry sector wants to tap into the great opportunity that comes from farm forestry, it has to downscale its approach to operations and be willing to work at a smaller scale. “It is realistic and worth targeting 10-hectare farm woodlands or less, they will add up to several hundreds within one area over time if enough land owners decide this is the approach they want to take”

Market access for small-scale operations

Marketing small quantities of timber is a challenge. Agriforest has built strong relationships with many of the sawmills in the area – James Jones, Forest Garden, AW Jenkinson, and Bedmax to name but a few– who are happy to accept smaller quantities now, due to the consistency of supply from Agriforest.

“Initially, there were a few that didn’t want to accept small timber parcels because of the unproportionally large amount of paperwork. The first two jobs were difficult to sell, although local markets ended up taking most of the material. I have since built up good relationships with customers who I deliver to throughout the year, from small family sawmills all the way up to larger firms.”

www.agriforest.co.uk

Innovating from seed to timber supply

Clockwise from above: mixed conifer broadleaf CCF *(picture Jonas Brandl)*; ***crytomeria* trial planting** *(picture Jonas Brandl)*; **tulip tree; felled redwood.**

Jonas Brandl and **Jez Ralph** on new approaches at the Dartington Hall Estate

Dartington Hall Estate has a long reputation for good silvicultural practice and an innovative attitude towards new planting dating back over 100 years. In times of unprecedented changes in climate and an increase in tree diseases, Dartington Hall is taking another progressive step towards promoting forest resilience tree species diversity and new dynamic supply-chains for timber. Jointly with Timber Strategies and Sawmills Devon, the Dartington Hall Trust is exploring an extensive change in its forestry practice.

In 1925, a unique experiment at Dartington was started that is grounded on an interdisciplinary understanding of the rural development. Dartington has been designed to bring together agriculture, forestry, ecology, learning, the arts and enterprise in a holistic system. Forestry was taught and practised under the leadership of Wilfred Hiley (1886-1961), an expert in Forestry Economics from Oxford University. At the time, an economically driven modernist approach was favoured that included purchasing extensive holdings and undertaking coniferization. This was matched by the introduction of a number of sawmills across the estate holding and an estate owned joinery producing exterior and interior furniture.

Today, the paradigm has shifted to a more resilient ecologically orientated approach within the core estate. How should the estate's forests adapt to changing climate and changing socio-economic models? How can the estate innovate whilst also spreading risk and increasing climate and economic resilience?

The first stage has been to look at forest types within the estate. A review of land use led to a more holistic approach with the idea of breaking down the boundaries between uses. Within the traditional high-forest, like many lowland estates, we move towards a system of continuous cover that diversifies age-classes and light levels and enhances soil health. Agroforestry has been implemented extensively. These systems place forestry and agriculture into a single system. They can be seen as trees in fields or crops in woodlands, when managed well, increase the resilience of agro-ecological land-use systems through increasing soil health, ameliorating micro-climates and providing diversified products from the same piece of land.

Future species testing

To deliver the merged forestry objectives of creating an ecologically resilient forest that is adapted to predicted changes in climate and producing quality timber, an in-depth evaluation of the current and possible future species composition at Dartington was produced. The suitability of 47 species currently found at Dartington were tested under possible future climate using the Ecological Site Classification Decision Support System provided by the Forestry Commission. A further 90 species chosen across a broad latitude range that is thought to equate to future UK climates. Species were investigated for their silvicultural performance, disease threats, and other ecological attributes. Potential timber properties, end uses and benefit to biodiversity and broader ecosystem functions were then added to each species profile.

The Nest collaboration between Woodland Presnets and WOCo *(picture Jonas Brandl)*

From this assessment, a subjective opinion based on local knowledge of the site and the estate objectives was needed to prioritise species selection. This mix of objective and subjective, scientifically assessed and opinion-based decision making is an interesting and significant move in itself, mixing modern data orientated forestry with a return to craft-based forestry.

From 150 possible species it became obvious that only some prioritised species can be classed as 'novel' with many well-known, well loved, traditional species being high priorities for future tree cover on the estate. The species analysis identified among others the following future tree species at Dartington: Black pine, Black walnut, Coastal redwoods, Common alder, Common walnut, *Cryptomeria*, Hornbeam, Italian alder, Large-leaved lime, Lawson cypress, Maritime pine, Oriental spruce, Paulownia, Red oak, Robinia, Serbian spruce, Tulip tree, Western red cedar, Wild service tree, Wild cherry.

Forest products: adding value close to source

The final stage is to look at the supply chain of forest products and at how value can be added as close to the source as possible. This has concentrated on timber, initially, with a redevelopment of the old sawmill site on the estate. Rather than the estate moving back into primary processing or taking the risk of starting

a joinery business, the decision was to start leasing out Woodlands Yard in a curated way that led to a group of businesses involved in the supply-chain. In this way, the estate could de-risk itself whilst also promoting timber development. Woodlands Yard is now home to EarthWrights, producing playground equipment; Woodland Presents involved in forest/timber education and diversified, modern, in-forest events, and Workshop Collaborative, a designer-maker architecture practice. In the future, the development of the site could lead to office space for forest agents, specialist timber designers & engineers and exhibition space.

The production of outdoor equipment by one of the tenants shows exactly the issues and opportunities Dartington is innovating in. Traditionally, roundwood Larch was used as it is durable and grew on the estate and locally. Problems with supply post-*phytophera* and problems with sapwood durability led to a move to imported Robinia. Robinia, however, features on the list of species highly likely to grow well at Dartington and whilst its silviculture can be difficult, it is likely to enter new planting mixes as a small component of tree growing on the estate.

Setting the tone for innovative management

Experimental sites, such as Dartington, are a very slow way of innovating in silviculture and supply-chains. In the future, we see developments in collaborative trialling of species and genetic research as crucial. Working with the Future Trees Trust and Silvifuture is opening our eyes to possibilities. Linking forestry and supply chains can be enhanced through a more digital approach to inventory whilst we would like to see Woodland Yard embrace digitally enabled manufacturing.

What is key to current and future innovation at Dartington is that it is embedded in the working of the estate; the estate land-use, the estate finances and the estate's broader picture. Whilst collaborating with purely academic projects it aims to demonstrate real change on a working estate.

Jonas Brandl is working with three innovative Devon businesses: Timber Strategies, The Dartington Hall Trust and Sawmills Devon. A holder of the Patsy Wood Scholarship, his main interest lies in silviculture, agroforestry and supply chain development.

INNOVATION IN DEVON

Timber Strategies is a young business working within the timber supply-chain from wood to end-use. This includes research & development on behalf of sawmills, timber quality work for forest owners and higher-level policy/landscape-level forestry.
http://timberstrategies.com

Sawmills Devon specializes in the management of traditional small Devon estates who have an interest in re-invigorating their forestry. This includes a focus on inventory and silvicultural prescriptions aimed at the production of high-quality timber.
http://sawmillsdevon.co.uk

Dartington Hall is an estate in South Devon with a history of social, economic, land-use and arts experimentation aimed at evolving the rural-development agenda in the UK.
http://dartington.org

Rethinking the opportunities from agroforestry and farm woodlands

Clive Thomas

Has anyone else noticed how agroforestry seems to now be firmly on the agenda? Everyone from politicians to my children all seem to agree that we need to plant more trees for the sake of the planet.

Certainly, that is our experience in the Soil Association over the last few years, particularly since partnering with the Woodland Trust and Royal Forestry Society to convene an Agroforestry conference in 2017, and more recently with the Farm Woodland Forum, to publish the Agroforestry Handbook in September 2019. This publication is now the most downloaded 'book' in the Soil Association's near 75-year history. Combined with the free hardcopies that have been issued, more than 5000 people have hopefully learnt more about the benefits of an integrated approach, to delivering both public and farm-level benefits from tree planting.

Indeed, the interest in any session that contained even the most oblique reference to trees at the Oxford Real Farming Conference in January 2020, would suggest that the farming audience is increasingly getting on board and is interested. We also know that colleagues in government, whether in Westminster, Cardiff, Edinburgh or Belfast, are seeing a farmer-led revolution in tree planting as a 'must have', to achieve even the most modest of climate change and biodiversity targets.

How can the forestry sector advise farmers?

The question is, what does this means for the forestry sector? Or to phrase this question in another way, what do we want it to mean? My assessment is that whether the forestry sector is engaged or not, there will be more farmers planting trees, and in some cases, wanting to achieve farm-level benefits, alongside any public funding that is offered. And irrespective of the individual motivation for tree planting, it is essential that farmers get good advice to ensure that any planting achieves the intended objectives. Cost-effective and good quality implementation of the advice, to ensure that any tree planting project is professionally managed, will also be required. And whichever government institution leads on administering any public incentives, professional support to farmers will be required, to help de-risk these transactions.

> Whether the forestry sector is engaged or not, there will be more farmers planting trees

In many ways this is bread and butter activity for the forestry sector, but we still need to think about the breadth and scope of our advice. I'm sure many of us as foresters, feel very confident to advise on site-based tree species selection. >>

>> But there are other aspects to consider; for example if a farmer is also interested in the optimum planting layout, to best support grass or crop production, or when the objective is to establish robust tree protection in an alley system, that supports mob-grazing in the medium-term, or when the farmer wants to achieve fruit and fibre production from their agroforestry system. So maybe not so bread & butter after all, and I would argue that as a sector we do need to develop our capability to make the most of these advisory opportunities and to respond effectively to increased interest in tree planting as agroforestry.

Markets and services for emerging small-scale farm forestry

We also need to think about the other end of the 'tree cycle'. For example, who will make the most of the opportunities that arise from the market benefits of all this tree planting; whether established as agroforestry systems, in which the trees are intended as a product, or as new farm woodlands. If we are honest with ourselves as a sector, this is perhaps the area that we (with a few notable exceptions) are least confident.

Some of the many questions left to answer include: have we really found a model that offers a small-scale service to farmers who want to harvest low volumes of timber from either small woodland areas or even individual trees that may be more the model in an agroforestry system? And are there new services that need to be developed to help farmers to realise on-farm substitution or processing activity? For example, machinery pooling and day contracting, to thin out trees for on-farm fencing requirements. Or day contracting of chippers (and operators) to chip thinnings or residues from grown-out hedges or other low value farm biomass, for on-farm use as woodchip for animal bedding, mulch around newly planted trees or for wood energy. There are examples of these types of service models from western and northern Europe, as well as some I'm sure operating below the radar in the UK already. We should build on these and be honest about the support we might need as a sector to develop viable models for all.

Reassessing the forestry service model

And as we address these questions, we can take confidence from what we have already achieved as a sector in relatively recent times. We have been very adept at developing a service model for the larger-scale conifer plantings in the 20th century and we now have an efficient and professional approach, largely meeting these requirements. This service model has developed on the back of the resource that has grown and now is the time to turn our attention and energy in a more concerted way to the on-farm tree resource. Of course, there are many challenges involved in managing this resource, not least scale, quality and access. Many of these challenges, however, are partly based on perceptions and under-recognition of the different but equal challenges that were overcome in managing the conifer resource. Steep ground, harvesting access and poorly drained soils were all technical challenges that were once perceived as barriers to harvesting the large-scale upland plantings in the UK. Through technological innovation and the ingenuity of many these challenges have largely been solved.

Collaborative models to create economies of scale

So, for the on-farm tree resource, it would be interesting to see how far we could get with collaborative or group approaches to deal with scale, where instead of each farm being the unit of management, groups of farms in a landscape became the unit. We also need to investigate how many of the farm machinery adaptations that are required, are already available. This would go a long way in reducing the need for too much access infrastructure beyond what most farms already have. And we should clearly be re-thinking quality expectations from trees in farm woodlands and agroforestry systems, if woodchip for bedding or durable (based on species) fencing materials are the intended products. I'm certainly not suggesting that an agroforestry and farm woodland economy can be achieved, without support and incentives. After all, it's not like the innovation to realise the conifer resource hasn't received any public funding. As a sector, we will need to successfully argue that public money is not just targeted at tree planting grants. If we are serious about the long-term benefits from more trees in the farmed landscape, then we will have to support supply chain and market development, as well as capital grants for the initial tree planting.

Seeing things from a farmer's perspective

The key factor in all of this is to see these issues through a farmer's eyes, and not just from the forestry perspective. After all, there is already a sizeable farm woodland resource that has consistently underperformed for both farmers and wider society in terms of public benefits and throughout my career, we have collectively bemoaned the lack of integration between farming and forestry in the UK. But I would contend that, more often than not, this has been quite one-sided, with foresters complaining about the difficulty of accessing land for new planting. What we have usually wanted, is for farmers to stop farming and for the land to be made available for forestry. I'm sure this tenure change model will continue and may even need to scale up to achieve ambitious UK woodland cover targets and supplies of industrial roundwood for UK processing. But alongside that we are also going to see a farmer-led tree planting revolution and we should firmly welcome this and see the opportunities that could arise. Not just for the farmers but also for those foresters who are prepared to develop their thinking, learn some new capabilities and reimagine themselves as 'farm foresters', helping to achieve farm enterprise objectives.

Are we up for the challenge?

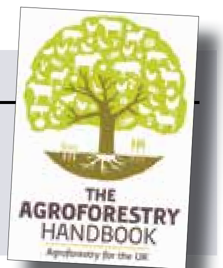
Clive Thomas FICFor, is senior policy advisor for forestry, Soil Association.

www.soilassociation.org

> "The key factor… is to see these issues through a farmer's eyes, and not just from the forestry perspective

RESOURCE

To download your copy of the Agroforestry Handbook search for "Agroforestry Handbook Soil Association".



FROM
3,375£

How the potato sector benefits from ‘funding from within’

As part of a series of case studies on industry funding, we look at the way the British potato sector funds its growth and innovation from within.

The ‘potato levy’ is one of six sector levies collected and invested by the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB). According to AHDB’s latest vision statement, the strategic priorities for the levies are:

- Inspiring British farming and growing to be more competitive and resilient
- Accelerating innovation and productivity growth through coordinated research and development (R&D) and knowledge exchange (KE)
- Helping the industry understand and deliver what consumers will trust and buy
- Delivering thought leadership and horizong scanning

Q&A

with **Sophie Churchill**, Chair of the Potato Sector Board

How are the levy levels determined in the potato sector and would this work for forestry as well?
The amount of levy is laid out in statute and changes have to pass through legislation. All the sectors of AHDB have an inheritance about how their levy is calculated and collected, so potatoes has its own history. In the case of potatoes, it is done on the basis of hectares planted, not tonnage or turnover.

