

FORESTRY & TIMBER NEWS

August / September 2026 Issue 136

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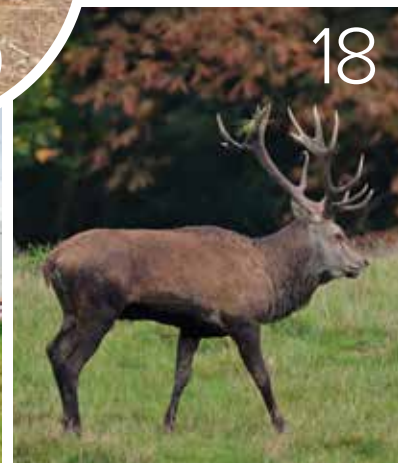
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Earning our place at the table



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Members are the lifeblood of Confor. Without members, Confor would not exist and it is to members that the Confor team look to for advice and feedback on where we should focus our efforts.

We have committees that cover the whole of the UK and whose purpose is to give us more regular advice and feedback. I would like to record my thanks to all the members who have participated in those meetings, especially those members who go on to work with us to represent the interests of the sector.

This is vital work. We are a highly regulated sector and changes to regulation, to forestry standards, to grant schemes and rules, have a real impact on the success of businesses.

Equally, the work we do to tackle challenges like skills and recruitment into the industry, the investment we facilitate and put into research and industry development, and much more delivers benefits for members.

There is always more to do, so please do talk to us about what is important to you – the contact details for the team are below.

I was recently asked whether lobbying politicians is worth the effort and, put on the spot, I listed examples of where Confor had achieved things of real benefit e.g. securing additional funding and pushing back successfully against unneeded bureaucracy.

Afterwards, I recalled a phrase that resonated strongly: "If you're not at the table, you're on the menu".

In our sector there are many powerful and influential people and organisations who wish to make our lives harder. We know that if they are successful, it will undermine what we can deliver in terms of jobs, reduced carbon emissions, more places for people and wildlife, and much more. But that doesn't appear to matter to them.

If we're not at the table, fighting our corner, then our lives will be much harder.

Your support, your membership of Confor sustains us. I am very grateful for that. Please help us to keep helping you.

Renew your membership and encourage others to join - the stronger our voice is, the more we can achieve together.

Confor is a membership organisation that promotes sustainable forestry and wood-using businesses. Confor members receive *Forestry and Timber News* for free as part of their membership. For more information on membership, visit www.confor.org.uk/join-us

Past issues and articles can be accessed online at www.confor.org.uk/news/ftn-magazine

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MANBY & WEST WOOD

Broughton, Nr Scunthorpe,
Lincolnshire

409.25 acres / 165.62 ha

Large scale productivity and timber volume in a well-roaded and compact package close to traditional sawlog and biomass markets. Situated on high fertility well drained soils. Forest office and firewood processing building with facilities for workers included in sale. Sporting rights owned and included.

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Guide price £2,295,000



KENTISBEARE WOOD & Paddock

Kentisbeare, Nr Cullompton,
Devon

48.78 acres / 19.74 ha

Sitka spruce p1990s with Sitka spruce, Douglas fir and Sequoia p2016 and mixed broadleaves p2015. Grass paddock (approx. 1.2 acres) with direct road frontage offers a range of potential uses. Excellent access. Good internal network of rides and tracks. Sporting rights owned and included.

Freehold.

Guide price £245,000



BRYN Y PENTRE

Aberhafesp, Newtown, Powys

122.18 Acres / 49.44 Ha

Attractive and productive mix of Sitka spruce, Douglas fir, Japanese larch, English and Red oak and beech with other minor species. Several areas could be thinned or felled in the near future. Good access and internal road system. Sporting rights owned and included. Freehold.

Guide price £590,000



PEN-Y-FFRITH

Alwen Reservoir, Cerrigydrudion,
Denbighshire

149.21 Acres / 60.38 Ha

Two plantations of mainly late rotation Sitka spruce planted in the late 1980s on a technically excellent site and now with large quantities of mature timber available to harvest subject to felling licence.

Good access. Freehold.

Sporting rights owned and included.

Guide price £775,000



BRYN EITHINOG

Pontrhydfendigaid, Tregaron,
Dyfed

171.96 Acres / 69.59 Ha

Well established second rotation Sitka spruce p2011, 2017/18/19/26. Smaller elements of Douglas fir and Scots pine also performing well. Significant areas of c.1900 mature oak. Excellent investment opportunity.

Sporting rights owned and included.

Good access. Freehold.

Offers over £925,000



PENIARTH WOOD

Llanfyllin, Powys

60.62 Acres / 24.53 Ha

Substantial mixed species woodland. Core Douglas fir p1970s with mix of conifers p2007 and 2019 and large areas of oak, regen birch, willow, rowan and sweet chestnut.

Woodland moving through its second rotation.

Good access. Freehold.

Sporting rights owned and included.

Guide price £280,000



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NEW TREE PLANTING FIGURES ARE “FAILING FUTURE GENERATIONS”

The release of the Provisional Woodland Statistics for 2025/26 by Forest Research in June outlined the status of tree planting across the UK. Confor was among the industry leaders to express disappointment at the lack of progress.

The forestry industry criticised governments across the UK for “failing future generations” following the publication of “incredibly disappointing” woodland creation figures.

Planting rates fell across the UK, with a total of just 13,480 hectares (ha) of new woodland planted in the year to 31 March - a drop from 15,690 ha in 2024-25, and less than half of the UK annual target of 30,000 ha.

Stuart Goodall, Chief Executive of Confor, said: “This year’s planting figures are incredibly disappointing and have to serve as a wake-up call to every government across the UK. Planting figures are down in every



country and have dropped around a third from the high of 20,000 ha in 2023/24.

“The UK aspiration of 30,000 hectares has been missed by miles - despite acknowledgment by politicians of all parties that a rapid increase in woodland creation is vital to meet policy goals for climate change, rural economic growth, green jobs and new housebuilding.

“By missing the targets, we are failing future generations - these figures will not help deliver timber security and will not provide the jobs, new homes, and economic growth our population needs.”

He added: “Given that woodland creation is a key plank of every country’s net zero targets, these figures show that we’re on track for failure against a backdrop of red weather warnings and record-breaking temperatures.

“Looking at the importance of timber production to the UK’s

future national security, the figures are even more stark - only 5,000 ha of productive conifers planted across the UK. This must be set against a continuing decline in conifer area due to government standards and policies.

“The latest softwood production forecast sets out in stark terms that we face a future of reduced wood supply in the decades to come and the time to act on that is now.”

In Scotland, just 7,220 ha of new woodland was created in the year to 31 March 2026 - down from 8,470 hectares in 2024/25 and a sharp fall from a modern peak of 15,040 ha in 2023/24.

Woodland creation in England was down from 5,770 ha in 2024/25 to 5,250 ha. Productive conifer planting also dipped slightly to 670 ha over the same period - less than 13% of the total, despite the Forestry Commission’s commitment to push productive conifer planting up to



SCOTLAND

Richard Hunter

National Manager for Scotland*

“The planting figures for Scotland are disappointing overall, but not unexpected - due to three very specific barriers which are putting off investors and making it very challenging for the industry.

“Investor confidence is low due to the continued challenge of judicial reviews to high-quality and well-planned planting schemes, driven by small numbers of individuals who often deploy misleading narratives about commercial forestry.

“Second, the Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS) no longer reflects the true cost of

planting at current market prices. The intended Scottish Forestry review of FGS taking account of inflation is expected to start soon, but it will likely take two or three years before a new scheme is operational.

“Finally, there is significant variation in how Scottish Forestry staff administer the FGS and engage with the industry across Scotland.

“We must not allow this to become the norm, as current timber forecasts show a worrying downward trend. The industry will continue to highlight the enormous benefits productive forestry brings to Scotland, its environment, and its people - jobs and investment to rural



economies, and support for climate-friendly construction.

“Economic and environmental policy demands more productive planting, but we’re simply not doing enough of it.”
(*At time of writing.)



one-third of total new woodland creation.

In Wales, just 680 ha of new woodland was created in the year to 31 March 2026 - against an annual target of 6,000 ha. In Northern Ireland, 330 ha were planted.

Confor is proactively working with all administrations to accelerate woodland creation delivery across the UK. These figures highlight the need to move the discussion into positive action as soon as possible. Otherwise, there is no chance we will meet climate change targets, and we will find it impossible to maintain economic growth and essential jobs in the sector.

Something has to give

The views of Confor's representatives across the UK on how woodland creation in 2025/26 has impacted the forestry outlook.



ENGLAND

John Bruce

National Manager for England

"These figures are very poor, and hugely disappointing after good progress last year. We had hoped some of the positive changes made in recent years were beginning to bear fruit, but unfortunately the rhetoric is not following through into the reality of new planting.

"We need a real step change and a focus on making this happen.

"The drop in productive conifer planting is a blow, and remains well below the Forestry Commission ambition, referenced in the National Wood Strategy by its former Chair Sir William Worsley, for at least 30% of new woodland creation to comprise productive conifer species.

"If we want to build more with wood and improve our long-term timber security, we need to continue increasing the supply of homegrown timber.

"On a positive note, there is a much more constructive conversation taking place around productive forestry than there was a few years ago. A joint industry and government Task Group

is now being established to identify practical ways to unlock greater investment in productive forestry.

"The challenge now is creating the conditions that allow larger-scale investment in productive forestry while maintaining the high environmental standards expected of modern woodland creation schemes."



NORTHERN IRELAND

Nigel Manley Northern Ireland Chair

"Northern Ireland has the lowest woodland cover in the UK, we're not planting enough productive woodland to maintain our future timber supply.

"Every year we fail to reverse that trend, we reduce the future timber resource that provides jobs, encourages investment and ensures the supply of sustainable, homegrown wood products.

"The Tree Planting Action Plan is an opportunity to change direction. If we work together to deliver its recommendations, we can increase woodland creation, strengthen timber security and provide lasting environmental and economic benefits for Northern Ireland."



WALES

Elaine Heckley

National Manager for Wales

"This is a dismal failure, when all the evidence shows that we need to plant many more trees to create green jobs, build sustainable homes and support our climate change ambitions.

"What is actually happening is that the system makes it painfully difficult to plant trees - even though everyone, including the Welsh Government, knows we need to do it. Yet when they fail to get anywhere near those targets, there are no repercussions, there is no accountability.

"Planting trees, especially the conifers

we need to build new homes across Wales, must be made much easier. They should be planted primarily on marginal land, leaving the best land for food production. But at the moment, it's hard to plant anywhere - and by failing to get anywhere near our woodland creation targets, we are failing future generations.

"To be fair to the new Plaid Cymru-led Government, it has inherited a real mess and we will work with ministers to help them to put things on the right track.

"By planting more trees, we can help deliver a better economic and environmental future. We are failing, and it simply isn't good enough."

From supply risk to strategic resilience

A sustainable future timber supply is vital for national security and economic resilience.

Together, through Confor's *Timber Security is National Security* campaign, we have put the issue of long-term domestic timber supply and the increasing use of homegrown timber firmly on the political agenda. The campaign has secured engagement from MPs across Parliament and is building real momentum.

With Andy Burnham now in office as Prime Minister and Jenny Riddell-Carpenter MP in place as Defra's Forestry Minister, we have an important opportunity to ensure timber security is recognised as a priority by the new Government from the outset.

Our immediate focus is securing parliamentary backing for our Open Letter to the Prime Minister, calling on the Government to take practical action to strengthen the UK's timber resilience. We have now written to every MP who has engaged with the campaign, asking them to sign.

There are encouraging signs that our campaigning is making a difference. In a recent response to Confor, former UK Forestry Minister Mary Creagh acknowledged "the points you raise regarding the UK's reliance on imported timber and the importance of ensuring resilient supply chains for housing, infrastructure and the transition."

That recognition is welcome. Now we must build on it and encourage the new Prime Minister and his Government to turn recognition into action.

Timber is a strategic material. It underpins housing delivery, construction, infrastructure, logistics, manufacturing and the transition to a lower carbon economy. Yet despite its importance, the UK remains heavily and increasingly dependent on imported timber to meet domestic demand.

This dependence leaves our economy exposed to global market volatility, international supply disruptions and rising costs. It also places at risk many of the ambitions that Parliament and Government have rightly set for the future of our country.

We believe there is an opportunity for the Government to show leadership by treating timber as the strategic national resource that it is.

A stronger domestic timber supply chain would:

- Support housing delivery and modern



Andy Burnham delivers his inaugural speech as the UK's new Prime Minister.

Fred Duval / Shutterstock.com

methods of construction.

- Strengthen UK manufacturing and rural economies.
- Create skilled jobs across forestry, processing and construction.
- Reduce exposure to global supply shocks.
- Lower embodied carbon in the built environment.
- Improve national resilience and economic security.

Work ongoing north of the border

Working with a group of members in Scotland, Confor has appointed Message Matters as our new public affairs consultants. We are now working with them to develop a strategy for the new Holyrood Parliament.

We were also pleased to secure an early meeting with the new forestry minister Jim Fairlie MSP, where we discussed the opportunity of increased timber availability over the next 30 years, and the challenge of a sharp decline in the following 20 years.

Following that meeting, Confor will prepare advice for the Minister on what actions can be taken with learnings from the recent 50-year Production Forecast.

We are therefore calling upon the Government to adopt the following measures, as set out in Confor's report provided to the APPG on Forestry and Timber Security:

1. Include timber supply metrics within the National Security Risk Assessment.
2. Establish a Cross-Government Timber Security Taskforce.
3. Provide Treasury-backed long-term certainty for productive woodland investment.
4. Recognise wood processing as strategic manufacturing.
5. Commit to annual public reporting on timber import dependency and domestic capacity.

This is not a choice between economic growth and environmental responsibility. Well-designed productive forests can deliver timber supply, carbon sequestration, biodiversity enhancement and rural economic development together. Timber based buildings generate 37% less carbon than a concrete or brick and block structure of a similar size.

The question before us is whether the United Kingdom will continue to accept a position of strategic dependence, or whether we will take the necessary steps to strengthen our resilience for the decades ahead.

Timber security is not solely a forestry issue. It is a housing issue. It is an industrial strategy issue. It is a resilience issue. And increasingly, it is a national security issue.



Rashiehill & Northhill Forest Near Kinross, Perthshire

An outstanding premium commercial forestry asset offering timber revenue with strong growth potential from high-performing second rotation crops, situated in a prime location for timber production.

Area: 242.50 Hectares / 599.21 Acres

Offers Over £4,500,000



Ayton Hill Forest Near Abernethy, Perthshire

Highly productive commercial forestry asset in the heart of Perthshire, with a diverse age profile and a significant volume of timber nearing maturity.

Area: 167.24 Hectares / 413.25 Acres

Offers Over £2,575,000



Glassary Forest Near Lochgilphead, Argyll & Bute

An attractive, mixed-age commercial forest with young high-yielding conifer crops and maturing timber, benefitting from excellent access.

Area: 103.56 Hectares / 255.97 Acres

Guide Price £1,300,000



Confor's Richard Hunter and Dr Kate Palmer took part in the Trek26 Lake District event, a challenging 26-mile trek, to raise awareness and funds for Alzheimer's Society.

The charity not only provides vital support to Alzheimer's sufferers and their families, but also campaigns tirelessly to make dementia a priority and funds groundbreaking research that promises a brighter future.

Thanks to the kind support of many Confor members, Kate and Richard smashed their fundraising goal and raised a total of £760. Well done team!

Updates to your points of contact

As of July 2026, April Armstrong has returned from maternity leave on a part-time basis. The National Manager for Scotland role is now shared between April and Dr Kate Palmer, who joined Confor last year. Alongside her responsibilities in Scotland, Kate also supports Confor's work in Northern Ireland and contributes to its wider policy work.

April, who is based in central Scotland, will lead the South Scotland and Mid-

Scotland committees, while Kate, based in the Cairngorms, will lead the North East and Highland committees. They will work jointly on national priorities to provide a coordinated service for members across Scotland. Please direct all enquiries relating to Confor's work in Scotland to both April and Kate.

Richard Hunter has resumed his role as Technical and Industry Support Manager.

Shaping Scotland's Rural Renewal

Confor has partnered with leading Scottish law firm Brodies LLP to host a conference examining the future of forestry and timber in Scotland at a time of major challenge and change.

Bringing together industry leaders, policymakers and key stakeholders, the event will explore the opportunities and challenges facing Scotland's forestry and timber sectors, and the vital role they play in supporting rural renewal, economic growth and Scotland's net zero ambitions.

Hosted by Confor Chair Lord Duncan of Springbank, the morning will feature expert insight, panel discussion and the opportunity to connect with others from across the sector over breakfast and networking.

Look out for further panellist announcements over the coming weeks.

Following the conference, Brodies LLP will also host an exclusive Employment Law Workshop, covering recent and upcoming changes following the Employment Rights Act 2025.

Led by Brodies Employment Partner Lynne Marr, it will offer practical guidance and actions that forestry businesses can take now.



Please note that spaces for this are limited and are booked on a first come, first served basis. See: www.confor.org.uk/resources/events

MEMBER UPDATE



Eliza Marrison,
Membership
& Marketing
Manager

During the summer season, the Confor team is especially busy at events and shows. For those who attended the Royal Welsh Show in Builth Wells, I hope you enjoyed yourself. The show is always full of positivity, and we are grateful for all the conversations and support. A special thanks to our sponsors at the show, who made our presence possible.

With the APF upcoming, please

be assured that all members will be emailed their digital membership card. This allows free entry to all days of the APF for one person only. You must be able to show this card as proof of membership to enter the show for free.

