

# FORESTRY & TIMBER NEWS

April 2020 Issue 98

## COVID-19

A RESILIENT  
FORESTRY &  
TIMBER SECTOR



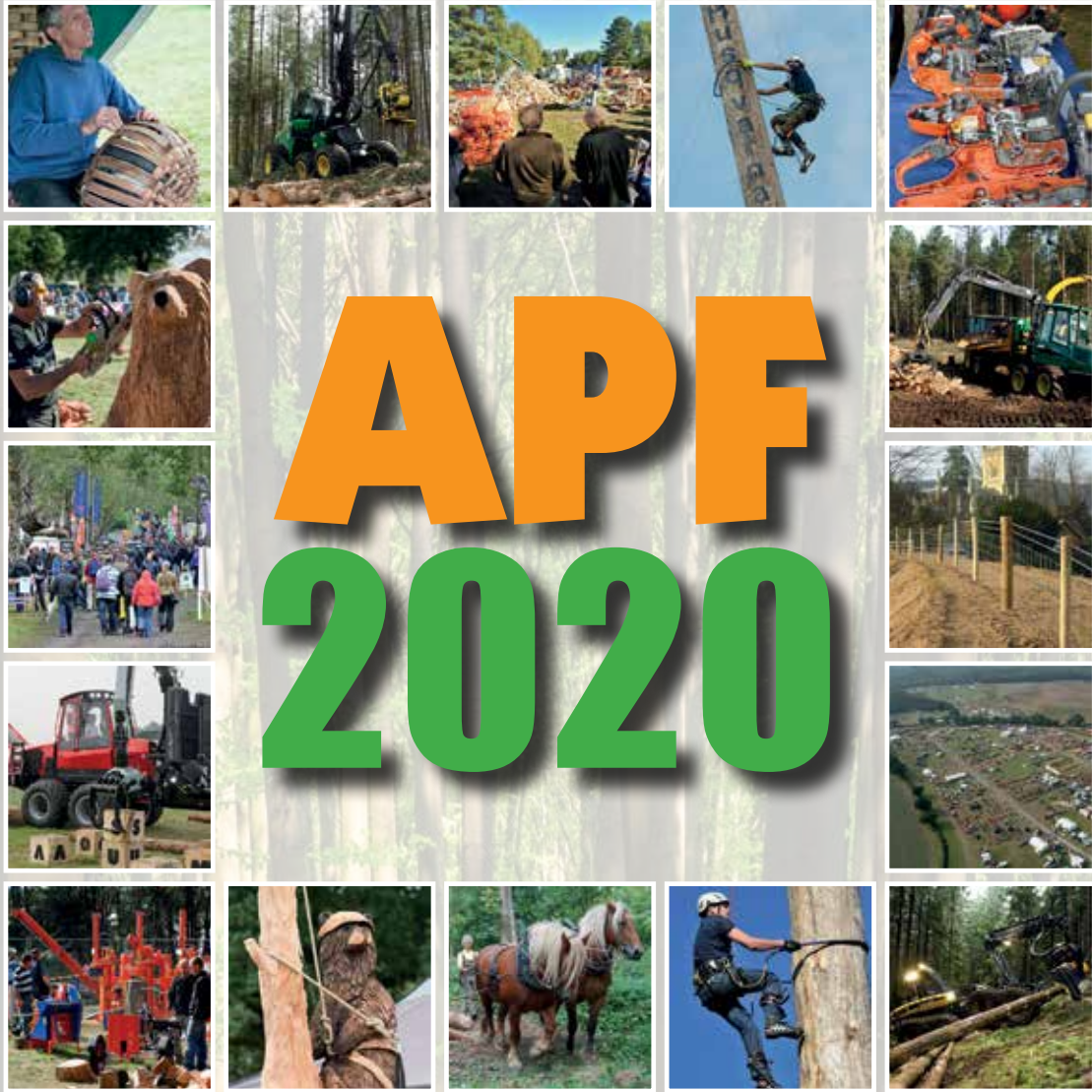
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CARVING CHAMPIONSHIP - WOODLAND CRAFTS - HORSE LOGGING  
WORLD LOG TO LEG CHAMPIONSHIP - UK FORWARDER DRIVING COMPETITION  
BRITISH OPEN FENCING CHAMPIONSHIPS - FOREST WORKER ZONE - ARB WORKSHOPS  
TREE HEALTH SEMINARS - FIREWOOD PROCESSING - BIOMASS PRODUCTION**

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Past issues and articles can be accessed online at [www.confor.org.uk/news/ftn-magazine](http://www.confor.org.uk/news/ftn-magazine)

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WOOD FOR GOOD

#### COVER STORY

Confor has set up a Covid-19 information website for the forestry and timber sector.

Visit [www.confor.org.uk/covid-19](http://www.confor.org.uk/covid-19)

Design: A. Wrona





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## A future beyond the crisis

**STUART GOODALL** CHIEF EXECUTIVE, CONFOR

In my February article I spoke of 2020 being an important year that may just live up to its billing. Well the story has quickly changed to one far more dramatic and immediate.

And at this time, we don't know what the conclusion is or even when that will come.

What I do know, after more than 30 years spent in the industry, is that we are a resilient, practical and inventive industry. I also know that we are privileged to work with trees and wood, something that society needs and benefits from in so many ways – there's a bright future beyond this current crisis.

Within Confor we've set up a service designed to help members get easy access to relevant business and sector information, for example from the forestry agencies. This can most effectively be accessed if we have your up to date email address. If you're at all uncertain whether we have it, please email [C19Qs@confor.org.uk](mailto:C19Qs@confor.org.uk)

After developing the information service we moved into a phase of better understanding what member's needs are at this time and what can Confor

assist with. Questions are coming in to the email address above and we have set up country contact groups which include businesses from along the supply chain.

These contact groups are important for a number of reasons:

Politicians and public bodies want to know what's happening in the sector and it's important they get as full and accurate a report as possible – this exercise also helps raise the profile of our industry further with them;

Members will also benefit from this knowledge of what's happening up and down the supply chain;

There are important practical matters that will arise, for example we are a sector that works a lot with forestry regulators and public sector suppliers and they will be under pressure – we need to establish new ways of working.

If there is anything we can do for you, do please get in touch with team members direct – their email and phone contacts are on the previous page.

We at Confor can't protect you from Covid-19 but we will do our best to help you protect your business and your forests during these difficult times.





# Covid-19: Confor keeps you informed

Confor responded quickly to the enormous changes to all of our lives as the impact of Coronavirus began to hit home - by establishing a web hub to share information about how the forestry and wood processing sector might be affected.

The hub - <http://www.confor.org.uk/covid-19/> - was set up after Confor identified an opportunity to share all relevant sector information - from industry, Government, public forestry bodies and all other stakeholders - with its 1600 members.

"It was important to take a lead quickly and ensure that our members had access to relevant information about Covid-19 in one place," said Confor CEO Stuart Goodall. "There is a lot of anxiety around our health, but also about the future of the industry and we quickly realised Confor had to step up and do all it could to help the forestry and wood processing sector get through this.

"We are in uncharted territory and the huge complexity of the situation means that a central source of information is both useful and necessary."

## Early issues

While the situation might have changed between writing this and FTN publication, early issues are emerging around continuity of business operations especially key workers, cashflow, possible impact on timber prices, a range of supply chain issues and the impact of potential reductions in demand for timber from key markets like construction. All the information about business support - special schemes to help both large businesses and SMEs, rates relief, help with tax payments and more - was quickly added to the site, which was created by Confor's Communications Manager Stefanie Kaiser.

"The site - and the speed with which we established it - has been welcomed across the private and public sectors," said Mr Goodall. "As well as highlighting all information we think is relevant and useful, we are working with members to ensure we under-

stand the full range of their concerns and are able to feed them [back] in to the relevant governments and agencies, following a combination of a reactive and a proactive approach.

"To support this, we established country contact groups, led by Confor's National Managers, to feed back specific concerns from different parts of the supply chain, from the nursery sector through to sawmills and end users."

There has also been very close contact with the public forest agencies in all parts of the UK, with a specific emphasis on how the current crisis will impact on site visits, felling licences, timber sales, procurement and contracts. Mr Goodall has been in close contact with all the public agencies in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, with Anthony Geddes, Confor's National Manager, leading in Wales.

This has allowed reassuring messages to be shared quickly, via email, the website and social media, such as this from Mike Seddon, Chief Executive of Forestry England: "We aim to provide as uninterrupted service as possible for direct production, standing sales and other business operations. We will continue to offer timber for sale through our e-sales platform."

The web hub has shared a very wide

## Keeping our members informed

**We will send out e-mail updates  
once or twice a week.**

Don't miss out!

**1. Check your spam folder for  
Confor updates**

Add us to your contacts

**2. Please make sure we have your  
current e-mail address.**

Contact [Liz@confor.org.uk](mailto:Liz@confor.org.uk) or  
[stefanie.kaiser@confor.org.uk](mailto:stefanie.kaiser@confor.org.uk)

range of information and we encourage feedback from all members. As well as the normal contact points for Confor, we have established an email for you to ask questions about the impact of Covid-19 - which we will endeavour to answer quickly. The email is [C19Qs@confor.org.uk](mailto:C19Qs@confor.org.uk)

"We are committed to doing all we can to find the answers to members' questions," said Mr Goodall. "As I wrote in my initial blog, Confor cannot protect you from Coronavirus, but we will do everything possible to help you protect your business and your forests from its impacts.

"I'm very pleased to see the great collaborative effort across the public and private sector to get through this crisis - and I'm buoyed by the knowledge, gleaned from meeting people over 30 years, that forestry and wood is a resilient, practical and inventive industry."







## Worried about how Covid-19 is impacting your business activity? Email us your questions



If you have sector-specific questions about Covid-19, please get in touch with us. Confor is working hard to respond to all enquiries, Frequently asked questions can be found on the Covid-19 information hub and will be sent to Confor members in regular e-mail updates on Covid-19.

[www.confor.org.uk/covid-19/faqs](http://www.confor.org.uk/covid-19/faqs)

## Country contact groups

The country contact groups are made up of members across the supply chain. They will be run by each of the National Managers and will:

- provide knowledge and comment (initially on a weekly basis), including supply chain challenges
- feedback on the tone and substance of Confor's communications on Covid-19 - making sure it's pitched right and says the right things
- advise us as we seek practical solutions for businesses working with regulators, grant providers and public sector timber suppliers during periods of reduced staff numbers and limited personal contact
- feed into our assessment of arising/future challenges and how government/public agencies can assist

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Find up-to-date-information on [www.confor.org.uk/covid-19](http://www.confor.org.uk/covid-19)



# UK tree planting prospects 'brightest for a generation'

The outlook for significant new tree planting in all parts of the UK is the brightest it has been for a generation, according to Confor Chief Executive Stuart Goodall.

Mr Goodall highlighted a range of positive announcements – at UK level and in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – designed to drive up planting substantially.

This included the confirmation by Defra that the UK Government target is to increase annual planting to 30,000ha a year (of new woodland creation) across the UK by 2025 – exactly in line with Confor's "ambitious but achievable" targets set in April 2019.

The scale of ambition at Westminster was underlined by the confirmation of a £640 million fund for tree planting and peatland restoration in England in the March Budget by new Chancellor Rishi Sunak.

Stuart Goodall, Confor CEO, said: "We have seen significant announcements across the UK which, if delivered on the ground, will mean we are making real progress towards the UK target of 30,000 hectares of new planting annually by 2025.

"As we said last year, it's an ambitious target, but an achievable >>

## ENGLAND

The Government announced it will invest £640 million in new tree planting and peatland restoration in England through the Nature for Climate Fund.

This is expected to drive up annual planting in England to contribute to the 30,000ha a year target for the whole (total annual) UK (planting) by 2025.

Slightly confusingly, the (new) total (planting) target for planting in England in the period 2020-25 is also 30,000ha – this is intended to increase annual planting (rising) from less than 1500ha now to around 9000ha in 2024/25 (an average) of 6000ha/year over the next five years)..

### Targets for new planting (ha) by 2025 by country

Scotland	15,000
England	9000-10,000
Wales	4000
Northern Ireland	900*

\*By 2030

## WALES

In Wales, a major announcement in March for a national forest the length and breadth of Wales included £10 million of new funding for planting and woodland restoration. This was welcomed by Confor's National Manager for Wales, Anthony Geddes, who said: "This is a game-changer for forestry in Wales – and for the wider environment. Planting millions more trees marks a significant commitment to tackling the Climate Emergency, declared by the Welsh Government in March 2019. This new funding can unblock the demand that we know is there and I look forward to seeing attractive, high-quality planting schemes brought forward in 2020." The annual planting target in Wales is 2000 ha/year, rising to 4000ha/year "as soon as possible".

## SCOTLAND

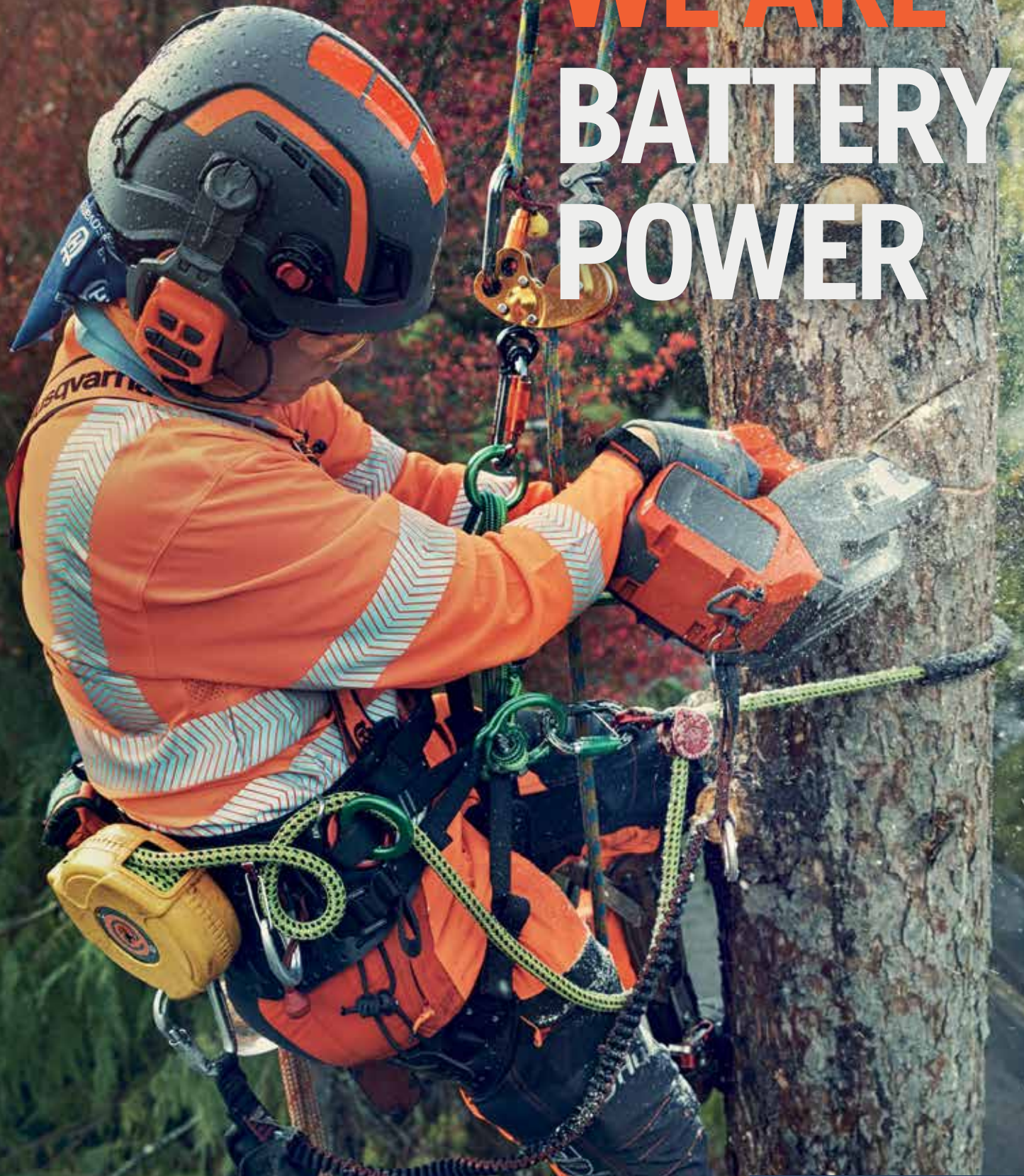
In Scotland, which planted 84% of all new trees in the UK in 2018/19 – 11,200ha out of 13,400ha in total – an extra £6 million was allocated to tree planting in the recent Scottish Budget. The pipeline of new planting applications in Scotland appears to be strong. In addition, the ruling SNP party has signed up to a joint commitment with Confor to deliver 18,000ha a year in Scotland by 2030.

## N. IRELAND

In March in Northern Ireland, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs pledged to target 900ha of new woodland creation annually – a significant increase on the 200ha being planted at the moment.



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>> one. We know the issues where we need to work hardest - nurseries, for example, who need confidence that the planting will happen and potentially investment support from Government. We also require funding to support the creation of new Regional Forestry Partnerships in areas in England like Northumberland where there are particularly positive opportunities for new planting. And, of course, we need to see processes for planting applications and approvals simplified and streamlined.”

Mr Goodall added a note of caution: “We also need to continue communicating positive messages about modern productive forestry and how it can deliver on a range of agendas - climate change mitigation, rural growth and employment, timber for wood products, biodiversity, flood risk reduction, recreational opportunities and much more. As we become more successful as a sector, we will come under greater scrutiny. We have already seen negative comment in the media about the carbon benefits of productive planting - we need to maintain and if possible increase our collective media activity to counter those who simply want to undermine our work as well as to ensure those who now take an interest in trees and wood products have access to the facts.

“Overall, we are in a very positive place and Confor will continue to work in partnership with all those organisations who recognise the huge value of trees to our economy, environment and society.”



## Other 2020 budget key points for the forestry and timber sector

### Nurseries

Confor has briefed Defra and the forestry Minister Zac Goldsmith on the potential need for support for seed supply and nurseries, and it is still hoped that detail on these will be forthcoming in the next few days.

### Red diesel in forestry

It was mooted in the press a few weeks ago that the entitlement to use red diesel would be removed from agriculture (which for this purpose includes forestry). Confor wrote to Defra pointing out the significance of red diesel for the industry, as did the farming unions for agriculture.

The budget confirmed that “The government will remove entitlement to the use of red diesel and rebated biofuels from April 2022, except for agriculture (including horticulture, pisciculture and forestry), rail and for non-commercial heating (including domestic heating).” While forestry has been protected, this restriction will impact on use by sawmills and possibly businesses building forest roads. Confor has begun to collect evidence on the potential impact of these ahead of lobbying Government.



### Carbon and energy

**(Including Confor’s climate change agreement for sawmills)**

The Government announced that it would extend the Climate Change Agreement scheme by two years.

More detail on the extended CCA Scheme will be published soon as part of a consultation to include long-term options



for a possible future CCA Scheme.

Details of the two year CCA extension are not yet published, but it may involve:

- An additional two years of CCA reporting, following the end of Target Period 4 in 2020 (tbc)
- An additional two years of CCL discount (tbc)
- Opening the CCA Scheme to new entrants (timing tbc)

Further information on the carbon and energy elements of the budget are in this summary from our CCA consultants Jacobs:

[www.confor.org.uk/media/247659/budget-2020-carbon-and-energy-summary-v1.pdf](http://www.confor.org.uk/media/247659/budget-2020-carbon-and-energy-summary-v1.pdf)

### Other announcements

- An extension of the Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive for one year
- For 2022/23 and 2023/24 a total of £100 million grant-funding for households and small non-domestic buildings to install heat pumps or biomass - the latter in limited circumstances
- Energy innovation R&D funding doubled to £1bn
- A Plastic Packaging Tax will be confirmed and consulted on
- The Plug-in Car Grant is to be extended with a £403 million boost, to 2022-23; Plug-in Grants for vans, taxis and motorcycles will be extended to 2022-23.







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## James Jones doubles I-Joist production capacity

The new, fully operational line will see the Timber Systems Division James Jones and Sons Ltd more than double its production capacity, making it the largest, fastest and most efficient I-Joist line in Europe.