In forestry, if you wanted buy-in from across the industry you might need to consider turnover, rather than returns from sales or hectares owned, as return would be very volatile and they would both potentially exclude many players in the industry?

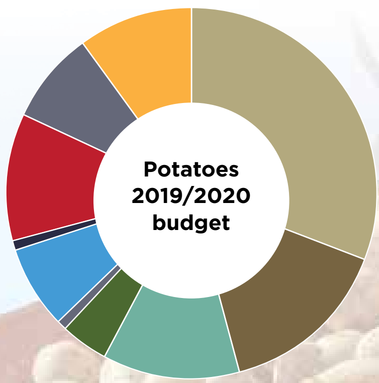
You might be able to give people the option as to whether they want to support research or marketing with their contribution.

How is the potato industry involved in the levy governance?
The levies are all compulsory and the industry awaits the outcome of the government review which may recommend a periodic ballot.

Each levy has a Board, in the case of potatoes representing the different parts of the industry. It has an independent Chair, which is a ministerial appointment across the devolved authorities. The rest of the board appointments are done by the Chair and AHDB.

The Potato Board’s role, formally, is to >>

According to the AHDB Strategy 2017-20, AHDB Potatoes levy income will be allocated as follows:



The Potato Data Centre features information gathered from a stratified sample of over 400 growers from the annual AHDB Potatoes Grower Panel Survey. Plus data from weekly market information contacts and national planting return data. Levy payers can access the Potato Data Centre.

>> agree the strategy and allocation of funds. In practice, it is more involved than that in how the programme is delivered and in being a focus for an industry that doesn't have many bodies operating across fresh and processed.

In the case of forestry, there are of course a large number of different bodies for different parts of the industry. Given that fund contributions would be voluntary, I assume that governance could be less onerous.

How are the benefits of the levy communicated to contributors?
The AHDB frequently updates levy payers on highlighted use of the collected funds. Highlighted examples of the fund uses in April communicated in April 2019 are:
- Strategic Potato Farms: an initiative for farmers to share ideas with each other and researchers in a commercial farm environment
- Sprout suppression and storage advice (£800,000 ring-fenced fund)
- Disease intelligence and crop protection - regular updates and practical advice
- Marketing: PR campaign promoting potato consumption
- Potato Data Centre: easy-access login protected site for price data
- Farmbench: easy-to-use benchmakring tool for farmers
- Brexit: up-to-minute reports on how Brexit might affect GB agriculture
- Exports: maintaining existing markets and creating new ones.

We tend to get divergence between people wanting marketing and people wanting research, with some wanting a balance.

How are funds allocated and monitored?
Via the Board. There have been a few open Board meetings recently but mostly it's through attempting to have a representative board with a good mix of skills. A structured business planning environment ensures that funds are used ethically and fairly.

Are priorities for allocation of funds reviewed regularly?
Yes, annually and sometimes mid-year, and for every five-year strategy period.

What have been the main benefits for the sector arising from the levy?
- Stewardship of some chemicals so they weren't withdrawn. This is now morphing into the sector being a leader on sustainable practice.
- Independent, objective field trials and demos, at a range of sites round the country.
- Marketing campaigns that may have staved off a bit of the decline in fresh potato consumption (but this is debatable).
- A parallel with forestry is the threat from imports and I don't think AHDB has much reduced this.

How did the agricultural fund start – what were the challenges in particular around industry buy-in?
It was inherited from the various industry promotional bodies. Because legally, after WW2 I think, they did not need to have buy-in as such. The five AHDB levy bodies were reviewed in 2005 – the document can can be found online and is an interesting reading regarding the justification, or not, of having levy boards, and of bringing them into one body. [To read the report, search for *Review of the Agricultural and Horticultural Levy Bodies.*]

Are contributors convinced that the fund supports their industry? Was it just a matter of getting used to it?
There are a range of views. I don't think contributors will ever be fully convinced and the task will get harder as the industry consolidates and more players do their own research and development.

How would a similar fund work in forestry? What are the major differences between the potato and the forestry sector that would need to be considered and what solutions would you suggest?
In some ways it would be easier as it would be voluntary but there would be parallel issues about whether it is research, marketing or other things which are critical and not otherwise being covered by public sector or the market.

Having an independent authoritative 'bible' of key industry issues that are high risk and aren't being adequately dealt with, as a starter for the spend, would be critical.

A voluntary forestry fund would require less investment for the collection of the fund. The process at AHDB is very tedious due to it being a legal obligation and the amount needing returns on hectarage, in the case of potatoes.

AHDB levy rates for 2019/20 (no change from previous year)

Sector	Levy rates 2018/19	Levy rates 2019/20	Higher rate for late payment
Beef and Lamb (England)			
Cattle (excluding calves)	£ per head	£ per head	£ per head
Producer	4.05	4.05	4.05
Slaughterer/exporter of live cattle	1.35	1.35	1.35
Calves	£ per head	£ per head	£ per head
Producer	0.08	0.08	0.08
Slaughterer/exporter of live calves	0.08	0.08	0.08
Sheep	£ per head	£ per head	£ per head
Producer	0.60	0.60	0.60
Slaughterer/exporter of live sheep	0.20	0.20	0.20
Pigs (England)	£ per head	£ per head	£ per head
Producer	0.85	0.85	0.935
Slaughterer/exporter of live pigs	0.20	0.20	0.22
Milk (GB)	Pence per litre	Pence per litre	Pence per litre
Buyers and direct sellers of milk	0.060	0.060	0.066
Cereals and oilseeds (UK)	Pence per tonne	Pence per tonne	Pence per tonne
Cereal grower	46.00	46.00	50.60
Cereal buyer	3.80	3.80	4.18
Cereal processor (human and industrial)	9.50	9.50	10.45
Cereal processor (feed)	4.60	4.60	5.06
Oilseeds	75.00	75.00	82.50
Horticulture (GB)	% sales turnover	% sales turnover	% sales turnover
Horticulture products	0.50	0.50	0.55
Mushroom spawn	Pence per litre	Pence per litre	Pence per litre
Agaricus	8.0	8.0	8.8
Non-agaricus	2.0	2.0	2.2
Potatoes (GB)			
Potato growers	£42.62 per hectare	£42.62 per hectare	£46.882 per hectare
Purchasers of potatoes	£0.1858 per tonne	£0.1858 per tonne	£0.2044 per tonne

Forestry and Land Scotland's approach to restocking

Jo Ellis, Head of Planning & Environment, Forest and Land Scotland

In our draft *Corporate Plan for Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS)*, we declared that our mission is to "to look after Scotland's forests and land, for the benefit of all, now and for the future". This includes commitments to provide a sustainable supply of timber, implement the 2017 Restocking Strategy and ensure a sustainable balance between resilience and productivity. This article gives an overview of the current position on restocking on the national forests and land.

Current position

In the Restocking Strategy we outlined a wide range of measures to monitor restocking and, in response to the requirements of the latest edition of the UKWAS, have developed a reporting approach that summarises what we are doing more clearly. This is illustrated in Table 1 and Figure 1 which present the data[1] for felling and restocking by Forest Enterprise Scotland (now FLS) over the last three 'rolling' five-year periods: 2013-17, 2014-18 and 2015-19.

Presenting the data as five-year averages reduces the 'noise' associated with annual variations in programmes and, as the time series is developed, will enable us to monitor the overall outcome from our restocking activities.

Categories in Figure 1 describe:

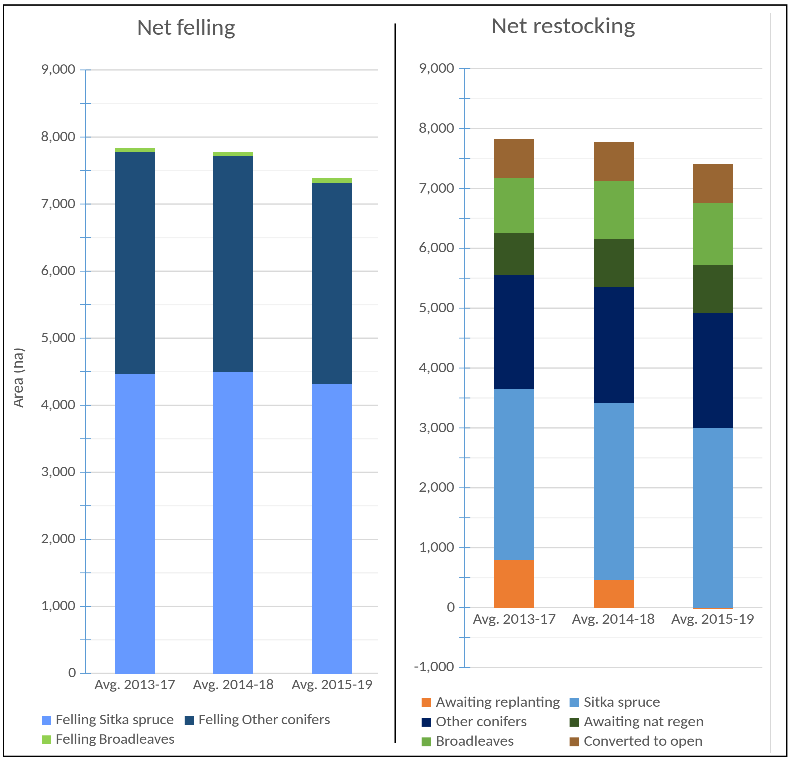
- the main types of species felled or planted (Sitka spruce, other conifer or broadleaves);
- areas where we anticipate natural regeneration will take place and are monitoring;
- areas that have been restored from forest to open habitats such as peatland;
- changes to the area awaiting replanting.

Table 1: Felling and restocking from 2013 to 2019

	Net area (ha)	Avg. 2013-17	Avg. 2014-18	Avg. 2015-19	
FELLING	Sitka spruce	4,440	4,490	4,320	58%
	Other conifers	3,300	3,230	2,990	41%
	Broadleaves	60	60	70	1%
	Total	**7,830**	**7,780**	**7,380**	**100%**
RESTOCKING	Sitka spruce	2,860	2,950	3,000	38%
	Other conifers	1,900	1,940	1,920	25%
	Awating nat regen	690	790	800	10%
	Broadleaves	930	980	1,040	13%
	Converted to open	650	650	650	8%
	Awaiting replanting	800	470	-30*	5%
	Total	**7,830**	**7,780**	**7,380**	**100%**

*The "-30" in the Awaiting Planting row under Restocking data reflects a small reduction in the "land bank" as increases in restocking programmes begin to have effect.

Figure 1: Felling and restocking from 2013 to 2019



Species felled – the proportion of Sitka spruce (58%) felled is broadly similar to the current overall forest inventory of 56%. The higher levels of other conifers felled (42%, compared to 32% in the inventory) reflects the fact that we are removing trees because of disease, ie *Dothistroma septosporum* on lodgepole pine and *Phytophthora ramorum* on larch. These areas will be replanted with other conifers, broadleaves or >>


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Figure 2: Second rotation Sitka spruce crop

Figure 3: Naturally regenerated birch stand

Figure 6: Felling of lodgepole pine on deep peat

Figure 7: Peat area under restoration

>> Sitka spruce depending on site suitability and location.

Species planted *(see Figures 2 and 3)* – of the trees that we plant, over four fifths are conifers but there is an increasing proportion of broadleaves, which reflects the commitments in our Restocking Strategy to maintaining timber productivity for the long term, while diversifying in

> We are still in the era when we are moving away from the blanket afforestation of the post-war era, and incorporating open space

line with the principles of sustainable forestry and expanding the area of broadleaves (currently, broadleaves make up only 8% of the national forests and land in Scotland).

The areas **awaiting natural regeneration** will develop into a range of future forest types. We currently have significant areas of prolific Sitka spruce regeneration *(see Figure 4)* in the southwestern and eastern parts of the country, as well as other areas of conifer and/or broadleaved regeneration (mainly native species) which we will be managing for timber production *(see Figure 5)*. In other areas we are managing naturally regenerating native broadleaves to stabilise steep slopes above key transport routes; to restore ancient woodland sites; and to produce hardwood timber and firewood *(see Fig 3)*.

The area that is being **converted to open land** reflects that we are still in the era when we are moving away from the blanket afforestation of the post war era, and incorporating open space to meet Scottish Government land use policies and modern sustainable forestry standards. Much of this conversion is the restoration of areas of peatland *(see Figures 6 and 7)* - areas that, if they were bare land today, would not be afforested.

This reduced area of forest over time *(see Figure 8)* will be offset by our woodland creation (currently averaging over 700ha each year) and the increased productivity of improved planting stock, most notably Sitka spruce. Second rotation stands of Sitka spruce are consistently growing at much faster rates, many achieving over Yield Class 30. We are confident that we can maintain our commitment to marketing at least three million cubic metres of softwood timber each year. This will be confirmed in more detail in the upcoming update of our timber availability forecast, which is due to be published in 2020.

The **area awaiting replanting** relates to sites that have been felled but haven't yet been planted. We currently have around 37,916ha awaiting restocking. This area expanded to its current size over the past ten years as we introduced management strategies, such as waiting for up to five years to al- >>

Figure 4: Dense natural regeneration of Sitka spruce

Figure 5: Regeneration of mixed species

Figure 8: How the forest will evolve over successive rotations

Felling at end of first rotation: UKFS requirements unlikely to have been met when the stand was planted	**Establishing second rotation:** open habitats being restored; more diverse establishment methods used; plantations brought up to UKFS standards	**Third rotation:** smaller area of UKFS compliant forest, open habitats already restored	**Fourth and subsequent rotations:** ongoing sustainable forest management
Area felled	**Area replanted to meet UKFS standards**	**Area replanted or naturally regenerated**	**Area replanted or naturally regenerated**
	Area stocked by natural regeneration		
	Converted to open habitats		

>> low Hylobius beetle numbers to drop before we restock, to avoid damage to the planted trees. We know, however, that the sooner we restock, the more quickly we capture carbon, grow timber and improve the appearance of felled sites. Rapid restocking can also minimise weed growth (and hence herbicide use), loss of nutrients, reduce risk of sedimentation and provides more options to improve forest structure and resilience. However, while we are seeking to minimise the delay in restocking, fallow periods of up to five years will continue to be used in areas where they have been shown to work.