No refunds will be available for members who forget their digital card. If you require more tickets, you can buy them directly through the APF website (www.apfexhibition.co.uk). If you have any questions regarding tickets or entry to the APF, please get in touch with me directly.

Renewals are upcoming for 2026/27 membership. Invoices will be sent out on the first week of September: if you

have any questions about your new invoice for the next membership year, do reach out. We hope to have your continued support for the year ahead!

On a personal note, I got married in July – hence the new name! Please note my email address remains the same eliza@confor.org.uk.

Finally, a welcome to our newest members:

Scotland: Mr D Caswell; Miss B Guthrie; Ponsse; Miss S Will.

England: Oxygen Conservation; TreeStock Ltd; Chalford Silviculture Ltd; Mr J Preston; Mr L McNay Defty. **Wales:** West Glamorgan; Mr D Williams.



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Turning ambition into trees

The new Northern Ireland Tree Planting Action Plan offers an opportunity to reverse persistently low woodland creation rates, but its success will depend on practical delivery and a renewed focus on productive forestry, writes **Dr Kate Palmer.**

Northern Ireland's first Tree Planting Action Plan was launched by DAERA Minister Andrew Muir in July, setting out a framework to accelerate woodland creation between 2026 and 2032.

The plan aims to support the long-standing ambition to increase forest cover from 8.6% - the lowest of the four UK nations - to 12% by 2050. It contains 10 strategic actions supported by 31 implementing actions, covering governance, grant delivery, communication, knowledge transfer, education, capacity building, research and evidence.

Confor Northern Ireland Chair Nigel Manley said: "Northern Ireland has the lowest woodland cover in the UK; we're not planting enough productive woodland to maintain our future timber supply.

"Every year we fail to reverse that trend, we reduce the future timber resource that provides jobs, encourages investment and ensures the supply of sustainable, home-grown wood products.

"The Tree Planting Action Plan is an opportunity to change direction. If we work together to deliver its recommendations, we can increase woodland creation, strengthen timber security and provide lasting environmental and economic benefits for Northern Ireland."

Confor contributed to the plan's co-design alongside forestry businesses, the Ulster Farmers' Union, environmental organisations, councils, NI Water and other stakeholders. This collaborative



(Ltr) Ian McCurley, National Trust, Gerry Darby, Lough Neagh Partnership, John Martin, Woodland Trust, DAERA Minister Andrew Muir, John Joe O'Boyle, Forest Service, and Nigel Manley, Confor.

approach is welcome and reflects the fact that no single organisation can address the barriers to woodland creation alone.

Farmers and landowners will be particularly important. With much of Northern Ireland's land under agricultural management, woodland creation must be presented as a credible and economically viable land-use option that can complement productive farming.

This will require clear advice, attractive and dependable financial support, proportionate regulation and an application process that gives landowners confidence to proceed.

The plan must support a balanced mix of woodland types. Native, riparian, farm and community woodlands each deliver important benefits, but productive forests are equally essential. They provide a renewable supply of timber,

sequester carbon as trees grow, sustain skilled rural employment and provide local processors with the confidence to invest. Increasing overall woodland cover

without creating sufficient productive forest would therefore leave a significant part of the economic, environmental and timber-supply challenge unresolved.

Attention must now turn from publication to implementation. Clear responsibilities, measurable - and achievable - annual milestones and transparent accountability will be needed to increase planting. Delivery must also be supported by sufficient resources within Forest Service, a capable nursery and contracting sector, and sustained political commitment beyond individual funding cycles.

The Action Plan is therefore an important starting point rather than an end in itself. It creates a shared framework and acknowledges the need to overcome the barriers that have held back planting. Confor will continue working with DAERA, Forest Service, members and wider stakeholders to help convert its recommendations into well-designed, sustainably managed woodlands on the ground.

Northern Ireland has the land, expertise and established timber sector needed to deliver more woodland. The test of the new plan will be whether it creates the confidence and conditions required to turn that potential into trees.



Growing the value of the rural landscape in Wales

The launch of a new strategy at the Royal Welsh Show aims to increase investment confidence and maximise the commercial value of natural resources in Wales.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) launched its new Sustainable Growth and Value Strategy 2027–2031 at the Royal Welsh Show, setting out how it will generate greater benefits for nature, communities and the economy from the land and natural resources in its care.

The strategy outlines how NRW will grow income and investment opportunities while continuing to put environmental protection and public value at the heart of decision-making.

Income generated through commercial activities will be reinvested towards NRW's well-being goals to support nature's recover, build resilience to climate change and minimise pollution.

The strategy was launched from the NRW stand at the Royal Welsh Show on Tuesday 21 July 2026 by Sarah Jennings, Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial at NRW, and Ben Burggraaf, Chief Executive Officer of Net Zero Industry Wales, an independent organisation providing guidance and support to Welsh industries on their transition to delivering net zero.

Ben said: "The transition to a net zero economy creates significant opportunities for Wales. Working together across sectors will be essential if we are to attract investment, accelerate renewable energy development and create sustainable jobs.

"This strategy demonstrates how collaboration between public bodies, communities and businesses can help deliver environmental, social and economic benefits for Wales."

A supporting Timber Sales and Marketing Plan for 2027-2031 was also launched to provide confidence in sustainable timber supply while maximising the social, environmental and economic value of Welsh forests.

Together these plans will deliver investment-ready projects for nature and climate, creation of new sustainable recreation opportunities, and support

WORKING TOGETHER FOR FORESTRY IN WALES



Natural Resources Wales has officially become an Associate Member of Confor.

Confor Chief Executive Stuart Goodall and Sarah Jennings, Executive Director of Communications, Customer and Commercial at NRW, formalised the partnership with a signing event at the Royal Welsh Show.

This step is hoped to facilitate a closer working relationship between our organisations and marks a strong show of support for our industry.

renewable energy developments on the Welsh Government Woodland Estate.

The Timber Sales and Marketing Plan includes a commitment, following consideration of the sustainable management of natural resources, to bring between 835,000 and 875,000 cubic metres of timber to market each year. This will help support Welsh jobs and rural communities and give confidence to the timber sector.

Confor National Manager for Wales Elaine Heckley MICFor commented: "This is a welcome commitment from National Resources Wales. Supporting the production of sustainable, homegrown timber across the Welsh Government Woodland Estate will help deliver economic and environmental benefits for the rural landscape by maximising investment and income.

"However, bearing in mind the disappointing preliminary planting figures for 2025-26, it is crucial these ambitions are carried forward into real action.

"I look forward to engaging with NRW in the coming months, and contributing

to the future collaboration of public and private sector organisations that will be vital to see the strategy pay off."

The strategy and timber action plan outline how NRW will work with partners and stakeholders to support a greener economy, create opportunities for investment and skilled jobs, and strengthen the long-term resilience of Wales' natural resources.

NRW's Sarah Jennings added: "Wales' natural environment is one of our greatest assets. It supports our communities, helps tackle climate change, underpins our economy and contributes to our well-being.

"This strategy sets out how we can create more value from the land and natural resources in our care, helping us invest more in nature recovery, climate resilience and community well-being.

"By working with businesses, investors, recreation providers, renewable energy developers, timber customers and communities, we can unlock new opportunities that support sustainable growth while helping us achieve our purpose of nature and people thriving together."



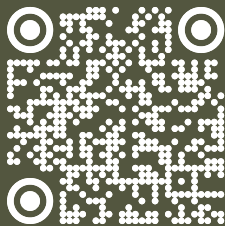
Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Rhaglen Sgiliau Hyblyg – Coedwigaeth a Phren

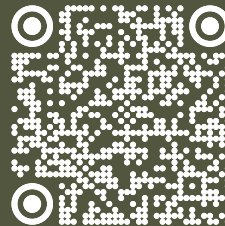
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Bydd y rhaglen yn darparu cymorth datblygu sgiliau
un-i-un gyda rhaglen o ddigwyddiadau trosglwyddo
gwybodaeth, gan helpu busnesau i adnabod anghenion
sgiliau, mynediad at gyfleoedd datblygu priodol,
a rhannu gwybodaeth ar draws y sector.

info@focusonforestryfirst.co.uk

Focus on Forestry First has been appointed
by the Welsh Government to deliver a new
Forestry Learning and Development programme
to support businesses across Wales.

The programme will provide one-to-one skills
development support alongside a programme
of knowledge transfer events

info@focusonforestryfirst.co.uk

FORESTRY DAY SPARKS CONVERSATION AND CONNECTION

Confor enjoyed a hugely successful outing at the 2026 Royal Welsh Show.

Forestry Day on 21 July at the Royal Welsh Show kicked off with the Foresters' Breakfast in the Confor tent. Supported by the Forest Contractors Association (FCA), Iwan Merion Forestry, John Deere, Royal Forestry Society (RFS) and Smallwoods, the well-attended event centred discussions around mental health in forestry.

Elaine Heckley MICFor, National Manager for Wales, said: "Forestry Day was an absolute success. We had about 80 people at our breakfast event, where we talked about mental health in forestry and the importance of supporting each other.

"This is a persistent and important issue in our industry and it's fantastic to be able to facilitate conversations about it."

The Cabinet Minister for Rural Resilience and Sustainability, Llyr Gruffydd MS, attended the tent in the afternoon, welcoming the launch of the Welsh Forestry and Wood-Based Industries Industry Leadership Group (ILG).

As a priority of the Welsh Timber Industrial Strategy, the ILG will promote the needs, interests and voice of the industry, contributing to raising the profile and improving practice, such as through linking in with other UK nations or promoting international best practice, providing guidance and training, and contributing to policy.

"It was brilliant to have the Minister join us," Elaine commented. "He spoke with key people in the industry and some really great discussions were happening in the room."

Seminars throughout the day brought

together experts and industry leaders to discuss training and skills, forest certification, future productive species, and legal questions.

The Martin Bishop Award was presented this year to Chris Jones, in recognition for his enormous contribution to Welsh forestry over the whole of his career. This is an honour awarded in memory of Martin Bishop, formerly Confor's National Manager for Wales, who sadly passed away in 2018. Presented at the Royal Welsh Show every year, it recognises individuals who have displayed admirable commitment to the forestry and timber industry in Wales.

Chris will be well-known in the industry for his frequent role as a judge for the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society (RWAS) Woodland Awards, which we hope to see return to the show next year.

The recently established Bangor University Forestry Alumni Association were also hosted by Confor for their first networking events, representing a wealth of forestry expertise and inspiration.

Other visitors to the Confor tent will have found information and activities centred around myth-busting and changing negative perceptions of forestry. Children had the opportunity to try on some equipment and find out about career paths into the industry.

Elaine added: "I'm thrilled with how the Show has gone this year. Thank you so much to our sponsors and speakers for helping make it happen, and to everyone who stopped in at our tent."

Elsewhere on the Showground

As part of Lantra's 60th anniversary celebrations, the Lantra Cymru building



hosted a hands-on Careers Hub designed to inspire the next generation of people working in Wales' land-based and environmental industries.

Visitors were able to take part in a myth-busting game to challenge perceptions of the sector, tree identification and microscope-based activities, and explore a live jobs notice board showcasing current opportunities.

Created with the support of Welsh Government, Careers Wales, Arbortec Forestwear and Aspen Fuels UK, the Careers Hub reflected a shared commitment to helping more people understand the opportunities available across Wales' rural, land-based and environmental industries.

“I’m thrilled with how the Show has gone this year. Thank you so much to our sponsors and speakers for helping make it happen.”

Elaine Heckley MICFor, National Manager for Wales



Martin Bishop Award



Forest Certification seminar



Llyr Gruffydd MS



Confor Members at RWS



Future Productive Species seminar

SHOWING UP IN STYLE

Confor received a Highly Commended award for Best Stand of Forestry Interest and for Educational Value at this year's show.

We are grateful to our sponsors, members and the visitors who got involved and made this achievement possible.

Flintshire Woodlands staff also welcomed a steady stream of visitors to their tent at the UK's largest agricultural show, at Builth Wells, Powys.

The stand promoted the geographical coverage of Flintshire Woodlands throughout Wales, the Midlands and the North-west - and its connection to Scottish Woodlands, its parent company.

There were also attractions for the next generation of forestry workers, namely small-scale forest machinery for youngsters to try and a giant noughts-and-crosses game.

Charles Gittins, Senior Forest Manager with Flintshire Woodlands,

said: "It was a busy, very warm, and very interesting week. Visitors to the stand included clients, potential clients, contractors, and colleagues.

"There were a lot of issues people were keen to discuss. We had conversations about timber markets, the Welsh Government's Sustainable Farming Scheme, recruitment to the forest industry, the importance of our sector to rural economies, global warming, tree species selection, and much more."

On Tuesday morning, CLA Cymru hosted a 'Moneywise' breakfast discussion thanks to RBC Brewin Dolphin. The panel - which included representatives from NatWest, RBC Brewin Dolphin, Michelmores and CLA Finance - discussed how surviving

and thriving in an uncertain financial environment.

The audience, including Confor's Elaine Heckley, had the opportunity to ask questions with the panel emphasising the importance of building relationships with trusted advisers and how business confidence is returning to the rural sector.

The next day, CLA Cymru held another panel debating the potential for landowners to boost income through tree planting, with a focus on incentives set by the Sustainable Farming Scheme. Representatives from Bronwin and Abbey, Strutt and Parker, Stump up for Trees and Woodknowledge Wales highlighted how trees can deliver benefits earlier than many expect.

Deer Culling Strategies: what, where, why and how much?

WildTrackPro CEO **Oli Smith** examines how pivoting focus from cull numbers to effort targets impacts resources and costs in a managed landscape.

Deer management in the UK has reached a point where intent is no longer the limiting factor - delivery is. Most land managers now accept that deer numbers and impacts are incompatible with woodland recovery across much of the country. The challenge is not whether to act, but how to apply sufficient predation pressure, in the right places, for long enough, and at a realistic cost.

Traditional deer management has relied heavily on cull targets. While convenient, this approach is increasingly inadequate. Cull numbers alone tell us little about:

- whether damage hotspots were addressed
- whether pressure was evenly distributed
- whether deer behaviour has adapted to avoid risk

For these reasons, effort-based targets are a more meaningful planning tool.

Effort targets: how much is enough?

As a broad but operationally useful

benchmark, experience across multiple landscapes suggests approximately:

- **Woodland:** Three hours of stalking effort, per hectare, per year.
- **Open land:** One hour of stalking effort, per hectare, per year.

These figures are not universal truths, but they provide a starting point grounded in observed outcomes. They reflect the level of pressure typically required to influence behaviour, reduce browsing intensity, and allow regeneration to establish.

Crucially, these are effort targets, not guarantees of deer shot. In some systems, significant effort may result in modest culls - but that does not mean the effort is wasted. Reduced feeding time, increased vigilance, and displacement all contribute to impact reduction.

Effort-based planning allows managers to identify under-delivery honestly. If regeneration continues to fail despite recorded effort, the response should be to reassess distribution and intensity, not to abandon the framework.

You can't manage what you can't measure. All culling strategies should be driven by measured impact, not assumption.

Quantitative damage and impact assessments allow targets and are (in many senses) essential to a coherent deer management plan. The objective is not to eliminate deer, but to restore intermediate disturbance - the level of herbivory that maintains structural diversity without preventing regeneration.

Cull strategies should therefore be adjusted in response to measured change, not fixed targets set in isolation.

Season-long contract culls can be effective, but only when contracts specify:

- hours to be delivered
 - spatial coverage
 - priority areas linked to damage
- Contracts based solely on numbers shot risk incentivising efficiency over effectiveness, with pressure concentrated where deer are easiest to take rather than where impact is greatest.

>>

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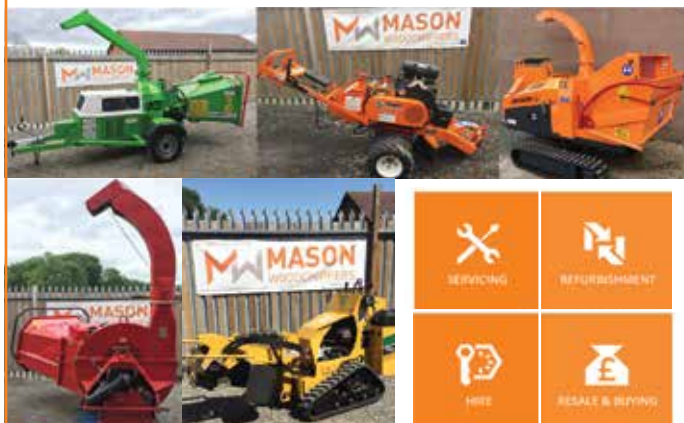
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High Impact Culling (HIC) involves concentrated effort over short periods - days or weeks - deliberately mimicking the arrival of a pack predator. HIC is particularly effective where:

- acute damage is occurring
- regeneration windows are narrow
- rapid behavioural reset is required

However, without follow-up pressure, the benefits are often short-lived.

HIC should be viewed as a tool, not a standalone solution.

Continuous Predation Pressure (CPP) is the most ecologically coherent and the most under-applied model. Delivered as regular, unpredictable effort spread across the year (typically ~3 hours/ha in woodland), CPP functions as an analogue for a resident ambush predator - closer to a big cat than a wolf.

Its effects are subtle but powerful:

- sustained vigilance
- reduced feeding efficiency
- lower browsing pressure per animal

CPP is labour-intensive, but it delivers the most stable long-term outcomes for woodland recovery.

Resources: who delivers the pressure?

Syndicated and recreational stalkers are often underestimated in professional discussions. In reality, they are essential to delivering CPP at scale without prohibitive cost.