The investment of £8.5m will not only significantly increase the production capacity to 20 million lineal metres a year, but will allow faster production times. This increased production speed will ensure increased stock levels and even better service for distributors and their end users. The final stage of the installation took place in October 2019 and has been fully operational from the start of this year. In-line innovations include a tension tester and precision end trim saws, which will help reduce on site waste and maximise floor and roof design optimisation by cutting to specified lengths suit-

ed to off-site manufacturing.

Speaking about the new JJI-Joist line, Angus Macfarlane, General Manager of James Jones and Sons' Timber Systems Division commented: "Housebuilders are under some pressure to meet government's new home build figures; we believe our investment in the new facility comes at a vital time and will enable us to support the UK's construction industry and many of our loyal customers to meet these targets.

"Other innovations that we are launching in 2020 include a pre-insulated I-Joist that not only provides the necessary thermal properties required in roof design, but can also provide enhanced acoustic performance for floor and wall design. We have also recently launched our new 'JJI Design' software, a newly built CAD based 3D modelling pro-



gram, significantly upgrading from our existing software with improved compatibility and increased speed of design.

"This recent investment follows on from the £4.5 million installation of a new finger jointing line in 2015 and we are committed to supporting a programme of continued investment, allowing us to lead the way in engineered timber products long into the future".

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

## Pallet and packaging manufacturers call for reuse focus

Repair and reuse of wooden pallets has risen sharply for another successive year and now represents a greater volume of the market than new production, according to a joint report by the Timber Packaging & Pallet Confederation (TIMCON) and the Forestry Commission.

The UK Wood Pallet & Packaging Market in 2018, estimated that a total of 46 million wooden pallets were inspected and repaired in the market during 2018, an increase of 3.6% on the previous year. With 44.9 million new pallets produced, the number of repairs surpassed produc-

tion of new pallets for the first time ever.

Last month, TIMCON has called for government to channel more resources into promoting the reuse of packaging materials before recycling.

Stuart Hex, TIMCON general secretary, said: "TIMCON believes that reuse should be encouraged over and above recycling – this is of central importance to move the UK towards a truly circular economy. If reuse is possible, recycling merely to meet targets is irrational. Keeping a product working and in circulation should be our priority, with recycling taking place only

when a product has reached the end of its useful life."

TIMCON is continuing to lobby the government and devolved governments to consider this when it reviews future packaging waste targets. "We believe current UK recycling targets, that rise from 43% to 48% this year, are far too high, particularly when compared to the current EU target of 15%," said Hex.

"Our industry has a fantastic track record in repairing and reusing its products. Only once they have been reused – often many times – do we recycle them into wood chips, animal bedding and other products, or used as biomass fuel."

TIMCON is encouraging businesses to make reuse a key part of their sustainability strategies.

"Pallets and other wooden packaging materials absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere as trees grow. Using them for as long as possible and continuing to store that carbon makes perfect sense to help businesses reduce their carbon footprint further," said Hex.

"We no longer believe that there is such thing as a 'single-trip' pallet."

[www.timcon.org](http://www.timcon.org)



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## Alba Trees MD Rodney Shearer steps down

The managing director of Alba Trees plc, the UK's largest producer of cell-grown plants, has decided to step down on 2 March 2020, after being with Alba for over 31 years.

Alba has grown significantly under Rodney's leadership, its impressive growth now sees Alba occupy 13ha of land across two sites in East Lothian, producing over 16 million trees in the last financial year, which is the largest annual production to date, and now employing over 60 people.

Jon Alexander, chairman of Alba said: "Craig Turner, Chief Operations Officer, will continue to lead the business. Craig joined the organisation in 2019 and has become a vital part of Alba's continuing growth. Together with Craig and the wider Alba team, we look forward to continuing Rodney's legacy and fulfilling the ambitious plans in place for the future of the company."

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



## Mike Tustin and John Clegg launch Tustins

2020 saw the launch of Tustins, a bespoke business aimed at providing the highest levels of service for forestry sales, acquisitions and valuations throughout England, Wales and Scotland.

The two directors of Tustins are certainly not newcomers to this business and are well known throughout the UK forestry sector. Mike Tustin and John Clegg have worked together over many years and have over 60 years of forestry specific experience between them.

Mike has wide ranging experience including at Abbey Forestry, Tilhill Forestry, FIM, Nicholsons and John Clegg & Co. John was instrumental in building up John Clegg & Co after joining his father, also John, Angus Crow, Colin Gee, David Taylor and Fenning Welstead in 1983.

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



### CONFOR WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Thomas Bartlett (Gwynedd)  
 Richard Coke (Fife)  
 Raymond & Katherine Henderson (Devon)  
 Jonas Brandl (Devon)  
 Caledonia Log Homes Ltd (Roxburghshire)  
 Certis Europe B V (Cambridgeshire)  
 Dartmoor Woodfuel Co-operative (Devon)  
 FutureArk Ltd (Midlothian)  
 Maristow Estate (Plymouth)  
 Orris Stevens (Devon)  
 Shillofad Limited (Gloucestershire)

## Rapid response to Trackplot's first SOS alarm

In October 2019 Trackplot, the UK's leading remote lone worker monitoring system, encountered their first real SOS alarm since the company's conception in 2009. The swift escalation proved how reliable and responsive the SOS procedure is, reassuring customers of the value of the system in a crisis.

SOS is integral to Trackplot's remote lone worker monitoring system, being one of the GPS device functions, and can be triggered in a life-threatening emergency. The GPS device works using satellites, it does not need mobile phone signal, so a lone worker is able to raise the alarm to rapidly locate their position even in remote regions.

### The SOS event

The SOS alarm was initiated by Trackplot customer McGowan, environmental engineering specialists, based in the Highlands of Scotland. The alert was raised by McGowan employees, who were working in a remote part of the company site, when they unfortunately discovered the body of a missing walker from the local area.

At 09.53 a McGowan employee pressed the SOS button on their GPS device and the escalation procedure began.

By 10.01 GEOS (Global Emergency Operating System) in Houston, USA received the SOS message by satellite into their secure call centre. The call centre established that the location of the SOS was in the UK and despatched an alert to ARCC (Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre) to start the emergency response. In tandem whilst this was happening the call centre also contacted the nominated Emergency Contacts at McGowan to verify if the SOS was real or a false alarm.

On confirmation that this was a true SOS further details were gathered to brief the emergency services as fully as possible. Within 15 minutes of the SOS alarm being raised, a helicopter landed on-site supported by the police.

### Conclusions

The McGowan site had very limited mobile phone reception, indeed one of the employees had tried to send a text message to the main office to request help, but it was not delivered until after the emergency services arrived.

Despite living in an age when the mobile phone dominates, the mobile network cannot be solely relied upon as a guaranteed method of communication in an emergency, especially in rural and remote locations.

The incident demonstrates the immediacy and rigour of the Trackplot system and proved the SOS escalation procedures work exceptionally well. It confirmed to McGowan employees they can rely and trust in the system knowing that help is on its way.



The incident demonstrates the immediacy and rigour of the Trackplot system

Although the incident had a sad ending and nothing could be done this time to save a life it's reassuring to know the SOS escalation works effectively ensuring a response as quickly as possible.

Ross Smith, director at McGowan, explained "McGowan works frequently in remote, rural locations and to safeguard our employees we use Trackplot. On 10 October 2019 the SOS button was activated by an employee on a remote Peatland Restoration Site near Roy Bridge (Highland). Within 15 minutes an emergency services helicopter was on-site and recovered the body of a deceased walker. Through this experience our staff and management are reassured that, if needed, the Trackplot system alerts the emergency services who can respond extremely quickly and exactly where required."

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Andrew Sowerby, Regional Manager at Pryor & Rickett Silviculture shares his passion for technical forestry, the community of the south Wales valleys and how playing the banjo can be the antidote to forestry. He was talking to **Anthony Geddes**

**E**ven in his early years it's fair to say Andrew was aware of looking after the environment, from the hole in the ozone layer being reported on Newsround to Scout masters taking him and friends into the great outdoors for hiking and camping trips. The crunch point for the career path of forestry came when at 15, he completed the career guidance questionnaire. Andrew recounts "My questionnaire returned Game Keeper and Forester and on balance being a forester was appealing because it had a connection to the wilderness, I was aware of climate change and instinctively tree planting was a positive thing to do."

Having completed his A-levels he chose Aberdeen due to family links to Scotland and Perthshire but then had the opportunity to study as a student exchange at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver followed by a year working with the Northern Ireland Forest Service in Limavady.

At this point it became clear just how broad a church forestry was, "it has so many disciplines and you can earn a living working in the forest or at a strategic/policy level, I'm grateful that doing a degree in forest management at Aberdeen prepared me for the widest range of work opportunities on graduating."

Being a Yorkshireman originally, Wales wasn't initially part of the grand master plan but in 2001 Andrew was offered a role as a Planning Forester in the South Wales Valleys in 2001. He recounts that it wasn't quite what he had anticipated. "Moving to Neath and latterly Pontypridd where I've lived for 16 years was quite surreal. It was like Yorkshire but with more hills, trees and



If we can look after our woodlands and trees well as a society, then we should feel secure that we can look after each other too





the wonderfully expressive Welsh accent.” Keen to understand the locals he immediately started to learn Welsh and impressively achieved a pass at A-Level in 2016.

### Starting out in the Valleys

The technical detail of working in the valleys is something that really appealed to Andrew and as a young forester he learnt to cope with steep slope harvesting, establishing crops on soils with mining heritage, landscape design and entire streets of terraced housing as adjoining land owners. He remarks “The South Wales Valleys is a great place to start your forestry career, people are naturally outgoing and friendly, you’re close to towns and cities as well as the countryside and the scenery is epic with a wildness that you rarely get in national parks “

Despite all the silvicultural and social reasons for loving life in the Valleys what really anchored him to life in the Forestry Commission was the sense of public ser-

vice and fairness. The characteristics the organisation enjoyed in that period brought a sense of belonging with support, patience, camaraderie and trust.

“As a young man, I became a forester because I wanted to protect the environment and work outdoors. My experience with the Forestry Commission and my experience with mentors long retired or colleagues still working in Resolfen or Llanymddyfri has evolved that. I work in forestry now because the public, my colleagues and the forests both current and future need us to be our most professional to achieve the most we can. If we can look after our woodlands and trees well as a society, then we should feel secure that we can look after each other too.”

### One country in a valley

The Forestry Commission provided training and experience as a planning forester, harvesting contracts manager and through a secondment to Welsh Government the chance to develop policy and guidance. Among notable accolades writing the Forestry Commission’s operational guidance for Forest Design Planning then leading teams in Forest Planning at District and National level provided a unique chance to put his stamp on the forests of Wales.

A less desirable opportunity ensued with the outbreak of *Phytophthora ramorum*. “Leading the Harvesting Team in South Wales during the years of peak harvesting of larch in the *Phytophthora ramorum* outbreak was the most challenging privilege.”

Amongst the largescale felling and restructuring of the estate, Andrews role as Harvesting Team Leader was intricately linked to safety in the public estate. His team of 15 supported the delivery of complex long-term contracts on very difficult, usually steep sites with lots of public access. This put him in a good position to understand how and why things didn’t always go to plan. “We investigated hundreds of near misses, reacted and investigated many hospitalisations and sadly one fatality in August 2015, it was humbling to say the least.”

### A new direction

After 15 years in the public sector, the opportunity arose to take a step outside his

comfort zone and join a private firm. Pryor & Rickett offered him a post as a forest manager based from their Brecon office. “Switching to work in the private sector was a really exciting time, the scale at which I worked shrank yet the range of responsibilities I had for individual properties was myriad. Having worked for 15 years in lots of different functions within forestry: planning, harvesting, policy, team leadership, now I had the chance to work across 10-15 disciplines at a time, one minute ushering sheep into their rightful pasture the next minute negotiating an annual budget for a multi-purpose woodland with managed public access. “

The change has been a successful one with Andrew being appointed Regional Manager West at Pryor & Rickett Silviculture last December, he’s matter of fact about the challenge. “The lows in the private sector come when plans don’t meet the budget you expected. There is no hiding, you have to deliver on your commitment and answer for the short comings. But, the highs of winning work competitively and delivering as planned is great. Knowing you can provide safe, quality work on price for the client is a brilliant feeling”.

As well as being a full-time forester, his position as a Fellow on Council for the Institute of Chartered Foresters has provided opportunities to give back, mentoring new foresters (old and young) in the profession. As Andrew describes it “in thanks for the start I had in Resolfen way back in 2001”.

The Welsh Governments tree planting work in Uganda ([www.mbailecoed.org.uk](http://www.mbailecoed.org.uk)) is a project he remains engaged with; “my one wish for forestry would be for society to find joy in woodlands that’s eluded them to date.”

### Away from the trees

This man is not good at saying No! “Getting away from trees and the necessities of work is always a challenge, a difficult lesson. My family are very patient with me but these days we don’t go for too many woodland outings. My wife Esther and our boys attend St Catherine’s Church in Pontypridd and I’m grateful that we’re grounded in a community of faith. Playing guitar in church or learning bluegrass banjo as well as extended family help me step away from work.



## Confor sponsors new Forest and Woodland Award

A new Forest and Woodland Award has been established as part of RSPB's annual Nature of Scotland Awards, and Confor has agreed to be its first sponsor.

The high-profile Awards programme - which celebrates the "inspiring people, projects, groups and organisations across different aspects of nature conservation in Scotland" - is open for entries and Confor members are encouraged to apply.

Stuart Goodall said: "We are delighted to be sponsoring this new award, which celebrates sustainable forestry and woodland champions.

"Our involvement reaffirms Confor's commitment to positive partnership working. Our approach is to engage with groups interested in the natural world and identify areas where we can work together constructively and tackle challenges collaboratively,

with the aim of promoting more planting and sustainable woodland management. I'm really pleased that we are involved in the Awards and look forward to working with RSPB on this and other projects.

"There are many examples of Confor members planting and managing excellent, multi-purpose woodlands and I would encourage them to consider entering this award so we can showcase modern forestry on a high-profile stage."

The Forest and Woodland Award is open to individuals, businesses, communities or organisations who are creating and/or managing woodlands.

The description of the award says: "Whoever you are, you will be going above and beyond standard practice, and placing nature and wildlife at the heart of your activities. You might be a wildlife-friendly



forester, a community making the most of your local woodlands or a farmer and other land manager exploring innovative new approaches which bring benefits for wildlife and people. Applicants with forests and woodlands of all types and scales will be considered, from small woodlands or urban planting schemes through to landscape-scale projects."

More information about the Awards is available at

## Have your say on the funding framework for forestry in England

The government's consultation on Environmental Land Management (ELM) is now open.

Westminster has released proposals that set out the initial thinking on the design of the new ELM scheme for funding for farming and land management, which will replace the Common Agricultural Policy. It does not intend to set out the detailed delivery arrangements for ELM. The responses from stakeholders will help to inform the detailed scheme design policy for both the national pilot (due to start in late 2021) and for the start of the full ELM scheme in 2024. We anticipate that there will be a full consultation on the detailed scheme design at a later date. The proposals are based on three tiers:

- **Tier 1:** encouraging sustainable practices among all land managers.
- **Tier 2:** delivering locally-appropriate environmental outcomes.

- **Tier 3:** delivering transformational land-use change

Confor will be responding to the consultation and we will circulate our response to members. Members are also encouraged to submit their own responses. Important points to make could include:

- A recognition that production is not just about food.
- Recognition of the UK Forestry Standard as a level of sustainable practice
- Recognition of the UK Woodland Assurance Standard as independently-audited sustainable forest management and the Grown in Britain Chain of Custody Standard
- A level playing field for all land uses, with integrated land use encouraged
- A recognition of the importance of active woodland management
- A recognition of the work done by landowners to maintain good plant health



- Substantial support for a transformational increase in woodland creation for multiple benefits.

Environmental Land Management is part of a wider government strategy for the countryside, including aspects such as plant health, regulatory culture, and the transition from existing farm subsidies.

### GET INVOLVED

For links to the full policy document and to the consultation page, visit our Consultations page on [www.confor.org.uk](http://www.confor.org.uk) (Resources/Consultations). The consultation is open until 5 May 2020.

If you respond to the consultation, please let Caroline Ayre know ([caroline@confor.org.uk](mailto:caroline@confor.org.uk)). Please also contact Caroline if you have any questions about ELM.



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# Confor 2020 award winners honoured at annual dinner

Two young foresters and five sector stalwarts were honoured at Confor's expanded awards dinner, in what was described as "a fantastic celebration of a successful, growing industry".

Young forest manager Andrew MacQueen of Tilhill won the Future Forestry Leader Award, with Laura Charles of Forestry England and Huw Lloyd of Lockhart Garratt also shortlisted. George Moore, Executive Director of the Royal Scottish Forestry Society, in one of two nominations for Andrew, said: "Very occasionally, one comes across someone with star quality - Andrew definitely has this."

Tom Bruce Jones, Chairman of James Jones & Sons, said the company had supported the Future Forestry Leader Award in memory of his father Tom A Bruce Jones, who died in 2019: "He was a great supporter of developing talent and leadership, not just at James Jones, but across the whole industry."

Mima Letts, Founder of Tree Sparks, received the Changing Attitudes Award for her work to inspire young people to consider careers in an "exciting and awesome" industry. The Trainee Forester at Chatsworth House, a graduate of Bangor University, was described as "an inspiration to us all" by one

of the people who nominated her. She won the award ahead of fellow finalists Cheryl Lundberg (Lockhart Garratt) and Andy Baker of Tilhill.

The third new award, for Innovation & Research, went to long-serving James Jones & Sons haulage manager Jon Ritchie, with Tom Barnes of Vastern Timber and the Northern Research Station (Forest Research) the other finalists. Jon's nomination said that in 35 years with James Jones, he had used the firm's haulage fleet as "an impressive test bed for a variety of innovative and industry leading initiatives to improve the health safety and welfare of drivers".

The Dedicated Service to Forestry Award was presented to Martin Gale, Chairman of BSW Timber, by Fergus Ewing MSP, Cabinet

Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism, Scottish Government. Mr Ewing later said: "The awards dinner was a fantastic celebration of a successful, growing industry. I was delighted to see young professionals honoured for making their mark alongside those who have given decades of outstanding service."

Stuart Goodall, Chief Executive of Confor, said: "Martin Gale was one of the driving forces in the establishment of Confor in 2005 and has always provided his time generously to support industry bodies." Mr Gale said the industry had a bright future because "wood was the raw material of the 21st century".

A special award went to Sir Harry Studholme, who stepped down in February after seven years as Chair of the Forestry Commission. Mr Goodall said: "Sir Harry served as chair during a period of great change in the Forestry Commission, and provided a calm presence. I have always found him to be a gentleman, generous with his time, hugely knowledgeable and truly passionate about forestry."

There was also a special presentation to David and Dorothy Sulman, who have retired after decades of combined service to the forestry and timber industry.

**Top (l-r): PK Khaira-Creswell (company), Jamie Farquhar (Confor), Laura Charles (Forestry England); guest speaker Forestry Minister Fergus Ewing MSP waiting to be called; David and Dorothy Sulman received a special award. Below (l-r): Sarah Virgo (Wood for Good), Leona Baillie (SAC) and Daniela Thule (Crown Estate); winner of the Award for Dedicated Service - Martin Gale (BSW) - with Sir Harry Studholme (former Head of the Forestry Commission) who also received a Special Award; and two of the organisers, David Lee and Stef Kaiser**



# THE WINNERS



## CHANGING ATTITUDES AWARD

to be presented to “an individual or business promoting the forestry and wood sector in a positive and impactful way – through personal engagement, campaigning or communication, social media or other ways.”  
Sponsored by Scottish Woodlands Ltd.



**Winner: Mima Letts**  
**Founder, Tree Sparks, and trainee forester**

“I am absolutely chuffed to have been nominated and win the Changing Attitudes Award at Confors annual awards dinner for the work I have done with Tree Sparks to promote the forestry sector in a positive and engaging way. After stumbling into studying forestry, it has now become my life and I want to make sure others are not only aware of what forestry is and how cool it is, but that it is also a viable and hugely rewarding career choice”.