The commitment in the Restocking Strategy is to reduce the amount of land awaiting replanting over time and, as outlined in Table 1 and Figure 1, this has started. This reduction is planned to continue in the coming years, although the rate will be affected by factors such as plant supply, labour availability and weather conditions. Part of this pressure comes from growing demand on resources as a consequence of the heartening increase in woodland creation in Scotland and the ongoing rise in the overall felling and restocking programme for the forestry sector as a whole.

Going forward

The commitments made in the Restocking Strategy carry forward into the new Agency, including:

- **We will always restock after felling,** unless there are overriding environmental, landscaping or legal reasons not to.
- **We will restock as quickly as possible after felling**, unless site conditions or management objectives dictate otherwise.
- **We will use restocking to help improve productivity, and the resilience of the estate** to climatic changes and tree health impacts.
- **We will use natural regeneration** to restock sites where this would meet the land management plan objectives and where site conditions are suitable.

Restocking is one of our most significant expenditure programmes (£16m in FY 2018/19 and £20m planned for FY 2019/20) and this investment is vital to sustain timber production, and the range of other benefits that our national forests and land provide.

REFERENCE

1: These figures are based on detailed analysis of our spatial (GIS) data and are all net figures. We have used this methodology for transparency, to avoid the complications inherent in comparing total felling areas (which, as well as the trees, include roads, rides, small open spaces etc.) and the gross restocking figures reported in National Statistics (which take the net replanting areas and add a standard 15% adjustment to account for un-replantable open areas).

Innovating to grow your business and the sector

Amanda Bryan
Inverness College, UHI

The modern forestry sector can describe itself as forward-looking and high-tech, and our timber processing businesses are often at the forefront of what would be considered advanced manufacturing. It is recognised that innovation is strongly linked to economic growth and in the UK it is predicted that in the long term, 70% of our economic growth is linked to innovation. Why then do so few of our businesses promote and recognise the importance of research and innovation and invest so little in it. Perhaps we have been spoiled as a sector by having the Forestry Commission and Forest Research which has responded to industry needs as a whole through their Science and Innovation Strategy which involves considerable industry consultation. However, as government resources continue to tighten and as the private forestry sector continues to grow and make up a larger proportion of the sector now is the time to take a fresh look at our approach and ensure that the sector continues to grow and respond to both existing and new challenges with creativity.

In November 2019, at the Scottish School of Forestry in Inverness around 35 representatives from across the forestry sector and research and innovation networks came together to discuss the range of funds that are available to businesses, the challenges facing the sector and how businesses and researchers can collaborate. There were presentations from Stuart Goodall (Confor), Bob Stubbs (Scottish Forestry Trust), Steven Hutcheon (Highlands and Islands Enterprise), Ian Heywood (Knowledge transfer Network), Carol-Ann Adams (interface) and Euan Bowditch (inverness College UHI). While the focus of discussion may have been focused around activity in Scotland the issues and the funding support available would be equally applicable anywhere in the UK.

Innovative innovation funding

The UK wide opportunities include funds that are made available from the UK government through Innovate UK. These include Innovation Vouchers, Advanced Innovation Vouchers and the Knowledge Transfer Partnership Scheme, described in more detail in Box 2. Innovation Vouchers can be pooled, so if several businesses are facing a similar challenge they can combine their funding to commission a larger piece of work from which they would share the results. It is also possible for KTPs to focus on a sector or shared problem not just one relating to an individual business as sometimes the issues could be a structural one – for example in the forestry sector sometimes we struggle to find solutions to problems if they cut across landowners, contractors, forestry managers and timber processors. These schemes seem to offer something for everyone and the success rate is high with 85% of applications for KTPs being awarded.

CASE STUDY

Tilhill Forestry is working with the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) on a project called Trees to Timber Mill (TTM). This is a digital end-to-end logistics solution which aims to reduce supply chain costs and increase efficiencies. The focus is on the optimisation of conversion of the standing crop to logs through focusing on the harvesting operations using data from harvester heads. It is great to see Tilhill taking this step. These funds are available to all businesses and ourselves at UHI, along with researchers at Forest Research and the many other Universities (not only those with forestry expertise) could be available to collaborate with the sector to help it innovate and grow.

What is Innovation?

"An innovation is the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), or process, a new marketing method, or a new organisational method in business practices, workplace organisation or external relations." Oslo Manual, 3rd Edition, OECD, 2015

Innovation doesn't have to be earth shattering; it could involve small changes and it need not necessarily be an entirely new idea just something that is new to you.

Funding mechanisms

Innovation Voucher: This funding is to encourage first-time partnerships between a company or further education college. The focus could be on a product/process/service or pn something related to the workforce. The value of the voucher is between £1000 and £5000 which covers the academic costs and is paid directly to the university. The company contribution is equivalent but could be either cash or in-kind (staff time, materials or equipment)

Advanced Innovation Voucher: This funding is worth up to £20,000 and is aimed at building 'sustained' relationships between SMEs and universities who may or may not have collaborated before. Again there is a requirement for a company contribution and this has a minimum cash element applied on a sliding scale dependant on the overall project size.

Knowledge Transfer Partnership: A KTP is a partnership between a UK business or not-for-profit organisation, an academic institution and a suitably qualified graduate. It is designed around a project which will address an identified business need or market opportunity which will help the organisation to innovate and grow. In Scotland projects are worth approx. £200,000 on average and they last between 12 and 36 months in duration.

Plant health: a seed supplier's perspective

Dave Richardson,
Forestart Ltd

As seed is at the very start of many supply chains it is essential that we get all aspects of supply right from sourcing the seed through to dispatch to our customers.

Seed is generally considered to be low risk from a disease point of view and we comply with all government regulations and legislation to ensure that the risk of disease entering and moving round the UK is minimised. This includes having seed from outside the EU phytosanitary tested, being inspected to enable us to issue Plant Passports and notifying DEFRA before we import species such as *Quercus, Pinus* and *Prunus* from elsewhere in the EU. We actually go further than required, for example we don't import *Castanea* seed at all because we feel that the risk of importing disease such as *Ceratocystis platani* is too great even if we comply with the regulation that does actually allow imports from Pest Free Zones.

Once seed is collected and extracted, it is cleaned to remove potential contaminates. We then use various methods to reduce the risk of disease being present on the seed, for example, the high temperature in our kiln has been shown to kill Ciboria and Red Band Needle Blight.

However, ensuring that we have healthy forests in the future goes far wider than just ensuring that the seed itself is disease free. We also have to look at the resilience of the plants that seed produces.

DEFRA Tree Health Management Plan

The document describes how the Plant Biosecurity Strategy for pests and diseases of trees in England is starting to be implemented; it builds on the Tree Health and Plant Biosecurity Action Plan. This states that "threats to our tree population have increased along with globalisation of trade . . . In addition, trees are facing other pressures from changes to our climate. Therefore, the Government believes we should build the resilience of our tree population to minimise the impact of pests and diseases".

In relation to building resilience they state that:

- The use of healthy planting stock is critical to the biosecurity and resilience of our tree population
- Diversity in tree supply and genetics within tree species is at the core of woodland adaptation

This view is backed up by statements in the OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme such as: "emphasis should be made on preserving species diversity and ensuring that height genetic diversity within species and seed lots thereby enhancing the adaptive potential of Forest Reproductive Material".

Diversity is key to risk reduction

Not just for climate change and environmental reasons but also to enhance a forest's ability to deal with threats to its health. When we look at the challenges our forest species have faced in the past they have been characterized by the shock of the unexpected infiltration of pests or diseases. We know that in the future we will face further challenges but we have no idea of what they will be. These are the 'known unknowns'; we know that unknown disease challenges will occur, driven by continuing globalisation of trade of goods and movement of people.

Collecting Noble fir

Diversity and resilience are two of our best weapons to tackle the increased risks that the modern generation of foresters face. Existing regulations provide an initial framework that we need to follow, for example the EU FRM (Forest Reproductive Material) regulations state that seed collections should be made from balanced quantities of seed from at least 30 trees across the whole area. This helps to ensure that genetic diversity is maintained. It also states that "trees must in general be free from attacks by damaging organisms and show resilience to the adverse climate and site conditions in the place where they are growing". To ensure future profitability compliance with this needs to be balanced against the need for efficiency and quality gains. At Forestart our aim is to help the industry achieve this balance.

When seed is collected from the wild we pick from as many individual trees as possible to ensure that the resulting seed lot has diversity and therefore more potential resilience than a collection from a single tree where offspring are closely related. Seed orchards allow us to collect from trees that have been selected to produce better quality timber trees but even these are designed to ensure genetic diversity. For example, our Sitka spruce orchards contain a least 40 clones which allows us to capture the vast majority of the desired genetic diversity of the population. We could have fewer clones and thus have a higher improvement rate in specific traits

versity of Sitka spruce the UK. This work could also be applied to other forestry species.

Technologies for future forest profitability

To ensure the future profitability of our forests we must take advantage of the technologies at our disposal but use them wisely. The use of vegetative propagation allows us to take advantage of the best genetic gains our breeding programs have to offer. The advice is to use seed of at least eight or nine families in a planting scheme. Using vegetation propagation and seed grown material together will help to maintain genetic diversity. The use of somatic embryogenesis is a further step along this road so even more consideration needs to be given to ensure diversity. For example, in Sweden lines are destroyed after a production run and that particular cross is not used again.

Another area of research that we are involved with is the Sitka Spruced project which is mapping the Sitka genome. This is being led by Oxford University and will provide the industry with valuable information about which gene controls which aspect of Sitka. This will provide us with the tools to monitor and manipulate the genetic diversity of our trees and could enable us to breed trees that produce seeds and cuttings that are resistant to pests and diseases. We are proud to be involved in projects that are looking at the basis of genetic influence on resistance to pests such as hylobius, and drought and frost tolerance. In the future this work could be extended to many other areas of plant health in many different species.

The forestry industry has a well-established knowledgebase. This is our first line of defence in the battle against destruction of our livelihoods by the onslaught of pests and disease exasperated by climate change and globalisation.

www.forestart.co.uk

Forestart is a supplier of tree seed to nurseries, landowners and managers.

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http://www.fao.org/plant-health-2020/en/

Widening the net to secure our future workforce

Amanda Bryan on the need to find the right narrative for connecting with people outside our sector and branding forestry as the buoyant industry it is.

It is easy to get stuck in a sector bubble. Through our day jobs, we are immersed in what forestry does, the impact it has and the value it brings to society – not just economically, but socially and environmentally. We are passionate advocates for all it represents and it is a dedication and sentiment we see every day from our students at the Scottish School of Forestry. Yet, we're reminded regularly that the forestry sector has a long way to go in terms of telling its story to the outside world.

A lot of our students stumble across forestry by accident – they either come from a rural background, have family members or friends in the sector, or have been introduced to forestry through degree study in another area. And when we speak to young people enquiring about courses at our open evenings, they have limited knowledge of the sector beyond planting, growing and harvesting, and even less awareness of the range of job opportunities available to them.

For those of us who work in the sector, we know forestry is a buoyant, dynamic, resilient, forward-thinking industry, with a hugely positive outlook and endless opportunities. We also know that our sector has tremendous strength and energy in its networks and partnerships – it's one of the things that make us so proud to be part of this industry.

With ambitions to double the sector's economic contribution and increased demand for sustainable materials, planned growth in new woodland planting and reforestation, and a focussed spotlight on the role forestry will play in tackling climate change and reducing carbon emissions, we know there's never been a better, or more exciting time, to join this sector. Today's focus on health, wellbeing and the importance of communities also highlights the growing social role trees will play in the future.

Yet, we've got a fundamental challenge, which grows more and more critical every day. What is forestry? What does it actually mean to people beyond this sector bubble? What do we want people to think about forestry? How do we want people to feel about forestry? What words do we need to use to connect with people beyond the sector?

Communicating with our future workforce

We must attract new people into this industry and there's lots of excellent work going on just now to address the skills shortage – in Scotland alone, 70% of the workforce need replaced within the next 10 years. Here, the Forest Timber & Technologies Industry Leadership Group (ILG) is working to address this challenge through its Skill Group, with a focus on engaging young people. The challenges are similar in England and Wales. This work is critical if the sector is to grow and flourish. However, we can't lose sight of how important communication is. The way in which we tell our story to the outside world, establish our identify, build our reputation and develop our networks and partnerships must go hand in hand if we are to effectively address this skills gap.

A joint-up sector approach to shaping the forestry story

Attracting people into the industry is an obvious priority for the Scottish School of Forestry, Scotland's only provider of both further and higher education in forestry and arboriculture. We know we have strengths in our networks and as a collective, we can do so much more together, than we can apart. It was with this in mind that we invited Confor, Forest and Land Scotland, Lantra, the Institute of Chartered Foresters, the Royal Scottish Forestry Society, and Scottish Forestry, to the Scottish School of Forestry in December to discuss this very issue. Our aim was to bring partners together to share views with the purpose of creating a joined-up narrative for the forestry sector and exploring collaborative opportunities. There was consensus on our objectives too – we need to raise awareness of the forestry sector and the wide and diverse range of careers available to people, promote the sector's benefits to society, position it within the wider economic landscape, and attract new audiences.

Through working through a simple SWOT/PESTLE analysis, we've started to bring together a narrative, or story, for 'our' forestry sector through identifying our strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats. We've also started looking at our personality – the human characteristics we want our sector to represent – and our audiences, identifying who they are and the profile of people we need to target. There was lots of interesting debate too – do we want to position ourselves as distinct from other land-based sectors? Who are we competing against? How can we tap into new audiences? And how can we create a buzz around what's happening in the sector just now? We also discussed some of challenges including how to reduce barriers into forestry and engage primary and secondary school children. Now we're into a new year, we hope to continue these discussions with interested parties with the view to formalising some key messaging and an approach, which will enable and facilitate a collective voice and begin to change the forestry narrative.

Collaboration is always a challenge, but one thing is clear – how we address this skills gap and how we talk about and promote the sector is interlinked and in all our interests. The response to our initial call to action was overwhelmingly positive and we hope to see this collaboration not only continue, but expand to include other education providers and industry - ensuring communication is viewed as a one of the top priorities in addressing the challenge now faced by the sector. Forestry has a good story to tell. We also know that young people who choose to study forestry fall in love with the sector and are our most passionate and valuable advocates. We need to shift gear collectively if we are to maximise the opportunities presented. Now is that time. If you are interested in joining this conversation, we want to hear your thoughts on this subject, how we can work together for the sector, share thoughts and good practice, and develop new collaborations.