However, their effectiveness depends entirely on time availability.

Analysis of approximately 6 million logged stalking hours shows clear patterns in annual effort:

- Average recreational stalker: ~30 hours/year
- Keen recreational stalker: ~60 hours/

year

- Retired recreational stalker: ~60 hours/year
- Retired keen recreational stalker: ~120 hours/year

These figures are not a criticism; they reflect real constraints. Small syndicates, however skilled, frequently under-deliver simply because there are not enough hours available.

The bigger problem is these resources need management, direction and planning which often falls outside of the skill set of those in the syndicate and (more importantly) is directly opposed to the incentivisation of the syndicate, who may be more likely to want large number of deer on their ground.

Volunteers can be valuable in specific, well-defined roles, particularly where local knowledge and continuity matter. However, reliance on volunteers alone rarely delivers consistent pressure and should be viewed as supplementary.

Extending existing staff hours can be highly effective, particularly where site knowledge is strong. Risks include fatigue, predictability, and competing priorities, all of which must be managed and if they are not will yield limited results.

- Extended hours for a game keeper: ~30-90 hours/year

A dedicated deer manager provides continuity, coordination, and accountability. While the upfront cost is higher, this model often reduces long-term risk by ensuring effort is delivered where it matters most and adjusted in response to measured impact.

- Deer manager stalking time: ~700-900 hours/year

Professional contractors offer speed, reliability, and flexibility. They

are particularly well suited to HIC operations, acute damage response and supplementing under-delivering effort.

They are most effective when managed by effort and impact, not carcass targets.

Costs: the wrong question is usually asked

The question is rarely “what does culling cost?”. The real question is “what does failure cost?”

Poor regeneration, restocking, fencing, lost timber value, delayed BNG delivery, and long-term ecological degradation far outweigh the cost of effective deer management.

One of the key considerations examining cost is to consider the incentives and ensure they are aligned with the aims of your deer management. For example, a stalking guide will likely be experienced, capable, have access to many recreational stalkers (some of whom he may syndicate onto the ground), and will often be training new stalkers.

However, their incentivisation is to have readily accessible deer that beginners can easily stalk, with a healthy trophy population. This level of abundance is unlikely to be at the stable population which causes intermediate disturbance. Fundamentally this kind of misaligned incentivisation will lead to longer term issues - regardless of the short-term cash upside of leasing the ground to a guide.

Cheap culling that fails to reduce damage is not cheap.

WildTrackPro mission when managing deer

When lethal control is required, our objectives are clear:

- To recreate intermediate disturbance of habitats.
- To base this disturbance on quantitative, damage-led impact assessments.
- To mimic natural predation as closely as possible.
- To deliver control in the most efficient and humane manner possible.

No single strategy works everywhere. Effective landscapes use mixed models.

An effort-led, impact-measured approach is increasingly adopted by WildTrackPro clients and others working at landscape scale.

The future of deer management will not be decided by how many deer are shot, but by whether our woodlands recover.

And that is the only metric that ultimately matters.

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Gazelle SG again permitted for nursery use

Colin Palmer, Rural Services, details the reinstatement of Gazelle SG as a pre-planting treatment for the control of *Hylobius abeitis*.

On 9 July 2026, CRD published a renewed off label approval (EAMU) for pre-planting use of Gazelle SG to protect bare root transplants and cell grown plugs.

The approval conditions closely reflect the previous off label approval, but require a month to elapse between treatment and planting to protect birds and non-target soil insects. This will mean that forest nurseries will require at least one month's notice prior to the delivery of treated plants.

Although nurseries are likely to be able to manage this one-month interval requirement through the use of cold storage with bare root transplants, the logistics for treating, handling and cold

storage of cell grown plugs is likely to be logistically more complex, so may make this use of Gazelle unattractive to some nurseries.

There should be no UKWAS certification implications from this use of Gazelle, as the actual insecticide application will be in the forest nursery, and not in the forest.

This re-introduction permits the use of up to three insecticides with different modes of action during the crop establishment period, which will minimise any potential for pesticide resistance developing.

For restock areas with a high risk of *Hylobius* attack, two alternative insecticide-based programmes can be considered, while conforming to UKWAS and product label and off label considerations:

Option 1

- Year 1: Lanzarta pre-planting, followed by a July / August application of Lanzarta.
- Year 2: Lanzarta April / May followed

by Forester in July / August.

- Year 3 onwards: If required, Forester should be used, as only two post planting applications of Lanzarta during the establishment period are permitted.

Option 2

- Year 1: Gazelle SG pre-planting, followed by a July / August application of Lanzarta.
- Year 2: Lanzarta April / May followed, by Forester in July / August.
- Year 3 onwards: If required, Forester should be used, as only two post planting applications of Lanzarta during establishment are permitted.

Note that this approval does NOT permit the application of Gazelle SG post-planting, and that applications in certified forests restrict the use of Forester when other treatments deemed to be less harmful can be used.

Colin Palmer, Rural Services, represents Confor's chemical & pesticide helpline for Members. www.ruralservices.info

Forestry Commission extends Sweet Chestnut Blight demarcated area following further outbreaks

The Forestry Commission has announced an extension to the demarcated area for Sweet Chestnut Blight in Devon, and into a small part of Cornwall, following further findings close to the current restricted zone boundary. The new area applies from Wednesday 26 August.

The expanded area subject to restrictions will now include West Devon District and South East Cornwall constituency. The extension follows continued surveillance work, which has confirmed additional infected sites with buffer zones that extend beyond the current area boundary.

Trading restrictions on sweet chestnut trees and other susceptible material will apply across the expanded area, to help prevent the further spread of this fungal disease through the movement of infected plants and material, and to help disease management efforts.

Defra Chief Plant Health Officer Professor Nicola Spence said: "The risk of Sweet Chestnut Blight spreading has increased significantly in parts of the South West. Extending the demarcated



area is a necessary step to help protect sweet chestnut trees.

"I would urge anyone who owns or works with sweet chestnut trees to remain vigilant and report signs of disease through TreeAlert."

A Sweet Chestnut Blight finding in October 2025 marked the first occurrence of the disease with sexual sporulation present since 2011. The additional outbreak sites identified through recent surveillance also show evidence of sexual sporulation, meaning an increased

number of airborne spores are being produced. This significantly raises the risk of the disease spreading further afield.

The Forestry Commission is urging woodland owners, land managers and members of the public to remain vigilant for signs of the disease and to report any suspected findings through the TreeAlert portal.

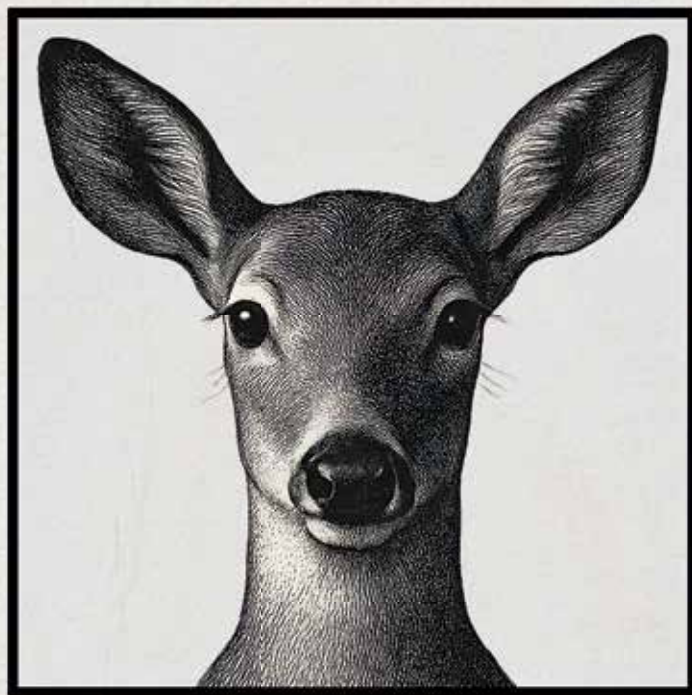
Forestry Commission Head of Plant Health Forestry Andrea Deol added: "Restricting the movement of susceptible material is one of the most effective tools we have to slow the spread of this disease.

"We would encourage the public to check their sweet chestnut trees and support the Check a Sweet Chestnut campaign. The compliance and cooperation we have already seen from forestry and trades has played a significant role in supporting our efforts so far."

The Check a Sweet Chestnut campaign, run in partnership with the Royal Horticultural Society and Forest Research, encourages the public to identify and report signs of the disease.

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Chris Hardy, Bianca Ambrose-Oji and Max McLaughlan

FROM FOREST TO FINISHED PRODUCT

Professor Bianca Ambrose-Oji, Chief Scientist at Forest Research, shares her learnings from a tour of Scotland's wood products supply chain.

One of the privileges of my role as Forest Research (FR) Chief Scientist is the support received from the sector to engage in continuous learning, which in turn highlights new ways FR can continue to work with the sector.

Confor' Andy Leitch organised a two-day visit for myself and my colleague, Chris Hardy, Head of Science Centre: Forest Management, across southwest Scotland earlier this year. It provided us both with a rare, integrated view of the UK timber supply chain - from forest establishment through to high-value manufacturing. The programme also helped to develop our understanding of Confor's view that timber production and supply is a matter of national security and economic resilience.

The visit opened at the Buccleuch Estate's Drumlanrig Castle forests, hosted by Head of Forestry Jim Colchester. We talked about long-term establishment strategies, species choice and tree improvement. These are areas where research is now fundamentally reshaping

practice and where Forest Research has been working with the sector through, for example, the Conifer Breeding Cooperative, maintaining long-term provenance trials, and advancing genomic selection techniques.

The restructuring towards CCF on some parts of the estate was also impressive, although the wet, grey and drier day we were there didn't make it easy to fully appreciate all the work being undertaken. What struck me most here was just how well Sitka spruce, managed for commercial benefit, could fit into forestry systems that had to balance conservation, history and landscape aesthetics. We discussed how translating the way things are done within the estate into large scale commercial forestry remains a challenge - economic models, financial margins and the requirements of the supply chain favour volume produced at efficient scale and cost.

At the EGGER Barony facility in Auchinleck, Forestry Director Max McLaughlan reinforced just how much

industrial processing depends on sustained supply, and increasingly, on material science. I was impressed by the 'circular economy' being central to EGGER's model, one where sawdust, wood chips and other by-products within the supply chain are not treated as waste, but as essential inputs to the board manufacturing process. Lower-grade timber and processing residues are re-engineered into different kinds of board, reflecting significant R&D in engineered wood products, resin chemistry and process optimisation.

Impressive was the degree of investment at the site, which naturally led into a discussion about how investment decisions are made, and how far publications such as the softwood supply forecasts from Forest Research might impact those.

The second day began at Glennon Brothers' Troon sawmill, where Supply Manager Alex Murray emphasised secure timber supplies and downstream integration. Markets for sawdust and



Chris Hardy, Jim Colchester and Bianca Ambrose-Oji

chip were discussed as by-products into the supply chain. We also appreciated how sawmilling is itself undergoing technological transformation, with scanner-based optimisation, AI-driven log grading and automated cutting systems that maximises recovery from each log.

I understood from our conversations at Glennon Brothers that these technologies are particularly important in the UK context, where improving yield from limited raw material is a strategic priority. We had a long conversation about C16 and C24, and increasing potential for UK forests to produce both. But this led on to tree breeding re-emerging as a central theme, linking upstream science directly to mill productivity.

Incremental gains in growth rate or wood density, achieved through breeding programmes, have compound effects across the value chain - affecting everything from sawn timber strength classes to processing efficiency. This highlights the long feedback loop between R&D investment in forests and industrial outcomes.

At Alexander Timber Design, the focus shifted to construction and the use of homegrown timber in offsite manufacturing of timber frame housing kits and roof trusses. Here, innovation is being driven by both material science and construction engineering. Advances in grading technology, engineered timber products and digital design (such as BIM integration) are enabling greater use of domestic timber in structural applications.

However, variability in market demand



Andy Leitch, Chris Hardy and Bianca Ambrose-Oji

for these products is a challenge, and it was interesting to me (being a social scientist) that we touched on the cultural barriers to uptake of some of these innovative products. In other words, how traditional building practices can be hard to shift. Ongoing research into strength grading, including machine learning approaches and non-destructive testing, seem to hold potential for further development of this part of the timber value chain, not least for increasing confidence among designers, builders and regulators.

The final stop at UPM Caledonian Paper was particularly impressive - the building and plant were massive, at tremendous scale. What we learnt here was the importance of fibre science and process engineering. Paper manufacturing relies on precise control of fibre characteristics, and R&D efforts continue to focus on improving fibre utilisation, energy efficiency and emissions performance.

What I found particularly interesting

was the very particular properties of Sitka fibre, long and strong, and at point of harvest very bright. Sourcing Sitka primarily from Galloway and Argyll, this plant is one of only two UPM sites in the world producing high-grade speciality papers and LWC-magazine paper that demand fibre with these specific qualities. Impressive, too, was the Combined Heat and Power system using biomass that produces all of the mill's heat requirements and just over half of its electricity needs.

Across all sites, several key issues emerged with clear scientific dimensions. First, the sustainability of timber supply is not just a question of planting rates, but also of genetic improvement, climate adaptation and land-use optimisation. Second, alignment across the supply chain increasingly depends on shared data and standards, suggesting a role for digital platforms and systems modelling. Third, investment confidence is closely tied to the sector's ability to demonstrate innovation - whether through improved productivity, reduced carbon footprints or new product development.

This tour highlighted both the resilience and fragility of the UK timber and product value system, and one which is increasingly shaped by scientific innovation as much as resource constraints, market volatility and policy. From genomics in the forest to advanced manufacturing in mills, science is no longer a supporting function - it is the backbone of resilience, productivity and growth.

A&J Scott's Mill 10 investment reaches another major milestone

A&J Scott is continuing to invest in the future of British forestry with the successful completion of Phase Two of its flagship Mill 10 development at the company's Wooperton sawmill in Northumberland.

As one of the UK's largest independent sawmills, A&J Scott has built its reputation on processing homegrown timber into high-quality products for customers across the fencing, landscaping, agricultural, construction and infrastructure sectors. The Mill 10 project represents one of

the most significant investments in the company's history and demonstrates its long-term confidence in both the UK forestry industry and the future of homegrown timber.

The latest phase of the development marks another important milestone. Foundations for the new sawline have

now been completed, while the steel framework for the new drop sorter is also in place. With the civil engineering works progressing to schedule, the project will soon move into its next stage, with the first major items of machinery due to arrive on site in September.

Remaining firmly on programme, Mill 10 is steadily moving from concept to reality.

For the UK forestry sector, investment in modern processing facilities has never been more important. As the demand for sustainably sourced timber continues to grow, increasing domestic processing capacity is essential if more of Britain's homegrown timber is to be utilised within the UK supply chain. Projects such as Mill 10 are not simply investments in individual businesses; they strengthen the resilience, productivity and competitiveness of the wider timber industry.

For A&J Scott, the decision to invest is built on a long-term vision. The company has operated from Wooperton for generations and has continually invested in its people, technology and facilities to remain at the forefront of the timber industry. Mill 10 represents the next chapter in that journey.

Once operational, the new sawmill will significantly enhance production efficiency
continued on p29



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continued from p26

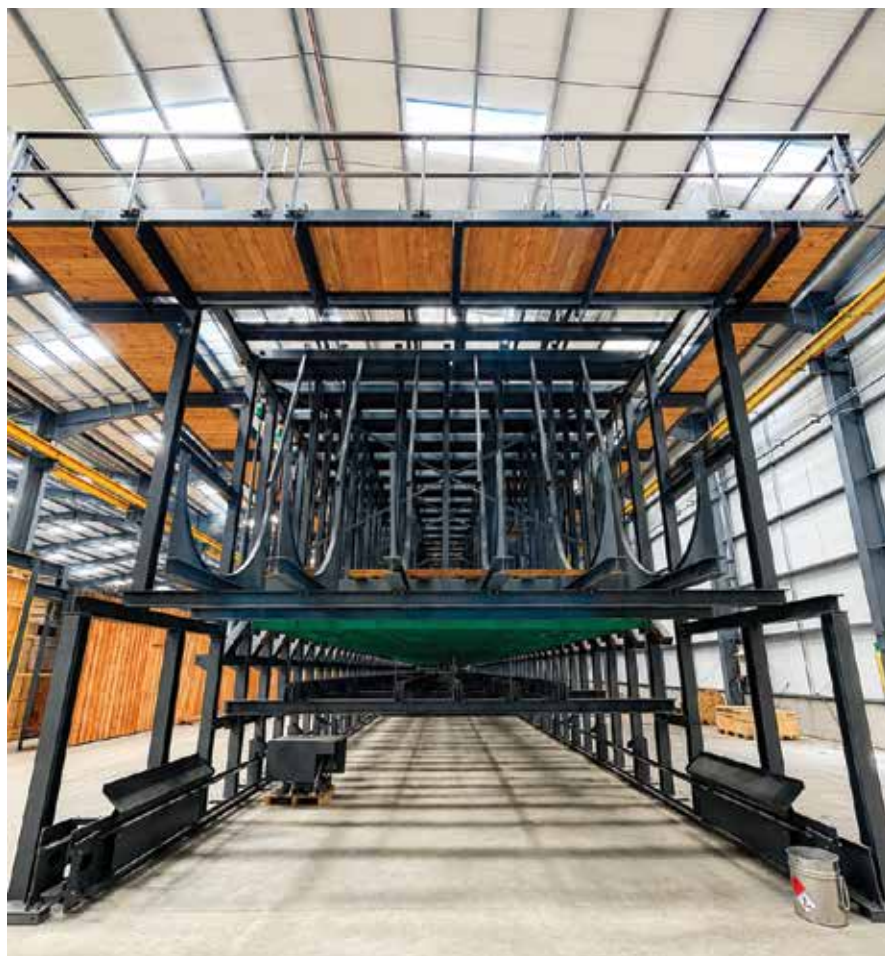
and increase processing capacity through the introduction of advanced sawmilling technology and automated handling systems. The investment has been carefully designed to maximise recovery from every log, improve operational efficiency and ensure the company continues to make the best possible use of sustainably grown British timber.