**Also nominated for the awards were**

- Cheryl Lundberg, Senior Forestry Consultant, Lockhart Garratt
- Andrew Baker, Forest Manager, Tilhill Forestry



*Pictured with Mima (centre) are Cheryl Lundberg and Andrew Baker*



## INNOVATION & RESEARCH AWARD

for a business or individual delivering successful innovation and/or research which has clearly demonstrated greater productivity or efficiency in the forestry and wood industry. *Sponsored by Forestry Commission/ Forestry & Land Scotland.*



**Winner: Jon Ritchie**  
**North Area Supply & Haulage Manager, James Jones & Sons**

“It was great achievement to pick up the award for “Innovation and Research” and thanks to Mick Bottomley who nominated me. I think overall this is great for the timber transport side as it has been recognised for all its good work over the years. I would also like to thank James Jones & Sons Ltd, my employer, as they encourage us to look for innovative ideas and then give us the back up.”

**Also nominated for the awards were**

- Present and former staff of the Northern Research Station
- Tom Barnes, Vastern Timber



*Pictured with Jon Ritchie (centre, right) are present and former staff of the Northern Research Station xxxxxxxx (left), Dr Mariella Marzano (centre left) and Dr Darren Moseley (right)*



## FUTURE FORESTRY LEADER AWARD

for “an individual with outstanding skills, who has the potential to be a leader in the forestry and timber sector – someone showing initiative, passion and making a real difference”. *Sponsored by James Jones & Sons Ltd.*



**Winner: Andrew MacQueen**  
**Forest Manager, Tilhill**

“It was very humbling to be chosen for this award. Thanks to Richard Davidson & George Moore for the nomination and to James Jones for the award itself. The outlook for the future is filled with both optimism and significant challenges. My personal aspiration is to embrace complexity in the forest as I believe diversity in both species and structure holds part of the key to safeguarding and enhancing our precious resource.”

**Also nominated for the awards were**

- Huw Lloyd, Assistant Forestry Consultant, Lockhart Garratt
- Laura Charles, Business Development Manager, Forestry England



*Pictured (left to right) Laura Charles, Andrew MacQueen and Huw Lloyd*



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# #TheFutureIsForestry essay prize

Jenny Knight has won #TheFutureIsForestry essay prize for challenging the premise that farmers and landowners need to be motivated to plant trees.

The accompanying video prize was won by Dan Haslam and colleagues from Scottish Woodland Ltd, for a forestry and wood spin on Monty Python's *What Have the Romans Ever Done for Us?*

The awards were due to be presented at Westminster by Defra Minister Lord Goldsmith on 24 March, but the event was cancelled due to coronavirus - after initially being delayed from last November when the general election was called.

The essay-writers and film-makers were asked to tackle the question (in up to 1500 words or a short film): 'How can farmers and landowners be

motivated to plant more trees to deliver a wide range of benefits, especially mitigating climate change?'

Judges said: "Jenny Knight set up the context for the discussion quickly, then questioned the question - and delivered a very coherent and persuasive argument as to how we can move forward, focused on relationship-building, communication and challenging perceptions. She also identified very specific logistical problems at local level that must be addressed."

The runner-up in the essay prize was Alex Malkin, ex-Tilhill Forestry, now working at Norbury Park, Staffordshire. Ellen Humphrey of Coed Cymru was placed third. Three entries were highly commended in a very high-quality competition: Nathan Adams, a Bangor University Masters student who works with Focus Consultants; Jay Williams, former Masters student, Harper Adams University; and Maeve Wright, of legal firm Anderson Strathern.

The runner-up in the video prize was Pippa

Paterson, former Graduate Rural Surveyor with Davidson and Robertson, while filmmaker Chris Court was third.

Stuart Goodall, Confor CEO, said: "It was disappointing to have to postpone the awards and then cancel them after such a strong set of entries. However, we are delighted to reward Jenny, Alex and Ellen for their excellent essays and Dan and the team, Pippa and Chris for their videos. The current crisis will throw up long-term challenges for forestry, timber and the rural economy and it is great to see such creative thinking going on."

Mr Goodall also thanked the competition sponsors Tilhill, BSW Timber and Forestry Commission for their tremendous support.

The winning essays will be published in FTN over the coming months, and both the essays and videos are available on the Confor website.

## Confor enews – keeping our members informed

In order to improve our information services to our members, we are making some changes to our Confor e-newsletter:

- **More frequent:** The e-newsletter will be sent out monthly from mid April 2020
- **More mobile friendly:** We are looking to adjust our design for a better content display if you read content on your smartphone
- **Reviewed content:** we will be reviewing the content to be prioritised in the e-newsletter.

### GET INVOLVED

We welcome your feedback, please get in touch with any feedback on how we can further improve our information services.

[Stefanie.kaiser@confor.org.uk](mailto:Stefanie.kaiser@confor.org.uk)

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# Developments in plant passports

**Following publication of the article in October 2019's *Forestry & Timber News* – 'All you need to know about plant passporting' – there have been further developments since the Plant Health Regulation (EU) 2016/2031 (PHR) was implemented on 14 December 2019. Below, the Forestry Commission Plant Health Forestry team provides updates on its most recent understanding of timber plant passporting and how you can register to continue moving wood, wood products and bark within GB and to the EU.**

Protected zone plant passports must now be used when professional operators – for example processors, management companies, timber merchants, hauliers and owners – move all conifer and *Castanea* (includes sweet chestnut) wood with bark. Plant passports apply to wood, wood products and isolated bark. Professional operators moving this type of material must now be registered and authorised by the Forestry Commission to issue plant passports.

Standard plant passports (Commission Implementing Regulation 2017/2313 Annex Part A) must also be used when moving *Juglans* (walnut), *Platanus* (plane) and *Pterocarya* (wingnut) with or without bark and professional operators must again be registered and authorised with the Forestry Commission.

A good proportion of professional operators have already registered and been authorised by the Forestry Commission to issue plant passports. More take up by the trade is required. Where chain of custody and other assurance schemes require that all relevant legislation should be followed, this will now include registration and the authorisation to issue plant passports for timber.

For access to the online registration system go to [www.gov.uk/guidance/register-as-a-professional-operator-to-issue-plant-passports](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/register-as-a-professional-operator-to-issue-plant-passports). It takes about 20 minutes to complete.

To modernise protections against tree pests, the new plant health regulations came into force on 14 December 2019 as part of the EU's Smarter Rules for Safer Food (SRSF) package ([www.gov.uk/government/publications/smarter-rules-for-safer-food-what-we-are-doing-smarter-rules-for-safer-food](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/smarter-rules-for-safer-food-what-we-are-doing-smarter-rules-for-safer-food)). The regulations will apply to the UK during the EU exit transition period which ends on 31 December 2020. When the transition period ends the regulations will be retained by the Withdrawal Act and will continue to apply – subject to any amendments the UK Parliament may agree. We will continue to use the plant passport system and the new plant passport format.

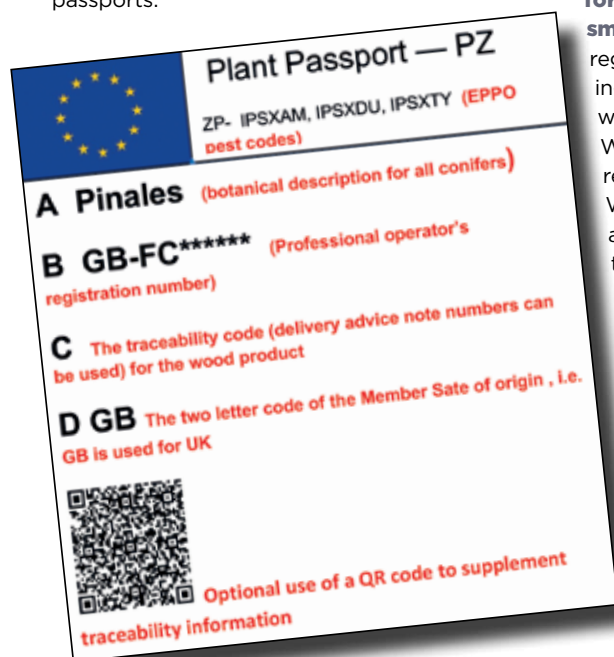
The Forestry Commission has liaised with forest industry stakeholders to agree a plant passport system that reduces the burden on the wood processing and forestry sector. The Forestry Commission has also contacted a range of stakeholders, including the arboriculture and firewood sectors, to explain the plant

passport system to increase the number of stakeholders registered and authorised.

As more detail has become available with different supply chains, the prioritised plant passport system has evolved to respond to this detail, with the aim of maintaining a pragmatic and reasonable approach.



**Standard plant passports must be used when moving walnut with or without bark.**



**An annotated (red text) example of a protected zone plant passport for conifer species moving within GB (England, Wales and Scotland). For sweet chestnut, *Castanea* would replace *Pinales* at Section A and the pest codes IPSXAM, IPSXDU, IPSXTY would be replaced with ENDOPA.**

## Pest codes

The use of codes for pests has evolved over the last year and the position has now been finalised. Plant passports must show either the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation (EPPO) codes for pests or use the scientific name for pests. The table below lists the protected zone pest codes which are acceptable for forestry material. Plant passports showing previous EU regulation pest codes can be accepted in the short term for movement within GB.

### Table of pest codes

Scientific name	EPPO code
<i>Dendroctonus micans</i>	DENCFMI
<i>Ips amitinus</i>	IPSXAM
<i>Ips cembrae</i>	IPSXCE
<i>Ips duplicatus</i>	IPSXDU
<i>Ips sexdentatus</i>	IPSXSE
<i>Ips typographus</i>	IPSXTY
<i>Cryphonectria parasitica</i>	ENDOPA

Please contact the Forestry Commission Plant Health Forestry team using [plant.health@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:plant.health@forestrycommission.gov.uk) if you have any queries.



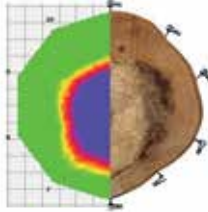


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# Specific predator breeding programme to manage *Dendroctonus micans*

**Nick Fielding** and  
**Katy Dainton**,  
Forest Research, on  
*Rhizophagus grandis*  
rearing and release  
2018-2020

Following the discovery, during 1982, of the spruce bark beetle *Dendroctonus micans* breeding in the spruce forests of Wales and the border counties, a programme of rearing and release of the specific predator *Rhizophagus grandis* has been managed by Forest Research on behalf of the UK forest sector. Predators have been reared and released into affected woodlands since 1985, with the aim of slowing down the spread and reducing the impact of this very damaging pest.

The *R. grandis* rearing programme has now been fully moved into new facilities at Forest Research's Northern Research Station at Bush near Edinburgh, and we have recruited an assistant to deal with the day-to-day running of the programme. This has meant that the insect cultures are being maintained and monitored on a more regular basis than was possible in the past. As a result, we have managed to increase production of the predators and this has in turn led to us being able to treat all the sites that required releases of the predator during 2018 and 2019. Forest Research is notified of infected sites by private owners and agents, Forestry England, Forestry and Land Use Scotland and following the helicopter surveillance flights undertaken by the plant health staff of both Forestry

Commission and Scottish Forestry. These flights look equally at trees on both the private and public forest estate. The surveys look for the presence of many different pests and diseases, but are ideal for finding dead tree tops (a classic symptom of attack by the spruce bark beetle), often in remote areas. Any suspicious findings are then followed up by ground surveys to confirm the presence (or absence) of a pest or disease.

During 2018, 147 affected woodlands were treated with *R. grandis*; 84 of these sites were in private ownership. During 2019, 95 affected woodlands were treated with the predator; 50 of these sites were in private ownership. So far, we are aware of 180 sites (about half of these are in private ownership) that require treatment during 2020. We are aiming to increase production of predators for release during 2020, as there are more sites requiring treatment and we intend to release larger numbers of predators in affected sites in western Scotland where *D. micans* is moving slowly closer towards the Pest Free Area. A large amount of effort is being put into monitoring this area of western Scotland as it is very important to keep *D. micans* out of this Pest Free area. A discovery of the pest

here would have very serious implications for the round wood trade to Ireland.

The rearing and release programme is at present undertaken by Forest Research with financial assistance from Forestry England, Scottish Forestry, Forestry and Land Use Scotland and by an annual donation made by the members of Confor. The donation made by members of Confor is very welcome and important to the continuing programme, as it is often the case that many small private sites cost relatively



more to treat than large woodland blocks. Since 1985, Forest Research has reared and released over 250,000 beetles into nearly 5000 infected woodlands. We will never be able to eradicate this pest but by continuing to rear and release the predator it is possible to reduce the effect of the beetle and to slow down its spread through the spruce woodlands of the UK.



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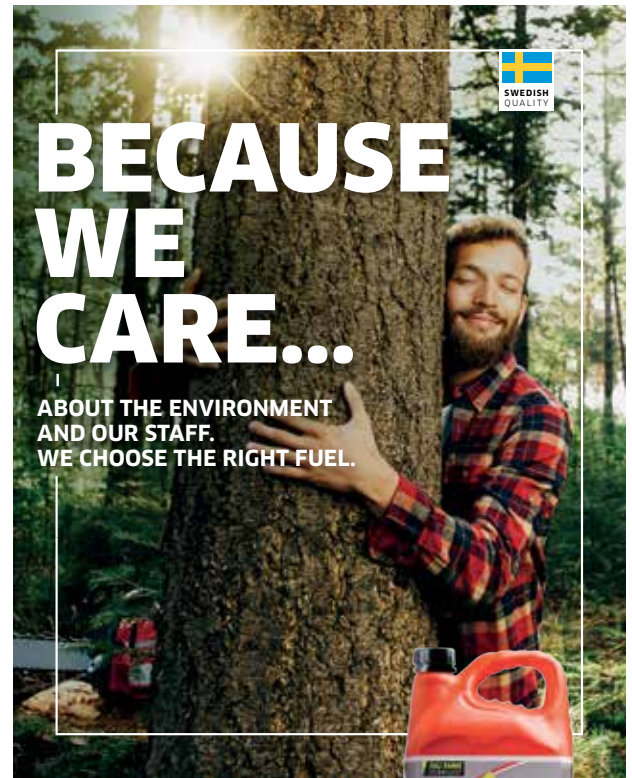


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# Early warning on oak lace bug

**Dr David Williams**  
and **Dr John Morgan**

Our oak trees are under threat from pests like the oak processionary moth (OPM) so it is unwelcome news to hear that there is a new potential threat – already well-established in southern and central Europe.

The oak lace bug (OLB) *Corythucha arcuata* is an invasive insect from North America and was first detected in Italy in 2000. Since its accidental introduction it has spread rapidly and is now found in over a dozen other European countries, but has not been reported in the UK. In Hungary and Croatia its population level has raised serious concerns about the impact that it may have on oak health.

There is little published information on OLB. Within its natural range it is generally regarded as a nuisance pest causing only incidental damage and occasionally premature leaf fall. However, within Europe there is considerable variation in its reported impacts. As such there is a real need to coordinate research and investigate what factors affect the development of OLB and whether it is likely to become a damaging factor to oak.

## The pest

Although very small, lace-winged adults can produce 2-3 generations per year which cause damage in a similar way to aphids by feeding on leaf sap. The first signs of feeding damage are small, yellow spots on the upper leaf surface, often concentrating around the leaf veins. As damage increases with each new generation, large yellow and bronze coloured areas appear on leaves and heavy infestations cause premature leaf drop. Damage to the leaves is visible during the summer months and tends to progress through the year from July to September. This can reduce growth and weaken trees, making them more susceptible to other pests and diseases.

## Potential to spread from Europe

Insects spread locally as adults fly or are blown to new tree hosts dur-



ing the summer. During winter the adults can survive either in the fallen leaf litter or in the deeper bark crevices of standing trees and timber. It is considered likely that the pest has been moved inadvertently over longer distances through hitch-hiking on various modes of transport and through the trade in oak trees or the movement of timber with bark.

## Slowing spread to northern Europe

There is little that can be done to stop the natural movement of the pest but we can slow its spread by reducing the opportunity for it to be introduced accidentally. The movement of oak trees into the UK is already regulated under the protected zone measures for oak processionary moth (OPM). Those regions in Europe with OLB also have OPM, so the same measures already reduce the risk of it being introduced on imported planting material. While there are no equivalent controls for oak timber, there are not known to be any imports of roundwood from regions where OLB is known to be established.

## How the hardwood timber sector is helping

In the UK, the main importers of oak roundwood have proposed a vol-

untary ban on imports from those regions in southern Europe where OLB is present. Hardwood mills and timber merchants have been working with the Forestry Commission to develop a system of voluntary controls to ensure that imports of oak logs are fully traceable to those regions where OLB is not known to be present. Timber buyers are familiarising themselves with the symptoms of infestation through the Observatree identification guide to help them to detect OLB. This information will then be shared to avoid bringing in logs from new regions where OLB has become established.

## Future monitoring by Forest Research

This year we are planning to set up an early-warning system using a network of sticky traps where OLB has the potential to enter England through ferry ports. Trapping will be assisted by Observatree volunteers, as well as by traps located at some of the larger hardwood log yards where stores of imported timber are held prior to processing.

Through this partnership approach, the aim is to minimise the risk of introducing OLB to the UK by accidental means and to provide the best prospects for early detection and action in the event it does arrive.

*Dr David Williams is Entomologist at Forest Research and Dr John Morgan, Head of Plant Health, Forestry Commission. Dave Williams is heading up an international team of experts who are collaborating on a Euphresco project to try to understand the threat that OLB represents to oak trees throughout Europe.*



# Plant health: the nursery perspective

**Charles Beaumont,**  
Trees Please, on behalf  
of the Confor Nursery  
Producers Group

**A**s we travel through the year of 2020, the impact of Covid-19 on human health may make it hard to focus also on the huge importance of plant health. Great Britain sits proudly as an island nation and should have an advantage when it comes to protecting itself from pests and diseases (P&D) that visit us from abroad but, in practice, membership of a 'common' market and ever more open borders have made it hard for us to profit from this.

Of course, British nurseries have not always behaved sensibly or carefully towards preventing infection. In 2012, forest nurseries were largely negligent in the importation and rapid spread of Ash dieback which served to highlight the nadir of a long decline in woodland planting (and consequent nursery capacity) that had started with a well meaning but ill judged tax change in 1988.

By 2012, Dutch climate advantages meant that it was much cheaper for nurseries to import one-year-old Ash than to spend two years growing it at home. This much regretted low point, however, also served as the catalyst for a much needed, and spectacularly successful, clean up for us all. Within two months of the realisation of the horrors that had been released, Confor's Nursery Production Group of eleven major tree nurseries had agreed to include "Country where grown" on its documentation; this has changed the sector from one which used to import up to one third of its output to one that now imports only three or four percent. Sadly, this is only relevant for "whip" sized trees - instant trees are still largely imported and carry a huge risk of P&D importation as clearly demonstrated by the widespread outbreaks of Oak Processionary Moth during the summer of 2019.

What steps are nurseries taking?

All NPG nurseries will, by now, have biosecurity policies in place which serve to highlight the points at which plants may become at risk from P&Ds. Simple boot washing facilities will be found on all nurseries and most nurseries will work closely with their agronomists and plant health advisers/inspectors. Our plants have to pass three inspections by external expert inspectors every year and, at Trees Please we are lucky in that our local Defra inspector lives only two miles away and can drop in on his way home if we find something that makes us nervous. We inspect all of our 40 million plant growing stock at least once a week during the growing season involving the production manager and the spray operators each time - between us we have over 100 years of experience! There is always something more that one can do and this year we have started testing our irrigation water for signs of Phytophthora and other potential problems - so far, nothing to report.

## UK Plant Health Assurance Scheme

On 20 February, the UK Plant Health Assurance Scheme (UKPHAS) was launched with great fanfare by Prince Charles at Kew. Whilst this has had a gestation period that would test the patience of an African elephant, it is now suckling hard on its founders' financial reserves and a small platoon of Grown in Britain inspectors is heading out to



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF  
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pluck some low hanging fruit from the trees. It is likely that the members of Confor's NPG will form part of their early diet. UKPHAS, which is now known as "Plant Healthy", is based around a Plant Health Management Standard (PHMS) that encompasses a chain of custody. The PHMS is based on a risk-based approach, which requires a business or organisation to conduct risk assessments on the critical control points within their operations. This reduces the risk of introducing pests to their site(s) to a level that ensures an Appropriate Level of Protection (ALOP).