Amanda Bryan is head of the Scottish School of Forestry and Helen Aird is marketing and PR officer for the School, part of Inverness College UHI.

Mentoring the Future of Forestry

Lantra industry consultation identified a need for an entry level introductory programme with relevant work experience and training in core technical skills.

Mentors from the industry are now needed!

Do you enjoy encouraging and motivating people, and want to share your knowledge with others?

Do you want to help train our future forestry workforce?

Recent research forecasts an increasing need for new talent in forestry over the next 10 years. It has been highlighted that most of these jobs will be in the contractor sector, which has traditionally faced challenges in terms of recruitment. The Forestry sector is planning a programme of internships similar to the successful agriculture internship programme run that has been operating in the northeast of Scotland for the past six years and is now being piloted elsewhere. This programme has a mixture of basic training in areas such like health and safety and tractor operations, coupled with work experience on farms.

For more information, search for Lantra land-based pre-apprenticeships.

Industry involvement is key

On 14 of January, on behalf of the Scottish Forest and Timber Technologies Industry Leadership Group, Lantra hosted a consultation on the proposal. The meeting tried to identify what would be of most benefit to the forestry sector, how such an initiative might be structured, what it should contain and how it might operate. Discussions identified a need for an entry level introductory programme with relevant work experience and training in core technical skills. Such a programme would also provide progression opportunities to Modern Apprenticeships, further education and training and/or employment.

It was agreed at the consultation that creating opportunities to allow people to get some structured experience of working in the sector was essential to enabling the industry to attract new talent. To this end, Lantra have been tasked with both identifying a pool of industry mentors, who are keen to help develop such new entrants, and supporting employers to satisfy workplace requirements. We will need mentors throughout Scotland, from a range of backgrounds, to step forwards and provide a diverse range of work placements of 2-6 months duration either on a full-time or part-time basis.

What does mentoring involve?

It involves people like you being at the forefront of forestry's future. At the most basic level it is where someone with experience shares their knowledge and skills with someone who is less experienced and wants to learn more. Mentors provide support to the new entrant, helping them to understand their role in the business and develop their career path. They also provide a listening ear if their mentee is facing any problems or challenges. If done well, mentoring can be a mutually beneficial learning experience and a way of improving morale and skills of both parties. Free mentor training and support will be made available for you to get things started.

What happens next?

Once our pool of mentors have been identified, a more detailed programme of activity will be generated. This exciting activity will ensure the needs of our specific businesses can be most effectively met now and in the future.

If successful, this programme will help to provide an alternative entry route for new entrants to the forestry sector and should help to ensure our growing need for more forest workers are met. It also will open up other opportunities for progression often to Modern Apprenticeships, further education or training and/or employment.

We envisage this programme will help provide an alternative entry route for new entrants to the forestry sector and help ensure our growing skills needs are met going forward. So why not call and find out more, we would love to hear from you.

CAN YOU HELP?

If you are interested in becoming a mentor, or just want to find out more – please contact Liz at Lantra on 01738 479709 or **Liz.Barron-Majerik@lantra.co.uk**

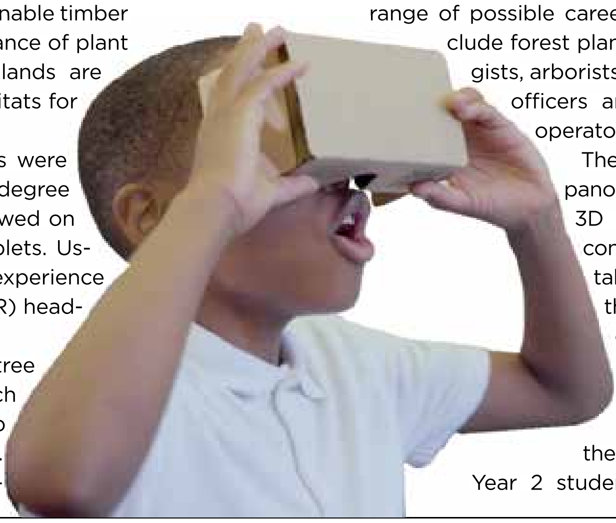
Virtual field trips to inspire next generation of foresters

Above: Eggesford Forest, Devon

The Forestry Commission is working with Google Expeditions to take schoolchildren on virtual tours of working forests.

The Commission is using the immersive platform to inform the next generation about sustainable timber production, the importance of plant health and how woodlands are designed to create habitats for wildlife.

The free Expeditions were made using a 360 degree camera and can be viewed on mobile devices and tablets. Users can heighten their experience with a virtual reality (VR) headset.



Pupils will visit a tree nursery to find out which species could make up forests of the future. They will explore machines used in forestry, study woodland habitats and wildlife, and learn about the importance of trees in the face of the climate emergency.

Students will also hear from people working in the forest about a range of possible careers. They include forest planners, ecologists, arborists, tree health officers and machine operators.

The 360 degree panoramas and 3D images are controlled by a tablet, which the teacher can use to point out interesting sights along the way.

Year 2 students at Hannah Moore Primary School in Bristol were recently treated to a test run of the forest expeditions. Their teacher Gen Ellison-Smith, said,

"The students absolutely loved using the virtual reality headsets and learning all about the forest. After the class, they wouldn't stop talking about the different jobs they wanted to have. I'll definitely be using these tools with other classes in the future."

Google Expeditions are used by over a million students around the world, enabling teachers to take students on virtual trips to museums, historical landmarks and outer space.

The first two Forestry Commission Expeditions are called Working with trees in England's forests and Timber production in England's forests. More Expeditions, created in Forestry England forests, will be added this year.

To view the Forestry Commission Expeditions, download the Google Expeditions app to get started.

Political clarity brings first wave of optimism

TIMBER MARKET REPORT
Harry Stevens

Since last putting pen to paper, the political scene has experienced significant change: a Conservative government with a significant majority now has not only the mandate to implement Brexit but also the ability to adopt a practical strategy in their negotiations.

This clarity is already influencing business sentiment, especially in the housing market. On the day following the general election, shares in Taylor Wimpey, Barratt Developments and Berkeley Group led the FTSE 100 with all three companies surging over 14%.

Recent data suggests investors' faith has been well-placed. A recent survey of RICS-qualified chartered surveyors reveals widespread belief that "potential purchasers are now more comfortable in following through with enquiries." Another survey, by Rightmove, indicated that UK house prices had risen 2.3% since the election.

The evident caution from members of the Bank of England's monetary policy committee provides further reassurance over short-term trends in the housing market. Pre-election weakness across the UK economy elicited many comforting speeches all echoing the theme that "we are watching the economic data closely and if it weakens further, we will cut interest rates."

This is welcome news for many operators in the timber markets suffering the consequences of the *Ips* beetles' devastation. Indeed, reports from Germany suggest there is still a year's cut of standing material needing dealt with while a German contact recently noted that the Hessen region has 1.2mn m^3 of logs at roadside.

Unsurprisingly, roadside prices have reportedly fallen further with logs at €20 to €30per m^3 and industrial roundwood as low as €5 per m^3. Additionally, the standing volume is deteriorating so will, in time, only be fit for use as industrial roundwood. The scale of standing volumes means this will remain an issue through H1 2020 and possibly H2, depending on the extent of further outbreaks this summer.

How is this impacting the UK market? Large volumes of imported sawn timber continue to depress both the construction and pallet markets. Sawn prices have fallen by 25-30% from their previous highs and sawmill production rates continue to be curtailed, by as much as 25% as some mills.

> "The impact of all these factors on the standing market has seen the major users of industrial roundwood buying aggressively both before and after Christmas

Alongside sawmills' widespread and protracted shutdowns over Christmas, the ensuing shortage of coproducts has impacted on overall fibre availability. Coproducts users have therefore been forced to bridge this gap with spot market purchases. Although the situation had been partially anticipated, several large users reportedly had empty yards in early January so prices for small roundwood prices with immediate delivery spiked.

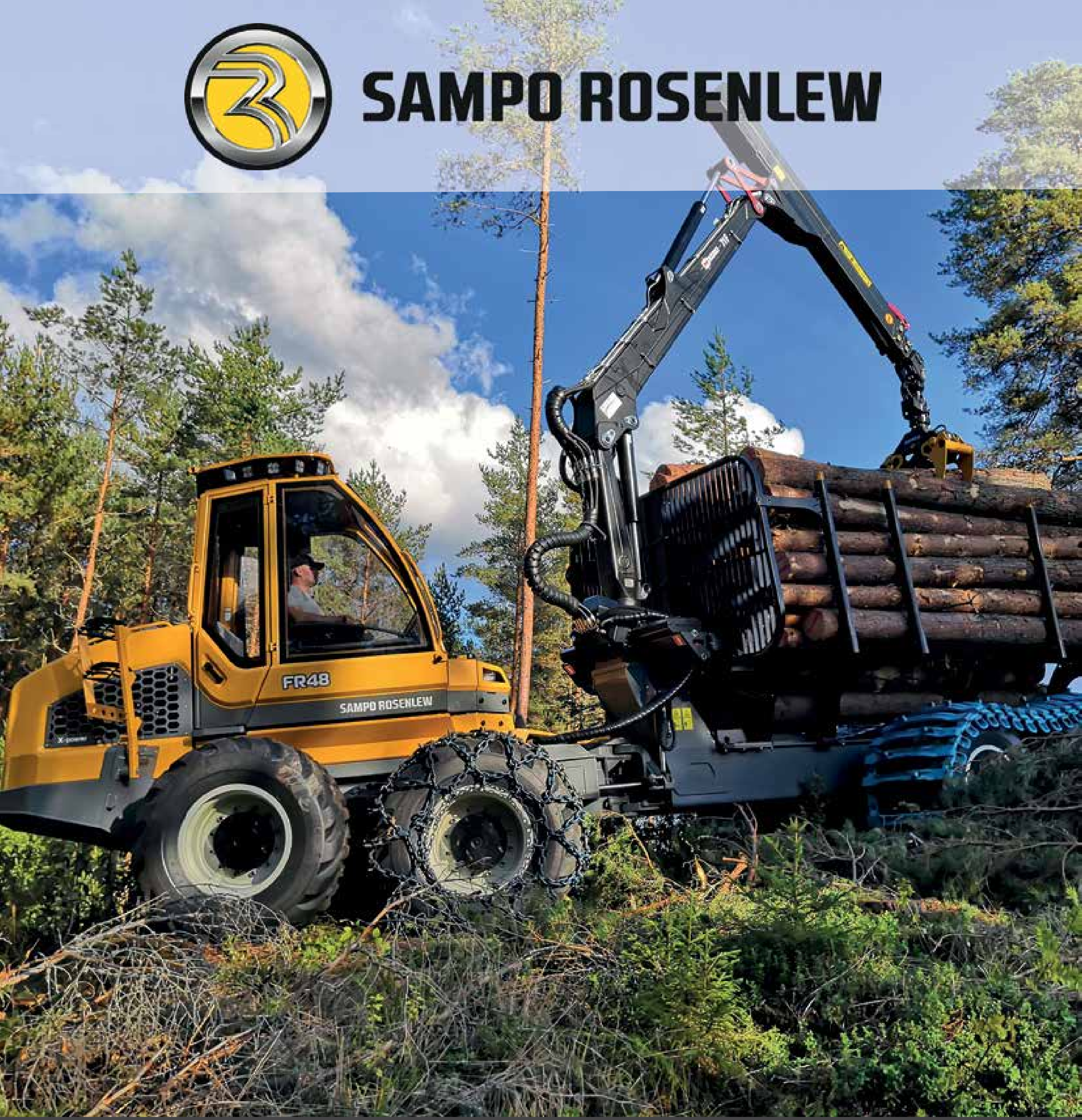
The impact of all these factors on the standing market has seen the major users of industrial roundwood buying aggressively both before and after Christmas with sales attracting a healthy number of bidders and strong prices. Whilst prices for standing may have come back from the absolute peak last year, standing sales in many cases are still achieving £30 to £40 per tonne and for the best quality in the right location perhaps a shade over £50 has been reported.

What is the outlook for the coming year? The high prices for saw logs and industrial roundwood are undoubtedly hitting the bottom-line of some processors and it will be interesting to see if these operators can continue to pass their higher input costs through to their customers.

Nevertheless, the implicit incentive among both biomass users and wood processors to maximise production scale means demand for standing timber is most likely to remain strong in 2020. This would then provide important support for prices.

Harry Stevens is timber buying director, Tilhill/BSW.

www.tilhill.com
www.bsw.co.uk


SAMPO ROSENLEW
FR48
SAMPO ROSENLEW

Bidding subdued at hardwood auction

John Jenkins,
DJP Newland Rennie

Over 13,000m³ was on offer at DJP Newland Rennie's 32nd Annual Hardwood Auction in Cirencester. A crowded sale room witnessed less spirited bidding than in 2018 but nevertheless. 90% of the volume on offer was sold. No doubt trade was affected by the political and economic uncertainty at the time but also the overall quality, with some noted exceptions, did not reach the 2018 heights.

The auction morning was again devoted to two speakers: Graham Taylor, of Pryor & Rickett Silviculture gave an extremely interesting talk on various aspects of oak marketing and Jon Smith of the Forestry Commission presented an update on their centenary year.

The auction presented the lots in three sections: standing, felled and softwood. Once again, oak predominated. Keith Spencer conducted the sale.

Standing sales

Mostly sold on a price per tonne basis, the top was £36 per tonne for a large volume of mixed species and sizes ranging from 15 to 73dbh in the Forest of Dean and sold to Mendip.

Of the other lots, another mixed species parcel, in Norfolk of sizes 18-48 dbh and the only standing lot offered as cubic metres made £34 per m³ and sold to Tilhill.

Logs

A total of 32 lots of logs were offered, again mostly oak. The top price was £310 per m³ for 87 m³ in 54 logs from Whistley Wood in Northants and sold to Pontrilas. This just pipped the 23m³ of oak at Clipsham which went to Brooks at £300 per m³.