Robert Scott, Managing Director of A&J Scott, commented: "Mill 10 is much more than a new sawline. It's an investment in the future of our business, our people and the wider forestry sector. We firmly believe in the long-term potential of homegrown timber, and this project will give us the capacity and technology to process it more efficiently while continuing to provide the quality products and service our customers expect.

"Reaching the end of Phase Two is another significant milestone for everyone involved. We're delighted that the project remains on schedule and look forward to welcoming the first machinery to site in September."

Behind every major investment is a collaborative effort, and Mill 10 has brought together a wide range of specialist contractors, engineers and equipment suppliers. Their expertise has been instrumental in delivering the project to programme, with construction continuing to progress safely and efficiently.

While the project is focused on increasing production capability, it also reflects the broader direction of travel within the timber industry. Investment in modern manufacturing technology supports improved resource efficiency, enhances product quality and enables processors to extract greater value from every cubic metre of timber. These are all key factors in strengthening the



UK's domestic timber supply chain and supporting the ambitions of the forestry sector.

As the project moves into the machinery installation phase later this year, Mill 10 will become increasingly recognisable as one of the most advanced sawmill developments currently underway in the UK. Each completed stage brings the company closer to commissioning a facility that has been designed with efficiency, productivity and

future growth at its core.

Looking ahead, A&J Scott is well positioned for sustained growth across its principal markets, including fencing products, railway sleepers and a wide range of outdoor timber products. The company continues to build on its long-established reputation for manufacturing quality sawn timber while delivering the high standards of customer service that have underpinned its success for generations.

Alongside the Mill 10 investment, A&J Scott has also expanded its product portfolio to include NHSS4 highways standard fencing, strengthening its offering to customers involved in infrastructure and civil engineering projects.

With construction progressing on schedule and machinery set to begin arriving in September, Mill 10 is rapidly becoming a reality. More importantly, it represents A&J Scott's confidence in the future of British forestry and its commitment to investing in the people, technology and processing capacity needed to ensure homegrown timber continues to play an increasingly important role in the UK's sustainable future.



Premier Forest to restart operations at Croespenmaen Site following SDL's closure

Timber production is once again underway at the Newport yard.

Premier Forest Products has announced that it is restarting timber operations at its 10-acre Croespenmaen site following the closure of SDL Sawmills.

The phased restart has already seen a number of former SDL employees return to work as operations are progressively re-established.

Premier Forest, which leases the site and sub-let it to SDL, plans to develop it into a centre of excellence for fencing and landscaping timber products, supported by a log and further processing line, fence panel assembly equipment and two timber treatment plants.

The investment will further strengthen the company's national manufacturing and distribution network, enabling it to supply customers across the UK from the strategically important operation.

As part of the relaunch, Deborah Llewellyn has been appointed Operations Manager and Rhys Watkins will be Sales Manager for the site. Both have extensive experience of the operation and strong relationships with customers and suppliers, providing continuity as the business enters its next chapter.

Neil Davies, Chief Financial and Operating Officer of Premier Forest



Products, said: "The closure of SDL was obviously disappointing, particularly for the employees affected and their families. As soon as we became aware of the situation, our priority was to look at how we could secure the future of timber operations at the site.

"This investment demonstrates Premier Forest Products' resilience, confidence and determination to make the site a success."

SDL Sawmills took on the site and existing staff in 2023, in what was hoped to be a mutually beneficial deal with Premier Forest. The sudden closure of the mill earlier this year came as a shock to workers, who reportedly had no warning.

Neil added: "We have moved quickly because we believe in the long-term potential of this site and the important role it can play within our national business. The site will

become an important hub within our UK manufacturing and distribution network.

"We are delighted that Deborah Llewellyn and Rhys Watkins have agreed to lead the operation. They know the business, understand our customers, and will be instrumental in delivering the next phase of its development.

"While there is a great deal of work ahead, we are excited about the opportunity to build a strong, sustainable operation that will benefit our customers, create employment and further strengthen Premier Forest's position as one of the UK's leading timber distributors."

Preparations are already under way, with the phased return to work beginning immediately. Premier Forest expects operations to continue expanding over the coming months as production capacity increases and additional employees return to the business.

West Fraser showcases major rail freight investment

West Fraser Europe welcomed Stephen Flynn MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Tourism and Transport, to the company's Inverness manufacturing facility to discuss the company's significant investment in rail freight infrastructure and its potential to strengthen Scotland's construction and manufacturing supply chains.

During the visit, Mr Flynn met with George Webb, European Purchasing Director at West Fraser, and toured the site, which manufactures SterlingOSB Zero, the only oriented strand board (OSB) manufactured in the UK with no added formaldehyde. The visit included a

tour of the site's new rail freight terminal, a major infrastructure project that will connect the Inverness plant directly to the Aberdeen-Inverness railway line.

The new facility incorporates two 560m rail sidings together with infrastructure for loading and unloading freight containers. Once operational, the terminal will enable more raw materials and finished products to be transported by rail, reducing reliance on road haulage.

In its initial phase, the project is expected to remove around 10,000 HGV movements each year while cutting annual CO₂ emissions by an estimated 9,000 tonnes.



LtR: Alan McMeekin (West Fraser), Stephen Flynn MSP and George Webb (West Fraser).

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SHOW SET TO BREAK ALL RECORDS

Exhibition Secretary **Ian Millward** brings you up to date with what to look forward to at the show, taking place at Ragley Estate, Warwickshire on 24-26 September.

The 50th anniversary event is on course to break all previous records and be the biggest and best show yet. The 300th exhibitor has just booked and the show is heading to sell-out of exhibition space. In addition to more than two miles of working machinery frontage, there are more competitions, events and have-a-go opportunities than ever before.

The Confor stand has increased in size ready to welcome new and prospective members. Early attendees will be treated to a bacon roll on the first morning, with breakfast kindly sponsored by Rhizocore Technologies. There is even the promise of decent coffee for those who stop by!

There will also be a fantastic display of APF Demo memorabilia and photographs of the past 50 years in the Confor tent. Outside, a 1976 Timberjack skidder will stand next to a state-of-art John Deere Harvester and there will be a display of vintage chainsaws to show how forestry has changed over the last 50 years. Come along and reminisce about your memories of the APF.

Confor will be holding their AGM at 12 noon on Thursday 24 September, followed by a BBQ lunch kindly sponsored by John Deere and a ceremonial cake cutting with a chainsaw to celebrate APF's birthday at 1pm!

The Confor seminar tent, sponsored by Tilhill Forestry, will cover the latest topical issues affecting forestry and timber, delivered by industry leaders including Chair of the Forestry Commission Baroness Barbara Young and Forestry Commission CEO Richard Stanford. Some of these will be Q&A sessions so come along and put your questions to the panels. Prebook a free space at any seminar to guarantee a seat!

>>



There are more events and competitions to watch and take part in than ever before. The A.W. Jenkinson European Chainsaw carving competition has a stellar line up of carvers including nearly all our previous winners. 2024 winner Chris Wood will seek to defend his title, coming on the back of a great year to date where his superb sculpture of Gaia was the main feature of the winning garden at this year's Chelsea Flower Show.

There will be some fierce family competition where our first ever winner from 2006, Peter Bowsher, will be up against his son Sam, winner of TV's 'A Cut Above'. All the sculptures will be auctioned at 3pm on Saturday afternoon so come along and bid for a stunning piece of art.

The Forwarder driving area sponsored by Richard Court Forestry Engineering Ltd and Coombes Forestry Ltd has a new and larger area this year to accommodate demos of working machinery. The UK Championships

FREE ENTRY FOR CONFOR MEMBERS

All Confor Members are entitled to free entry to APF 2026 on presentation of a valid Membership Card. You should have been sent this already so please check your inbox.

Note that each card is valid for one attendee only and can be printed or displayed on your device. There will be no other way to confirm your membership status at the gates so be sure to double-check before you arrive at the show!

Any Member who fails to present their Card will be required to pay the full entry fee on arrival. Confor will not be able to reimburse any Members charged at the gates due to a missing Card.

If you have not received your Membership Card, please contact members@confor.org.uk.

will take place over all three days and attracted 50 entries last time. There is an all-new course including 'the bowling alley'.

If you have ever fancied driving a state-of-the-art forwarder, and are over 14 years of age, there will be an opportunity to give it a go (subject to availability).

The Husqvarna World 25m poleclimbing championships will have a high-class field and the real prospect of the world record being broken, with several climbers capable of breaking the magic 10 second barrier.

Also on the Husqvarna stand will be a unique opportunity to get tuition and learn about the five disciplines of the World Logging Championships. Can you change the bar and chain on your saw in under 10 seconds? There will be two sessions a day over all three days, and you can turn up on the day with a copy of your chainsaw maintenance and cross cutting certificate to take part. You can even borrow PPE if you haven't got any with you.

Our new Winch Racing competition is a UK first using a tractor mounted winch, and is designed to be fast and fun with a target time of less than five minutes. Competitors will need to choker four logs and winch them safely around obstacles and up the hill against the clock. There will be prizes for the daily and the overall winner. There will also be demonstrations of the Portable and Erde capstan winches.

You can try your hand at axe throwing, controlling a timber horse and ascending into a tree using a rope and harness.

For the Arb sector there is the Solidur and Teufelberger UK Speed Climbing Competition with some great prizes. Teams of two will be battling against the clock for the title of the fastest climbers in the UK. This will form the heart of our new Arb Worker Zone, sponsored by DEWALT, with lots of other displays, technical workshops and product demos.

You can watch and learn about the latest PiCUS Tomograph system for the non-invasive checking of the internal condition of a tree. Lantra will be able to advise on all things relating to training.

The Fencing Village, sponsored by M&M Timber is the largest yet with all the industry's main suppliers booked in to demonstrate the latest fencing machinery, equipment and materials. There will be the British Fencing championships for both speed and traditional fencing on the Thursday and Friday of the show.

Tilhill Forestry are sponsoring our Schools & Careers Initiative. The Royal Forestry Society are once again organising our schools' visits programme and have done a great job in signing up over 700 children to come along on guided tours to learn all about what happens in a modern working woodland. To encourage participation, the APF Demo is offering up to £300 per school



to help with travel costs.

Our Woodland Crafts area has been re-located to a new, larger position in the static area with over 200m of working

craft demonstrations and more than 30 craftspeople. There will be many rare crafts you will not see anywhere else such as coracle making, oak swill baskets, hazel whisket and skeined willow baskets and clog making. You can watch axes being forged from scratch and the ancient skill of iron hooping a wheel. There will also demos of charcoal burning.

Many of the craftspeople will be happy to let you have-a-go at a particular skill.

Remember, even better, Confor members get into the show free of charge, get a free breakfast and BBQ lunch on Thursday, and free tea and coffee in the Confor tent on all three days; a great feature of your membership! What's not to like?

Come along for more than one day and help us celebrate our 50th birthday. We look forward to welcoming you to APF 2026!

TALKING FORESTRY AT APF

Join expert panels and industry insiders for Talking Forestry, this year's exciting programme of seminars and debates

Forest Research, the Forestry Commission (FC) and Forestry England have worked with Confor and sponsors, Tilhill Forestry, to develop a new event series for APF 2026.

Talking Forestry is a programme of nine free but ticketed discussion events and demonstrations taking place in the APF Seminar Tent across all three days of the show.

Highlights on Thursday 24 September include Forestry Commission Chief Executive Richard Stanford, in conversation with recently appointed FC Chair Baroness Barbara Young, asking the question: 'Is forestry a national security issue?'

Author and journalist Rebecca Smith will interview Forestry Commissioner and former Labour MEP Paul Brannen, and Forestry England Area Director for

CONFOR SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

THURSDAY 24 SEPTEMBER

- 10.30am Trust, transparency and the public perception of forestry – how can we explain forestry better? *Rebecca Smith, Peter Coles & Paul Brannen*
- 1pm Confor AGM & APF Anniversary Lunch Celebration
- 2.30pm Is forestry a national security issue? *Forestry Commission*

FRIDAY 25 SEPTEMBER

- 12pm Forestry in 50 years – species choices for a future climate. *Panel Discussion*
- 1pm How do we get more trees on farms? *Rebecca Wilson & James Ramskir-Gardiner*

- 2pm The TreeAlert top five – protecting our trees, woods and forests. *Panel Discussion*
- 3pm Broadening the pool – increasing sector skills in forestry. *Panel Discussion*

SATURDAY 26 SEPTEMBER

- 11am Keep it clean, protect our trees. *Plant Health Forestry*
- 1pm Keep it clean, protect our trees. *Plant Health Forestry*
- 2pm Small Woods Association AGM. *(invite only)*



the South-East and London Peter Coles, discussing 'Trust, transparency and the public perception of forestry'.

On Friday 25 September, future species selection in a changing climate is the topic for a panel discussion between Forest Research's David Edwards, Forestry England's Eleanor Tew, Rob MacKenna of James Jones & Sons, and Mark Broadmeadow of the Forestry Commission.

Also on Friday, fifth-generation Yorkshire farmer, Cambridge graduate and blogger Rebecca Wilson will be discussing the benefits of trees on

farms with James Ramskir-Gardiner, National Agroforestry Advisor at the Forestry Commission.

All events are free but ticketed. Please reserve a space to make sure you can attend. For the full programme and booking details, go to: www.forestresearch.gov.uk/news/talking-forestry-26/



EUROFOREST GROWING TOGETHER AT APF's 50TH ANNIVERSARY

This year marks a significant milestone for the forestry industry as APF celebrates its 50th anniversary. For five decades, the exhibition has brought together the people, businesses and innovations that continue to shape the sector, providing an opportunity to share ideas, strengthen relationships and look ahead to the future.

The industry has never stood still, but the pace of change in recent years has been remarkable. Landowners, estates, developers and businesses are balancing commercial objectives with environmental responsibility, biodiversity and changing legislation. As expectations evolve, so too must the businesses that support them.

At Euroforest, the last few years have been a period of evolution.

Rooted in forestry, we've continued

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to strengthen our business to better meet the changing needs of our clients. Today, our expertise extends across the full lifecycle of land and woodland management, bringing together forestry, timber marketing, harvesting, silviculture and environmental consultancy under one roof.

One of our most significant developments has been the continued growth of our Environment division. Alongside our established arboriculture and project teams, we've expanded our ecology services to support an increasingly diverse range of clients and projects. Whether working in forestry,



development, infrastructure or wider land management, our teams provide practical, commercially minded advice that helps clients navigate environmental requirements with confidence.

For us, bringing these disciplines together has never simply been about expanding our service offering. It's about making life easier for our clients. Rather than coordinating multiple consultants, they can work with a single trusted partner, backed by specialists who collaborate to

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We're looking forward to returning to APF in this landmark year and celebrating alongside the wider industry. You'll find us exhibiting with our colleagues from AW Jenkinson, where members of our forestry, timber marketing and Environment teams will be available throughout the show.

As APF celebrates 50 years of bringing the industry together, we're looking forward to playing our part in the next chapter - building lasting relationships, embracing new opportunities and continuing to support our clients with the practical expertise they've come to rely on.

LANTRA LOOKS AHEAD TO APF

Lantra is excited to be attending APF 2026, one of the most important events

in the forestry and arboriculture calendar. It is always a key event for Lantra, and this year feels especially significant following a busy period of development behind the scenes.

At this year's APF event, Lantra will be hosting a dedicated discussion on diversity and inclusion within forestry and arboriculture. Bringing together voices from across the industry, the session will provide an open and honest space to discuss how we can attract and support a wider range of people into the sector.

The discussion will take place at the Lantra stand on Friday 25 September at 11am. We would particularly welcome contributions from those with lived experience of entering the industry, including the challenges they have faced, what they have learned, and how the sector can improve.

Also, in recent months, Lantra's product development team has been working closely with industry specialists to update several key training courses. These include our Chainsaw courses, Basic Tree Inspection and Professional Tree Inspection. We are also pleased to share that a new Foundational Tree Assessment

course is coming soon.

These updates reflect Lantra's ongoing commitment to maintaining high standards across the sector, ensuring that training remains relevant, robust and aligned with the needs of industry.

Visitors to APF 2026 will have the opportunity to meet members of the Lantra team at the event. We would be delighted to welcome you, answer any questions and talk through our latest developments.

Lantra will also look a little different this year following our recent rebrand. For those who have known us for many years, you will now be welcomed by our modern new logo.

Look forward to meeting new friends and old, we are sure you are all looking forward to it as much as we are!








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TRUST INSURANCE: SUPPORTING ARBORISTS EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

Trust Insurance is proud to be exhibiting at APF 2026 and looking forward to meeting arborists from across the UK. As a specialist insurance broker with extensive experience in the arb and forestry sectors, we understand the unique challenges faced by tree surgeons and arboricultural businesses every day.

Whether you are carrying out complex dismantles, working at height, operating specialist machinery or managing a growing team, arboriculture presents risks that require tailored insurance protection. Standard insurance policies often fail to address the specific needs of the industry, which is why specialist advice is so important.