One of these risks, of course, is the trade of plants from one nursery to another irrespective of whether those plants are crossing a border. In this instance, a risk analysis will have to be carried out with reference to the UK Plant Health Risk Register which now carries details of over one thousand pests. The downside is that we will all have to produce much more documentation but the upside is that our businesses, and all the native flora of the UK, should be very much safer. From the customers perspective, it should be possible within a couple of years to shun businesses that are NOT Plant Healthy accredited. Power to the People!

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

**The planting fleet** (picture Trees Please)





# University of Cumbria, National School of Forestry

**Mark Tomlinson,**  
Senior Lecturer  
National School of  
Forestry

The National School of Forestry (NSF) has been providing sector focussed education for over half a century. Since 2013 we have been located at our new campus at Ambleside, in the heart of the Lake District National Park. We have easy access to a very diverse range of woodlands and forests: Grizedale and Whinlatter Forest Parks, which provide a diverse range of economic benefits including timber production and recreation; or the precious jewel of the Lake District, the Atlantic oak woods of the stunning Borrowdale Valley.

Being in a National Park enables our students to develop their understanding of the importance of integrated land management as well as providing them with a unique environment in which to study. During each year of study, our students gain wider experience of forestry on the upland study tour in Scotland, the lowland study tour in England and a residential visit to Kielder Forest. Programmes at the NSF are accredited by The Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF) endorsing their content and providing our graduates with a clear pathway to chartered status once they enter the workplace.

### Diversity within courses with practical applications

Our students are diverse and come from assorted backgrounds. As well as more traditional routes, following A levels or college, we also attract many students who have decided on this career after a period of other work and life experiences. Career changers such as this make up around half of our undergraduates.

This diversity is accommodated through provision of both BSc and Foundation degree courses. Those with lower academic qualifications or wanting to gain a forestry qualification in a shorter time can apply for the Foundation Degree. Our courses have a significant practical element and are focused on developing pro-

fessional as well as technical skills. The degrees we offer are focused on either forest management or on woodland ecology and conservation and we have found each attracts a different group of students. A high proportion of teaching is carried out on site in the commercial forests and ancient semi-natural woodlands on our doorstep. The last National Student Survey carried out in 2019 we achieved a 100% for Overall Satisfaction which we are very proud of.

As a response to the changing needs of our students, and to provide employees with relevant and specific development opportunities, we are relaunching the popular part-time, block release Foundation Degree in September 2020. Feedback from employers demonstrate that supervisors and foresters are being recruited with associated undergraduate qualifications, so we are responding to provide an accessible, forestry specific qualification.

Our full-time courses suit the widest range of students and include FdSc Forestry and BSc (Hons) Forestry Top-Up along with BSc (Hons) Forest Management and BSc (Hons) Woodland Ecology and Conserva-

tion which are available with or without the sandwich year placement.

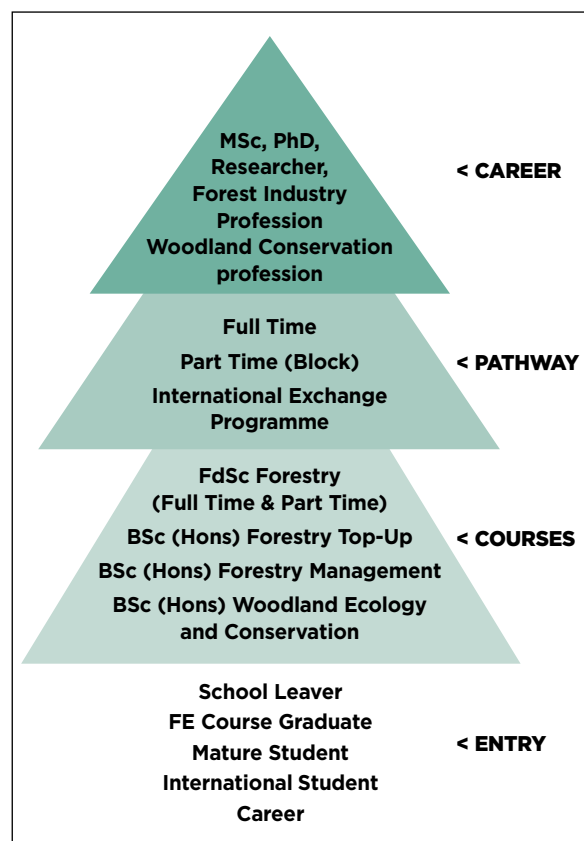
### Work placements with industry support

All our courses offer opportunities for practical experience in the workplace and we recommend this to all students. We have strong linkages with the forestry sector and employers have been very supportive in providing work placements. Placements are very important; during our graduation day in 2019 we asked all who attended how they were getting on with seeking employment. Of the graduates who chose a work placement 100% had been successful in securing a full-time position before the graduation day. Employers who take on the challenge of providing placements can ultimately be rewarded with newly graduated staff who understand the company and its people. In 2019 we have seen an increase in student numbers and would ask that employers, other than those currently offering placements consider doing so.

### Appropriately skilled workforce

We have been a proactive member of the Forestry Skills Forum, which conducted a study on forest sector education and training needs and provides a useful overview of the educational requirements of the sector. Our recent revalidation had input from professionals working in forest and woodland management roles and senior external experts with up-to-date knowledge of the needs of the sector. We are actively involved with organisations in the sector and this also ensures we are aware of important developments.

We have ensured the underlying principles are taught with relevant and up-to-date methods as well as further embedding the skills which have become fundamental for employers. These include GIS, which are now taught from the first semester and throughout the student's time with us. New to our core delivery is a module dedicated to social forestry which previously was taught within other modules but is now further improved and will look at the benefits to society in depth.







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# Scottish School of Forestry – integrated forestry education

**Amanda Bryan MICFor**,  
Head of Scottish  
School of Forestry

The Scottish School of Forestry (SSF) which is part of Inverness College, UHI is located in its own woodland campus on the edge of Balloch five miles from Inverness. A great location with ready access to an active forestry and timber processing sector who provide numerous opportunities for the students to contextualise their learning.

SSF is unusual in that it provides a very broad range of educational opportunities across both Further Education and Higher Education as well as providing an in-school offer in some local secondary schools for pupils as young as 14.

Higher forestry education and practical skills training Our offer spans from Scottish Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Level 4 to Level 12 which is remarkable. This allows us to support students to progress to whatever level they wish, often dipping in and out of education to help them secure career advancement. We also have increasing numbers of part-time and distance-learning students who can take advantage of UHI's approach to remote access to education. This has resulted in adaptation of some of the courses and there is a distance-learning only option of studying for a Professional Development Award (PDA) in Forestry which appeals to those wishing to progress within the sector or those who have joined the industry from other professions.

The School also provides commercial training in practical skills including chainsaw, ATV, machine operation etc. and also support employers who have taken on Modern Apprentices under the Scottish Trees and Timber Framework. In June 2020 a CPD programme will be offered to the sector.

Meeting industry needs The courses at SSF have been designed to provide graduates at all levels that meets industry workforce

requirements across the board. Our Further Education (FE) students will take on roles as estate workers, forest crafts persons and contractors, while our Higher Education (HE) students will fulfil a range of supervisory and management roles in forestry and timber processing or indeed establish their own businesses.

The courses themselves are focused on what the industry requires and our Forestry Advisory Committee, whose membership is drawn from across the sector and chaired by Julian Hollingdale from Tilhill, ensure the curriculum remains relevant and embedded. All staff teaching across both FE and HE are industry experienced and many are part-time and still working in the sector. We view our strong industry links and contextualised learning as our USP.

Recruitment and retention Along with our sister forestry education providers it is a perennial challenge to attract enough new entrants into the sector. We need to be able to maintain numbers to keep our costly to run courses financially viable and attractive to our host academic institutions at a time when competition from other courses is strong and the number of 18 year olds in the general population is in decline. Forestry does suffer from some perception issues so we need to work collectively and with sector partners to make a career in forestry and timber processing attractive.

At SSF we also experience the challenge of holding on to our students to the later years of education as they have the opportunity to exit at the end of any year with a qualification. With the sector crying out for new blood, we are finding an increasing number of students exiting earlier than they might otherwise, lured by earning a good salary and often with added perks including a vehicle. Every academic year, prospective employers are getting in touch earlier and earlier and fewer students return to us full time after their mid-year industry placement. This means there is an increasing impetus for us to improve our distance learning offer to ensure that there is

<p><b>NC Rural Skills (L4)</b></p>	<p>Student Nos: -12 Roles: - Forest Worker - Estate Worker</p>
<p><b>Certificate in Forestry (L5)</b></p>	<p>Student Nos: -24 Roles: - Forest Worker / Craftsperson / Woodsperson - Chainsaw Operator - Contractor</p>
<p><b>Advanced Certificate in Forestry (L6)</b></p>	<p>Student Nos: -12 Roles: - Forest Ranger / Conservation Ranger / Recreation Ranger - Forest Worker / Craftsperson / Woodsperson - Chainsaw operator - Contractor</p>
<p><b>PDA Forestry (L7/8) (Distance Learning)</b></p>	<p>Student Nos: -20 Introduction to HNC Conversion course for non-forestry graduates.</p>
<p><b>HNC Arboriculture &amp; Urban Forestry / Forestry (L7)</b></p>	<p>Student Nos: Forestry -32 / Arb -10 Roles: - Forest Machine Operator - Forest Ranger / Conservation Ranger / Education Ranger / Recreation Ranger - Forestry Foreman / Supervisor / Squad Leader - Assistant Tree/Arboricultural Officer</p>
<p><b>HND Arboriculture &amp; Urban Forestry / Forestry (L8)</b></p>	<p>Student Nos: -20 Roles: - Contracts Manager - Establishment Contractor - Harvesting Contractor - Arboricultural Consultant - GIS Technician - Tree/Arboricultural Officer - Forest Worker Supervisor</p>
<p><b>BSc (Hons) Forest Management (L9/10)</b></p>	<p>Student Nos: L9 -10 / L10 -5 Roles: - Forestry Consultant - Forest Ecologist - Forest Surveyor - Harvesting Manager/forester - Head forester/forest/woodland manager - Community/social forester - Planning forester - Recreation and tourism forester - Woodland Officer</p>

the option for our students to complete their studies while working.

## What next?

There is no doubt that in Scotland the sector continues to go from strength to strength backed by significant support from the Scottish Government. What we need to do now is grow the number of students right across FE and HE to meet the demands of the sector and we are working with Confor, ICF, Skills Development Scotland, Lantra Scotland, Scottish Forestry, Forestry and Land Scotland, RSFS and others to do this. We also need to be mindful of developing new ways of accessing education and enabling individuals to continue to learn and progress which means an improved online offer which is our next priority.



# Forestry education at Bangor University

Studying a forestry degree at a research-led institution like Bangor University enables students to graduate with the very strong cross-section of skills required for a management role. This includes a deep understanding of forest ecosystems, how they function and the products and services that they deliver. There is a strong focus on wood production, especially given its crucial role as a renewable and carbon-neutral material when produced from a sustainable forest management system. All the traditional components of forest management are covered in detail and also the latest knowledge about how site environment, silviculture, tree genetics and the rapidly growing threat of pests and diseases combine to determine timber yield, quality and wider forest resilience.

Whilst Bangor University's forestry graduates have been facing a multiplicity of professional challenges for well over a century, our current graduates are set to face huge changes in the practice of forestry during their careers, through major shifts in economic and social needs, combined with the direct and indirect effects of climate change, and the rapid development of new technology. While it is important that our graduates are familiar with current forestry practice, it is also crucial that they have the knowledge and capabilities to go beyond this. Our degrees seek to equip our students with the capacity to critically assess the evidence of "what works" - what is the best solution to each challenge. The education at Bangor University then gives them the confidence and skills to obtain new knowledge, innovate, monitor the outcomes of their professional decisions and learn from experience through the practice of "adaptive management".

The best Bangor forestry graduates are also characterised by their strong knowledge of the international context and its importance for providing wider perspectives on how forest management should develop in the UK. They have good understanding of the rapidly devel-

oping forest policy context both globally and in its increasing complexity within the UK. Their education also includes the key components of economics relevant to the sector and the challenges of engaging with the wide range of stakeholders concerned with woodlands and forest management decision-making. We emphasise the importance of how forestry and tree management fits into the broader land use context, in particular the carbon cycle, the management of water at the catchment scale, public recreation and wellbeing, conservation and agricultural food production.

Bangor University is able to pro-



vide this quality of forestry education through our teaching team of 15 lecturers and professors, the largest in the UK. It also draws on the resources provided by its large land holding, which features numerous forest types, and our exceptional

## Bangor University forestry degree programmes

A levels  
College land-based diploma  
Mature students

### UNDERGRADUATE

Forestry BSc (Hons) 3 years  
Forestry (with placement year) BSc (Hons) 4 years  
Forestry MFor 4 years

Conservation with Forestry BSc (Hons) 3 years  
Conservation with Forestry (with placement year) BSc (Hons) 4 years

Geography with Environmental Forestry BSc (Hons) 3 years  
Geography with Environmental Forestry (with placement year) BSc (Hons) 4 years

Forestry professionals  
Professionals in other land-based and conservation sectors  
Postgraduate degrees (MSc, PhD)  
Education professionals  
Diversity of other careers

Graduates from BSc degrees of other universities or Bangor (but generally not forestry)  
Already employed in the forestry sector and using the degree for career development  
Already employed in another sector and using the degree for career change to forestry  
Curious and passionate retirees/'hobby foresters'

### POSTGRADUATE MSc, Diploma or Certificate

Forestry - part time by distance learning  
Tropical Forestry - part time by distance learning

Environmental Forestry - 1 year full time  
Agroforestry and Food Security - 1 year full time or part time by distance learning

Sustainable Forestry and Nature Management (SUFONAMA) - 2 year Erasmus Mundus European Masters  
Sustainable Tropical Forestry (SUTROFOR) - 2 year Erasmus Mundus European Masters  
Forestry and Environmental Management degrees (TRANFOR-M) MSc- 2 year, 1 year in Europe, 1 year in Canada

Forestry professionals  
Professionals in other land-based and conservation sectors  
Education professionals  
Diversity of other careers

Graduates from MSc or sometimes BSc degrees (forestry or other science or social science subjects)  
Sometimes after a period of professional employment in order to return to research

### POSTGRADUATE MSc, Diploma or Certificate

NERC studentships for forest science projects through the Envision Doctoral Training Partnership  
Co-sponsorship of projects from forestry sector

Forest policy  
Research careers in forest science or social science  
Higher education professionals  
Management roles in forest sector organisations  
Senior roles in a diversity of other sectors  
All in UK or worldwide

links with the forestry sector, which affords so many high quality opportunities for learning, accessing interesting sites, keeping up to date with industry developments and gaining exceptional professional placements. More than half of our staff are also actively engaged in forestry research both in the UK and internationally, leading projects that are producing important new discoveries of direct relevance to the improvement of forest policy and management practice.

Perhaps unique to the forestry learning experience at Bangor is the way in which we celebrate the synergies of undergraduate and postgraduate study and of part-time and full-time study. For example, our Scotland study tour enables undergraduates and part-time MSc students, who are already working across the sector, to study together. And our MSc programmes educate full-time MSc students resident in Bangor alongside part-time students who attend and participate in many events 'live', at a distance.

Complementing the formal education provided by the university is an incredibly proactive and ambitious student society, fondly known as 'BFSA' (Bangor Forestry Students' Association). BFSA host regular guest lectures from leading forestry professionals, organise practical woodland management activities and attend national and international conferences, seminars and workshops.

One of the biggest challenges faced by the forestry team at Bangor University is attracting applicants from a wide cross-section of society to our BSc degrees, including increasing the proportion of female applicants. In contrast, at the postgraduate level we do recruit students from a diversity of backgrounds within the UK and internationally, with a good balance between women and men.

*John Healey, Professor of Forest Sciences; James Walmsley, Director of BSc and MSc (Distance Learning) forestry degrees; with inputs from Norman Dandy, Director of the Sir William Roberts Centre for Sustainable Land Use; Bid Webb, Teaching Associate in International Forestry and Natural Resource Development*

## Jas P Wilson offers machinery training for forestry workers

Jas P Wilson is now approved by LANTRA to offer industry-recognised qualifications in both the UK and the Republic of Ireland on firewood processors, wood chippers and forestry winches.

The one-day courses deliver hands-on practical skills, health and safety training as well as industry recognised certification to demonstrate that you and your employer have completed sufficient training to meet the industry standard which satisfies Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER).

The courses will operate with a 4:1 student-teacher ratio, so each delegate will have a great deal of focused learning and training, whilst balancing the associated costs with three other trainees to make this a very cost effective and productive experience.

The company can also offer re-

resher courses which work on a 6:1 ratio for experienced operators.

Would you, your employees or other machinery users benefit from training and industry recognised certification? Whether you're a team of 4, or an individual, Jas P Wilson can organise an event to suit - be that here in its purpose-built facilities, or at a location of to suit your company.

*For more details contact Kris Wilson on 01556 612233.*



### Attracting and retaining a quality workforce

Securing the workforce for the future is a challenge for many sectors, including the forestry and timber industries. Teaching young people the skills to become the new generation of foresters is one thing - but what can employers do to attract and retain potential candidates?

When it comes to identifying best practice, why re-invent the wheel? Scotland Food and Drink Partnership has published a practical guide for employers on Recruitment and Retention, which is equally relevant to other sectors, including the forestry and timber industries.

It offers simple-to-use guidance that is equally relevant to the forestry and timber sector. Printable checklists for each aspect of recruitment and retention help businesses assess their commitment and progress to best practice.

Featured content includes:  
**Attracting the right people to your business**

- Promoting the industry as a great career



- How to create a great place of work
  - Attracting young people
- Recruitment**
- 10 ways to make yourself an employer of choice
  - Recruitment best practice: a step-by-step guide
- Retention**
- 12 steps to improve employee retention
  - Improve your people management
- Development**
- Offering professional growth and development for your employees.

### DOWNLOAD

To download this practical guide, search "Food and Drink Scotland" "Recruitment and retention". Or visit [www.confor.org.uk](http://www.confor.org.uk)>Resources>publications>reference publications



# Forestry education in England – now you can get involved!

This is a time of dramatic change for forestry education in England. Government continues to implement their technical education reforms and the forestry industry is also pushing ahead with ambitious employer-led developments that aim to provide a skilled workforce for the future. Forestry is facing a reduction in workforce as migrant labour becomes much less available and competition increases across the board for skilled workers. This is at a time when increases in labour are needed to deliver wider Government policy such as the Tree Strategy, climate change targets and the 25-Year Environment Plan.

There are a number of great opportunities this year to shape and design forestry education and help Government recognise our industry's professionalism and skills needs. This in turn could lead to a better skilled pool of workers, to help ensure your organisation's competitiveness in future. The potential downside of this, is of course the potential for multiple consultations and initiatives for employers, training providers and industry bodies to respond to over the next twelve months.

The Forestry Skills Forum (England and Wales) recognises the huge importance of engaging positively in the coming months. If we don't, we run the risk of important learning products being lost, unfunded or unsuitable.

In order to help give a little more of the 'big picture' the following will hopefully explain some of the potentially new terms that might appear in your in-box....

## New T Levels and forestry

In England, the 'Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education' (IFATE) is developing new college-based qualifications, set at the same difficulty or 'level' as A Levels (level 3) for all industry areas. These Technical Levels (T Levels) are equivalent to two or three A Levels, and are taken over two years by (mostly) 16-year-olds.



A T Level is proposed for forestry and arboriculture, due to be launched in 2023 and the detailed content will be consulted on over the summer. T Levels contain practical skills alongside underpinning knowledge and understanding. Although this will be college based, they will undertake 45 days of work placement, longer than other technical qualifications at the moment.

## Forest operative apprenticeship review

Apprenticeships are programmes of learning while working, with 80% of the time on the job and the remainder studying. They have been subject to intense reforms in recent years and forestry has an apprenticeship at GCSE (level 2) difficulty based on the new apprenticeship 'standards'. The forest operative apprenticeship has been available for several years and numbers are still low, but growing more steadily now.

This apprenticeship is being reviewed as part of the IFATE's wider work on their apprenticeship offer for agriculture, environment and animal care industries. There was a consultation at the end of 2019, and it is expected that the results will be published in the summer.

The group of employers (the trailblazer group) that developed the forest operative apprenticeship is working with training providers to make

this more widely available and will be working with the IFATE once their recommendations are published.