Of other oak lots, the best from the New Forest made £180 per m³ for two m³ logs to W H Timber and a quality parcel of 34 logs from Hazelborough Northants sold at £270 per m³ to Pontrilas.

There were two pure ash parcels with the best from Clipsham of 14 good 1.7m³ logs sold to Brooks at £60 per m³.

Firewood logs

There were seven lots of short logs for the firewood market, only four of which got sold, all from the Forest of Dean and achieving £48 per tonne for two lots and £46 per tonne for the other two purchased by Border County Forest and Certainly Wood, respectively.

Softwood

All four lots on offer were sold. The big Douglas from Kent sold after the auction leaving a stand of Japanese Larch from Chepstow Monmouthshire (above) comprising 1570m³ and selling for £28,000 to E G Burton, and finally two lots of larch in Staffordshire made over £80 per m³.

Full sale results on **www.djandp.c.uk**

Two lots of larch in Staffordshire made over £80per m³

Top price for oak was £310 per m³ from Whistley Wood in Northamptonshire

SAVE THE DATE

2020 SALE

The next sale is scheduled for 26 November 2020 – further details from John Jenkins at D J P Newland Rennie, 87 Monnow Street, Monmouth NP25 3EW.
Tel 01600 712916.

The slow road to global recovery

TIMBER AUCTIONS MARKET REPORT
Oliver Combe
Timber Auctions

Global trends

For many in the global timber industry, 2019 will be remembered as the annus horibilis as processors were hit with the perfect storm of falling demand, high production costs and high stock levels. The savage finished product price decreases that had started in the USA during the second half of 2018 spread rapidly throughout the main global markets causing turmoil in most domestic markets. Poor global softwood consumption in 2018 and 2019 led to oversupply in the major markets throughout 2019.

Three market areas, Europe (excluding Russia) North America (excluding Mexico) and China account for 75% of global softwood lumber demand, slowdowns in 1 or as in 2019 declines in demand volumes for two markets have a profound impact on global trade patterns. High inventory levels in the major import markets led buyers to seek lower prices on the world market for their commodity requirements and producers to cut prices to maintain market share. Interestingly, higher environmental standards in China lead to hundreds of older timber processing plants being closed which in turn temporarily reduced demand until more modern plants could increase their capacity within the new environmental constraints placed by the government

The global timber market is driven by the desire to be competitive in a market where the price is set by the lowest cost producers. Therefore, raw material costs, plant efficiency and transport costs are key drivers in being a low cost producer. The low cost producers quickly replace the high cost producers in a market driven by the lowest common denominator, price!

A major new factor in determining where the low cost producers are located appears to be climate change and its impacts on the world's forest resources. A series of well documented catastrophic climate events through central Europe over the last five years have led to this region emerging as a major low cost timber supply which is having global influence.

Wind throw, fires and now beetle damage have led to widespread felling of spruce forests either as salvage cutting or as owners seek to rescue value from their forests before a natural disaster. Growing concern over climate change has further influenced behaviour in the forest as government policy initiatives to improve resilience by restructuring of forests and diversifying species have further accelerated felling of spruce.

In other areas such as Scandinavia, the Baltics and Canada, milder winters and hotter, drier summers have restricted logging activity and slowed timber growth leading to increased concerns over long term timber availability.

Over the last two years the availability of high quality spruce sawlogs at steadily falling prices to a highly efficient sawmilling industry centrally located in one of the main global timber markets has been a major factor in the decline of global lumber markets.

"A major new factor in determining where the low cost producers are located appears to be climate change and its impacts on the world's forest resources.

Because of beetle damaged timber, the central European supply area has, over the last two years, become:

- Very close to being the lowest costs suppliers of sawn timber to the North American market,
- The lowest cost producer into the European sawn timber market,
- A major exporter of round wood sawlogs to China reaching over one million m^3 per month in the final quarter of 2019 and increasing its market share from 3% to nearly 20%.

The impact of this on the global market has been a major rationalisation of production capacity with sawmill closures and reduced working throughout the North Americas, Scandinavia and New Zealand, as high-cost producers fight desperately to reduce their costs.

In summary, there has been a sudden and profound change in the global timber market over a period of 18 months with steadily falling finished product prices, reduced activity levels and continuous downward pressure on raw material costs.

There are however some reasons for a bit of optimism in 2020.

- Firstly, the Forest Economics Advisers 2020 lumber price forecast is for an increase of 10% over 2019 levels in North America
- There have been significant production capacity reductions in high-cost production areas
- Stock inventory levels have fallen in 2019
- A USA vs China trade war agreement is looking increasingly likely
- Global softwood demand is forecast to increase by 2.2 to 2.5% in 2020 after two years of stagnation
- Global timber production to rise by 1.5%
- China is amending its Forest Law to include a nationwide ban on buying, processing or transporting illegally sourced timber. This could have a major effect as, according to the UN Environment programme and Interpol, between 15 and 30% of all timber traded globally has been illegally harvested and China's vast market for raw material has been a massive driver of illegal logging around the world
- There are signs of stability in the minor markets leading to increased demand.

Given a period of stability in early 2020 there are strong signs that excess production will be absorbed by increased demand which will tighten the global supply and lead to price increases in the second half of 2020.

Domestic trends

The decisive election result should be a major factor in restoring business confidence in the UK which in turn should lead to increasing domestic demand; this should be a positive development for the UK market. The key question is what will happen to timber prices in the UK in 2020?

In Scandinavia felling volumes have also started to reduce so there are now signs that the oversupply in the market is correcting itself in the peripheries of the bark beetle area.

2019 has been a traumatic year for the domestic processing industry which has been hit by a perfect storm of:

- Falling domestic demand due to political uncertainty around Brexit
- Falling end product prices due to global oversupply

- Reduced market share as German and Austrian mills aggressively sought market outlets for beetle damaged timber
- High round wood prices from 2018 legacy contracts
- Reduced availability of cheaper timber to 'offset' expensive timber as the private sector reduced their sales volumes on the back of 20 to 25% reductions in sawlog and other produce prices.

Current market conditions
Most processors have had one of the most difficult years in recent times as they have had to reduce production capacity which in some cases meant redundancies. Some businesses have stopped cutting round wood (eg Earnshaws and Premier timber in Doncaster), while most have now managed to adjust their operations to the market conditions. However, the net result has been reduced demand for the higher value sawlogs, particularly in the mixed conifer market.

The fencing and pallet and packaging mills have also felt the pain and reduced their round wood prices and intake volumes in order to remain competitive in a very challenging market.

The slow-down in the sawmill sector always puts pressure on the small round wood market as not only does harvesting activity reduce but also the availability of sawmill co-products (woodchip and sawdust) reduces. The board mills (Caledonian, Egger, Iggesund, Kronospan, and Norbord) then have to increase their intake of small round wood from the forest which then starts to put pressure on standing timber supply.

> 2019 has been a traumatic year for the domestic processing industry which has been hit by a perfect storm

This is further compounded by the relentless demand for wood-based biofuel not only from the established large markets but also from regional and local markets. This has meant that whilst we have seen major reductions in prices being paid for sawlogs and pallet wood, small round wood prices have started to firm again in the second half of 2019.

The glut of small round wood at roadside that was evident in early 2019 has now largely disappeared and whilst there are still roadside stocks of sawlogs supply and demand are now coming into balance and some buyers are now concerned about availability of timber going forward into 2020. Demand for biofuel has remained strong and has served to put a bottom in the market whilst the prices have remained good enough to make almost all thinning operations viable and ensure that work can carry on in productive woodlands.

The reduction in standing prices has certainly reduced the amount of timber offered to the market in late 2019 and the first quarter of 2020 from the private sector which was reflected in some strong prices for standing timber at the backend of 2019.

The signs are that tight supply of standing timber in 2020 could see a stabilisation of prices particularly for parcels with a high small round wood content and smaller diameter fencing and pallet type sawlogs. The outlook for prime sawlog parcels remains depressed for the first six months of the year although the optimists are starting to talk about the market improving in quarter 4 of 2020.

Hardwood market
The main global hardwood markets all saw falling demand in 2019, particularly in the second half of the year on the back of growing economic uncertainty, the USA v China trade war, slowdown of demand in Asia.

The European market has become heavily dependent on oak; this is a trend that we also see in the UK. This has become a major risk for the industry; too little effort has gone into creating demand for and adding value to other species. Core European hardwood species are under ever increasing threat, ash from Chalara and beech from drought.

Raw material availability and quality has become an increasing challenge for the hardwood sector. wBeech production has been hit hard by drought damage to trees over the last few summers, whilst the logs appear unblemished on the outside when standing and first felled, sawing is revealing high levels of defects and low yield of high grade timber.

The overseas markets for beech have historically been especially sensitive to quality issues and in previous times, the export markets were severely undermined by shipments of low quality material.

Oak is also causing concern in Europe with increased incidence of pin hole borers and other causes of worm holes as a result of drier conditions in the forest leading to both the trees being stressed and so more vulnerable to attack and ideal conditions for insect pests once trees are felled and still in the forest.

Climate change, new pests and diseases and restricted markets are all combining to increase the risks involved in growing hardwoods.

Continued on p53

Major factors driving domestic prices

Exchange rates The pound has quietly strengthened against the Euro since December and has now settled at around the 1.18 Euro to the pound level, whilst this an increase from the lows of 1.08 seen in August 2019 it is still a little way off the 1.25 level where the domestic timber producers really struggle to compete with importers. So the exchange rates remain favourable for UK producers.

Imported timber prices Although imports remain a threat, the prices do now appear to be stabilising and the Scandinavian producers are keen to see price increases to restore profitability. There are signs that log prices are creeping up again in central Europe as the mild winter has slowed logging activity down and lead to accelerated degrade of beetle infected stands which is starting to reduce the amount of C24 material being produced. Once secondary fungal infections, sap stains and boring beetles become active in trees infected by *Ips typographus* or damaged by drought and wind throw there is a rapid degrade of the timber from graded carcassing timber to industrial small round wood and bio fuel. This in turn could lead to reduced availability of prime sawlogs as the harvesting activity continues to be focused on recovery of lower and lower grade material.

Imported timber volumesvThe elephant in the room remains the price and volume of timber that is coming into the UK from central Europe. Cheap high quality spruce from German, Austrian and other central European producers has been a key factor in driving down prices in the UK for graded carcassing, unseasoned carcassing and pallet and packaging material. Other producers have had to follow the prices down or withdraw from the UK market. The Baltic producers have had a particularly hard time as after initial price reductions of 20 to 25% they have been unable to reduce log prices to much below 60 Euros per m^3 delivered. Growers are simply not prepared to sell logs at lower levels and have reduced harvesting activity accordingly.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Continued from p51

There is now concern in Europe that there is an 'eating up' of quality hardwood stock going on and that the resource is not being replaced but without co-ordinated inventories and forest management policy it is difficult to see this concern being proved although it will sow the seeds of doubt in the hardwood processors minds.

Export demand for oak cooled off in 2019 and prices for the lower grades fell back by around 15% although the prices for higher grade oak sawlogs for veneer, barrel staves and planking have remained stable or slightly increased. Reports are coming through of increased mortality of oak in Europe both directly from drought and indirectly from secondary causes as a result of weakening from drought.

Beech prices also fell by around 15% due to lower export demand from China and falling prices, drought has had a major impact on the quality and quantity of beech logs available. Drought has meant there are now 700,000m3 of dead beech trees in eastern France.

Ash prices have remained high on the back of increased demand from Asia and in particular Vietnam where ash is popular as a cheaper alternative to oak. Ash dieback has led to a short term rise in production, particularly in France however there are signs that this availability will be short lived and that the demand for logs from the UK will improve.

In the short term, there has been an oversupply in the UK of lower grade oak logs (fencing and small beam quality) during late 2019 and early 2020 which have lead to prices for these categories falling. At the same time, there has been a shortage of good quality planking and large beam oak sawlogs, the demand is there but not the logs so it is difficult to gauge the price level but is should be realistic to expect £10 to £15hft at roadside for the best quality material.

Whilst there is little domestic demand for ash there are strong signs that in the short term the export demand will increase.

It will become increasingly important to fell quality ash before it begins to degrade from Chalara to capitalise on the current export demand. As the availability of 'clean' ash from France declines, there will be increased focus on the UK resource but the buyers are already nervous about degrade.

Beech sawlogs currently have very limited markets in the UK and whilst there is export demand for better quality logs, it remains sensitive to haulage costs. The situation in Europe is pointing to an oversupply of beech sawlogs in the short term and depressed prices.

In summary, for the UK hardwood market, the firewood and biomass sectors are a great opportunity to manage and work to improve our crops. We should not lose site of the aim to grow quality sawlogs of whatever productive species we plant but should always be aware of short term opportunities. The UK with its excellent tree growing climate, good soils, strong management sector and highly efficient processing sector has an extremely resilient and robust industry which is globally competitive. Despite the turmoil of the last year the outlook for the private grower in the UK remains good, timber prices are still good and there are signs that demand will improve in 2020.

TIMBER AUCTIONS

If you wish to discuss parcels of timber you would like to market, please contact Oliver Combe on 07771 958975, **oliver.combe@timberauctions.co.uk** for free independent marketing advice.

DR. PETER SAVILL

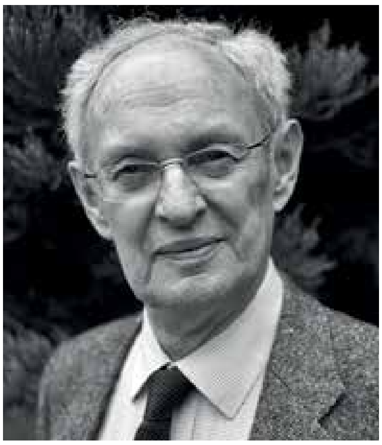
After his retirement from Linacre College, Peter was one of the initial founders of the British and Irish Hardwood Improvement Programme, the charity that became Future Trees Trust and which works on improving broadleaved trees to enhance their desirable characteristics.

Peter brought a wealth of experience, knowledge, passion, energy and enthusiasm to the charity and it's no exaggeration to say that without his input, the charity wouldn't be here today. He interviewed me for the role of development officer in 2011 and I was immediately struck by the air of quiet confidence and authority that emanated from him. Here was a man that clearly knew more about broadleaved tress than anyone I had ever met before. Despite my having none of the required forestry experience for the role, Peter decided to employ me and thus started my acquaintance with this most thoughtful, clever and learned man.