At Trust Insurance, we work closely with arborists of all sizes, from sole traders to established contracting businesses, helping them secure comprehensive

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and competitive cover for public liability, employers' liability, machinery, vehicles, tools and equipment, professional indemnity and more.

The arboricultural sector continues to evolve, with increasing emphasis on safety, professionalism and environmental management. As businesses invest in new equipment, training and technology, it's essential that their insurance protection evolves alongside them. Our experienced team understands these developments

and can provide practical guidance to ensure businesses remain properly protected.

Visitors to our stand at APF 2026 will have the opportunity to meet our specialist team, discuss their current insurance arrangements and explore ways to strengthen their risk management and insurance programmes. Whether you're reviewing your existing cover, starting a new business or expanding your operations, or are already one of our >>

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ALBA TREES: GROWING THE FUTURE OF UK FORESTRY

As the UK's largest forestry nursery, Alba Trees continues to play a key role in supporting woodland creation, reforestation and biodiversity projects throughout the UK.

Producing up to 40 million trees across our Scottish nurseries, Alba remains committed to supplying high-quality, UK-grown planting stock that meets the needs of the forestry sector today and into the future.

Since 1988, innovation has been at the heart of our business. As demand for trees continues to grow, we have invested significantly in modern production systems that improve efficiency, increase capacity and help

reduce reliance on seasonal labour. Our advanced seeding, transplanting and grading technologies enable us to produce and dispatch large volumes of trees while maintaining the high standard of quality our customers have come to expect.

A significant milestone for the business came in 2026 with the acquisition of a bare root nursery, expanding Alba's production capabilities and enabling us to offer customers a

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APF Exhibition 2026 ♦ Ragley Estate, Warwickshire ♦ 24 to 26 September

comprehensive range of both UK-grown cell-grown and bare root planting stock. This investment strengthens security of supply, broadens our product offering and allows us to continue to support our timber industry through restocking, as well as woodland creation, landscaping and conservation projects across the UK.

Alongside our tree production, Alba supplies a full range of planting sundries to support successful establishment and protection of new woodlands. Our offering includes tree shelters, vole guards, spiral guards, FSC-certified stakes, canes and fertilisers, providing customers with a convenient one-stop-shop for all their planting requirements. We also offer pre-spraying with Lanzarta, helping protect young trees from pine weevil damage and improving establishment rates on suitable sites.

Biosecurity remains a core priority for Alba Trees. We are Plant Healthy certified and accredited under the UK Sourced & Grown scheme (UKISG), reflecting our long-standing commitment to supporting UK forestry through home-grown planting stock. Our strategy of producing trees

domestically helps provide greater supply chain security while supporting industry-wide efforts to strengthen resilience against pests and disease.

Seed availability remains one of the forestry sector's biggest challenges. Alba actively supports seed sourcing and collection programmes, working closely with trusted UK suppliers to secure the provenance options required for native woodland and commercial planting schemes.

The APF Exhibition remains one of the most important events in the forestry calendar, bringing together growers, foresters, contractors, land managers, policymakers and suppliers from across the industry. It provides a unique opportunity to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the sector, from woodland creation targets and climate change to future investment and innovation.

We look forward to meeting customers, partners and stakeholders at APF, sharing our latest developments and discussing how Alba Trees can support the next generation of forestry projects.

JAS P WILSON: SEE THE RANGE IN ACTION

Join the team on the Jas P Wilson stand for multiple LIVE working demonstrations of their range of Forestry & Firewood Machinery. The team at Wilson's always strive to ensure visitors get to see the machines in action, in full production, to get a firsthand, real working conditions demonstration of the products on offer.

Jas P Wilson's stand size and space dedicated to live demonstration has increased further, beyond what was already a demo-focused set up in 2024.

Visitors to the stand will see a wide range of Posch and Krpan firewood processors in action, including 70cm, 49cm, 42cm and 37cm cut processors to highlight a few. Models on show include the new K-700 firewood factory, alongside the S-500 Vario Plus, which has been a long-awaited addition to the Posch range, a two-part machine, with an automatic splitting system, ensuring uniform logs, no

>>

Paul Vidgen Forest Machines have been supplying mulching equipment to customers for a variety of projects since the late 90s, and have been the UK dealers for Prinoth for over 30 years.

In the autumn of 2025 we were asked to provide a Raptor 800, nothing unusual but the customer didn't want the European spec unit, but a basic "rest of the world" unit. After a lot of toing and froing we settled upon a spec, and the machine was ready for delivery in the spring of 2026.

The customer, the Firestone Rubber Corporation, wanted the unit for its rubber farm in Liberia, West Africa. Firestone has 119,000 acres of rubber, the trees produce latex in year 7 and generally are replaced when production falls off in around 30 years, and the cycle then starts again.



As part of the deal we were asked if we would visit Liberia, set up the machine and train service personnel and the operators and advise on working methods to get the best production from the Raptor 800.

In late May the machine was delivered to site and myself and an old friend, Mike Kelly, a German based Irishman that has worked for Prinoth in the past, flew down to Monrovia.

We received a warm welcome from all the guys at Firestone and have a fantastic week getting the people up to speed on the machine and putting it to work clearing dense regrowth from previously cleared rubber plantation, ready for new trees to be established.

Due to the climate everything grows at a phenomenal rate and areas where the rubber trees had been felled were covered in 10m tall scrub, making visibility for the mulcher operator's challenging. The most effective method turned out to be using two Cat D7 dozers and a length of ships anchor chain to flatten the standing bush and then a single pass with the Raptor 800 and a following pass with a set of very heavy disks provide an ideal planting environment for the new rubber trees, they are planted by hand into augured holes with some chicken manure and a water retaining gel.

Work rates of 10 acres day were possible once the method was perfected. Firestone has 119,000 acres of rubber, the trees produce latex in year 7 and generally are replaced when production falls off in around 30 years, the cycle then starts again.

We had the most fantastic time, everyone we met were so friendly and enthusiastic and I'm sure we will be going back to see how things are progressing.

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matter if the machine runs with multiple operators across the working week.

From Krpan, there will be three action packed days on their 42cm cut machines, including a very well spec'd circular saw unit, the CSKZ 4218, which has been a popular choice for many, since the last APF.

The team are also bringing the new range of Botex Oniar timber trailers and loaders to the stand, including new models offering over 10 metre reach loaders, and trailers capable of multiple bed length adjustments, and drive options. The stand will also include a flagship new roof-mounted Botex Oniar loader, on a Botex forestry-guarded Valtra tractor. A great opportunity for those involved in tractor-based timber handling.

This Botex Oniar range also extends into an exciting crane-feed Woodchipper demo, with Mus-Max chippers now represented by Jas P Wilson. The live demos will include a Mus-Max WT9 XL chipper, fed by a 10.2 metre reach Botex Oniar loader. This will offer an incredible display of tractor-based biomass chip production across the three-day show - if

STAND
1300 - 1400
OUT



the supply of timber holds up, as this chipper doesn't hang around, bringing high-output commercial chipping to the Jas P Wilson stand.

For those seeking new forestry and firewood attachments, the team will have several new releases on display alongside the bespoke "HarvaDig" excavator guarding. Visitors to the stand can see the 3D scanner in action, which is used during

excavator and tractor guarding projects, amongst other applications.

Also, for the excavator operators, Jas P Wilson will have live demonstration of their innovative, patent-pending Firewood Ringer attachment, which has been a real crowd pleaser at a string of UK demonstrations over the Summer, with the team excited to show an entirely NEW way of firewood processing.

>>

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GLOBAL MACHINERY SOLUTIONS: NEW MACHINES, LIVE DEMOS AND A SAWMILL GIVEAWAY

Global Machinery Solutions is gearing up for this year's APF Show with one of its biggest and most varied machinery displays yet. Bringing together leading names from across the forestry, arboriculture, biomass and waste-processing sectors, the team will showcase new machinery, carry out live demonstrations – and even give away a sawmill! With an impressive line-up from Bandit, Norwood, Frontier, Willibald, Pronar, Pezzolato and SANY, visitors to stand 1525 can expect plenty to see.

Brand new range of Bandit wood chippers

One of the major attractions, is going to

be the unveiling of Bandit's new range of wood chippers!

The 2026 machines have several new features, including an enhanced infeed pan, designed to make crane feeding easier while also improving discharge. This new range has been developed in partnership with Global Machinery Solutions and Bandit who've adapted their machines based on feedback from UK customers.

A particular highlight is the new 12-inch tracked diesel chipper that can be towed – a first for Bandit. The team has worked hard to combine the benefits of a tracked machine with the convenience of towing, creating a highly versatile solution for tree professionals.

Alongside the static display, visitors can see several Bandit chippers working in the demonstration area, giving them the opportunity to experience the machines' strength, speed and capability in real-world conditions. The display will cover everything from compact 12-inch machines through to a formidable 20-inch chipper.

STAND
1525-1605
IN



Global Machinery Solutions team.

Stump grinding power on display

Bandit's stump grinder range will also feature, with the popular SG-40 represented across its wheeled, tracked, remote-controlled and new hydraulic configurations. Visitors will be able to compare different cutter wheel options, including Greenteeth and Revolution systems. Plus, the larger SG-75 will demonstrate the capability of Bandit's heavy-duty stump grinding technology.

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Join us at
APF 2026
woodland
demo area
stand 1845





Turn timber into value with Norwood and Frontier

Global Machinery Solutions will be showcasing a broad selection of Norwood and Frontier sawmills, demonstrating how processing timber can create additional value from felled trees and timber resources.

The display will cover solutions suitable for sawmilling newcomers, as well as more advanced equipment aimed at enthusiasts and professional operators.

Adding another dimension to the sawmill display, Wavy Wood Sawmill's Nick Garton will be carrying out live demonstrations throughout the three-day event. As he processes timber and creates garden furniture in front of visitors, Nick will share the remarkable story of how he became a global sawmilling influencer while working full-time in a local steelwork.

The team will also reveal the winner of its sawmill giveaway, with one lucky entrant set to win a Norwood MN26. Entries are open until the start of the show, so head to Global Machinery Solutions' website for more information on how to get involved.

New shredding technology joins the line-up

For the first time, Global Machinery Solutions will showcase the EP SHARK 5500, following the recent announcement it has become Willibald's exclusive new UK supplier.

Configured to process green and wood waste, the machine offers forestry professionals a powerful solution for high-speed shredding applications.

The Pronar PRO.S1 slow-speed twin-shaft shredder will also be on display, highlighting its versatility across materials including wood, tyres, general waste and construction and demolition waste.

Pezzolato and SANY complete the forestry offering

A selection of Pezzolato biomass woodchippers will demonstrate the breadth of the range, from compact machines through to the PTH900 and mighty AllRoad, which will be put through its paces in the demonstration zone.

Complementing the forestry machinery, SANY excavators and telehandlers will showcase the versatility available to modern timber operators. A range of forestry attachments, including log grabs, cone splitters and flails, will be

on display, alongside Cabcare guards designed to provide reinforced protection when working on site.

Visit Global Machinery Solutions at APF

Visitors can also browse a selection of parts at the Global Machinery Solutions stand. And if you can't carry what you buy - or don't see what you need on the stand - you can browse and arrange delivery through our online store.

Come and see the latest machinery, watch the live demonstrations, meet the team and find the right solution for your business. We can't wait to see you there!

HOME FORESTRY LLP: SMALL BUT MIGHTY

Home Forestry LLP will be demonstrating a wide range of Alstor mini-forwarders and harvesters on their demo stand at the 2026 APF.

Winner of the Alan Cobb Memorial trophy for best exhibitor stand in 2024, Home Forestry LLP will have live demonstrations of machinery going over obstacles to show some of the capabilities of their available range.

There will also be new launches of products not seen in the UK before. The Alstor is an 8-wheel drive mini forwarder available with open cab or full ROPS FOPS OPS. It has a very light footprint and excellent terrain ability, making it perfect >>



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for low impact forestry or utility sites. The ability to move the machine on a suitable trailer behind a 4x4 removes expensive haulage fees and also allows the owner operator to remove the machine from site after work for high-risk areas.

There are a range of forestry cranes available, with strong lift to allow large logs to be loaded easily and be transported. The Alstor 850 can be operated as a purpose-built harvester with two head options: the Tapio 170 stroke head or the newly designed Keto-Forst track feed head. The new head increases feed and volume production dramatically and is geared towards the professional operator, for first/second thinnings in sensitive or difficult areas and lower volume crops. The Alstor 850 has a very low fuel requirement to run the head and good oil flow for its size, making it very productive.

Home Forestry LLP have been the sole Alstor UK agent for 26 years and provide service sales and backup across the whole of the UK. Sales continue to grow as more and more landowners require access into timber which is hard or difficult to access. Sales have also increased with utility companies benefitting from the low ground pressure and ease of movement for powerline and arb work sites.

Come and join us to see the machines in action and to discuss how an Alstor could improve your business.

TOMORROW'S FORESTS: THREE MILLION TREES – AND GROWING

Tomorrow's Forests builds on more than a decade of UK planting experience as it expands into woodland management, harvesting and timber sales.

Planting three million trees a year requires scale, discipline and dependable delivery in demanding conditions. For Tomorrow's Forests, more than a decade of large-scale planting across the UK has provided the foundation for its next

stage of growth: a joined-up forestry service extending from grant application and woodland creation to long-term management, harvesting and timber sales.

Tree planting remains at the heart of the business. Tomorrow's Forests operates with a seasonal workforce of up to 70 planters, typically deployed in dedicated six-person squads. This structure enables experienced teams to be mobilised throughout England, Scotland and Wales while retaining clear supervision, consistent working practices and accountability at site level.

The company has planted more than 20 million trees to date. Its UK track record includes work with Forestry England stretching back to 2014, including annual planting programmes in Yorkshire and Thetford. Tomorrow's Forests has also delivered work across national infrastructure projects connected with HS2 and National Highways, as well as schemes for the National Trust, Ministry of Defence, Woodland Trust, local authorities and private estates.

Operating at this scale involves considerably more than supplying labour. Successful establishment depends on coordinating skilled planters, tree stock, protection materials, transport, accommodation and site access within a relatively short and weather-dependent season. Tomorrow's Forests has built its operational systems around managing these pressures and maintaining reliable delivery across multiple sites.

Elisabeth Boivin, Director of Tomorrow's Forests, said: "Our clients need planting teams that are not only productive, but also skilled, professional and properly managed. Our squad structure gives us the capacity to deliver major programmes while maintaining strong site supervision, communication and consistent standards.

"We can also take responsibility for much of the procurement and financial burden associated with a project. On agreed contracts, we purchase tree stock, guards, stakes and other materials in advance, coordinate deliveries and carry the initial cost through defined project stages. This gives clients one accountable

delivery partner and greater certainty that the workforce and materials will be ready together when the site is ready."

Tomorrow's Forests also undertakes ground preparation, fencing and establishment maintenance. Bringing these operations together reduces the number of separate contractors a client must coordinate and provides continuity during the critical early years of a woodland.

During the past two years, the company has expanded further into professional forestry management. It now employs two foresters, covering the South West and North East, enabling woodland creation grant applications - including EWCO applications - to be prepared in-house and carried through into practical delivery by the company's operational teams.

The expansion is also supporting work in established woodlands. Tomorrow's Forests can now assist owners with woodland management planning, harvesting operations and timber marketing. Summer 2026 marks its second successful harvesting season, strengthening the business at the other end of the forestry cycle.

Nicholas Hollingworth, Managing Director, said: "We are very positive about the direction of the company and the wider forestry industry. Appointing two foresters has allowed us to combine our established delivery capability with professional woodland planning and management. Our next objective is to appoint two additional foresters by Christmas, further improving our regional coverage and capacity.

"We want to provide landowners and clients with an efficient, modern service delivered by one accountable team. When the people planning a woodland remain involved through establishment and future management, there is better continuity, clearer responsibility and a greater opportunity to achieve the owner's long-term objectives.

"Our ambition is to build a genuinely complete forestry business: one that can take a project from its first feasibility >>

discussion and grant application through to successful establishment, woodland management, harvesting and ultimately timber sales.”

Tomorrow's Forests will be exhibiting at APF 2026 on Stand C6a. The team welcomes conversations with landowners, forestry agents, principal contractors and organisations seeking an experienced delivery partner for woodland creation, establishment, management or harvesting projects anywhere in the UK.

ORIGIN GREEN-TECH: TRUSTED EXPERTISE AND NEW IDENTITY

STAND
D13

The show marks an important milestone for Origin Green-tech as the company introduces its new name to the forestry sector.

Formerly Green-tech, the new identity

reflects the company's position within Origin Enterprises Plc and reinforces its purpose of delivering sustainable land management solutions through technical expertise, innovative products and trusted support. While the name has changed, customers can continue to rely on the same experienced team, innovative products and commitment to helping create healthier, more resilient landscapes.

Visitors to the Origin Green-tech stand will have the opportunity to discover the company's extensive range of forestry and land management solutions, designed to support successful woodland creation, establishment and long-term management.

From tree protection and planting accessories to mulches, weed control solutions, irrigation, soils and ground reinforcement products, Origin Green-tech provides practical solutions to help customers overcome challenges and achieve successful project outcomes. The company's technical specialists will be available to discuss individual projects and provide advice on selecting the right solutions for each application.

As part of this evolution, the established and respected British Hardwood Tree Nursery (BHT) adds further specialist expertise to Origin Green-tech while continuing to operate as a specialist trading brand alongside John Chambers Wildflowers, Green-tree Soils and Groundtrax Ground Reinforcement Solutions.