## Degree-level apprenticeship

The forestry trailblazer group also has an application with the IFATE to develop a degree level professional forester apprenticeship. If successful, this will establish a work-based route to take forestry workers to degree level. Consultations are planned in the summer, although this will be dependant on the result of the application to the IFATE. This is subject to a negotiation about the delivery of forestry content and if this should be included with arboriculture.

## GET INVOLVED

This year could be pivotal for forestry education in England. The Forestry Skills Forum and the apprenticeship group will work with the trade associations to publicise consultation opportunities as they arise, but also consider getting more involved.

The IFATE website has further information: [www.instituteforapprenticeships.org](http://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org) > **Develop apprenticeship standards**

In the "about" section you can sign up to their newsletter to stay informed.

Sign up to receive updates directly about forestry apprenticeships (<http://eepurl.com/dtiILr>) or consider asking to join the trailblazer group ([ros@adrow.co.uk](mailto:ros@adrow.co.uk)).

# APF 2020 offers wide range of skills and training opportunities

The APF Demo is known as the place to come to see the latest tools and equipment, compare them side by side with other manufacturers and secure a great deal. There will be approximately £60 million of equipment on show, much of it shown working.

The event is the largest gathering of the forestry and arboricultural industries in the UK. This year will see around 320 exhibitors and over 20,000 visitors attend over the three days. However there is far more than just machinery to see at the show.

Visitors can take the opportunity to avail themselves of a very wide range of free training and updating events. The show is a great place to see the very latest techniques, hear the latest updates on topical industry issues, increase your skills knowledge and get CPD points into the bargain all for the price of the ticket. There is nowhere else where you can get so much information on so many subjects in one place in such a short time. Whether you are a forest manager, contractor, tree surgeon or fencer there is something for you.

We realise your time at the show is precious so most of the events will be short workshops that require no pre-booking, just walk in and take part. They will encourage audience feedback and questions.

**Confor** and the **Forestry Commission** will be hosting a series of daily seminars on topical issues and the latest technology. Plant health, forest carbon, the Government's new planting targets, digital vegetation mapping will be among the subjects covered.

The **Forest Worker Zone** will see practical workshops on forest skills, ergonomic tree planting, workers health issues, running a small business, grant aid, chainsaw maintenance and much more. You will be able to walk in and chat, in many cases on a one to one basis over a cup of tea.

New for 2020 will be the **Tree Worker Zone**. We have teamed up with the Arboricultural Association to put on this zone in a similar format to the FWZ above but focused on the Tree Worker. Recent changes requested by the Health & Safety Execu-



tive have placed new requirements on tree climbers particularly in the use of a two rope anchor system. This has caused some confusion in the industry. The Tree Climbers Forum will see a series of practical updates and demonstrations on the latest techniques and bring you update with the latest requirements. The AA hope to have their best practice guide covering the new techniques ready for the show. There will be other demos of chainsaw maintenance, knot tying and the chance to practice your line throwing skills. In the Arborists Workshop there will be short seminars on tree selection, the latest rules and regulations, ensuring your business is compliant and getting your business up to approved contractor standard.

**Lantra** will be on hand to advise on their ever widening range of training courses and guiding you through the process if you wish to become an instructor. They will also be staging daily demonstrations of using a twin anchor point system. Their expert instructors will be on hand to answer all your queries to ensure you don't fall foul of the new rules.

**NPTC City & Guilds** can offer advice on their range of training and assessment units and you will be able to talk to them

about recent changes and how you might be affected.

In the **McVeigh Parker fencing arena** there will be demonstrations and hands on opportunities of erecting the latest fencing as well as seeing the latest machinery and equipment and getting advice on how it works.

Technicians from **Husqvarna, Stihl, Makita** and **Echo** will be on their stands to answer specific queries you may have on maintenance, fault diagnosis, servicing and repairs to your machines.

If you have identified a training need then there are many training companies on site who can guide you through the various course options you have and advise on costs, locations and duration.

We are also working closely with the **Royal Forestry Society** this year to encourage schools to visit the show and learn about the opportunities and career possibilities in the forest and tree work industries. There will be help and advice on forest apprenticeships and several colleges will be present to discuss full time and short course choices.

We are working hard to finalise plans and details as soon as possible. Keep an eye on the visitor section of our website for details of all the events and timetables and follow us on social media to ensure you get the latest news. Some events will be limited to a set number of people so you may need to act quickly to reserve your place.

## Details, stand booking and tickets on:

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

Email: [info@apfexhibition.co.uk](mailto:info@apfexhibition.co.uk)

Tel: 01428 723545

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Confor members get in free to the show on production of their membership card.





“ The role of an forest machine operator is so much more varied than people realise ”

**Q: What does the role of a Forest Machine Operator (FMO) consist of?**

The role of an FMO is much more varied than people realise. Of course there is physically operating the machines, performing daily maintenance and minor repairs, and ensuring that the machine performs optimally. The FMO is at the front-line of quality control, ie ensuring logs are cut to the correct specifications and graded correctly. They are responsible for trying to achieve as good a breakout as possible for

about environmental constraints, eg flora and fauna; archaeological sites of interest; water and diffuse pollution etc. that the operators have to work around too! For the general public, an FMO may be the first person that they speak to regarding the works taking place so again, they are also representing the company they work for.

Lastly, I think it is important to remember that FMOs are not working solely in the harvesting sector. We can't forget where it all begins, ground prep! Probably the less glamorous side of forest machine operations but without our moulder, scarifier and ploughing operators where would we be?

**Q: Historically, how has FMO training been carried out?**

FMO training has been a bone of contention for some time now! We've gone through various scenarios over the years. The traditional way being for a contractor to take someone under their wing and train them up, albeit without much structure to the training. The fear always being that the trainee would leave once they attained their certificate of competence.

During the mid to late 2000's, we had an apprenticeship scheme where trainees were taken on by Forestry Commission Scotland and given forwarder/harvester and moulder training. More recently, we had the eight- week courses run by SRUC Barony, where the trainees were given forwarder and harvester training on a real harvesting site.

**Q: What is the current position on FMO training?**

Firstly, there are still contractors out

there taking on trainees and training them in the time old manner.

However, in Scotland we now have SVQ Level 2 and 3 apprenticeship programmes in place with the Level 3 able to provide FMO training. Development work had identified a couple of initial flaws and assumptions with this programme. For example, Tree ID was not available in the Level 3 framework and direct entry to the Level 3 is possible. These issues have been identified, the new framework has been proposed and we are currently awaiting imminent approval for it. Once it is approved we hope to be offering FMO training here at Scottish School of Forestry (SSF).

SVQ 3 is a modern apprenticeship, so it is open to anyone regardless of age. The first 4 applicants have just completed their first year in conjunction with SRUC and Forestry and Land Scotland in Newton Stewart.

**Q: What do you do at the college and what is your background?**

My background is commercial harvesting. I have been involved with it since I was 16. I started on a forwarder, a Valmet 820, before moving onto the harvester. I had to get lifts to random forests at weekend whilst my school friends went to Pizza Hut for weekend work.

My work has taken me to the Swedish windblow in 2005, the Beaulieu-Denny powerline in 2010/11, and lots of red zone felling SSE in addition to numerous normal sites across the North of Scotland.

Since I joined SSF in January 2016, my main remit is machinery and harvesting based. That is anything from introduction to land-based machinery with the Rural Skills group to the Harvesting unit with the HND/Degree first years. Things like tractor driving, skidding and then timber cranes on both purpose-built and agri-based units. I am the self-confessed diesel junkie here at the school.

**Q: What has your own training consisted of?**

Initially, I was taken under the wing of an old hand on the forwarder. I spent a few days sitting in with him and would unload the machine at roadside. Then it was on to a Saturday and Sunday driving the for-



with **Andrew L Smith** ('Smithie'), Forestry Lecturer at the Scottish School of Forestry

the client. That is only part of the role. Nowadays, our FMOs are planning worksites - where to put main extraction routes; crossing points and rack layout. On the majority of thinning sites they will be selecting which trees to remove and which ones to leave, I couldn't tell you the last time I saw a marked thinnings. Whilst most foresters would carry out basal area checks during thinning operations, many also rely on the harvester operator to carry out their own relascope sweeps to monitor their work. Let's not forget



warder. He was good to me in that he would clear the racks out during the week and only leave chip for me until I became more competent.

After a year, the harvester operator we followed gave me a crash course on the harvester for two hours and that was me – hooked on harvesters.

We had a couple of Finnish operators who worked alongside us and our boss had close ties with a couple of Finnish colleges. I was encouraged to apply for a place at one, I was successful and went and spent six months in Kuru. Although machinery based and working on real sites on a two-shift system, we studied various things including plant ID so that we could identify site types and appropriate thinning control.

Over the years, I studied part-time for my BSc in Forest Management. More recently, I have become a qualified FMO assessor under the NPTC City and Guilds scheme. I'm now one of only 20 qualified FMO assessors across the UK.

**Q: What are the barriers to FMO training for both the candidate and the employer?**

From a candidate's point of view, FMO has been seen as a difficult area to get into. For many, it comes as culture shock with long hours spent in a cab often with no phone signal and is often completely different to their previous roles. There is a lot to take in, particularly for someone with little or no forestry experience. Independent training tends to be quite expensive, with no guarantee of employment at the end. We also have the whole employed/self-employed debate which can put people off too.

From the contractor's point of view, the big issue is cost. Cost of

machines being less productive - remember if someone is learning to drive a harvester then there may be a forwarder with little to do as well; the cost of repairs; the cost of increased supervision and of course the trainee will expect some form of payment! Lastly, there is the problem of trainees leaving to work for a competitor once qualified, or potentially leaving the industry all together once they realise the job is not for them, usually at the point they are starting to make the contractor some money!

**Q: What are the barriers to colleges/training providers wanting to provide FMO training?**

First and foremost, the cost of the equipment but also ancillary equipment, eg grab tanks; site safes; movement of machinery and so on is prohibitive. Machinery training is quite labour intensive given the trainer to trainee ratios. Given the low but steady number of potential trainees it is a lot of resources tied up for not a huge amount of output and someone has to pay for it. Finally, there is a recruitment issue, tempting suitable trainers away from industry and into the training sector.

**Q: Do simulators have a role to play in training?**

Yes and no! From a health and safety point of view they are great, particularly when trainees are new to the concept of machine operation they can gain familiarity with the controls. We use Timber Skills on our John Deere simulator with our students and certainly some of the more advanced tasks are quite challenging. Whilst the simulator is a cheaper alternative to a real machine, ultimately, the trainees need to get on to real machines. The simulator doesn't shake you about!

**Q: What skills should a potential FMO have?**

An ability not to be attached to their mobile! >>

“ There is a recruitment issue, tempting suitable trainers away from industry and into the training sector ”



>> But seriously, amongst a broad range of skills, potential FMOs should have good communication skills and basic IT skills. An interest in mechanical skills is useful, as well as good hand-eye coordination. However, other attributes include a good work ethic; an ability to work on their own and unsupervised, and a keen interest in Forestry.

**Q: In what ways has the role of FMO changed in recent years?**

Our operators now are more responsible for factors such as the environment, archaeological sites and site safety. These factors were always there, but now they are more prominent.

In terms of their work, there is a push for more production; better breakouts and better recovery. Developments in machinery reliability has meant that operators are more likely to be making adjustments through the computer than repairing machines with spanners.

Finally, improvements to the

operator environment have been made which should reduce fatigue.

**Q: Thinnings or clearfell, which do you think would be better for FMO training and why?**

I'd prefer to be working in thinnings for a number of reasons. There is less pressure on production and breakouts particularly in first thinnings, and better opportunities for the trainees to become accurate with their crane/head control; their tree selection and the quality of their work. They'd be working with a smaller tree size which is safer when they are only learning. For many foresters, chipwood/fuelwood is now their second most valuable product, so there is less financial impact if there are a few crosscutting errors. Speed can come later, but bad habits are easy to pick up and difficult to lose. Going forward, I see an increasing emphasis on thinnings so getting the trainees used to working in this environment can only be beneficial.

**Q: How do you see FMO training developing and is there anything we can learn from training models in other European countries?**

We already acknowledge a shortage of operators in the UK, an aging workforce, and for some contractors the situation may worsen with the effects of Brexit! Formal training can only be a good thing, and the apprenticeship is one model of formal training. As machinery becomes ever more expensive, contractors are going to look for operators who have already been trained.

Many European colleges have a small machine fleet of their own and work away on real sites. Once at a suitable standard the students are not supervised 24/7, they work a six-hour double shift pattern with the trainers coming to site from mid-morning until mid-afternoon. For many, machinery training comes in the final year of a two or three year basic forestry course. I'd be delighted to see a similar structure here, so fingers crossed



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## QUESTIONS TO MEMBERS

An occasional series where we ask readers to give their response to a topical question.

### Some people in our sector perceive that there is a need in the UK for a type of forestry professional who sits between the machine operators, planting squads or other forestry professionals working on the ground, and the degree educated professional holding coordinating roles.

This is a very interesting point and one which does need careful consideration.

I believe, particularly in the early period of a professional career, there is a need for all foresters to develop their skill base in terms of people management, in addition to technical knowledge and in that role to have an active involvement in working directly with contractors, be they planters, fencers or machine operators. It is only by engaging with all those involved in our industry that these foresters will develop a rounded understanding of the works required to deliver proper forest management.

The alternative of being seen to abdicate responsibility for operations to a 'supervisor' is not a route I would want to see followed, particularly with newer forest managers. This would, in my view, distance the forester from the works being undertaken for no great benefit. I also believe that many Foresters joined our profession to have the full range of forestry experience including getting their hands dirty once in a while!

We will clearly still have forest foremen who work with the Forester to deliver the 'on the ground work', but we must take care not to remove the responsibility and detailed understanding of what is happening in the forest from the Forester.

The current model for forest training as provided in Inverness and Ambleside does cater well for individuals coming into our industry. It allows them to find a level of training that suits them and allows them to join our industry at a range of levels. I believe this currently works well.

**Norman O'Neill, RTS Ltd**

Firstly, let's celebrate the fact that many graduates are entering modern British forestry from institutions which offer a range of degrees with different types of academic and practical content.

We should also be careful not to over-emphasise formal education: many in our industry have contributed at high levels without the barrier that the lack of a degree might have been in the past. So, let's not have a formal 'type of forestry professional'. However, at risk of sounding like an interested party - there is a place for more education! There may be a gap of the sort you suggest. Bangor University is exploring cooperation with Coleg Cambria (with close links to Tilhill

Forestry), who offer a Level 3 Diploma in Forestry and Arboriculture, which could enable students to transfer directly into the BSc Forestry programme. This means that individuals can take their education to the level they seek at any given stage. Those who choose not to progress to degree level are able to take the roles suggested in your question, and progress later if they choose.

Our vision should be:

- Opportunities for learning appropriate to all roles,
- Clear opportunities for progression,
- Cooperation between different institutions and crucial industry partners,
- Opportunities for real life-long learning.

The key is career-long flexibility! One can return to education, full or part-time, or follow the route provided by the Institute of Chartered Foresters. At Bangor, we are attracting high calibre students for distance learning programmes, studied from home. Many already have forestry experience. In effect, this is a form of Continuing Professional Development. There may be scope to enhance or refine this CPD approach in conjunction with the modular structure of degree programmes.

**Dr Alec Dauncey, School of Natural Sciences, Bangor University**



Many in our industry have contributed at high levels without the barrier that the lack of a degree might have been in the past

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# Dealing with dangerous trees safely

**Stuart Wilkie**

Scottish Woodlands

The spread of Ash dieback disease throughout the UK, plus the prevalence of other tree diseases, and the increasing frequency of significant storms has made the issue of tree safety more relevant.

The owner of land on which a tree stands has a 'duty of care' under common law to all people who may suffer injury or damage to property where this is caused by the tree. There have been several cases where significant damages have been awarded against landowners for their failure to address tree safety issues.

In effect, failure to address tree safety, and where necessary, carry out a tree safety survey could cause an owner or manager to be liable in the event of an accident. Similarly, failure to carry out any recommended felling or other remedial work in a proportionate manner could leave a tree owner exposed to a claim.

Trees away from areas frequented by the general public are generally accepted not to require any additional monitoring or care. We are not required to look at every tree in the forest. Trees near to footpaths, tracks or buildings used by the public, formally or informally, may present safety risks if they are damaged by storms or develop disease which in turn affects their structural integrity. Trees adjacent to public roads

## Tree safety risk factors

### Size

The larger the tree, the bigger the leverage on the roots and the larger the sail area of the crown in high winds.

### Form

The more branched the tree, the greater the forces acting through the limbs and trunk and the more likely the tree is to fail.

### Health

Look for trees with cavities, fungal bracts, splits, cracks or other signs of decay.

### Rooting

Trees on shallow soils over rock or showing signs of the root plate lifting in the wind. Trees where excavation within the root zone has taken place may also be unstable or those newly exposed by adjacent felling.

### Location

Trees within falling distance (or two tree lengths if in falling they could bring down or damage another tree within falling distance) of public roads, forest walks, carparks or other places where the public might have access. Trees near houses or other buildings.

present an additional level of risk, where fallen trees or branches can be struck by motor vehicles where the forces involved will increase the severity of damage.

The danger a tree represents is related to its size, form, health, rooting and location. Owners and managers are not expected to be experts on tree safety; however, they should be looking for obvious signs that a tree might present a danger. The National Tree Safety Group's "Common Sense

Risk Management of Trees" says, a quick visual check for obvious signs that a tree is likely to be unstable can be carried out by "a person with a working knowledge of trees and their defects, but who need not be an arboricultural specialist."

Nevertheless, owners and managers need to recognise the limits of their own competency when dealing with more complex situations and may need to take the advice of an appropriately qualified arboriculturist.



## Forest certification

If a forest is certified, it is an UKWAS requirement (UKWAS 5.2.1) that risks to the public are identified and dealt with. Failure to do so would not be compatible with certification requirements. Conversely, UKWAS also requires veteran trees to be managed and retained but is clear that this should not conflict with the safety of the public or workers. Veteran trees will typically suffer a large number of defects throughout their lifetime and these features, holes, splits cracks etc, add to their biodiversity value. Best practice would seek to make these trees safe through arboricultural work, rather than simply felling them. Leaving a proportion of deadwood on a clearfell site is also a certification requirement. However, deadwood must not be left where it could pose a significant risk to members of the public or forest workers. Standing deadwood should therefore be treated in an equivalent manner to dangerous trees.

## Approvals

Felling or limbing of dangerous trees may require consultation or approval with statutory authorities. Where large numbers of trees are to be felled a Felling Licence or Permission may be required. Check also for Tree Preservation Orders issued by local authorities. Dangerous trees can also contain bat roosts as bats tend to roost in the very splits, cracks and holes that make a tree dangerous. It is an offence to disturb bats in their roost regardless of how dangerous the tree is. Always contact the relevant nature conservation agency (SNH, Natural England, NRW, NIEA) if you suspect a tree may contain bats. Local bat groups may also be able to help.

## Operator safety

Dealing with a dangerous tree in an unsafe manner simply compounds the risk. A competent and appropriately qualified chainsaw operator can deal with straightforward tree felling but many large, dangerous trees will be beyond the competency of most estate foresters or forestry contractors. Ensure you engage a contractor with the appropriate Arboriculture competencies for anything other than straightforward tree felling. Make sure any felling near public roads is done with traffic management in accordance with Roads and Street Works Act 1991.



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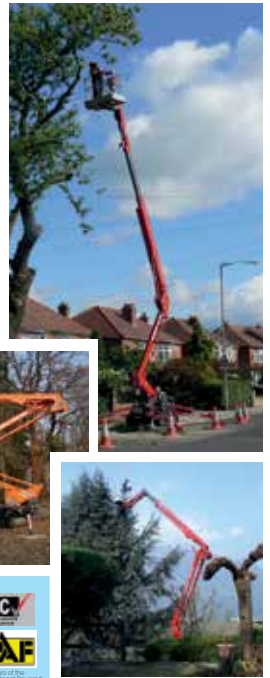
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# MULCHING



**RAB Easton** gets to grips with mulching

Over the last few years, I have been fortunate to spend time with Justin Kingwell of Kingwell Holdings Ltd who carries out mulching operations throughout the UK and I have visited TMC Cancela, a Spanish manufacturer of forestry and agricultural mulchers. Mulching was an area of forestry I had little experience of and it was interesting to discover how mulching can improve and protect the health of a forest.