Peter stepped down from his role as Chair at Future Trees Trust in 2013 but continued to be a significant contributor to its work. He just couldn't keep away and, if we knew Peter was going to be involved in a meeting, we all had a hugely increased sense of confidence that we would end up doing the right thing, under Peter's always excellent guidance.

His contribution to tree improvement cannot be underestimated and he will be sorely missed by everyone that ever encountered him, let alone all of us at Future Trees Trust.

Tim Rowland,
CEO Future Trees Trust



Funding to help develop Cairngorms woodland creation proposals

The Cairngorms National Park Authority with the support of partners Scottish Forestry, Scottish Natural Heritage and Woodland Trust – is offering grants of up to £3,000 to help reduce the cost of developing woodland creation proposals within the Cairngorms National Park.

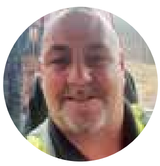
Funding is to encourage planting proposals of native species within target areas identified in the Cairngorms National Park Forest Strategy using the relevant woodland creation options in the Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme.

The grant can be applied for by owners, crofters, or tenants, of land in the Cairngorms National Park.

To find out more call David Hetherington Woodland Advisor, 01479 870516.

Logosol's Big Mill

Chainsaw milling



RAB Easton on the attachments that turn chainsaws into portable sawmills

Chainsaws are not just for felling, de-limbing and crosscutting trees. By the addition of a simple and easy-to-fit attachment, they can be converted into a portable sawmill. The only constraint is the power of the chainsaw being used and length of the guide bar. Both these factors will determine the maximum diameter of timber you are capable of milling.

For effective milling, the chain that is used is different to a regular chain; the cutting angle is much smaller, between 0°-10°. These are called ripping chains and are specially designed for cutting along the grain of the wood. They are able to cut four to five times faster than a regular chainsaw chain which has a cutting angle of between 20°-35°. A wider guide bar is recommended when milling as this will produce a smoother face on the sawn timber and requires much less finishing.

Portable saw mills offer a simple solution for converting single trees or smaller volume harvesting areas into good quality milled timber where it could possibly end up being left to rot or cut into firewood. It is also a cost-effective way of processing timber at the stump - the tree is felled, de-limbed, crosscut and then milled without any extraction and transport costs to the sawmill. Larger diameter logs, that are extremely difficult or too heavy to remove in one piece from the forest, can be processed with a large chainsaw and milling attachment.

Milling timber can put considerable strain on a chainsaw so it is important to use manufacturers recommended fuel, chain and two stroke oils and check that the guide bar oil ways and rails are kept clear of debris for good chain lubrication. It is imperative that the cutting chain is kept sharp and properly maintained; a dull chain will put additional strain on the cutting equipment and increase fuel consumption. >>

>> Milling creates more dust/sawdust than normal chainsaw use so keep a vigilant check on the cleanliness of your air filter as an improper fuel/air mixture can result in an expensive seizure of the chainsaw's engine.

There are of course disadvantages to this type of milling; it is a slower process than using a band saw and more wood is wasted due to the thickness of the chainsaw chain but they are a great solution for many circumstances. They are light to carry onto site, quick and easy to assemble, many can be operated by one person and the initial cost of the milling attachments for the saw should be recovered reasonably quickly from the sale of timber.

Logosol

Logosol is owned by the Byström family in Härnösand, Sweden. The company was founded in 1989 by Bengt-Olov Byström and to date they have sold over 30,000 sawmills.

Logosol supply the F2, F2+ Chainsaw Mills and the Timberjig.

The F2 is a lightweight portable sawmill constructed from anodised aluminium in 1m sections and is capable of milling logs up to 60cm diameter, with unlimited length. Additional 1 or .5m sections can be added to whatever length you need to mill. It takes minutes to set up and because it can be disassembled it can be transported in the boot of a car. It is simple to use with an auto-locking system and the sawing measurements give precise sawing dimensions for each board.

The F2+ is an extra robust version of the F2, for milling larger 70cm diameter timber, including hardwoods. In standard form it will mill up to 3.8m length logs with 1 and .5m extensions for longer lengths.

The only slight downside regarding these chainsaw mills is that the logs have to be lifted onto the elevated bench prior to milling but you are working at a comfortable height with much less bending over and loading aids are available.

Logosol have an alternative called the Timberjig which turns a standard chainsaw into a complete sawmill that cuts logs into finished planks and boards. It will handle 24” maximum diameter logs in lengths up to 2.7m long in standard form but can be easily extended for longer lengths. You are able to upgrade the Timberjig with a guide rail system which will enhance the cutting accuracy. Logosol can supply you with chainsaw, guide bar and chains that are adapted for log sawing, but you can also use standard equipment if you already own a chainsaw with two guide bar bolts. Logosol recommends Stihl MS391 or MS661 when you are sawing with the Timberjig. A larger version, the Big Mill *(see picture, p55)*, is available specifically designed for milling large timber with a diameter of up to 53”. These mill attachments are made from aluminium and steel and treated with Nitrus Oxide which gives better corrosion resistance and is more durable to wear and tear.

www.logosol.co.uk

Logosol's F chainsaw sawmill

Granberg

In the 1960s, Elof Granberg acquired the rights to a bar-mounted chain saw mill, nicknamed the “Alaskan.” Working under the credo “smarter. not harder.” Elof set >>

Granberg's MkIV chainsaw sawmill and, top, Granberg's Mini Edger

>> about simplifying and streamlining the design. Today, the Alaskan MKIII is the industry standard and is sold all over the world. Over the years, the Mini Mill was added to Granberg's sawmill line as well as the Small Log Mill. Both have been available for sale in the UK since 2006

The company currently offers three chainsaw mills for sale, the MkIV Alaskan Mill, Small Log Mill and the Granberg Mini Mill.

The Alaskan MKIV is a versatile robust heavy duty milling attachment suitable for any make/model of chainsaw preferably with a minimum 50cc or over engine and with a guide bar length of over 24". It is capable of accurately cutting boards and beams from 1/2" to 13" thick. As the sawmill attachment is clamped onto the saw there is no limit to the length of timber. Due to the mill clamping onto the guide bar in two places you lose 8" in the cutting length of the bar so a 30" guide bar will mill a maximum diameter log of 22". The MKIV is manufactured from aircraft grade aluminium and any steel parts are zinc coated, no drilling or modifications to the saw are needed.

The Small Log Mill is intended for any make/model of chainsaw with a 16" to a maximum of 20" guide bar length with a minimum 50cc motor. With this mill attached you lose only 2" of the sawing width of the guide bar. No drilling or alterations are needed, its light and easily moved from tree to tree and is ideal for producing planks and beams of unlimited length from Ð" to 13" thick.

The Granberg Mini Mill is for saws of 50cc or more with guide bars between 16"and 36". This is a vertical chainsaw mill for dimensional cuts and is suitable for squaring up logs for structures and cabins. The shorter the guide bar the more accurate this mill will perform and it will work more efficiently with a Granberg Ripping Chain.

www.chainsawbars.co.uk

Panther

Panther Chainsaw Mills are designed and built by LogLogic and are ideal for milling at stump. Four sizes are available with or without GB milling guide bars and ripping chainsaw chains. If you decide to use your own existing guide bar then it will require drilling to attach the sawmill before use. GB has developed guide bars specifically for chainsaw mills and they are called lo- pro – a low profile guide bar – which enable a smooth, even and much faster cut.

The smallest chainsaw mill is the Panther Cub which can be used with most makes/ models of chainsaws.

This is the entry level mill for smaller saws and is suitable for a 20" guide bar and will cut a 17" maximum diameter log of any length. Although light and agile this mill performs well and will stand up to rigorous continuous use.

Panther's 80 chainsaw mill

The next three Panther models are quite similar in design to each other, the Panther 42, 64, and 80. These mills have been totally re-designed from scratch and the company claim they are made by chainsaw millers for chainsaw millers. The model number determines the maximum diameter of the timber that can be milled.

One benefit of this mill is that it has a dedicated Panther first-cut system which ensures your first cut is table top flat. This gives precise milling results even with thicker boards. The variable height adjustment is fast, precise and tool free and because the attachment is bolted and not clamped the saw will never slip within the mill.

The Panther Chainsaw Mills are able to mill any length of log and have a winch winding system to ensure even, smooth milling, making it much easier and more accurate to use than manually pushing the chainsaw mill.

Panther attachments can be used with a variety of chainsaw models and makes.

www.frjonesandson.co.uk

There are many different types of chainsaw mills available through a multitude of suppliers; there is even a good selection to be found on internet sites like Amazon and eBay. I would always recommend using a chainsaw slightly more powerful than what is sometimes recommended. The chainsaw will not need to work as hard during milling and it will be less demanding on the engine which in turn can improve fuel efficiency.

Don't be frightened to ask for advice from online sawmilling forums or sawmilling groups on social media. You should be able to get an honest and unbiased opinion from users who will have experience using the equipment you are considering purchasing.

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

www.forestmachinemagazine.com

@forestmachineoj

@forestmachineoperatorjobs

What3words: location technology that's given every 3m square in the world a unique combination of three words

When it comes to describing where things are in the countryside, it can get really complicated. Many places like field entrances, barns and damaged trees have no address at all, and postcodes tend to cover unhelpfully broad areas.

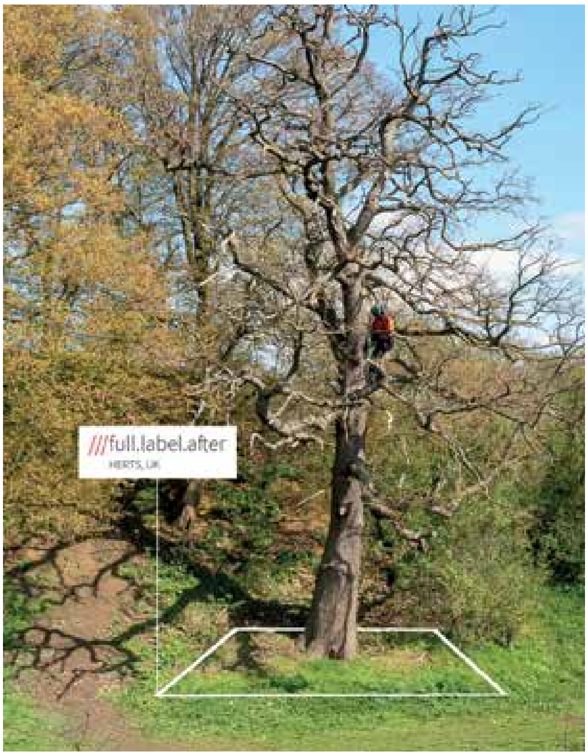
Coming from a farming background, Chris Sheldrick went on to develop what3words, an innovative location technology that's given every 3m square in the world a unique combination of three words: a what3words address. For example ///filled.count.soap marks the front entrance to the company's office in West London.

Now in its sixth year, what3words is used by over 1000 businesses, government organisations and NGOs in over 170 countries. It is used across diverse industries including automotive, navigation, logistics, e-commerce, post, travel, emergency services, drone routing and disaster response. Significant partners include Mercedes-Benz, which was the first car company to build what3words into its navigation system, Ford, The UN, NATO and the postal services of nine countries to date.

In 2018, a what3words address was used for the first time to report and respond to an emergency in the UK – a fire in a remote location in Hertfordshire. Fast-forward 18 months and what3words is now used by most emergency services around the country and is reportedly helping to save precious time, resources and lives everyday.

Following the UK emergency services' rapid adoption of the innovative what3words addressing system, Forestry England has recognised the potential of making the free what3words app a part of every forester's toolkit. The organisation recently announced its plans to explore more collaborative opportunities with what3words.

Clare James, Head of Health, safety and technical training at Forestry England says: "Our foresters, civil engineers, wildlife rangers and other colleagues are very familiar with using grid references day in and day out, and we have sophisticated and accurate systems to keep our lone workers safe. However, at times colleagues have found what3words a useful and quick way to meet in more remote parts of the forest and in response to working with some emergency services and dealing with members of the public directly, and we have now added the system to our standard Forest District incident and emergency plans."



what3words can pinpoint the exact location of workers

As well as helping to promote better safety behaviours among the forestry industry, lone workers and others working in hard-to-find, remote locations, what3words has captured the attention of many businesses looking to coordinate and manage rural jobs more efficiently.

Tom Williams is the managing director of Mayndencroft, a business offering a range of specialist services that work to create, restore and maintain rural landscapes, from forestry to farmland, nature reserves and some of Britain's most famous historic countrysides. It has always been important to Tom that his team take a modern approach by embracing new solutions and technologies. Therefore, he was quick to encourage his team to start using what3words across the business. He says:

"Postcodes have always been useless to us when it comes to coordinating teams of specialists, consultants and contractors on rural jobs. Postcodes route sat-navs to the nearest house or building – not the field, woodland or open space where work has been instructed. In the past we've tried to get around this problem by annotating screenshots from Google maps, but what3words provides a much simpler, more reliable solution."

For the UK forestry and timber industry, there are a number of ways what3words can be used effectively almost instantly. The free app provides an easier way to report the exact location of theft or vandalism of forestry equipment to your local rural crime policing team; it can be used to find, share and record accurate location data, or even direct tree surgeons straight to the correct tree that needs felling without the need for long directions or confusingly annotated screenshots of Google Maps.

With high rates of worker fatal injuries across agriculture, forestry and fishing industries, there is good reason to recommend use of a free app that people can use day-to-day, but also if they were ever get into trouble in a hard-to-describe location.

GET INVOLVED

The mobile app is free to download from the App or Google Play Stores and a simple guide for using the app can be found at **https://what3words.com/how-to-use-the-what3words-app/**

If you're interested in adding what3words to an existing software, for example your GIS, incident reporting form or asset management system please get in touch at **https://what3words.com/contact-us/**

Already using what3words? Discover more ways to get the most out of the system at **https://what3words.com/what3words-for-business/**

FISA Guidance on Managing Health & Safety in Forestry (GMHSF)

Knowing your role

The refreshed 2019 FISA Guidance on Managing Health & Safety in Forestry (GMHSF), is available to the UK forestry industry on the Forest Industry Safety Accord (FISA) website.

This core guidance is not new, having been first launched in 1999 with earlier updates in 2003 and 2014. The 2019 version clearly sets out each of the key roles in the planning and delivery of forestry work, including for the first time, the role of forestry workers.