Visitors to the British Hardwood Tree Nursery stand will have the opportunity to discover more about one of the UK's leading suppliers of British-grown native trees and shrubs. With decades of experience supporting woodland creation, forestry and environmental projects, BHT will showcase its expertise in tree production, provenance and successful establishment. The team will be available to discuss planting requirements, species selection and the practical considerations involved in creating healthy, resilient woodlands, alongside the high-quality trees and planting solutions for which the nursery is recognised.

Together, Origin Green-tech and its specialist trading brands provide customers with access to a



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- Wildflower and biodiversity solutions
- Woodland creation and habitat establishment products
- Sustainable soils, growing media and landscape materials
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comprehensive range of solutions, from high-quality planting stock through to the products, advice and technical support needed to establish and maintain successful land outcomes.

The Origin Green-tech team works alongside forestry professionals, contractors, landowners, local authorities and environmental organisations, supplying products and expertise that support sustainable land management projects across the UK.

As a solutions provider rather than simply a supplier, the company works closely with customers to understand their challenges and deliver practical, effective solutions tailored to their needs.

Visitors to APF 2026 are invited to meet the Origin Green-tech team on Stand D13 and the British Hardwood Tree Nursery team on Stand A3 to discover how their combined expertise, products and technical support can help deliver successful forestry and woodland projects.



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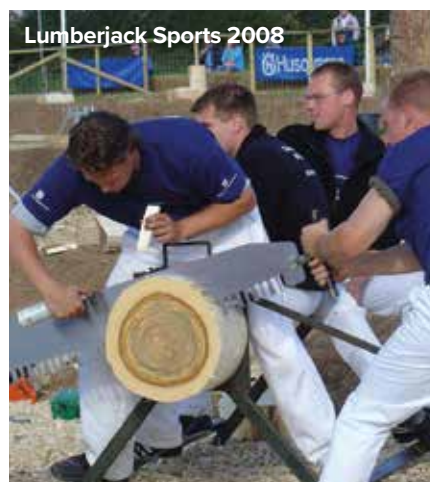
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Confor Tent



Lumberjack Sports 2008



Pole Climber 2010

LOOKING BACK ON 50 YEARS OF THE APF

Confor is excited to welcome you back to the Ragley Estate for APF's Golden Anniversary.

Thanks to the dedication of the APF Committee and its many volunteers over the past 50 years, the APF is unquestionably a fantastic showcase for the forestry and timber sector.

The Confor stand, located opposite APF HQ, will be bigger than ever this year. Alongside our Members' Hub and hospitality area in our tent, visitors can explore a special APF 50th Anniversary exhibit, featuring memorabilia and memories dating back to the first APF Exhibition at Longleat Estate.

Photographs of APF volunteers, exhibitors and visitors will be on show, with plenty of stories behind them! A special Golden Anniversary souvenir booklet packed with anecdotes

DID YOU KNOW?

There are eight companies who have exhibited at every APF since 1976:

- Compact Loaders
- Forestry Commission
- Husqvarna (previously Hyatt Adams)
- James Jones & Sons
- McConnel
- Merrist Wood College
- Oregon (previously Omark UK Ltd)
- T H White

from the past 50 years will be free to visitors.

Outside, visitors will find a unique mix of forestry machinery from past and present, including a restored 1976

EVENTS & WHAT'S ON

Areas of Interest

- Arb Worker Zone
- Fencing Village
- Forest Worker Zone
- Woodland Crafts Area

Competitions

- A.W. Jenkinson & Tilhill European Chainsaw Carving Championships
- British Tree Climbing Competition
- Husqvarna World 25m Pole Climbing

Championships

- UK Forwarder Driving Championships
- UK Open Fencing Championship

.....

Timberjack skidder, a new John Deere harvester, a Komatsu forwarder, and a display of vintage chainsaws supplied by Kieran Anders Forestry.

John Deere is sponsoring the Confor AGM lunch and BBQ on Thursday, which will conclude with a special APF 50 cake-cutting ceremony in true forestry style: using a chainsaw! Come along around 1pm if you're free to watch.

WHAT YOU'LL FIND AT THE CONFOR STAND

Forest Industries Safety Accord (FISA)

FISA will have a presence in both the Confor tent and in the Forestry Workers marquee. Members and prospective members are more than welcome to visit and have a chat with the FISA team.

A new safety video will be running periodically throughout the show.

Forest Industries Education and Provident Fund

The Fund provides Confor members with grants for further training. Drop by and learn more about recent recipients – you could be next! Plus, help raise future funds by entering the daily prize raffle.

Forestry Training Service UK (FTSUK)

FTSUK has been established to help



Longleat Organisers 1976

THE APF TIMELINE

1976-78	Longleat Estate
1980	Forest of Dean
1982	Beecraigs Country Park
1984	Windsor (Crown Estate)
1986	Clumber Park
1988	Cannock Chase
1990	Swynnerton Forest
1992	Dalby Forest
1994	Thoresby Estate
1996	Weston Park
1998	Zetland Estate
2000	Weston Park
2002	Lockerbie (Birkshaw Forest)
2004-06	Ragley Estate
2008-10	Cannock Chase
2012-26	Ragley Estate

bridge the gaps in training provision and align learning with industry needs. Meet the Operations Director heading up the effort to ensure a future workforce.

Kielder Forest Display

Forestry England are also celebrating a huge milestone this year: 100 years since the first trees were planted at Stannersburn - the beginnings of Kielder Forest.

A celebratory "100 Years of Kielder" exhibition, previously displayed at Northumberland County Hall, will be taking up residence on the Confor stand as an illustration of forestry's progress in the last century.

Created in partnership with Bellingham Heritage Centre, the exhibition includes the oldest known

Planning 1994



map of Kielder Forest and photographs from throughout the years.

Timber Transport Forum (TTF)

TTF will be returning to the Confor stand this year. Visit to find out how the Forum works to minimise the impact of timber transport on the public road network, on local communities and on the environment.

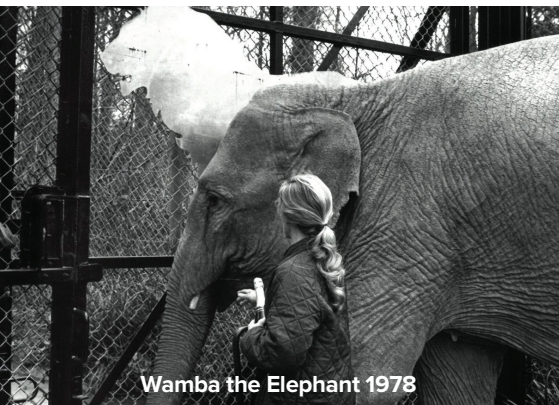
PortRail Group have contributed a striking multi axle low ground pressure timber lorry and trailer combination for display outside the tent, demonstrating how modern timber transport can reduce the impact on forest roads.

Rhizocore Technologies

Best known for producing the RhizoPellet™, a solid-state delivery system containing live ectomycorrhizal fungi, Rhizocore Technologies will be in the Confor tent to talk about delivering the right fungi, in the right place, for the right forestry purposes.

Rhizocore is building a growing body of performance data across commercial forestry, native woodland and land restoration projects. Soil biology and fungal ecology are becoming part of wider discussions around resilience, productivity and long-term asset value. Talk to the team to find out more.

Rhizocore are also kindly sponsoring the Confor Member Breakfast on Thursday 24 September.



Wamba the Elephant 1978

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Clark Engineering appointed official UK distributor for PALMS forestry trailers

PALMS forestry trailers are now available in the UK, thanks to a partnership with Dumfries-based Clark Engineering.

Clark Engineering has been appointed as the official UK distributor for PALMS forestry trailers, bringing an established European range of tractor forestry trailers and timber forwarding equipment to customers across the UK.

The partnership strengthens Clark's forestry equipment offering and means customers can source a complete trailer, crane and grapple setup through one experienced forestry equipment supplier.

Founded in Estonia in 1992, PALMS is a family-owned business and one of Europe's leading manufacturers of forestry trailers and cranes.

The company has built its reputation through continued product development and quality improvement, with forestry equipment designed around practical operation, durable construction and long-term reliability.

The PALMS forestry trailer range includes single-beam, double-beam, unibody and driven models. This provides options for different tractor sizes, load requirements, ground conditions and forestry applications, from smaller-scale woodland work to professional timber forwarding.

Clark can supply PALMS forestry trailers ranging from 8,500kg to 19,000kg gross weight. Different frame types, bolster arrangements, loading areas and drive options are available, allowing each trailer to be configured around how and where it will be used.

PALMS forestry trailers can be paired with Cranab FC5, EC8 and EC10 cranes, with maximum reaches of up to 10 metres depending on the crane model and configuration selected.

Cranab grapples can also be supplied alongside Indexator rotators, Tamtron weighing systems and Parker hydraulic and control equipment. This allows the main elements of the forestry trailer setup to be considered together rather than selected as separate components.



Selected PALMS Z cranes are also available through Clark Engineering.

Richard Gordon, General Manager at Clark Engineering, said: "PALMS is a strong addition to the Clark range and a good fit for the customers we work with. It gives us access to an established forestry trailer range with the flexibility to suit different tractors, applications and ground conditions.

"By combining PALMS trailers with the cranes, grapples, rotators, weighing systems and controls already available through Clark, we can provide complete forestry trailer and crane setups built around each customer's operation."

The first PALMS build completed by Clark combines a PALMS 12U forestry trailer with a Cranab EC8 crane offering a 9.4m reach.

The setup also includes a Cranab CR26 grapple, Indexator GV6 rotator, Tamtron One weighing system and Parker control equipment.

Bringing the trailer, crane, grapple, rotator, weighing system and controls together allows the complete forestry

setup to be considered as one system. Each component can be selected around the tractor, timber handling requirements and conditions in which the equipment will operate.

PALMS forestry trailers are designed for a wide range of timber extraction, forwarding and handling applications.

The available configurations include lighter single-beam trailers, strong double-beam designs, high-clearance unibody trailers and driven options for more difficult terrain.

Features vary by model but can include Strenx performance steel, tested drawbars, flexible bolster positioning and KTL dip coating followed by powder coating. This coating process helps protect both visible and concealed surfaces against corrosion, supporting long-term durability.

Different drive, frame and loading-area options also allow the trailer to be adapted to the customer's workload and ground conditions rather than relying on one standard specification for every operation.



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Komatsu introduces next generation forestry machines

Komatsu Forest presents a new generation of forestry machines, where both harvesters and forwarders have been comprehensively updated to meet the evolving demands of modern forestry.

The new Komatsu Forest range combines improved productivity with reduced environmental impact, focusing on efficiency, operator comfort and long-term reliability.

The launch includes a complete update of Komatsu's harvester portfolio as well as a new generation of six-cylinder forwarders. Across both segments, the upgrades are centred around a new engine platform, enhanced driveline performance and a more refined operator environment.

At the core of the new generation is the AP Core engine, designed to deliver higher power and torque while enabling more efficient operation. The increased engine performance makes it possible

to operate at lower engine speeds while maintaining – or in many cases improving – productivity.

In the harvester range, all seven models have been upgraded. New crane designs play an important role in this development. The cranes feature a more robust design, with additional cast components and increased dimensions in key areas. This improves durability, particularly in demanding operations, while maintaining high performance and precision.

The hydraulic system has been optimised to reduce pressure losses and improve overall efficiency, while a revised hydrostatic transmission enables high performance at lower engine speeds. Together with the engine updates, these improvements contribute to reduced fuel consumption and lower CO₂ emissions, while supporting efficient performance in a wide range of operating conditions.

"We have focused on delivering more performance where it matters, while also improving efficiency," said Joakim Johansson, Product Manager, Harvesters. "The new generation gives operators more capability in demanding conditions, while enabling lower engine speeds and more fuel-efficient operation in everyday work."



The new forwarders – Komatsu 855, 875 and 895 – benefit from similar core upgrades, including the same engine platform and an updated transmission. These changes enable higher transport speeds, improved traction and increased productivity in challenging terrain.

Daniel Grabbe, Product Manager, Forwarders, added: "We continue to develop our forwarders with a clear focus on productivity and usability. The improvements in engine efficiency, driveline performance and serviceability all contribute to lower cost per cubic metre and a more reliable machine in daily operations."

Additional updates in the forwarder range include flexible load configurations, improved crane performance and several design changes that simplify service and maintenance. A redesigned access system and improved component layout also enhance operator safety and daily usability.

With the Next Generation range, Komatsu Forest continues its focus on delivering machines that combine productivity, operator experience and environmental consideration – supporting forestry operations both today and in the future.



FIGHTING FIRE WITH FOREST MACHINES

After tackling blazes in mainland Europe and the United States, Ponsse is hoping to see their firefighting equipment loaded on more forwarders in the UK to help suppress and manage wildfire breakouts on difficult terrain.

“Where there’s a fire, there may not always be a road” declares Ponsse’s firefighting equipment brochure.

Increasingly hotter and drier summers have intensified wildfire risk in the UK, with 72 fires larger than 30 hectares recorded so far in 2026. The complex challenges posed by combating these outbreaks shouldn’t be news to anyone in the forestry sector.

However, the common issues of rough terrain, difficult access and expansive scale are not unfamiliar either.

Joe Ford, Country Manager for

Ponsse UK, stated: “Forest machines are the most natural and effective way to access a forest fire. Operating in challenging terrain come as second nature to our highly skilled operators, and Ponsse Forwarders have more than enough capacity in their hydraulic system for demanding conditions.

“When the rescue authorities approached Ponsse Oyj to ask if we were willing to develop this product in conjunction, we were ready right from the beginning, because rescue professionals and our customers had a clear demand for firefighting equipment.”

How it works

First launched by Ponsse in 2020 and developed in cooperation with fire safety professionals, the firefighting equipment features a 10,000-litre water tank that can be filled from natural water sources using its own pump, or directly from a fire engine tank. The water cannon has a range of 47 metres and a turning radius of 360 degrees, so that there is no need to drive close to the flames when working in front of the fire.

The equipment is compatible with PONSSE Buffalo and PONSSE Elephant forwarders. The minimum loader requirement is PONSSE K90+.

Everything is delivered to the fire location as a single package and, after it has been connected to forest machine hydraulics, the tank and cannon are ready for use. It can be operated by the driver of the tractor and the operator in the field via remote control under direction of trained firefighting and rescue personnel.

Ponsse’s firefighting equipment and HH360 harvester head rotator won the main Innovation Award at July’s Demo Forest trade fair held in Bertrix, Belgium. Interest in fire protection solutions has increased in Europe, and the fair gave Ponsse’s firefighting equipment wide visibility in the mainstream media.

“We would like to thank the organisers of the Demo Forest event for the innovation award: it’s a pleasure to note that Ponsse’s technology solutions are seen as useful when functional solutions are required not only for harvesting but also for forest-related challenges,” commented Timo Savornin,



Area Marketing and Communications Manager for Europe at Ponsse.

“Although the underlying forest and wildfires are a serious issue, it’s positive to see that there is also discussion

on how to develop fire protection preparedness. Interest in our firefighting equipment is growing across Europe.”

Trialled by fire

In recent years, severe wildfires and forest fires in Europe and the Americas have caused widespread damage to nature, livelihoods and local communities. At the same time, the importance of effective fire protection has increased.

Ponsse has already sold their firefighting equipment in almost 10 countries, including Germany, Finland, Russia, the USA, Chile, Brazil and Uruguay.

In the summers of 2021 and 2022, Uruguay was hit by major forest fires. A long-time Ponsse customer, Montes del Plata, learned first-hand how difficult it was to access certain fire areas. Water and firefighting trucks could not reach areas with uneven or rocky terrain or areas where trees had recently been felled.

“Ponsse offered us a new fire protection system to try. After examining the system, we found that it was ideal for firefighting in Uruguay, especially for our own use,” said Juan Bide, Landholding & Silviculture Manager. “Safety is one of our most important values, and Ponsse equipment is extremely safe. Not only does the agile equipment travel and operate off-road, but it is also reliable.

“It can travel over all types of terrain, so you can fill the water tank wherever you want, which hasn’t always been possible if you’ve had difficulty

getting to water. The equipment has greatly improved and enhanced our firefighting.”

In Finland, a record-breaking wildfire in 2021 claimed 227 hectares of forest in Kalajoki, prompting hundreds of emergency services professionals and volunteers into action. Among them was Ponsse Technical Specialist Seppo Kinnunen, who also works with the Southern Savonia rescue services response unit.

He said: “The off-road capability of the forest machines load space firefighting equipment is absolutely its best feature. Forest machines can usually go where no others can.

“The terrain in Kalajoki featured stony ground that was impossible for any quad bike or other machine to negotiate. The capability to travel and firefight in extreme terrain is in a class of its own, with the water cannon reaching beyond 40 metres and covering 360 degrees. It can put out a lot of fire in one go.”

Bringing the fight to the UK

UK summers are getting hotter, as evidenced by the heatwaves that have marked 2026. England and Wales have seen the driest July since records began in 1836.

And now the Met Office has issued warnings that 2027 may very well be the hottest year on record, due to an El Niño event developing over the Pacific Ocean.

Joe at Ponsse UK, commented: “Equipping Ponsse Forwarders with simple yet high-capacity firefighting equipment, at the hands of the people who know the forest the best - our operators - is a sure way to combat these terrible fires that have caused devastation to many parts of the UK this year.

“Given the extreme hot weather in the last two summers, and the forecast of it being hot again in 2027, we are speaking to different contractors and forestry organisations about the provision of firefighting equipment for next year. This might mean that a forestry organisation purchases the firefighting equipment with an agreement in place to use a forestry contractors forwarder should a fire start.