Visiting forestry exhibitions, you begin to get an insight into just how important mulching has become; there are small remotely operated, tractor mounted, excavator boom mounted and purpose built mulchers capable of working in most forestry conditions.

An interesting fact I discovered was that the majority of mulching contracts are seasonal and take place from October until the end of March. This puts

a considerable amount of pressure on operators and the reliability of equipment when working to such strict time constraints.

Using traditional land clearing methods can be slow and expensive. Leaving bare soil exposed to the elements can cause soil erosion and leave it prone to being blown or washed away. This can result in poor water drainage or insufficient soil to support new and healthy forests. Mulching is a precise method of clearing around established trees with minimal ground disturbance and without causing any damage to the tree stems and root system. Healthy trees and forests are far better equipped to deal with attacks from insect and fungal diseases.

Adding a top layer of mulch prevents soil erosion and keeps it in place. It suppresses weeds and at the same time, offers other long-term advantages. Firstly, the soil benefits from the nutrients contained in the mulch which nourish and enrich the land - this helps the trees to grow healthily during establishment. Secondly, the planting of new trees is more cost-effective as it is an easier and safer environment for the tree planters to

work in.

The risk of wildfires is reduced with mulching as the fuel sources on the ground are eliminated. Mulching fallen branches, dead trees and other fuel sources also acts as a preventative measure for fires by decreasing the heat intensity of a forest fire. This debris would normally serve as a fire ladder which enables fires to elevate quickly to the crowns of the trees where they are more difficult to contain and control. Mulchers are capable of operating in challenging forestry conditions and are therefore





>> ideally placed for creating fire breaks in forests to help prevent and contain forest fires. In the unfortunate event of a forest fire a mulcher is an effective way of dealing with the aftermath and preparing the ground for replanting.

Overgrown verges on roads, motorways, railways and riverbanks can be cleared without causing too much disruption. The mulchers are able to clear scrub and woody weeds quickly for establishing new forests and for building work to take place. I visited a site near Motherwell recently which had been cleared and mulched for a new housing estate to be built. The mulch from the site was collected, loaded into containers and delivered by truck to bio mass purchasers. Over 200 tonne was collected and sold, offsetting part of the mulching costs.

Smaller or excavator-mounted mulchers can be used in young forests to deal with invasive species which can soak up a lot of ground water, which in turn reduces the water table. Proactive mulching can cut down the stress on trees caused by "crowding". This is when other unwanted species take over the forest and can either inhibit the growth and development of the desired crop or kill them altogether.

Mulching is not as effective on rocky or very stony ground as the stones and rocks will wear the teeth on the rotor. This can cause considerable damage to the mulcher or carrier and in some cases be a fire hazard as the mulching teeth can create sparks when it comes in to contact with hard rock.

There are an abundance of makes, models and sizes so it is worth finding out about what kind of after sales service is on offer from manufacturers and the availability of spare parts.

## 1 Fecon

Fecon are a US manufacturer from Lebanon in Ohio. The company have been making mulching and land clearing equipment for over 20 years. They are well known for the famous registered trade marked Bull Hog mulcher.

Fecon operate out of an impressive 150,000sq ft facility and have made over 7500 mulching heads to date.

The company has won many awards and been recognised as one of the leaders in forestry mulching attachments. Their efforts for diligence to quality and innovation, their business acumen and their recognition of organisations who exhibit a strong commitment to local workforce development have all been rewarded.



They offer an extensive range of mulching equipment which will attach to many different types of carriers. There are Bull Hog mulchers for attaching to most makes and models of skid steers, PTO-mounted Bull Hog's for agricultural and forestry tractors and smaller Bull Hog units for attaching to excavator booms.

Fecon manufacture four purpose-built tracked mulchers from the 140hp FTX150 through to the large 600hp FTX600. They also manufacture a wheeled version, the RTF 230 which is a four wheel drive/steered compact 230hp tractor with a 24mph road speed.

[www.fecon.com](http://www.fecon.com)  
[www.khlplant.com](http://www.khlplant.com)

## 2 Plaisance

This is a family run business from Montigny in France specialising in high quality forestry mulchers and crushing equipment. Since the company was founded in 1976 they have subsequently grown to be a market leader in heavy duty self powered, hydraulic and PTO driven mulchers.

Plaisance offer four applications of forestry mulchers:

**Galotrax** is a tracked based purpose built mulcher with seven different sized models ranging from the GX 200 which is a 165hp 7,700 kg compact unit to the large GX 800, a 765hp 32,000kg mulcher.

**Vario Track** is a four equal wheeled base machine with six models available. The smallest is the VT 180, a 173hp 6,100kg mulcher to the VT 500B, a 440hp 13,800kg machine. This range has mechanical transmission which allows 100% of the engine power to the mulcher head.

The **BF range** is for general forestry mulching and is PTO driven, 3pt linkage mounted, there are 14 different model

sizes available.

The **BS range** is also PTO-driven and 3pt linkage mounted. There are five models available and this range is for deep mulching and grinding stumps and has a slower rotor speed.

Finally, there are five sizes of the BFH range which are for mounting onto booms of excavators.

[www.plaisance-equipments.com](http://www.plaisance-equipments.com)  
[www.fuelwood.co.uk](http://www.fuelwood.co.uk)

## 3 Prinoth

Prinoth was established by the German racing driver Ernst Prinoth in Gröden, Germany in 1951. It started out as a garage, but Ernst was fascinated by tracked vehicles and soon developed a steep slope snow groomer. As time progressed, so did his range of tracked vehicles. In 2011, Prinoth acquired the AHWI Company who has a long history in building mulching equipment.

The Raptor crawlers are available in three sizes;

RT 200, 176hp PTO driven mulcher weighing 8300kg. The RT 300, a 275hp engine with either direct mechanical drive with a special 4pt linkage or 3pt linkage weighing 15,250kg and the RT800 with 630hp. This model has direct mechanical drive with a 4pt linkage weighing 20,750kg.

There are four 3pt linkage PTO driven mulchers starting with the M450 which needs a minimum of 80hp (at the PTO) to operate efficiently up to the M750 with the turbo clutch which can be used with tractors in the 250-400hp (at the PTO).

They offer four models of excavator boom mounted units available from 6 to 30 tonne excavators.

[www.prinoth.com](http://www.prinoth.com)  
[www.paulvidgenforestmachines.co.uk](http://www.paulvidgenforestmachines.co.uk)

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>> **4 Serrat**

Serrat currently have 50 employees and have been producing mulching equipment for over 30 years. Operating out of Huesca in Spain they make forestry and agricultural mulcher heads to suit tractors, excavators and skid-steer compact track loader (CTL) machines.

The FX range of 3pt linkage PTO driven mulchers has five different sizes and will work along with tractors from 80hp up to the large 250-350hp models.

The Cabezal MF2 has been designed for attaching onto compact track loaders of over five tonnes. This is designed for >>



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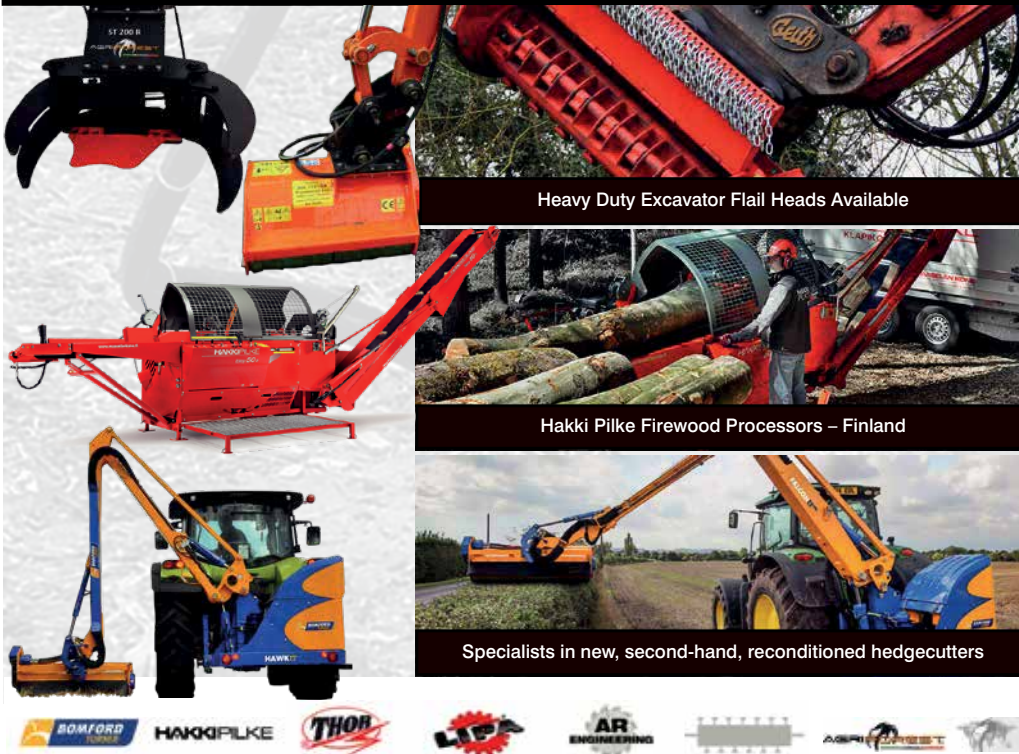
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have been resolved better.

TMC Cancela offers a range of mulchers capable of working in almost all conditions:

- Eight models of 3pt linkage PTO driven mulchers for attaching to tractors from 70hp through to 400hp.
- Eleven mulching heads for fitting to excavators; the smallest will fit on a 3.5 tonne machine and the largest a 40 tonne machine.
- Three heads for smaller skid steer equipment with the lightest one weighing 615kg up to the 1268kg mulcher.

TMC Cancela also manufactures a range of mulching equipment for fitting on to remote controlled vehicles.

[www.tmccancela.com](http://www.tmccancela.com)  
[www.spaldings.co.uk](http://www.spaldings.co.uk)

>> maintaining smaller green spaces, hedges, riverbanks etc and will work with material up to 3cm in diameter.

For excavators they offer five sizes of mulchers, offering a range that will work effectively with 3.5 tonne excavators up to large 50 tonne machines.

[www.serratmulchers.com](http://www.serratmulchers.com)  
[www.khlplant.com](http://www.khlplant.com)

and the professional approach they have to their business and customers.

It was a very modern facility using the latest technology and the emphasis was on quality not quantity. Each morning the heads of departments got together to discuss any problems from the previous day and to see if there was a way it could

As with all buyers guides these are just a few companies I have selected to list. There are many mulcher manufacturers producing equally as good equipment as these mentioned. I have selected the ones that I have seen working in the forest and have a working knowledge of.

## 5 TMC Cancela

This is a family owned business from Galicia in Spain that has been manufacturing mulchers for over 40 years. This highly successful company have been growing annually by 20%. 70% of their manufactured equipment is exported to over 30 countries around the world.

I personally visited this factory about two years ago and was extremely impressed by the quality of workmanship

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](http://www.forestmachinemagazine.com)

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## 'Full steam ahead' for APF 2020

We are very aware of the current uncertainty as to whether many outside events will go ahead as planned this year and that several have already been cancelled or postponed.

APF 2020 is still going 'full steam ahead' towards our planned event on 24/25/26 September. We are still over six months away from APF 2020 and our assessment is that current restrictions and recommendations will have lifted well before then.

We will, of course, continue to monitor the situation and listen to all relevant advice but APF 2020 is planned to go ahead as scheduled.

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# A journey into unknown waters



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

At the start of March there were the first signs of recovery in the UK timber market, the weather was improving, there was a modest upturn in orders and demand for standing timber was increasing. Timber prices had stabilised and the seasonal upturn was starting to kick in.

The spring budget has delivered an enormous fiscal stimulus to an economy which was stalling due to Brexit and the global uncertainty. The outlook for construction and the low carbon economy looked very positive in the UK.

In Europe the oversupply of spruce timber continued to be a threat with the Czech republic forecasting and accrual of 40 to 60 million cubic metres of beetle damaged timber whilst recent winter storms had led to 7 to 8 million cubic metres of storm damaged timber which should easily be incorporated into existing felling programmes. The big question was how much of the beetle damaged timber would feed into the sawn timber market and how much would be downgraded to energy wood.

There had been a huge increase in exports of sawlogs from Europe to China with some estimate showing that China ac-

counted for 46% of global sawlog volumes traded in 2019.

Although there has been a global downturn in timber prices there were signs that production had been reduced and demand has started to increase so price increases would be sought in negotiations for supply in spring 2020.

The Covid-19 has changed this dramatically on both a global and local scale. The impact on global trade is already significant and has the potential to increase.

In the UK the country goes into a period of lockdown. The virus will in the short term impact on demand and supply and create disruption to the supply chain, we will have to adjust our work patterns and how we interact with others but above all else we must act in a rational and considered way based upon the advice available.

The UK government has acted swiftly and decisively with a massive support package for business to help it through the Corona virus crisis. This on top of the already announced budget measures amount to an unprecedented financial support package to the UK economy.

In the short term businesses are making immediate changes to adapt to the threat, in Europe we have seen changes to shift and working patterns as businesses adapt production to demand and supply chain capacity. In many cases this has involved reduced production levels and postponement of capital investment.

The key issue is the scale of the disrup-

tion in terms of volume and time. In the timber industry we have now become used to operating in a volatile market in terms of demand volume and price and developed expertise in operating in challenging circumstances, these skills will become very useful.

We can effectively home work, we can operate remotely and we have resilient business systems, provided we can work with the Forestry Commission to ensure the regulatory side of our industry continues to function effectively we can weather the storm

We do not know what the short term impact will be, that is dependent on society's willingness to do what the government tells us!! How will the UK fare relative to the rest of the world?

Beyond the current crisis the outlook for our industry looks very positive, there is massive fiscal support from the government for construction and the low carbon economy which should be good for forestry and the forest products industries. There appears to be recognition of a wider role for woodland creation in rural land use policy and a growing understanding of the significance of forest products in the rural economy. The government will have to borrow considerable amounts of money which may reduce the value of the pound in the medium term.

This should improve demand and drive investment which will ultimately drive our industry forward

## Roadside hardwood prices (£ hft) November 2019

	Oak planking	Oak beam	Oak fencing	Oak Cordwood	Export ash & beech	White ash sawlogs	Export sycamore	Large Douglas fir and Larch
High price	£14.00	£10.00	£6.00	£1.40	£3.25	£4.00	£5.00	£3.30
Mid price	£12.00	£9.00	£5.00	£1.25	£2.75	£3.50	£4.00	£2.90
Low price	£10.00	£8.00	£4.00	£1.00	£2.00	£3.25	£3.00	£2.90

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

## 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](mailto:oliver.combe@timberauctions.co.uk) for free independent marketing advice.

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

Product	Lower price	Upper price	Trend
Log 18	£65.00	£70.00	=
Bar 14	£63.00	£68.00	=
SRW	£58.00	£62.00	=
Fencing	£60.00	£65.00	=
H Wood firewood	£60.00	£65.00	=

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

Product	Lower price	Upper price	Trend
Log 18	£65.00	£75.00	=
Bar / pallet 14	£60.00	£65.00	=
SRW	£55.00	£60.00	=
Fencing	£60.00	£65.00	=
H Wood firewood	£55.00	£70.00	=



Box Wood, Stevenage

# Market resilient but future uncertain



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

Whoever said we live in interesting times must have had the last few months in mind. Since the General Election result on 12 December, we have managed to finalise Brexit (only the small detail of trade negotiations to go!), had several climatic storms and are now facing the medical storm of Covid-19. The effects on the global economy appear to be as stormy as the weather. Quite how things will change in the forestry world is unclear.

While we self-isolate the trees continue to grow. As Walter Scott's Laird of Dumbiedykes advises his son "ye may be aye sticking in a tree; it will be growing when ye're sleeping". With interest rates at an historically low level, growing trees may be a sensible investment. Certainly people have so far continued to put money into land and trees, and increasingly into land that may carry trees.

The market evidence we report on today is based on activity prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Its effect on the market is as yet unknown.

A selection of recently completed sales indicates good activity across the board.

Starting with a small, 7.4ha woodland near Blairgowrie – Bridge of Cally Wood – being a mixture of 50-year old Scots Pine and other conifers set in lovely landscapes. This sold for a figure just under £90000/ha. An ideal amenity wood with undoubted potential for recreational use, possibly the development of a hut under the Scottish Government's hutting policy.

At the more productive end of the spectrum, Glenhead & Arns sold strongly. Planted between 1995 and 2002, three lots were combined and sold as a whole. In total, 169ha of very high-yield class spruce with sound access, achieving a price of £18,300/

ha for (on average) 23-year old crops. An investment in rapidly growing timber that should be available for harvesting in the 2030s.

For older trees, one might consider Braemore Wood near Lael in Wester Ross. 82ha of mixed conifers, some of them dating from the 1940s and 50s, but others only recently restocked and with some further ground for replanting – this very attractive woodland sold for a figure in the region £6000/ha. The attractive woodland nature being somewhat compromised by the close proximity of the A835 trunk road to Ullapool and the public car park. The ele-



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>> ment of privacy is therefore reduced and there will be additional management costs in harvesting timber alongside a busy trunk road.

A more substantial property in Easter Ross extending to 198ha has sold for just over £15,000/ha. This property comprised a mixture of ages, but the bulk was Sitka spruce, now 27 years old. It included a small lochan with a well-built bothy offering accommodation. A forest to enjoy for its amenity but also for the strong projection of capital growth as the spruce matures over the next 10-15 years.

### Properties on the market

Of properties currently on the market, John Clegg & Co have Whiteburn Forest in Northumberland. There has been a dearth of good substantial commercial woodlands in the north of England available on the market. Whiteburn, at 485ha, is a substantial forest, well through the restructuring phase. There are still well over 100ha of mature spruce crops for harvesting. At 50 years of age, these contain good volumes of merchantable timber, albeit on steep slopes with consequently higher operational costs. Younger crops have been replanted since 2004 on a regular basis and the whole forest is beginning to present a very appealing mixed continuum. In addition to the pure woodland interest, there is a small stone-built cottage at Whiteburnshank, set in the heart of the forest and offering a very attractive base from which to enjoy the estate. At a guide price of £4.8M, strong interest is already being shown.

In Wales, Esgairnantau, 122ha of spruce crops, again dating from the early 1990s and therefore approaching 30 years of age, is currently on offer at a guide price of £1.75M. This equates to just over £14,000/ha overall. Parts of the crop have been thinned with the objective of allowing better quality timber to develop. Now that



**Glenhead Arns**

there is a stronger market for small roundwood, particularly supported by biomass energy, thinning is an operation beginning to feature again in forestry management

New to the market is Reidside in north-east Scotland; 33ha of spruce planted in 1987 and now approaching the harvesting phase. With a guide price of £500,000 this equates to £18,750 per spruce hectare. With strong demand for timber from sawmills, panel mills and biomass energy markets it will be an interesting marker for how things may change in the post Covid-19 world.

At the other end of the country, Box Wood near Stevenage, Hertfordshire offers a full mix of species on its 24ha. It is one of the 999 year leases at a fixed rent of £7.54 per annum. Originally planted by the Forestry Commission in the 1950s, there is a wide range of species including beech, hornbeam, oak, Douglas fir, European larch and red cedar. The wood has been thinned on a regular basis creating a very attractive property with sound commercial timber developing. At a guide price of £180,000 this is stimulating good interest.

Gloucestershire is a well wooded county and Park Wood is a good example of an 'owner's wood'. Extending to 34ha and including a five-hectare field under grazing, it offers considerable privacy and scope for timber production and great enjoyment. It could be the base for the development of a woodland activity business given its good access and mixed crops. With a history of beech timber a wood turnery course would seem to be ideally suited. A guide price equivalent to £10,000 per hectare looks very reasonable.

It is a very strange atmosphere this week with no clear picture of how things may develop. We know that some intending woodland purchasers have withdrawn on the basis that releasing funds from the stock market only crystallises a loss. Investors sitting on cash may be more keen to get this invested as the traditional financial markets look anything but certain. Alternatively, cash may be best kept in readiness to pick up opportunities in the recovery from Covid-19. It all adds up to a period of uncertainty.