The new documents outline the legal duties, responsibilities and nature of each of the roles with the aim of making them more straightforward and understandable.

Although everyone involved in forestry work has health and safety duties and/or responsibilities, the primary responsibility for ensuring the effective planning of work and management of risks in forestry rests with the Forestry Works Manager (FWM).

Forestry work generally takes place in difficult and complicated outdoor environments, amongst significant hazards and constraints. It is a high-risk industry and the planning, management and co-ordination required for forest operations are necessarily complex. Responsibility for safety in this complex working environment extends from workers on the ground right through to chief executives of management companies and forestry organisations, and to landowners too.

Planning and carrying out commercial forestry operations involves several tasks and processes that have to be managed to ensure health and safety is built into every activity, for example:

- Selecting suitable equipment
- Completing risk assessments
- Communicating effectively
- Protecting the health and safety of the public
- Establishing safe working practices
- Ensuring appropriate training and competence for all involved
- Selecting skilled and experienced contractors who are competent
- Supervising the work effectively.

It is important that the FWM and everyone else involved understands which role(s) they have to fulfil in each situation. Any role may be preformed by an organisation (such as a forestry business) even though it will generally assign an employee or another person to perform the functions of the role on its behalf. It is clearly possible to delegate the functions of a particular role to an individual; it is not possible to delegate the legal responsibilities that go with that role.

Some roles, for example, the FWM role or the contractor role, have significantly more responsibilities than others. However, all roles are interdependent and require discussion and co-operation.

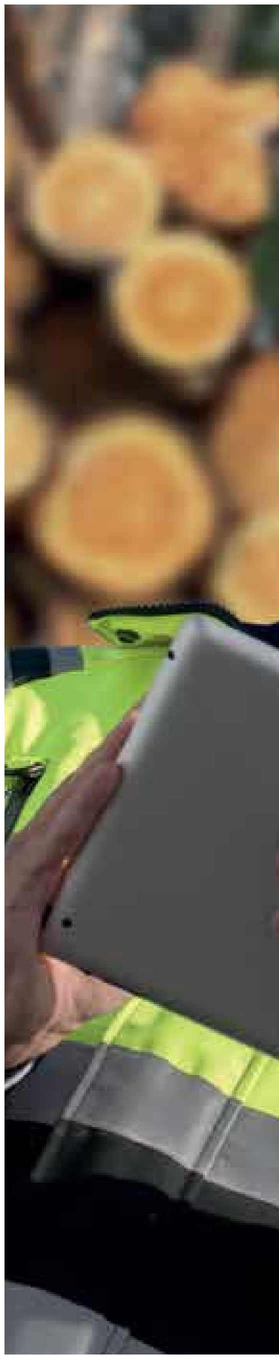
Ensuring you have a competent workforce

The competence of individuals is vital, whether they are employers, managers, supervisors, employees and/or contractors, especially those with safety-critical roles like the FWM. Competence ensures better recognition of the risks and application of the right measures to control and manage those risks. Competence ensures thorough site planning.

Competence can be described as the combination of training, skills, experience and knowledge that a person has, and their ability to apply them to perform a task safely. A competent person recognises and manages risks and applies control measures using timely operational planning, clear communication, inspection and review.

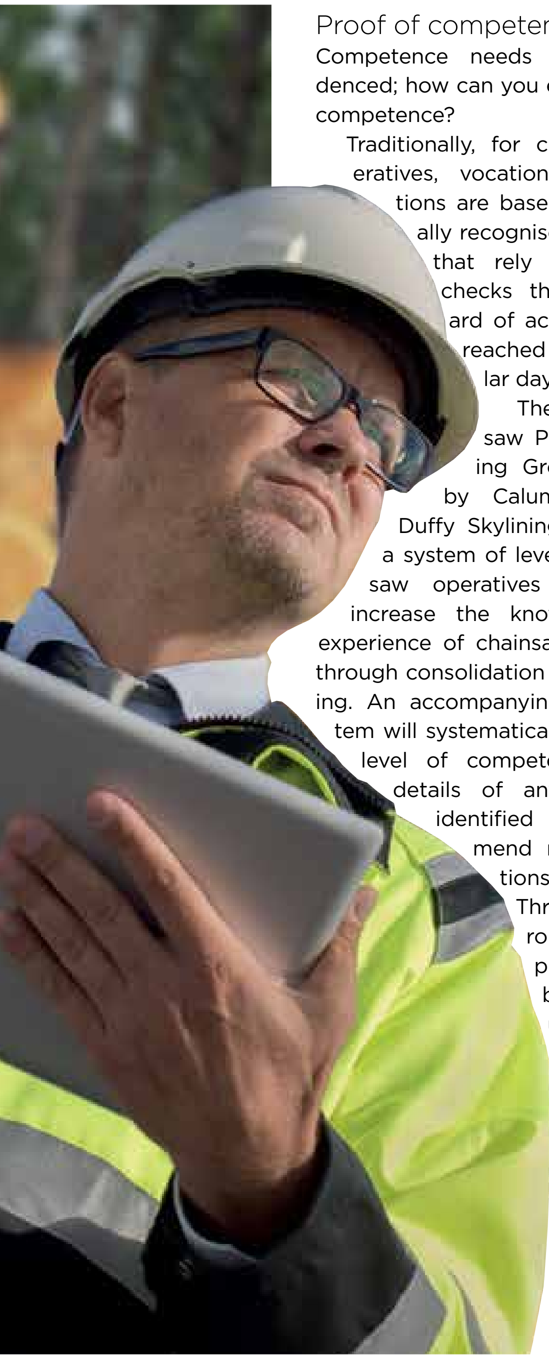
Employers must take account of the competence of employees when conducting their site risk assessments and determining the level of supervision needed. As self-employed workers gain competence and skills, they may need to arrange a level of supervision with another contractor – this needs to be added to the risk assessment.

If contractors are used or a landowner employs an agent, there is a responsibility to make sure they are competent.



Proof of competence

Competence needs to be evidenced; how can you evidence this competence?



Traditionally, for chainsaw operatives, vocational qualifications are based on nationally recognised standards that rely on periodic checks that a standard of achievement is reached on a particular day.

The FISA Chainsaw Project Working Group, chaired by Calum Duffy of Duffy Skylining, is trialling a system of levels for chainsaw operatives which will increase the knowledge and experience of chainsaw operators through consolidation and mentoring. An accompanying audit system will systematically check the level of competence, giving details of any omissions identified and recommend remedial actions to be taken. Through this route, competence can be built upon as new skills are achieved, supporting career development. Calum is piloting an APP based system (called Safe Forestry) which can evidence this competence (the APP is also capable of an awful lot more to help manage site health and safety, for example, showing when workers are on site, site specific 'live' risk assessments, machine check sheets and much, much more).

What steps are you, as a company providing FWMs to the industry, taking to demonstrate the competence of your FWMs and what records are you keeping as evidence of this competence?

Skills development for FWMs

FISA is actively encouraging the industry to move to a system of FWM continuing professional development (CPD) as, clearly, the FWM carries a huge responsibility for forestry site health and safety. To be at the top of their game, the FWM needs to be competent and continue to develop and maintain these skills once achieved, as methods of work and equipment is constantly moving forward.

The FISA Skills and Development Working Group, chaired by Graeme Hodgson will be developing FWM CPD during 2020.

The Forest Haulage Working Group, chaired by Neil Stoddart, in November 2019, ran a trial HGV Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) Forestry Module. This will be rolled out across the UK in 2020. This course, although aimed initially for Driver CPC, is also suitable for FWMs. New dates will be put out on the FISA website.

wwwwwwww.ukfisa.com

Managing Health & Safety in Forestry

Half Day Workshops

The newly revised 'Managing Health & Safety in Forestry' Guidance documents set out the legal duties, responsibilities and nature of each of the roles with the aim of making those duties and responsibilities more straightforward and understandable.

Focus on Forestry First have teamed up with FISA, Pontrilas Harvesting & mwmac ltd to deliver these half day workshops to introduce the new MHSF Guidance, with two events in Wales (North & South). Booking is direct with Focus on Forestry First via the links below.

The expectation of these events is to brief the key parties in the new guidance and provide working examples of delivery within our day to day tasks. The event will be hosted in two sessions (10am-12pm session for landowner and forest works manager and 2pm-4pm session for contractors). You are invited to enjoy a networking lunch 12-2pm.

Event dates

Thursday, 27 February
Coed Y Brenin

Friday, 28 February
Garnwant

For more details and booking visit the events calendar on **www.focusonforestryfirst.co.uk**

Looking after your teams' wellbeing

MySafety supports your teams and you by recognising the wellbeing of the forest industry's workforce is of paramount importance given their workplace can be remote, and their working conditions harsh and also lonely. Both physical and mental wellbeing are important: good communication and engagement will therefore contribute significantly to the workforce's safety and motivation.

Via MySafety's app, real-time information can be conveyed easily to and from each of the five roles summarised in the latest *FISA Guidance – Managing Health and Safety in Forestry*.

The effectiveness of that operational support has been confirmed by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) during the trials: "This is the first time managers have real-time visibility of what is actually happening on our forest operations, and their improved awareness will improve the safety of all", says John Ireland, health and safety adviser.

MySafety has progressed significantly over the last 12 months in response to many helpful suggestions from trials and other interested parties. While further developments are planned – geofencing and man-down functionality – the research phase of the project ends in March 2020, after which the app/portal will be available for use. For further information about MySafety, please mail **c.mann@lfi-silva.com** or **stephen.bartlett@invigilatis.com.**

The App is intuitive to use and features include:

- Daily Safety Checks
- Reporting - for incidents, risks and for competency records - photos and notes can be attached to reports and safety checks
- Emergency support using the What3Word addressing system.

Essential workplace information is available:

- Guidance on mitigating risks
- Incident summaries - daily alerts about incidents which happened on the previous day
- Hourly weather forecasts for their work site from the Met Office's latest services.

There are significant benefits for every role defined by FISA:

- Records of Skills and Competencies can be maintained.
- Observations can be shared by Operators, Contractors, Managers and Owner, so fostering an inclusive team culture. The team members in every role can be "heard"; they will be engaged, and consequently feel valued.
- Operational processes can be formalised and evidenced to provide reliable management information.

Igggesund trains staff as Mental Health First Aiders

In January 2017, Iggesund Paperboard (Workington) signed up to an initiative called Better Health at Work, an award which recognises and encourages employers to promote a healthier workplace.

In the last three years, the large company has organised many campaigns, wellbeing days and trained 18 employees as Health Advocates and 24 employees as Mental Health First Aiders. These employees all have an interest in wellbeing and help to be a contact point for employees around the mill.

Iggesund was assessed in November for the Better Health at Work Gold Award and officially received the award this January.

When Confor staff visited the premises in October 2019, we were pleasantly surprised to find see the mental health awareness posters of the Ask Twice campaign inside toilet cubicles. We believe that promoting mental health awareness, in particular in male-dominated sectors, has long been overdue and is key for staff wellbeing and productivity.

www.iggesund.com

GET INVOLVED

Are you an employer? Why not promote mental health awareness in your business? #AskTwice offers posters and other resources to encourage your employees to look after each other. For more information, search for Ask Twice or go to **www.time-to-change.org.uk/support-ask-twice-campaign**

A decade of keeping lone workers safe

In May last year, Trackplot celebrated its 10th anniversary. Trackplot is the lone worker monitoring system for people who work remotely outdoors. The easy-to-use interactive system helps companies comply with lone worker laws and create their own tailored lone worker management system.

This satellite-based system offers a range of different communication methods and does not need mobile phone reception to work.

Their product helps employers to comply with the law, improving working conditions and safety for their workforce. Integral to Trackplot is a system of notifications, a check-in and check-out facility and alerts. The Trackplot Portal has an automatic escalation procedure which, in the event that the lone worker is incapacitated, allows the alarm still to be raised.

This year the company gained Cyber Essential Plus accreditation. This UK government scheme encourages businesses to adhere to best-practices in IT security. It means Trackplot has been independently verified and has cyber security measures in place protecting their service and data from any cyber attack.

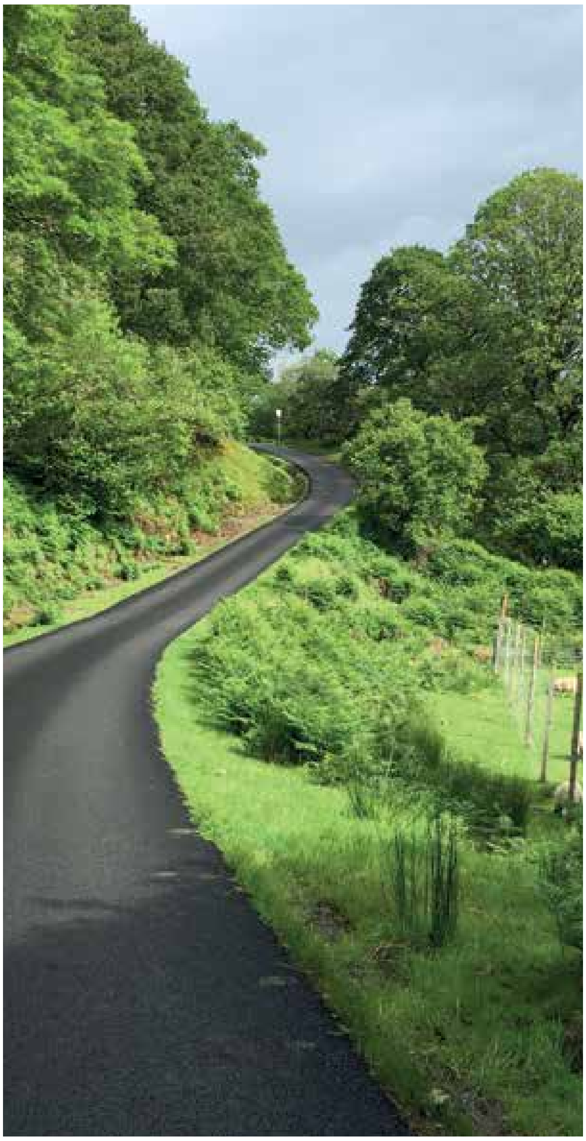
Looking ahead to the second six months of their anniversary year, Trackplot is focused on gaining BS8484 accreditation a British standard which ensures the quality of lone worker safety services. BS8484 will provide recommendations and act as a benchmark when seeking solutions to reduce the risk to lone workers. By complying with BS8484 this will provide further commitment that Trackplot is working to the highest standard for their customers safety as a code of practice.

www.trackplot.com

TRACKPLOT

Roads, Forests, People

Roland Stiven
Timber Transport Forum



Every two years, an eclectic mix of people with an interest in timber transport gather for a conference. This time we will be in Penrith on 20 March 2020, graciously sponsored by Volvo.