“We have increased production of the fire fighting equipment for the remainder of this year as we have seen increased interest across Europe and if you have any questions, please contact your Ponsse sales representative for more details.”



Surprising step down

Seán Lenihan, Kestrel Forestry Consultants Ltd, recounts the regretful resignation of former forestry minister for the Republic of Ireland, Michael Healy-Rae.

In one of the biggest shocks in Irish politics in many years, Michael Healy-Rae, the Minister of State with responsibility for forestry, resigned in April 2026. He decided to support an opposition motion of no confidence in the government following a week of protests by hauliers, agricultural contractors and farmers against increased fuel prices caused by the US/Iran conflict.

Despite the fact that the protesters almost brought the country to its knees by blocking fuel collections from Ireland's biggest oil refinery in Cork, causing widespread closures to petrol stations all over the country and effectively blocking Rosslare port, the city centre of Dublin and numerous national roads, Healy-Rae announced that the government hadn't done enough to appease the protesters.

Ironically the government had introduced the most generous fuel subsidies in all of the EU - which are still in place - but Healy-Rae still went ahead and resigned.

His resignation was naturally also a huge shock to the Irish forest industry seeing as this was the first time a sitting forestry minister had ever resigned,



Niall Collins

and there was a great sense of disappointment and despair with his decision. Despite a shaky start Healy-Rae had gained the confidence of the industry by his actions and plans for future action. He was very accessible, hands on, and had no problem in challenging his Department officials whenever he was presented with evidence of their intransigence, bureaucratic delays or general nonsense.

As a forest owner himself, he was open to proposals from the industry that could make afforestation more attractive to landowners at a time of historically low planting levels, and new schemes for existing growers to help manage their crops to maximise returns. A very good working relationship had developed with Forest Industries Ireland (FI) and the Social, Economic Environmental Forestry Association (SEEFA) and hopes were high that forestry in Ireland had begun to turn a corner.

In an extraordinary footnote, in June this year Healy-Rae stated in an interview on his local radio station that he had basically been forced to resign by his brother Danny (also a Teachta Dála), and was full of regrets for having stood down, especially for giving up his forestry brief

within the Department of Agriculture.

However, according to sources from within the forestry organisations, Healy-Rae has since reached out and promised to continue to pursue the policies and plans that had been agreed with the representative bodies within his role as TD, so the industry is hopeful that some may still come to fruition.

Healy-Rae was eventually replaced at the end of May by Niall Collins, who has previously served as a Junior Minister at the Dept. of Higher Education, and the Dept. of Justice. A seasoned politician who was first elected to the Dáil in 2007, it is too soon to speculate regarding his potential impact on our sector.

He is certainly a more experienced operator at government level and has real access to the senior cabinet ministers and decision makers, plus a fairly prominent media profile. However, whether he can emulate Michael Healy-Rae, who was a forest owner and appeared to have had a real passion for trees, remains to be seen.

Collins has however as of July 2026 launched an online Forestry Hub and appointed three Forestry Ambassadors (existing forest owners) to inform and promote forestry to potential new growers. This move has been welcomed by both SEEFA & FI.

AFFORESTATION SPRING 2026

Ireland's afforestation programme continues to experience disastrous results. Hectares planted this spring and early summer amounted to 1,060 hectares, of which 20-25% was Sitka spruce. This is even lower than last year and can only be described as catastrophic for the industry and for the country.

The reasons for afforestation levels falling off a cliff are many and varied, depending on who you ask, but they include:

- Constant anti-conifer afforestation campaign in mainstream and social media.

- Impact of ash dieback on investment confidence.
- Competition from tax-free agricultural land leasing.
- Absence of serious commitment to forestry from the Government.
 - No appointment of a senior minister and prolonged wait for new junior minister to be named.
 - Forest Service name abolished.
 - No evidence of official concern from the Minister of Agriculture.
- Increasingly protracted and complicated afforestation licence approval process, with increasing

levels of referrals to ecologists and ornithologists, and an increased number of requests for further information from the Dept.

To go from 10,000 ha in 2005 to 6,500 ha in 2016 was regarded at the time as very worrying. To now have a predicted outturn of 1,500 ha in 2026 is a disgrace.

Sadly, though not surprisingly, there has been no urgent reaction or response from the Irish government, and none is expected in the near future – despite the fact that the forest industry employs 9,000 people.

STIHL

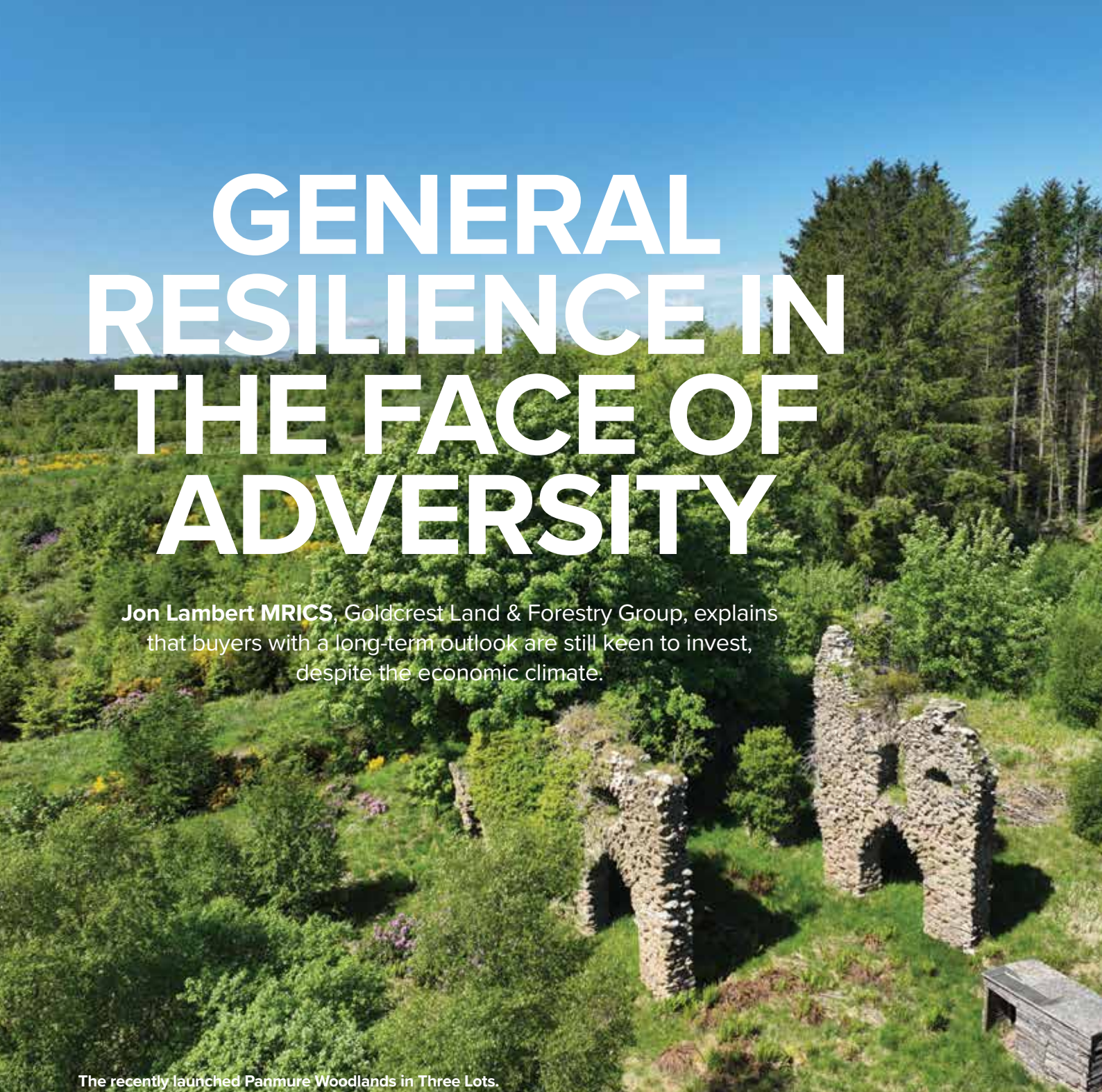
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An aerial photograph of a dense, green forest. In the foreground, several ancient stone ruins, possibly Roman or Celtic, are visible. The ruins consist of several tall, rectangular stone walls with arched openings, some of which are partially overgrown with vegetation. The forest is composed of a mix of deciduous and coniferous trees, with a vibrant green canopy. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

GENERAL RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

Jon Lambert MRICS, Goldcrest Land & Forestry Group, explains that buyers with a long-term outlook are still keen to invest, despite the economic climate.

The recently launched Panmure Woodlands in Three Lots.

What is the single biggest factor affecting forestry property prices? For what it's worth, in my opinion, it is timber prices. Timber prices themselves are influenced by wider economic activity, housebuilding, manufacturing output and, ultimately, consumer confidence.

When the last Prime Minister took office in July 2024, one of the headline commitments was to deliver 1.5 million new homes during the course of the Parliament. He is not the first, and certainly will not be the last PM to make an ambitious pledge and then face challenges in delivering it. Political promises aside, when economic growth slows, demand for timber products often

follows suit. Fencing, pallets, packaging, panel products and construction materials are all closely linked to economic activity.

Persistently high fuel costs, rising labour expenses and inflation remaining around 3% have all placed pressure on timber markets. It is difficult to see a sustained improvement in timber prices until the wider economy strengthens and confidence returns across key sectors.

With such an unoptimistic introduction, one might expect a wholly gloomy report. However, the forestry market remains remarkably resilient. Investors and purchasers understand that timber is a long-term asset, requiring decades to mature. As a result, many

are prepared to look beyond short-term fluctuations and focus on the longer-term fundamentals of the market.

This patient capital has begun to identify opportunities, and Goldcrest Land & Forestry Group has been particularly active during the last quarter. Properties that have been marketed effectively, supported by realistic pricing and strong underlying characteristics, have continued to attract significant interest.

Craigdow Forest in Ayrshire, extending to 246 hectares, of which 124 hectares are stocked with commercial conifers with an average age of 13, went under offer at a figure well above the guide price of £2.3 million. The purchaser



moved quickly to secure the property in the face of strong competition.

A similar story unfolded at Auchanruie, a 240-hectare property containing 188 hectares of commercial conifers with an average crop age of

23 years. A relatively swift transaction resulted in a sale price exceeding the guide price of £3.25 million.

Both properties benefited from sound fundamentals, good location, excellent access, favourable ground conditions, moderate to high yield classes and quality timber crops. These characteristics continue to underpin demand, even during periods of softer timber pricing.

In Wales, with stunning views towards Colwyn Bay and a useful storage shed, Bryn y Maen Wood extending to 27.31 hectares is also under offer at a figure above the asking price of £350,000.

And, last but not least, we have concluded a sale on a parcel of land in Sudbury Suffolk growing maturing cricket bat willow. Pricing remains confidential but the example illustrates the interest that purchasers show in land plus commodities. A rather appropriate sale following this wonderfully protracted hot summer we have been experiencing.

Over the last few weeks, Goldcrest has launched six properties with a combined value of approximately £10 million. The properties offer a range of investment opportunities across different price brackets and buyer profiles. Encouragingly, initial levels of enquiry have been positive, despite the backdrop of the summer holiday season.

Overall, it has been a positive quarter but there are some properties out there on and off market that have failed to find homes. It is not entirely clear to me why. Is it the asking price? Sometimes. But my instinct is that it has resulted from lack of purchaser confidence in the economy. The result is that I believe there is still value in the market and opportunities to be had.

The planting land market has been quiet. We have seen prices settling in the last six months in a range from £8,000 - £12,000 per hectare. The variation resulting from land quality, location and perceived chances of securing planting approval. The devolved forestry authorities, granting planting contracts, have come under considerable scrutiny of late for the efficiency and technical process of formalising the contracts. Some applications remain in limbo after three years or more. An unacceptable position doing considerable damage to investor confidence.

All in all, the resilience of the forestry market continues to stand out. While timber prices remain under pressure, demand for well-presented, sensibly priced properties with strong long-term fundamentals remains robust. Buyers are taking a measured approach, but they are still active, and quality forestry assets continue to command attention.



Bryn y Maen, north Wales - under offer.

UNDERSTANDING AND PREDICTING STEM CRACKING IN NOBLE FIR

Forest Research Scientists **Thomas Baer, Adam Ash** and Senior Scientist **Rubén Manso** explain one of the risks to an emerging timber species.

Across the UK, we are experiencing unprecedented extreme drought events. These events are expected to become even more frequent and intense in the future. Drought has been reported to be a trigger for stem cracking in several species, resulting in radial and longitudinal splits which have a significant impact on tree health and timber quality.

Different species show different predispositions to cracking, with significant within-species variability. Understanding what makes a species or a tree more susceptible to cracking than another is therefore of great value.

With increasing focus on species diversification, the interest in timber quality from emerging species has also grown in recent years. Noble fir is one of those species.

Timber from noble fir has been perceived to be comparatively poor in the past. However, this assumption could be a result of limited testing of timber properties in Britain. Recent studies indicated that, at similar rotation lengths, British-grown noble fir could potentially produce timber of strength classes compatible with structural uses in the UK. Finding out how the species responds to drought is increasingly important.

What might influence cracking?

Factors which influence cracking are still not fully understood, however they could be the result of tangential tension during extended periods of moisture deficit. This causes the sapwood to shrink, dry and eventually split radially. The rupture can remain internal and not visible on the outside, or it can propagate radially and tear the cambium and create a visible scar on the bark (Fig. 1).

Although the crack may seal and normal ring growth continues, the scar can remain visible on the bark for many

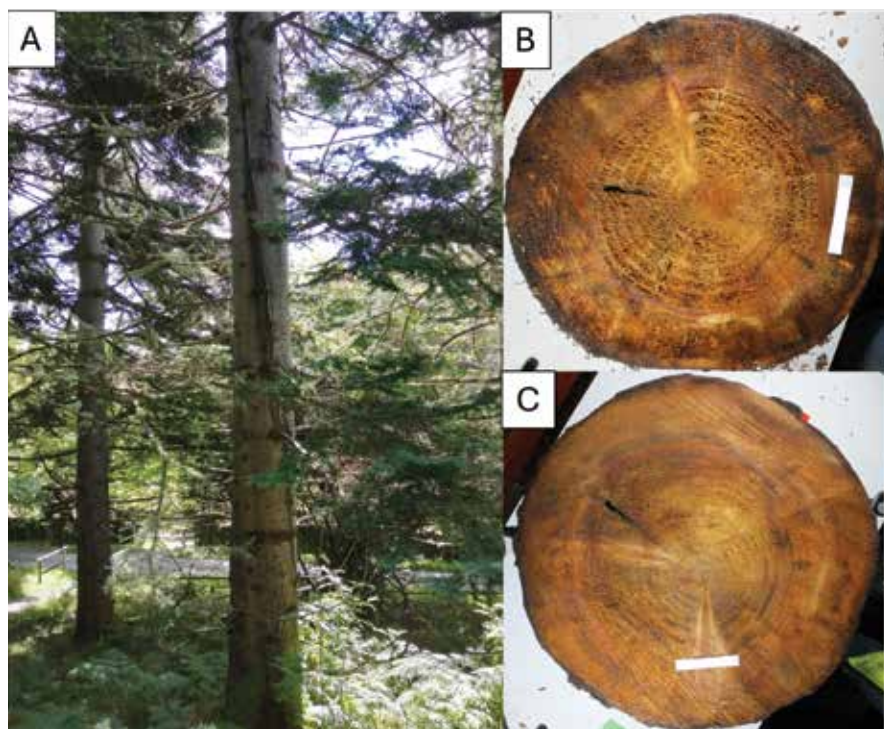


Fig. 1: A: Longitudinal drought crack on standing noble fir. B + C: Radial view of drought crack in Sitka spruce on cross sections from within the same tree with > 3m height difference between sections.

years. Our understanding of why some trees are more susceptible to cracking than others also remains incomplete. Site conditions, tree physiology and genetics all are likely to play a role.

Cracking in noble fir has been linked with the increasing age of trees and tree size, while the importance of soil and rooting depth has also been stressed in research. These factors influence either the tree's water requirements or its ability to access water at greater depths which may lead to trees being prone to stem cracking because of increased internal tensions.

Small proportions of late wood in tree rings have also been observed in cracked trees, suggesting that structural elements may also be relevant. With all this in mind, thinning and adequate site selection have been suggested as countermeasures against cracking. However, previous work has been limited by sample size, geographic representation or knowledge of genotype.

The gaps in knowledge provide opportunities to conduct more representative research on this topic. We are particularly interested in whether

a tree's likelihood of cracking can be predicted based on the physiological traits described above and whether there are differences across provenances of the species.

Non-destructive and destructive testing

Broadly speaking, there are two possible research approaches in the field: the first is non-destructive testing. This approach is mainly limited to visual assessment, accompanied with minimal invasive sampling such as microdrill measurements or tree coring.

The other is destructive testing methods, which would include collecting logs from felled trees. This method allows for more in-depth analysis, as it allows us to locate the crack within the tree. We can establish what year it occurred and what the tree's physiological traits were at that point, such as growing pattern, size, wood density or within-ring earlywood-latewood proportion.

Funding permitting, these sampling strategies could first be deployed across the provenance trials of noble fir managed by Forest Research, which can

be selected according to climatic criteria (Fig. 2).