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# Changing the way we think about supply chains

## COMMENT

The world is changing, forestry is changing and the materials we use to support our lives are changing.

**Jez Ralph** of Timber Strategies looks at how changes to silvicultural practice over the coming decades will alter the availability of home-grown timber and how we use it.

This article is intended to ask questions rather than provide answers; something to think about as we sit at home watching society change.

Lowland forestry is fast becoming increasingly complex. Matching agro-ecological approaches in farming, many owners are rapidly moving towards more complex silvicultural systems that mix a greater variety of species in a greater variety of age-classes to increase biodiversity, mitigate against storm, disease and other threats. In essence,

to give the forest and its soils a long-term resilience. At the same time, markets for timber are rapidly expanding in the construction sector. Product and engineering development is allowing higher proportions of timber to enter the market in the form of new systems. The same is also true of non-timber products such as bio-distilled chemicals and lignin/cellulose derived products.

This situation raises significant questions for the future of timber processing and timber supply. We may accept that the uplands will continue to provide volume spruce (but will they really? How many rotations can the soil take?); however, in the lowlands, the situation is already looking very different. How do we, as foresters, processors and end-users reconcile this increasing complexity with a need for more volume?

The semantics of our industry may have a role to play in addressing this perceived imbalance. 'Oversized' timber is usually understood to mean diameters too big for large sawmills to take, a negative connotation despite the facts that this timber will have increasing proportions of heartwood to sap or juvenile wood. We could say that, despite having reached its maximum mean annual increment, much of our timber is felled undersized if we



**Above:**  
Eucalyptus trials at Dartington Hall

**Below left:**  
Tulip wood engineered panels



are looking for quality timber and greater returns per log off the saw.

Likewise, we are focussed on the narrative of native versus novel species and a fundamental difference between commercial and non-commercial woodland. In a new era of more resilient and complex forestry should we not be planting trees based on our knowledge of site and species match to create resilience? Rather than be constrained by particular markets (for example beech & furniture or poplar & matches) look to the species properties in terms of more generic structural properties, durability, aesthetics, chemical composition etc.

Removing these forestry constraints needs to be matched by a removal of constraints in processing and end-use.





Why do glulamated beams need to be single species?  
Is the mass-timber movement right if there are constraints on volume but not on quality?  
If we understand the properties of timber better can we optimise sawing and fabrication based on those properties?

These are questions we often ask of both forestry and architecture students but despite much discussion never get to the bottom of other than vague ideological principles. It all seems a way off but is actually much closer to realisation than we think, especially with the advent of fast growing and hybridised crops; the sudden need to try to maximise value in large-volumes of diseased



trees such as ash; the need to understand the properties of species at planting age to ensure they have a marketable future.

Some of these questions are beginning to be answered and we have a thriving sector of innovation in academic centres such as the Centre for Timber Engineering, Bath University, Cambridge, Bangor and Forest Research. We have commercial innovation in the likes of Brimstone thermally modified timber and experiments with hardwood glulam. Work has been and is being carried out on how we can adjust silviculture to give better property profiles to timber and in assessing how much timber we actually have growing.

Undoubtedly, as both forestry and timber use becomes more complex, there needs to be a better understanding of the supply chain from all ends, for architects to understand where material originates and for foresters to understand the end markets their timber will end up in. Many architects, architectural



Moving away from a focus on constrained diameters, constrained species choices and constrained markets, the opportunities open up to us to re-think how we grow, process and use our timber.

& forestry students are actively engaging in understanding how timber is produced. Projects like Hooke Park and Studio in the Woods undertake design and build projects within the woods the timber comes from as a learning activity. For others, it is field trip based and where this isn't possible through lectures on timber properties, processing and products.

Moving away from a focus on constrained diameters, constrained species choices and constrained markets, the opportunities open up to us to re-think how we grow, process and use our timber.

We need to bolster our research capabilities, product innovation and, as importantly, we need better connections between forestry and end-users to better understand the future landscape we are all going to be dealing with.

This kind of work and thinking may seem on the periphery of our industry but as time goes on will become increasingly important if we are to take as a baseline the health of the forest and have to adapt our processing and user industries as a result.

For those of us stuck at home at the moment I'd highly recommend tuning into Tom Barnes ongoing series of videos, *Wood for the Trees*, exploring many of these questions.

Go to [www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and search for "Tom Barnes" and/or *Wood for the Trees*.

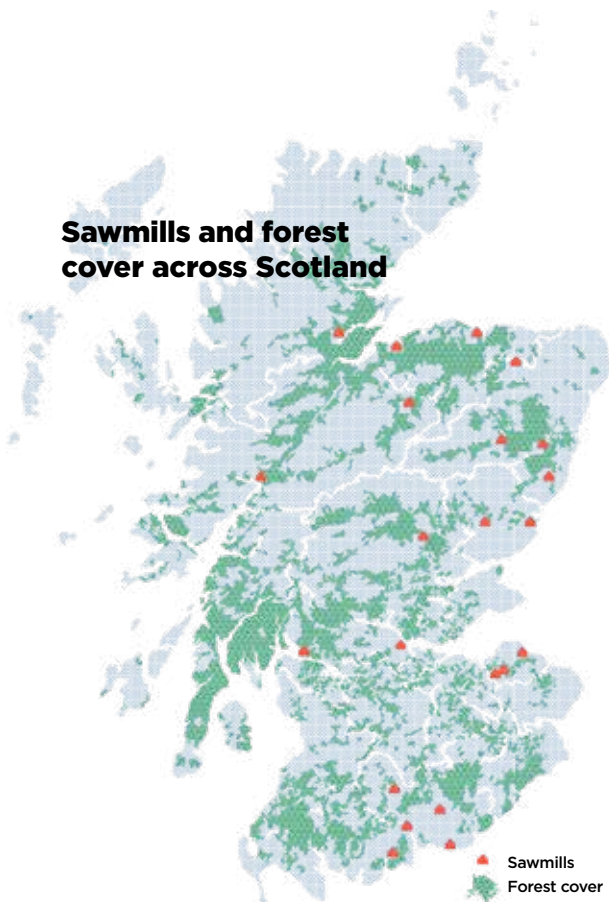


# Bridging the gap - an architectural response



In the context of climate change, **Beth Dutson**, looks at the role of architects in catalysing a paradigm shift towards using locally-sourced timber in construction.

**Sawmills and forest cover across Scotland**



Gradually, we are starting to become more aware of the origins and shipping miles of the food that we put into our bodies, what it's sprayed with and wrapped in. We have the daily choice to selectively avoid buying over-packaged and non-organic vegetables from far-flung corners of the world. But do we have the same level of conscience when it comes to the buildings that we spend our days living and working in? Our lives are framed by concrete and steel; accountable for 11% of global carbon emissions, then clad in timber from Russia, New Zealand and South America.

Among those who do have a comparable understanding of the origins of building materials, not many are in a position to have a major influence over their built environment. This is where the architect and the designer is obliged, not to turn a blind eye, but to harbour skills within their domain to have a positive impact where others cannot. 'To be an architect is an enormous privilege', says Shella McNamara of Pritzker prize winning Grafton Architects.

In 2020, the role of an architect is changing. My generation is entering the world of work from university at a time when we must engage in sustainable practice in all we do. However, while the primary drivers of urban planning remain economical, putting sustainability at the heart of design is hugely challenging.

It's inspiring then, to see examples of conscious architecture (socially and environmentally) break through to the fore. A beacon of hope for the future came in the form of 'Goldsmith Street' housing in Norwich, by architects Mikhail Riches. This 100% social housing scheme, built to Passivhaus standards using structural timber panels, won the 2019 RIBA Stirling Prize, showing that sustainability as part of well-executed social design can be at the top of the architectural agenda heading into the new decade.

A cause for celebration but not as a successful one-off, rather as a springboard for aspirational architects to follow suit. It's time to further this ethos, by combining equally sustainable design and materials.

There's a palpable excitement with regards to the future of sustainable timber construction in Scot-

land. In 2017, I wrote a dissertation examining the potential emergence of a 'New Scottish vernacular' architecture, using Peter Wilson's curated precedents in *New Timber Architecture in Scotland* as a starting point. While researching, I visited the workshop of Confor member MAKAR in Inverness - a company headed by Neil Sutherland, which produces offsite-manufactured timber housing. University is a test bed for exploring radical and hypothetical ideas, but what doesn't crop up so much is the idea of designing within physical and environmental contextual parameters, which in itself can often lead to the hatching of rewarding, innovate solutions. What MAKAR has done is acknowledged the limitations that the unpredictability of Scottish weather puts onto on-site construction by fabricating SIPs undercover, simultaneously creating an efficient and comfortable environment for employees, and minimising onsite assembly time of the prefabricated components.

This design model is taking off around Scotland, with studios such as MAKAR and Rural Design confidently leading the way, and starting to establish a new contextually sympathetic, and aesthetically consistent typology of Scottish building.

Currently, an amazing 85% of new Scottish homes are being construct-



ed with timber, but only around a third of this is actually grown in the country. The UK is a huge importer of timber, despite the potential for far more homegrown C16 construction grade timber to enter the supply chain. There's a slight faltering point in the supply chain however, between the timber producer and the building designer.

### Bridging the gap

Working with traditional timber framers in Wales, I was mocked (in jest - I hope) for my relatively unformed, idealistic notions of how traditional joinery techniques can be applied to contemporary architecture. As I chiselled a mortice into a beautiful piece of oak I learnt that it's both much harder than I had imagined, and also very important for there to be a connection and understanding between the architectural designer and the master craftsman, who knows the ins and outs of every tenon, and works with the grain as second nature to inform conscientious design in ways an architect couldn't.

A refreshing FTN case-study to mention here is the Holzbaunkunst collective in Austria\* - a picturesque Austrian valley showcasing a beautiful, natural progression of advanced timber design - without architects. 'Good carpenters here are able to



**Above:** Holzbaunkunst Award 2019, Austria

**Left:** Talla na Mara (by Rural Design), Isle of Harris, Scotland

construct better homes than architects do elsewhere' the visitors website proclaims, and after perusing photos of their work it's hard, even as an aspiring architect, to deny. Nuanced in their anti-architecture-establishment roots, this generation of timber producers, joiners, carpenters and builders are creating a pioneering collection of buildings.

As with Goldsmith street, this boundary-pushing creative practice is the next step for Scotland as we latch onto the potential of timber as a primary building material, but requires a greater coherence along the supply chain.

The 'construction artists' of Holzbaunkunst and the MAKAR team demonstrate the strengthening of ties in a weak point in the supply chain, between timber producer and building designer. There's space and requirement for more of this boundary-pushing creative practice in Scotland - as with Goldsmith street - as we latch onto the potential of timber as a primary building material.

### How can architects help?

To generate a deeper understanding between these two parts of the chain - producer and designer - there needs to be a sustained effort to learn. We must understand the potential and the limitations to increase confidence in our own

local resource - timber. We must overcome the misconceptions that Scottish-grown conifers are an inferior or lower graded product. With continued forest management the percentage of C16 timber is on the increase, and if supply pressures increase with a higher demand for construction grade timber, this should only get better. This education should be prioritised early on as part of a pedagogical approach within universities and colleges - something I have not experienced to be high on the agenda.

So, architects have a job to do. Firstly, the profession must come to terms with the fact that we face an imminent climate crisis, and must play a part in improving the health of our planet by choosing to champion local sustainable materials, which means timber. To make the most of this and progress, architects must then fully engage with craftspeople to get the most out of this hugely precious and powerful resource that we all have responsibility for. Necessity is the mother of invention, and right now we are most definitely entering a time of need.

\* Holzbaunkunst - FTN February 2018 (past articles can be found on [www.confor.org.uk](http://www.confor.org.uk) > News > FTN magazine > search for articles). [www.holzbaunkunst.at](http://www.holzbaunkunst.at)

*Hailing from rural Cumbria, Beth Dutton studied architecture in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and now works in Glasgow after graduating as a part 2 architectural assistant.*







## QA

**Aurelia Musa, Martin Juricek, Jessica Haskett and Ellenor Witton** are students of architectural engineering/design and structural engineering at Heriot Watt University. They are lucky members of the only UK university team currently designing and building a sustainable house to take part in the Solar Decathlon Middle East (SDME) competition. They tell us about their process of considering timber as a building material.

**Q: In order to excel at this competition, what are the advantages of using timber as a construction material?**

It is a sustainable resource and can be the most appropriate material for fire safety. Unlike man-made materials, wood will not produce toxic by-products when burnt. Wood also burns slowly, allowing plenty of time for evacuation. Single story timber buildings such as ours usually pass fire safety regulations without detailed description of fire protective coatings. Nevertheless, we are working with suppliers of Cross Laminated Timber (CLT), which is well documented as an appropriate fire resistant material. CLT also has a lower density compare to other materials which makes transportation of the timber easier. Trees are a natural carbon-capture resource and timber has a low embodied energy/carbon property. With careful planning, multiple trees can be planted per tree used in construction, therefore contributing to the removal of excess CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere.

Compared with masonry or steel structures, timber has a better thermal performance due to natural air pockets that limits heat conduction. This minimises the

effect of thermal transmittance and thus energy loss. It can be applied in both warm and cold climates, reducing the energy consumption needed to cool and heat buildings, respectively.

Timber framed buildings are far quicker to construct than brick or stone, regardless of the building size. This is due to prefabricated timber components being quick to manufacture and therefore makes the overall construction process more efficient, decreasing costs. As our house is to be built and dismantled several times it has been designed to be modular. These pre-cut modules are made from CLT panels, insulation and cladding materials. Prefabrication and modern methods of construction means smaller companies can get involved with our project, supporting the wider construction industry.

**Q: Did you consider sourcing home-grown timber or CLT?**

At the beginning of the project, we considered using Scottish larch, as this is a fast growing variety and is in plentiful supply. Using a local timber would help us achieve the overall goal of building a low carbon house. However, due to time

constraints we didn't manage to identify a suitable supply in time.

CLT is still quite a new material in the UK's market, with the first CLT house being built in the UK in 2004. The timber requires a specific moisture content, which determines its properties. Moisture content can vary between 8 % and 15%, however, adjacent layers must be of similar moisture content in order to cure the adhesive between the layers.

CLT requires appropriate machinery and drying kilns to prepare the timber, and there is only a handful of companies within the UK with these facilities. Nevertheless, we are working with Construction Scotland Innovation Centre who have a vacuum bed ensuring that a uniform pressure is applied to the CLT panels as they are laminated and manufactured. They are based in Hamilton, Glasgow, and therefore

their location is perfect to try and minimise the carbon footprint of our building.

**Q: Using timber in construction – an essential part of the academic curriculum?**

Our team consists of students on different courses so the exact modules we are taught can vary. Overall, the university is good at teaching sustainable building and tackling climate change through various approaches, however there is not always a focus on timber buildings in particular. We are well informed in order to work with any type of material. Nevertheless, we feel that timber construction should be taught in greater detail. This would mean the next generation of graduates entering the industry have the necessary tools to construct buildings while providing a benefit to the environment.



## Solar Decathlon Middle East

A competition involving 21 universities from across the world coming together to design and eventually build a solar powered house in Dubai this year. The aim is to encourage sustainable living under specific climatic conditions, and the buildings will be judged on the following aspects:

- Architecture
- Energy and management
- Engineering and construction
- Energy efficiency
- Comfort conditions
- House functioning
- Sustainable transportation
- Sustainability
- Communication
- Innovation

**Q: Did you engage with timber industries for this project?**

Companies that we are keen to work with include Glenalmond timber, who we are hoping to purchase our timber from and utilise their timber cladding, while Construction Scotland Innovation Centre are hoping to manufacture our CLT. Other companies such as Glulam Solutions and Scotframe are prepared to form our prefabricated panels.

We believe that companies providing timber should have greater collaboration with universities focused on engineering like Heriot Watt. As students, we are the ones that will one day be in the industry picking suitable materials for construction of our projects and having greater knowledge of innovative ways of using timber would influence our decision making.

Follow the group's journey on twitter/instagram/linkedin [@teamestem2020](#)

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# Carbon capture and storage - the natural way

**Morwenna Spear** (BioComposites Centre, Bangor University), **Andrew Norton**, (Renueables Ltd) and **Callum Hill** (JCH Industrial Ecology Ltd)

It is now beyond any reasonable doubt that the release of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere, strongly linked to economic activity, is leading to climate change in its many manifestations, with serious impacts on planet, society and the economy.

Decarbonisation of economic activities such as manufacturing and construction is the only answer; and various governments around the world have put in place strategies to pursue a low-carbon pathway. The UK Government was the first major economy to put in place zero carbon laws, with the stated intention to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. But how will this be achieved?

Part of the strategy is to balance any emissions by removing an equivalent amount of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, by planting trees or using technology like carbon capture and storage (CCS). A huge investment would be required in CCS technologies and there is a notable lack of any serious plans to build CCS infrastructure at the present time.

By contrast, planting trees requires a much smaller investment, as well as providing additional ecosystem benefits, such as rainwater interception and providing natural habitat. Apart from the obvious carbon sequestration provided by the trees, economic benefits can also be realised if the trees are harvested sustainably and the harvested wood products are used in long-life applications, such as buildings. The investment in forestry will pay for itself; this is not the case for CCS.

## The role of timber in climate change mitigation

The use of timber in construction provides climate change mitigation due to the storage of carbon derived from atmospheric carbon dioxide in the timber. There are also other advantages because most timber products have a lower embodied energy (and carbon footprint) compared with the same functional unit made from non-biogenic materials, such as steel or concrete. In addition, the inherent energy that is stored in the timber can be recovered from the material through burning, often

substituting fossil fuel equivalents, when no further recycling can be achieved. Depending on the circumstances, the re-use of timber in other products (cascading) may provide further benefits.

A 2018 report of the potential climate change mitigation benefits of using timber in construction in the UK was published by the Committee on Climate Change - Wood in Construction in the UK: An Analysis of Carbon Abatement Potential. This study, undertaken by the Bangor University BioComposites Centre, JCH Industrial Ecology and Renueables Ltd, used very conservative assumptions. The effect of replacing brick and block masonry structures with timber frame was investigated, but the same foundations were included, even though the timber frame was lighter. Even using these assumptions, the advantages of using timber-rich structures were readily apparent.

## CO<sub>2</sub> reduction by using timber in construction

By considering houses with either brick and block, or timber framed construction methods, and quantifying the embodied carbon and the stored sequestered carbon of each, the team were able to model the effect on the housing sector.



It is estimated that it is possible to source 86-92% of the timber construction material within the UK.

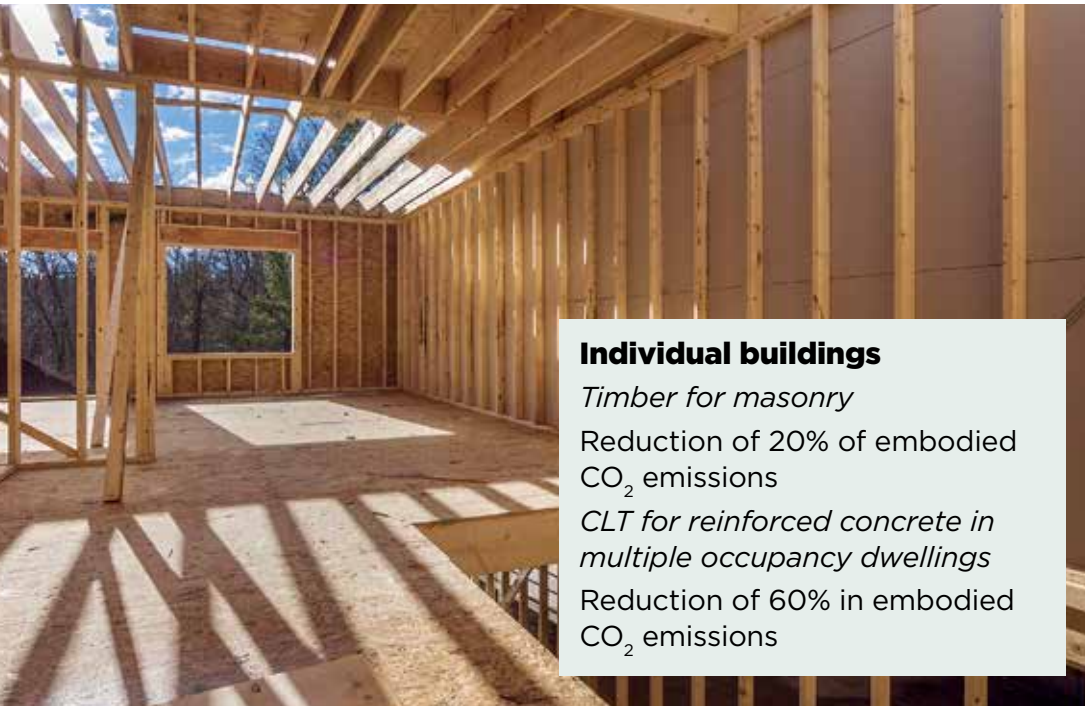


### 270,000 new homes by 2050

*If using timber frame instead of other materials*

Emissions reduction: MINUS 0.08 - 1 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>eq / year

+ carbon storage in timber fabric of 1 - 1.3 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>eq/year



### Individual buildings

*Timber for masonry*

Reduction of 20% of embodied CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

*CLT for reinforced concrete in multiple occupancy dwellings*

Reduction of 60% in embodied CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

When looking ahead to a potential 270,000 new build homes per year by 2050, it was calculated that this substitution would deliver an annual reduction in carbon emissions of at least 0.8-1.0 Mt carbon dioxide equivalents (CO<sub>2</sub>e) per year. This was simply by substituting timber structures for methods that use higher embodied energy and embodied carbon building materials. In addition, the carbon storage in the fabric of the timber buildings amounted to an additional 1.0-1.3 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e, per annum.