One reason for the location is that it is in the 'Borderlands' where the Scottish and UK Governments have recently announced a £394m Growth Deal covering the five local authority areas of Carlisle City, Cumbria County, Dumfries and Galloway, Northumberland County and Scottish Borders.

At the same time, the UK Government has announced the creation of the Great Northumberland Forest, a proposed new forest in the north of England, alongside Kielder Forest – which might already warrant the name!

In Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway, the South of Scotland Enterprise is being established with a remit to support inclusive growth across the predominantly rural Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway.

Both initiatives recognise the forestry and wood sector as an asset to the region delivering low carbon growth and contributing towards sustainable economic development. Forestry and wood processing are significant employers, with commercial forestry and state of the art processors both north and south of the border. The Borderlands Partners will bring forward proposals for a Forestry Innovation Centre as an exemplar for the sector. We are yet to see what this will entail.

Enabling growth

Both initiatives also recognise the importance of transport infrastructure in enabling economic growth. There is a host of economic studies that try to pin down the relation between the two and, while it is usually fairly obvious where transport infrastructure is limiting, it can be very tricky to say 'if you invest in improving these specific roads you will get this much economic growth': It is easier to do for a new motorway, very difficult for improvements to a bunch of minor roads.

The Timber Transport Forum and groups are in a rather unique position of being practitioners (rather than economists and planners) managing the interface where poor road infrastructure directly impacts on our business. It affects the value of our forests, the price we get for our timber, the riskiness of interventions and investment and the cost and carbon emissions from our supply chain. It also affects the perception of forestry by local communities, not always positively. The enterprise initiatives value forestry; we need to make sure the local communities do too.

Influencing investment

In Scotland, the industry is most fortunate to continue to have the Strategic Timber Transport Fund through which we can help influence infrastructure investment and immediately see the benefit to local communities. Visiting road improvement works in Argyll in January I was struck by how much has been achieved by the local authority with STTF support in recent years. The road improvements don't just reduce the impact of timber transport, they mostly benefit local people and visitors to our forested landscapes.

Transport is just part of the story. Borderlands and South Scotland Enterprise also realise that rural development is a multi-faceted issue. The forestry sector needs roads but it also needs young people living locally to do the work, and they in turn need affordable housing, training and skills development, regular transport services, office space and functional communities people want to live in.

Come to the conference, it's all about roads, forests and people (and big trucks!).

TICKETS ONLINE

The Timber Transport Conference is being held at North Lakes Hotel, Penrith on 20 March 2020. More details and ticket bookings on **www.confor.org.uk under Resources/events**

The closing date for applications to the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme for 2020 is 9 March 2020. Search for "Strategic Timber Transport Scheme" for more information.

Are there lessons to b

Neil Harrison of Re:heat tours the mysterious country of Abkhazia to explore new ways of sustainably using biomass for heating.

You'd be forgiven for having to resort to Google maps if you're wondering where to find Abkhazia on the globe. I even have a couple of friends who were initially convinced that it was a far-off fictional land where Tintin had been on one of his adventures. The reality is a little more mundane, although only a little.

Sandwiched between the Black Sea and the North Caucasus mountains, Abkhazia is variously described as a 'breakaway republic' and 'autonomous region' by the international community, having declared independence from Georgia following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The geography of Abkhazia is quite remarkable - think the landforms of south island New Zealand with the climate of the south of France - with biomes ranging from subtropical forests along the Black Sea coast, up to permanent snow cover and glaciers in the peaks which top 4000m to the north. Abkhazia is a paradise for anyone who loves the outdoors or is interested in forestry or farming, but its disputed status leaves it in a peculiar limbo – unable to trade internationally with most of the world, or to secure investment, attract tourists or do any

be learned from woodfuel-reliant countries?

of the other things that the rest of the international community typically takes for granted.

Having visited Abkhazia in 2018, and again at the end of 2019, I've been offered the opportunity to tour much of the country as part of my work looking at sustainable biomass use and its links with forest management. Initially commissioned to look at the opportunities around using hazelnut shells for space heating in homes and schools, the scope of my work broadened to look at the use of wood for heating more generally – the hazelnut shells proving to be a bit of a red herring.

Unreliable electricity grid

The biggest single use of wood in Abkhazia is for space heating and cooking by households, and for heating schools and other public buildings - particularly in rural areas. The end of the Soviet Union and the civil war brought about the closure of the coal mines and the destruction of the heating systems in the public buildings that used it as a source of heat. This, coupled with an unreliable electricity grid which still bears the deep scars of conflict, means the importance of wood has increased over the last three decades, as people have sought a reliable and low cost source of heat, and wood is now one of the key planks in Abkhazia's energy system.

Speaking with communities across Abkhazia at the end of 2019, the extent to which households rely on wood as a fuel became clear. Almost every home has a wood burning stove installed in the main living space, typically with an integrated oven and a hot plate in the top for cooking. Many villages also have *apatshka*, cook houses which have a central fire pit for communal use, and houses may also feature an open fire - an important source of light when the power fails. Wood is also used to power the ubiquitous cha cha stills – the local spirit produced by double distilling the leftovers from wine production.

With total forest cover at around 70%, and higher in rural areas, a culture of *ad hoc* forest management is present in every rural community in Abkhazia, driven almost entirely by the fact that every household consumes 6-10m^3 of fuel wood each year. Village elders lament the changes they've seen since the Soviet times, when all aspects of life in Abkhazia were organised and regulated by the state, with the forestry sector no exception to this. Every town and village had its local administration, and while these remain, they are in a much-reduced form, and none of those I spoke with had the well-trained forest rangers and system of permits which existed prior to 1992.

> "Wood is also used to power the ubiquitous cha cha stills – the local spirit

The breakdown of all state structures during the civil war triggered years of hardship, huge numbers of internally displaced people and a need to heat and cook with wood, meaning that much of Abkhazia's original forest cover was lost, particularly in the lowlands where the conflict was most intense. As a consequence, the changes in the management and structure of Abkhazia's forests have been dramatic, and there is a general lack of sustainable forest management and regulation outside the 'high forest' of the mountains - areas dominated by beech and chestnut at lower altitudes with mixed conifers higher up in the Caucasus.

The state forestry service, which although staffed by dedicated career foresters, is run on a shoestring, and is responsible for regulation and conservation, and for managing relatively small areas of forest for commercial timber. Hardwoods in particular are a rare source of export revenue, with beech and chestnut finding ready markets in Turkey, while some goes for domestic processing into construction timber, flooring and other uses.

It took me quite some time to determine that the Abkhaz don't really regard anything that isn't 10m or more in height as an actual tree, and they certainly don't refer to the near-continuous belt of hornbeam, alder, box and oak which stretches from one end of the country to the other as 'forest'. Despite most of this looking like very respectable broadleaved forest to me, the Abkhaz refer to it as scrub or thicket - something to be periodically cleared for firewood and other uses, with little thought for regulation or sustainable management. The need to provide knowledge and training for the communities who rely on the forests, and those that work in them is clear, and has the potential to be genuinely transformative.

New Defender set for April showroom debut

Eamonn Wall looks forward to the new Land Rover Defender

The all new Land Rover Defender has finally gone into production and first deliveries are due in April, after a gap in production of four years.

The new Defender uses an all-aluminium moncocoque body based on the one used in the current Discovery 5, so out goes the rusty ladder frame chassis. It has permanent four-wheel drive, twin speed auto gearbox, central differential and optional active locking rear differential. With its square two box design, vertical rear end and side-hinged rear door holding the spare wheel, the new Defender does pretty much look like a modernised version of the old model. A three-door 90 version and a longer five-door 110 version will be available. To start with, only the 110 version will be available, priced from £45,240 up to £78,800! Its prices are more in keeping with Discovery prices than those of the old Defender. The 90 version will be cheaper and commercial versions of both will follow next year, priced from about £35,000.

Even though the new Defender was launched in September 2019, supply chain issues have pushed back deliveries to April 2020 instead of January 2020. So at the time of writing, no one outside of Land Rover has actually driven the vehicles. Though I have sat in one which was making its way around the dealers before Christmas.

It is interesting to compare the 110 version to the Discovery 4. The 110 is 5018mm long with spare wheel (4758mm without), 2008mm wide (mirror folded) and 1967mm high, with a turning circle of 12.84m. The Discovery 4 compares with a length of 4829mm, 2053mm width and 1891mm high, with a turning circle of 11.45m. The new Discovery 5 is longer again.

To start with, the Defender is being launched with two-litre four-cylinder petrol (300bhp) and diesel (200-240 bhp, 32mpg is claimed) engines, and a six-cylinder 400bhp petrol. It is hoped that a six-cylinder Land Rover diesel engine will follow in due course. Only an eight-speed automatic gearbox is available and air suspension is standard on the 110. Coil springs will be an option in the 90. The dash mounted gearstick allows the Defender to have the option of a central jump seat, thus giving the 90 capability to carry six people and the 110 up to eight.

True off-roader

The new Defender has been designed to be excellent off road, a true off-roader, while also being good to drive on road. It has minimal front and rear overhangs. It can tow up to a 3500kg braked trailer. It is built in a new £1.5bn factory in Slovakia joining the Discovery 5 whose production was moved there in autumn 2019. The engines are built in Wolverhampton.

On the 110, the optional third row two seats fold out of the rear floor. With these folded away, the boot space behind the second row rear seats is 1075 litres (Discovery 4 and 5 are 1260 litres) and 2380 litres (vs 2558 litres in Discoveries) when the second row is folded. So the 110 is certainly spacious.

I do like the interior which is fairly simple but stylish, and the dials are all computer generated. The exterior lights look good but are not covered with a protective glass cover, meaning they will soon clog up with dirt I expect – a strange detail indeed.

The model range comprises S, SE, HSE, First Edition and top of the range X. Four accessory packs are available, together with a range of other accessories.

Land Rover has been inundated with orders for its new Defender. I look forward to driving one and seeing them on the road.

Eamonn Wall FICFor is a forestry and arboricultural consultant and director with Eamonn Wall & Co Woodland Design and Tree Management.

The new Defender in action on the set of the new Bond movie No Time To Die

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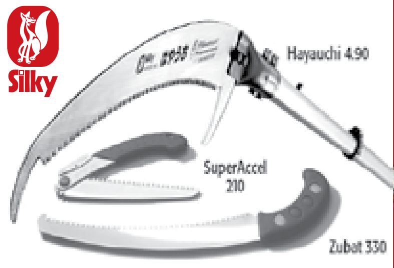

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PROFESSOR JULIAN EVANS OBE FICFor

First things first: health and safety in woodlands

When the Panama Canal was being built in the early 1900s, the flooding of Gatun Lake, which would provide the main expanse of water for the route, would mostly submerge only tropical rain forest. But this presented an interesting problem. Many trees were too tall to be overtopped as the water rose to its new natural level and even more were just below the surface. Thus, the transit route ships would take had to be cleared of trees altogether, a stretch of over 20 miles, before the lake was filled. Manual felling with saws and axes was slow and it was decided to blow up many of the trees instead. Sticks of dynamite were inserted and the operatives ran for cover. No protective clothing was provided, they just had to hide at a 'safe' distance: there were numerous casualties.

Re-reading one of my favourite books – one telling the story of how the canal was built – reminded me of the above. And it prompts me to re-visit the basics of good woodland risk assessment and health and safety bearing in mind accidents can happen. This is not in a form filling, boxing ticking way, but in noting five elements of good practice for any woodland owner and especially for the smaller owner with no staff to whom to delegate.

Know where you are

For me, the first element is to have good maps and other geographic information so that whenever or whoever has to come in emergency has location details: the wood's name, postcode, national grid reference or GPS coordinates along with name of the road or lane frontage, the nearest village etc. Where possible the internal layout of tracks and paths helps too. Point one is: 'know the wood's location'.

Read also what3words report on p61.

Emergency contacts

The second requirement is: know who to contact and how. Phone details of neighbours, first responders, nearest doctor, countryside crime officer (we have a brilliant police officer whose 'beat' is our area of Hampshire) etc. Mostly mobile phone numbers will do for voice or text contact and social media, but email addresses can be also be useful though obviously not for emergencies.

Know thy wood

Thirdly, inspections of hazards, noting what has shifted since last checked, or where a boundary has been breached, or dangerous spots like fire ponds or rocky outcrops all help build the picture. These are physical hazards, but don't forget ticks and snakes in the spring and summer. And it is good practice to visit soon after a storm has passed, especially if gusts of wind above 100kp/h (60mph) had been forecast. When I checked ours after the mid-January storms there was no damage, but someone had been in and left a calling card, a dead squirrel beside the main track!

Know thy visitor

Fourthly, bear in mind the kind of people likely to come, particularly their ages and their experience or otherwise, and what they intend to do. A contractor coming to work in the wood is very different from a church group or weekend camp. It's an

obvious point, but I recall my late mother, when visiting our wood in her late 80s would ask whether the route we took could be smoothed (my wood is remarkably easy walking) simply because she had lost much confidence following a fall. For her, the hazard of a small stick across the path was real, so an arm was proffered.

Legal requirements

Finally, know the legal requirements to comply with H&S regulations and do carry out risk assessments when you have a group coming. Remember to have appropriate signage and hazard warnings for when you are not there and visitors, welcome and inwelcome, gain access.

If you will allow a 'finally, finally' do ensure you have third party insurance of at least £5 million but preferably £10 million and do think about your own wellbeing with an up-to-date first aid box in your vehicle. What about getting trained in first aid?

By the way far, far more died in Panama during canal construction from malaria, yellow fever and other tropical diseases than dodgy tree felling. Safe wooding.

FORESTRY IN PICTURES

"There is plenty space in Sutherland for planting more trees without impacting on the world class scenery."

Colin MacKenzie took this picture of Ledmore Forest and Cul Mor from Loch Borrolan, Sutherland.

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