For individual buildings, the substitution of timber for masonry resulted in the reduction in embodied CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by about 20%, whereas using CLT (cross laminated timber) instead of reinforced concrete for construction of multiple occupancy dwellings led to a massive 60% decrease in embodied CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Most importantly, these climate change mitigation benefits can be realised with almost zero abatement costs, because recent UK studies have shown that costs of timber frame and masonry are now similar, and that CLT is nearing cost parity with concrete or steel systems.

As the CCC report hinted, huge further reductions in carbon emissions are possible with only simple changes in building designs, to move the current vernacular away from brick and block for small build-

ings and steel and concrete for larger ones. Timber can provide a powerful alternative in reducing the construction sector's footprint, here and now. This can be done without the need for a decarbonised electricity grid or investment in CCS technologies, meaning that these technologies can yield additional carbon reductions in future. However, this can only be realised if the benefits of this low energy requiring and carbon storing material, timber, are recognised by policy and commercial venture and promoted as such.

### Availability of homegrown timber

The study also considered timber availability within the UK. Total volumes of softwood sawlogs were found to be sufficient to support timber frame construction using homegrown timber. This can be achieved if the timber frame housing sector designs structures to use C16 timber, or if higher grades become available through revision of grading practices for homegrown timbers such as pine and larch. It was found that a significant volume of the stored sequestered carbon was derived from wood-based panels used in the timber frame houses, ie oriented strand board and particle-board within walls and floors. From the point of view of reporting these benefits are attributable to the na-

tional carbon accounts, and it was estimated that it was possible to source 86-92% of the timber construction material within the UK.

Although the majority of timber requirements for the UK construction sector could be met by home-grown timber, it must be recognised that markets already exist for much of this timber; albeit often with shorter product lifetimes. Any timber shortfall must consequently be met by imports, for which no credit is currently given in the UK carbon accounts. Given the pitifully low levels of planting in England, Wales and Northern Ireland last year, there will have to be a massive shift in policy in order to get anywhere near the required planting targets. Declaring a Climate Emergency is one thing, but now is the time to take action.

### Tree planting to support decarbonisation of construction sector

Decarbonising is a massive challenge for the UK construction sector, but the timber industry is more than capable of helping to meet that challenge. As part of the strategy, it will be necessary to have a massive increase in new planting. Confor have stated that 40,000 hectares of new woodland needs to be planted every year to make a substantial contribution to carbon reduction and as much as 260,000 hectares a year to achieve a zero carbon Britain. We have recently seen a substantial commitment to tree planting included in the March 2020 budget.

### Are we just temporarily storing carbon in wood?

One final point needs to be made. A criticism sometimes levelled at the use of timber in construction is that the carbon might be in storage now, but one day it will be back in the atmosphere. Aren't we just 'kicking the can down the road' - creating a problem for future generations? In fact, it can be shown by modelling that carbon stored in long life products (such a buildings) will be held in the built environment carbon pool for a long time. It will take time before the built environment carbon pool reaches equilibrium (the quantity of carbon exiting the pool equals the quantity entering). Depending on the assumptions used, this point of equilibrium will not be reached for 100-150 years, even without considering the additional storage duration when timber cascades into secondary lives through re-use or recycling.



# Proving the value of choosing wood



Wood for Good's new campaigns manager **Sarah Virgo** offers a fresh perspective on the why wood matters in the light of climate change

The built environment must adapt if there is any hope of minimising the climate emergency and reaching the government's 2050 net zero carbon goal.

In the recent Budget, the government announced plans to fund new technology into carbon storage. While prioritising carbon storage technology and research is an essential part of tackling climate change, we should not ignore the natural, ready-made carbon storage already available to us: trees.

The message that using timber in construction plays a key role in climate change mitigation by locking up carbon long term is not reaching enough of the people that matter. If construction is to change its ways for the better, the timber industry needs to get them to sit up and listen.

That is my role as campaign manager of Wood for Good. I was thrilled to take up the position in February, taking the helm from Christiane Lellig, who has been leading the campaign since 2016.



The timber industry is perfectly placed to take centre stage in discussions around how we can work towards zero carbon

My generation, and the generations that follow, are consumed by the talk and effects of climate change. We are aware of our individual carbon footprint and of the consequences that come with our eating, travel, leisure and business habits on the surrounding environ-

ment. Increased awareness and interest in climate change has paved the way for young activists, such as Greta Thunberg, to take the conversation from schools up to addressing leaders around the globe. It is also influencing how we live and work.

So, it was essential that the Wood for Good campaign focuses on how we can achieve net zero through the way we build.

Fresh to the forestry and timber industry, I have been overwhelmed by the positivity, passion and dedication within the industry and its desire to provide solutions that work.

Wood for Good is unique insofar that it represents every part of the industry, including dedicated supporters. But we need more voices to share the message and the evidence that using wood reduces CO2 emissions and helps to combat climate change.

We, as an industry, need to prove the value of choosing wood over other building materials and dispel any myths around cost.

This message will be pushed via a digital marketing campaign, launching in late spring 2020, across social media and online. The aim is to increase exposure for the timber industry and inform those responsible for the design and construction of buildings the benefits wood products can bring.

The timber industry is perfectly placed to take centre stage in discussions around how we can work towards zero carbon. It isn't the only solution to climate change, but it is the best natural solution available to us, critical to building a circular economy. We continue to encourage the use of wood in building new homes, particularly for social housing where tenants are at most risk of fuel poverty.



**Multiply**, one of the winning projects from the Wood Awards 2019

And alongside capturing carbon, we must champion wood's aesthetics, flexibility and adaptability, and its contribution to health and well-being.

This will require collaborative effort from our supporters across the industry and we will collate the impact of the campaign ahead of COP26, the UN Climate Change Summit, in November 2020.

I feel hopeful, excited and ready to make 2020 the year timber establishes itself as the go to low carbon material for the built environment.

## GET INVOLVED

If your organisation is interested in supporting Wood for Good's upcoming carbon-focused campaign launching in late Spring, please get in contact with Campaign Manager, Sarah Virgo on [sarah.virgo@woodforgood.com](mailto:sarah.virgo@woodforgood.com) or 07909335232 to discuss details and how you can best get involved. [www.woodforgood.com](http://www.woodforgood.com)

# New group addresses forestry plastics use

With increased attention on the forestry industry's use of plastic - both public interest and from those organisations involved with tree planting wishing to either go plastic-free, explore alternatives or improve the understanding of environment benefits and impacts of using the traditional polypropylene tube and their alternatives - a new forestry industry group has been formed to support addressing these issues across the industry, writes **Nicola Abbott**, of Tilhill.

In 2018 Confor set up the Forest Industry Environment Group which included on its agenda exploring the use of plastic and the challenges of recycling alongside the many other environmental aspects and sensitivities forestry managers have to plan for and manage. Collaboration within this group's agenda ranges from species licensing to environ-

mental protection responsibilities and training, with aims to advocate and facilitate high standards of environmental practice and compliance. Some members of the group felt that a separate focused working group on plastic was required and approached Confor to support its formation.

The need for a dedicated working group was highlighted further at the 'Plastic Tree Tubes - Who needs them?' Conference organised by the Yorkshire Dales Millenium Trust with support and involvement from United Bank of Carbon, University of Leeds, Tilhill, The Deer Initiative, Woodland Trust and others; a small group of individuals came together with a willingness to share initiatives and good practise of managing plastic waste alongside researching the environmental impact performance of alternatives on offer. The Forestry Plastic Group is now formed with Confor's support and with initial members from Yorkshire Dales Millenium Trust, Tilhill, the National Parks, Forestry England and Forestry Commission.

The Plastic Tree Tubes event in November last year, served to highlight increasing frustrations within the industry to understand what other viable options there are and to avoid replacing one unsustainable product with alternatives, that may have increased overall adverse environmental impact. It was also apparent that better coordination is re-



quired to understand and combine efforts of individual organisations to ensure waste compliance and manage the logistics and challenges of recycling redundant materials from remote forestry properties.

The new Forestry Plastic Group is about improving communication, understanding and sharing expertise and experience within the forestry industry.

The Group aims to use a collaborative approach to look at concerns and problems with the use and management of plastic and will work with partners to develop responses, solutions and remedial actions and disseminate these throughout the forestry sector and to interested parties.

Membership of the group will be representatives of organisations involved in woodland creation and management or regulating these activities. One of the first actions of the group is to invite further members to join or support the work to deliver the aims of the group through collaboration. The next meeting of the group is scheduled for late April.

The terms of reference for the Group can be requested from [caroline@confor.org.uk](mailto:caroline@confor.org.uk)

## Overall aims of the Group

To advocate and facilitate good practice around use of plastic in forestry and waste compliance

To research and share information on plastic packaging and tree tube alternatives to ensure adverse environmental impacts are reduced and balanced sustainable solutions found

To promote the environmental benefits that result from forestry and forest management.



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# Making a difference: how an industry fund could contribute



**Stuart Goodall**

Feedback from Confor members is that they would like to have more detail on what a potential industry fund could support before considering whether to support it. In response, we are developing costed programmes of work for the four proposed strands of a fund:

- Research and innovation
- Industry information and statistics
- Skills and recruitment to the industry
- Promoting the industry.

This would provide clarity on what a fund could support in its first three years of operation and the expected cost of that.

To identify industry relevant activities we are working as follows:

- under **research and innovation**, we are organising two events (one in northern UK and one in the south) to bring members and research providers together to identify industry important research needs that can be prioritised and costed
- for **industry information and statistics**, a working group of members is developing priority needs for industry that members will be consulted on
- on **skills and recruitment**, we will look to work currently being prepared with partners to prioritise needs in this area
- on **promoting the industry** we have Wood for Good and a communications working

group of members that can define robust activities that would benefit the whole supply chain

The article (*right*) from Andrew Vaughan demonstrates clearly just one of the major challenges that the sector faces and which require the industry to take more responsibility. There are many more.

The onus is on Confor to find a way to share the cost of supporting relevant and important activities fairly and to provide reassurance that money raised will be spent to the benefit of all those who support the fund. The intention remains that this will be set out in a prospectus that members can examine and take a view on.

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# Penny a tree!

There is an urgent need to fund pesticides research, says

**Andrew Vaughan** of the Hylobius Industry Research Programme

**P**ine weevil represents one of the most significant risks to successful and cost-effective restocking, and in the worst cases can lead to nearly 100% failure of replanted trees. Pesticides have been an important part of the industry's arsenal to counteract this threat and the forest industry, as a relatively minor user, has been entirely reliant on extensions of licenses of particular active ingredients and generic products as a by-product of the wider agricultural industry.

It stands to reason that a responsible industry, mindful of its environmental responsibilities, will seek to minimise use of potentially harmful pesticides and develop alternatives. This is one of the aims of the Hylobius Industry Research Programme (HIRP) group which consists of representatives from Confor, Forestry England, Forest and Land Scotland, Scottish Forestry, Forest Research, Scottish Woodlands, Tilhill Forestry and the Confor Nursery group.

In 2018, the forest industry faced the risk that our most commonly used (and effective) pesticide

might be banned – the neonicotinyl insecticide Gazelle. Fortunately, this was avoided (for now), but the direction of travel is clear – we need to continue to minimise pesticides use, ideally developing alternative control and damage avoidance strategies.

The UK and Scottish Governments continue to commit considerable research resources, via Forest Research, but there is much more that needs to be achieved and the industry needs to find ways of funding this. Private sector timber growers and investors have, in particular, been the main beneficiaries and yet contribute virtually nothing to the cost of research, while FSC (UK-WAS) certification now requires members to contribute to initiatives to reduce and minimise pesticide use.

The timescale to generate the required funding to progress the identified research is currently so slow that the HIRP group discussed the option of implementing a levy on tree supplies at the November 2019 meeting, with the suggestion that tree nurseries could charge a levy of one pence per tree on the around 40 million conifer trees used annually in the UK, and thus generate the £400,000 per annum required to fund the research programme, via the Scottish Forestry Trust.

The forest industry has much to offer the climate change agenda

## Six research outcomes have been identified by the HIRP group:

- 1 Alternative pesticide options need to be reviewed, trialled and licensing arrangements considered.
- 2 The Hylobius Management Support System is continually being evaluated and updated from monitoring site data. Further cost-benefit analysis is required, as well as spatial research on Hylobius populations (and damage) to better predict where and when pesticide use would be most effective.
- 3 Development of lures, biocontrols and live weevil population monitoring are underway under “Can Do” funding, but there were three other viable research projects that would merit funding, including development of a new bio-degradable physical barrier.
- 4 There is a massive body of research information that needs to be reviewed and assessed, particularly alternatives to pesticides, use of barrier methods and water catchment research.
- 5 Alternatives to pesticides (ie physical barriers) require more trials, especially those that avoid use of plastic.
- 6 Selective breeding for natural resistance to insect damage is in its early stages, but is potentially promising as there are populations of Sitka spruce in British Columbia that are considered less susceptible.

and must continue to drive improvements in environmental performance. The challenge remains as to how the research should be paid for and by who. “Doing nothing” is not an option, otherwise we could face the scenario where we have limited options to replant productive species and at far higher cost.

[andrew.vaughan@tilhill.com](mailto:andrew.vaughan@tilhill.com)



**Hylobius abietis on larch**  
(picture: Shutterstock)



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# Key forestry products for 2021: an update

The major change for managers of FSC certified woodland in 2020 is that the revised policy published by FSC during 2019 has reclassified pesticides on their 'Highly Hazardous' (HH) list as Prohibited, Highly Restricted, and Restricted, with preference for control of weeds, pests and diseases given in the following order:

- 1 Non chemical strategy, then,
- 2 Use of a pesticide not on the HH list, then,
- 3 Use of a pesticide classified as restricted, then,
- 4 Use of a pesticide classified as highly restricted.

None of the products on the prohibited list are currently approved for use in UK forestry.

If a restricted, or highly restricted pesticide is to be used, then this can only be used following an environmental and social assessment, and any disbenefits addressed.

## HERBICIDES

### **Glyphosate - Approved to at least 2022**

Members will recall that the European Parliament influenced a shortening of the usual ten-year approval period to five years, after negative campaigning over glyphosate by environmental interests. This meant that last use of the herbicide would be at the end of 2022. But, in accordance with EU regulation, all pesticides have to have the data reviewed as they move towards their expiry date - and this is currently being undertaken. However, the EC review programme on all pesticides is well behind schedule, so the likelihood is that use of glyphosate in Europe will continue after 2022. It is reassuring to note that the latest statement from the European Food Standards Agency (EFSA), which coordinates the review, is that glyphosate is not carcinogenic.

An added complication is that we do not yet know whether the UK will be adhering strictly to the EC regulatory process - or whether it will be managed to a UK protocol which may mean quite a different outcome.

Glyphosate is now classified by FSC as "Restricted".

### **Asulam (Asulox) - Approved for use July to end September 2020**

A revised Emergency Approval was issued by CRD earlier in the year. This differed from the 2019 approval in that aerial spraying would be extended to 90m from any watercourse, and no handheld or ground spraying would be permitted. This latter requirement was on the basis that glyphosate already fulfilled this role so no emergency existed. Confor have worked with the Bracken Control Group to point out to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) that forest saplings will be killed by glyphosate, and selective control avoiding the crop is not possible. We await the result of their deliberations.

Asulam is not included on the FSC HH list.

### **Propyzamide (Kerb Flo) - Approved for use to a date yet to be determined**

Propyzamide is a winter applied residual grass herbicide which is an extremely useful alternative to glyphosate in areas when wet weather restricts the use of foliar applied sprays. It may also control buttercup and docks.

Propyzamide has now been removed from the FSC HH list.

### **Cycloxydim (Laser) - Approved for use until November 2023.**

Cycloxydim is a grass specific herbicide which has the advantage over glyphosate in that it is completely safe to all crops - even on new foliage.

Best effect is from applications made when the grass is growing strongly in the spring, but note that the major upland grasses, molinia, nardus and some festuca are not controlled.

Cycloxydim is not included in the FSC HH list.

## INSECTICIDES

### **Acetamiprid (Gazelle SG) - Approved for use to a date yet to be determined**

Gazelle SG has emerged as the product of choice for hylobius control, as it is as effective as cypermethrin and alpha cypermethrin without the occasional associated operator problems. However, the future may be uncertain due to the political pressure on neonicotinoids -

although no bee harm has been linked to the product.

It may be best to avoid the cheaper alternative products - one has already been withdrawn as counterfeit, and two others are under investigation by the Chemicals Regulation Directorate

(CRD). There is therefore potential for lack of weevil control should the product be counterfeit.

Acetamiprid classified by FSC as Restricted.

### **Cypermethrin (Forester) - Approved for use until end April 2023**

A synthetic pyrethroid insecticide which kills weevils on contact together with prolonged anti-feeding activity.

There are concerns that all synthetic pyrethroids may lose approval status throughout the EC.

Cypermethrin is classified by FSC as Highly Restricted.

### **Alpha-cypermethrin (Alpha 6ED) - Approved for use until end January 2023**

An effective insecticide only available as a nursery pre-treatment.

Pre-treatments not currently included in the FSC classifications.

## ANIMAL REPELLANTS

### **Emulsified Sheeps Fat (Trico) - Approved for use to February 2023**

At last, an animal repellent that really works as a deer repellent. This product is gaining an impressive reputation for use as pre and post planting treatment to prevent browsing and fraying. Emulsified Sheeps Fat is not included in the FSC HH list.



## MEMBER SERVICES **Pesticides helpline**

Pesticides helpline is a free service operated by Confor's crop protection adviser Colin Palmer on behalf of Confor members. Colin can be contacted 8am to 8pm Mondays to Fridays on 01531 633500 (leave a message if necessary) or by email to: [branchline@xln.co.uk](mailto:branchline@xln.co.uk)





In times of self-isolation, with all “non-essential” entertainment options and distractions removed from the menu board, people realise more than ever the importance of forests as places of well-being and restoration: a place for boosting mental and physical health, a place of education for our children, a moment of inspiration for burned-out professionals, an opportunity for peaceful, joyful social distancing. Let’s enjoy our forests responsibly, maintaining distance from others. Enjoy the peace, enjoy the solitude. It won’t last forever...

Photo: Stefanie Kaiser



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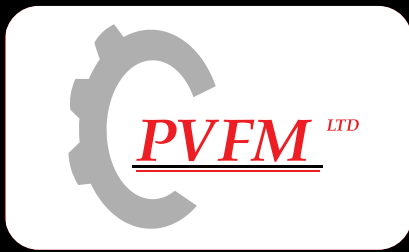
## COMING UP IN JUNE – GET INVOLVED

In June, we will run our traditional feature on Skills and Training, plus a feature on Timber in Construction. Please get in touch by 15 May if you would like to submit an article or news item for the skills feature.

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

Confor members, send us your company’s news updates or pitches for feature articles.





# Paul Vidgen

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