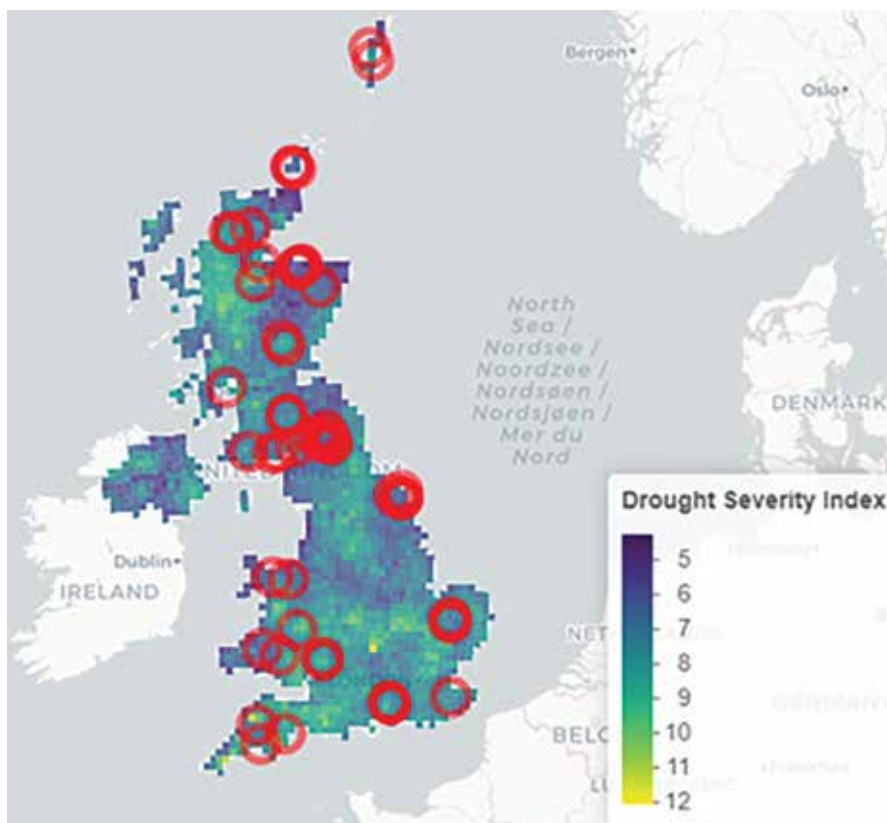
How you can help

For a more complete picture of this issue in noble fir, and indeed in any other British-grown conifers, we need the support of the sector. We currently invite and encourage forestry professionals to report trees and stands that show signs of drought cracking by using the TreeAlert portal (<https://treealert.forestresearch.gov.uk>).

This portal allows you to enter information on the affected trees such as their geographical location and only requires the upload of one image. This information is essential to better map and assess stem cracking, and to help direct possible future research on this important matter.

Find out more: <https://bit.ly/3UDkhQU>

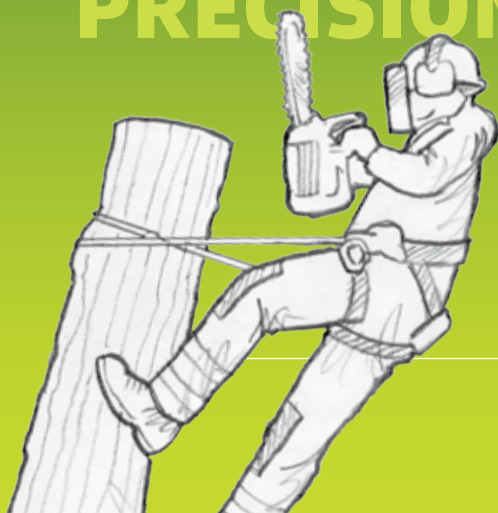
Fig. 2 (right): Forest Research managed trial sites in the UK containing noble fir (note: not all sites are provenance trials) on drought severity index (5 being low and 12 being high) map.



Forest Research, Drought severity index data source: Met Office.

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TINY PREDATOR, BIG IMPACT:

PROTECTING BRITAIN'S SPRUCE FORESTS

Molly Davidson and **Katy Dainton**, entomologists at the Forest Research Northern Research Station, provide an overview of the great spruce bark beetle landscape.

Among the insect pests threatening spruce trees in Great Britain, the great spruce bark beetle (*Dendroctonus micans*) remains one of the most damaging invasive forest pests when left unmanaged.

The pest can successfully infest all species of spruce, including Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) and Norway spruce (*P. abies*), whether trees are stressed or healthy. Damage is caused by the juvenile stages of the pest, with the larvae feeding on the inner bark layers of living trees - in some cases completely girdling the main stem.

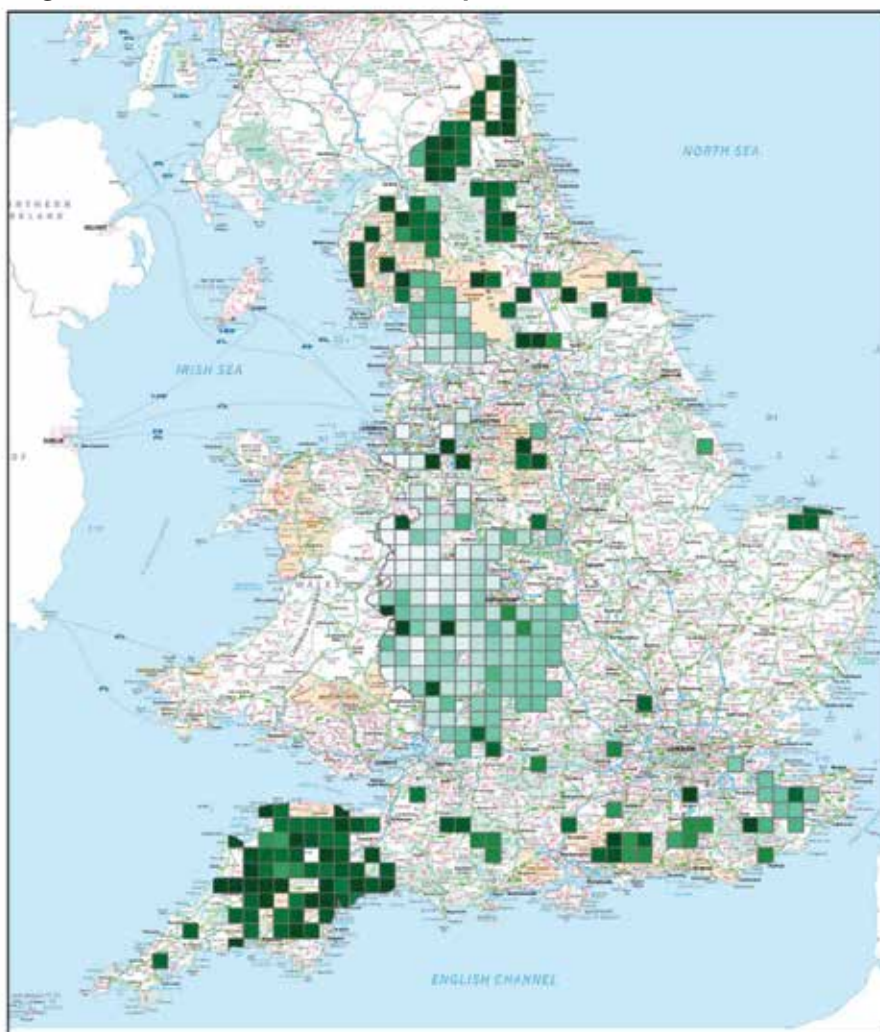
It can often take several years for healthy trees to be killed, whereas those stressed from drought or bark damage can decline at a faster rate. Luckily, however, if an infestation is detected early and control measures implemented, tree mortality rates are generally low.

Unlike many bark beetle pests, *D. micans*' distinctive biology makes it particularly challenging to detect, especially in the early stages of infestation. The species does not rely on aggregation pheromones to attract mates or coordinate mass attacks on healthy trees, as many Ips species do. Instead, a single adult female *D. micans* is able to successfully attack a spruce tree and start a new breeding colony (Gregoire, 1988).

As a result, pheromone-based trapping methods commonly used for other bark beetles are not effective for monitoring or controlling *D. micans*. This can allow large beetle populations to build-up before they are noticed.

Believed to be native to Siberia, *D. micans* has expanded its range throughout large areas of Europe and western Asia, both via natural dispersal fuelled by the expansion of spruce planting and as a result of transporting infested timber. In Great Britain, the beetle was first reported in Shropshire in 1982 and was already established throughout large areas of Wales and the West Midlands.

England and Wales Distribution Map: Forest Research



Legend: *D. micans* positives (and *R. grandis* releases) between 1984 (pale green) and 2023 (dark green)

Today, *D. micans* is widely distributed across England, Wales and much of southern and central Scotland. The beetle is absent from the island of Ireland and northern areas of Scotland, including above the Angus region on the east coast and Argyll and Bute, as indicated on the distribution map.

This map has been produced using both historical and current data from

TreeAlert, alongside findings from a multi-year survey programme conducted by the Scottish Forestry Tree Health team and its contractors, including a new survey completed earlier this year. The 2026 survey has identified a new leading edge of *D. micans* infestation in Scotland, improving our understanding of the pest's current distribution and rate of spread. These data have enabled Forest >>

FOREST RESEARCH

Research to deploy control measures at an earlier stage of infestation, shortly after detection.

Forest Research would also like to acknowledge the contribution of Forestry Commission Plant Health Officers, forest managers and woodland owners who reported *D. micans* through TreeAlert (103 confirmed reports between 2024 and 2025).

D. micans control

Despite the challenges posed by *D. micans*, Forest Research entomologists have an important ally in the specialist predator *Rhizophagus grandis*, which has helped limit the beetle's impact across Great Britain. This is a predatory beetle that breeds exclusively in the presence of developing *D. micans* broods and feeds on their immature stages – a rare trait among insect predators most of which are more generalist.

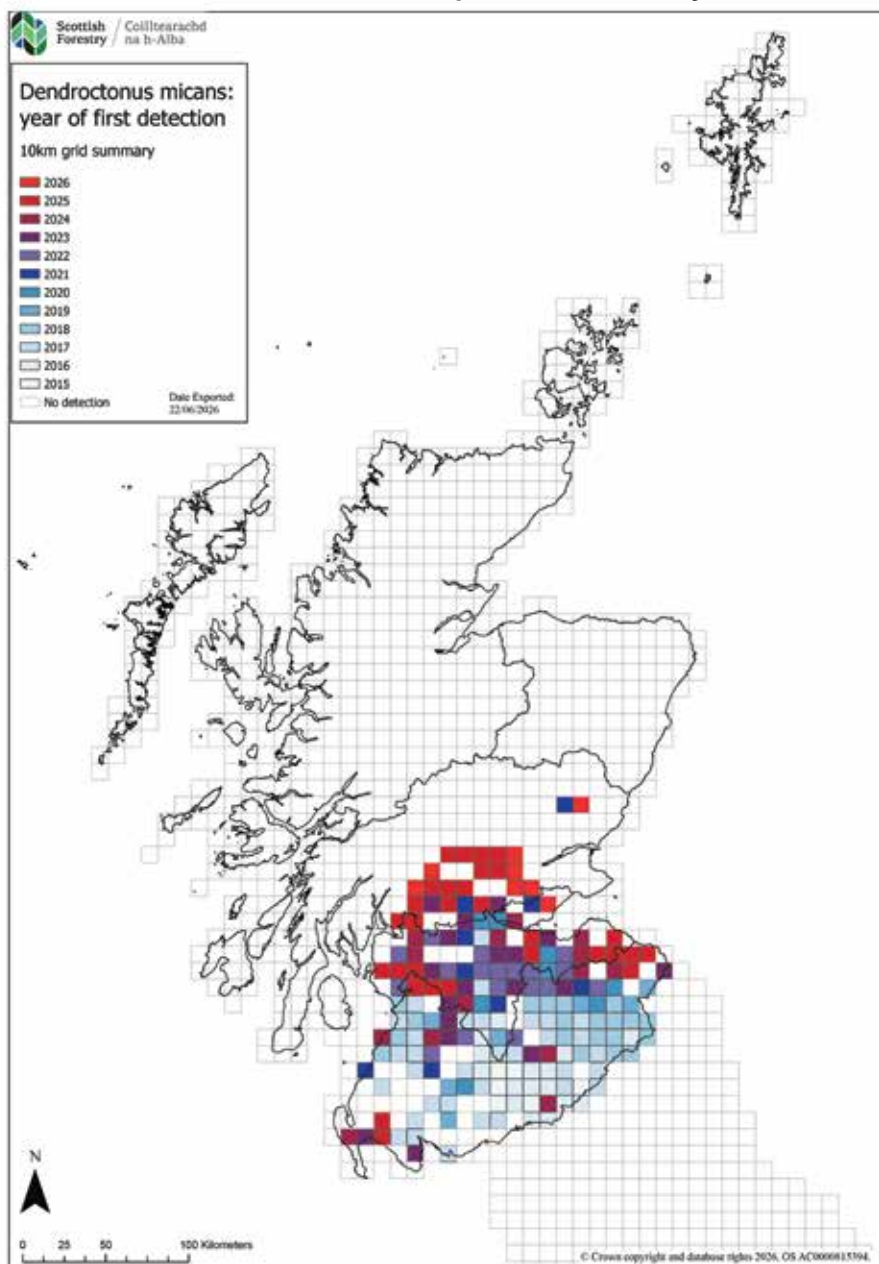
This close association with its prey, combined with its ability to locate infestations over several kilometres, makes it an effective biological control agent. Forest Research has operated a breed and release programme for this predator since the 1980s. Approximately 2,500 predators are reared each year and strategically deployed in infested spruce stands across Great Britain to suppress *D. micans* populations, slow its spread and minimise tree mortality.

Programme funding

The annual cost of the *Rhizophagus grandis* breeding and release programme is approximately £52,000. Funding is currently primarily provided by the public sector (Scottish Forestry, Forestry and Land Scotland, Forestry England). In addition, the wider *Dendroctonus micans* surveillance programme, including aerial surveys, costs in excess of £200,000



Scottish *D. micans* Distribution Map: Scottish Forestry



annually and is funded separately by Scottish Forestry and Forestry England.

Support from Confor and its members has been instrumental in the success of the biological control programme. However, rising costs associated with predator production, monitoring and field releases mean that additional investment is now required to maintain this vital work. To help secure the future of the programme and ensure that predator releases can continue on privately managed sites, Confor members are being asked for a collective annual contribution of £12,500 for the next five years.

Continued support will help minimise the economic and environmental impacts of *D. micans* and support the long-term

resilience of spruce forests across Great Britain. If you or your organisation would like to contribute to the programme, donations can be made via the dedicated GoFundMe page (<https://gofund.me/3dc929d49>) or by contacting Confor's Richard Hunter directly.

Spruce decline in SE Scotland

The team at Forest Research also want to use this opportunity to acknowledge the recent reports of unexpected levels of spruce decline across areas of south-east Scotland. In several localised areas, the scale and severity of spruce decline observed is unusual in a UK context and warrants further investigation.

Initial site inspections in collaboration with the Scottish Forestry Tree Health

team, FLS and other forest managers are underway. Preliminary findings show multiple factors appear to be contributing to the elevated levels of tree mortality observed, with *D. micans* one of the agents associated with decline at some sites.

We aim to determine whether the decline observed in these localities is isolated or indicative of a broader emerging issue affecting spruce health.

Reporting pests and diseases

Forest managers who suspect an outbreak of *D. micans* should report this through our TreeAlert reporting tool. Once reported, the entomology team at Forest Research's Northern Research Station will assess the infestation and determine whether the site is suitable for inclusion in the biocontrol programme.

TreeAlert is also available to members of the public, such as forest visitors, who suspect they have seen evidence of tree pests or diseases in Great Britain (suspected sightings in Northern Ireland should be reported to the email address: planthealth@daera-ni.gov.uk).



Rhizophagus grandis. © Crown copyright. Forest Research.

The system can be accessed at <https://treealert.forestresearch.gov.uk>.

The following information is essential for reporting via TreeAlert:

- Details of the location of the tree or trees of concern, such as a grid reference or postcode. Alternatively, you can identify the location on a map within TreeAlert.
- The capacity to upload three digital photographs, including one of the affected tree(s) in context, one of the symptoms in context, and one of the

symptoms in detail.

Protecting Britain's spruce forests

The continued success of *D. micans* control depends on a combination of vigilant monitoring, prompt reporting through TreeAlert and sustained investment in the *R. grandis* breeding and release programme. Together, these measures will help limit the pest's spread and protect the long-term health, productivity and resilience of Britain's spruce forests.



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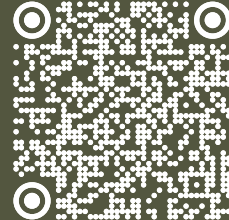
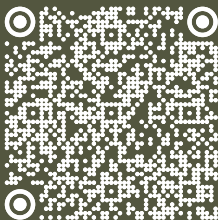
Gweler canllawiau'r cynllun am y meini prawf cymhwysedd llawn.

Eligible applicants can apply for investment to enhance their ability to do one or more of the following:

- increase capacity for seed supply, as a tree nursery and/or for ground preparation
- realise forestry potential by bringing woodlands under management and/or increasing harvesting and enabling/improving primary processing
- promote the economic and sustainable production of timber and timber products, adding value to forest products through secondary processing
- support their transition towards net zero.

Applicants must be based in Wales, with equipment purchased predominantly for use in Wales.

See scheme guidelines for full eligibility criteria.



WHAT IS THE NEXT CHAPTER FOR FORESTRY IN SCOTLAND?

Graeme Leith, partner and head of rural business and natural capital at Brodies LLP, explores the rural policies currently under consideration and their potential impact on forestry businesses.

Since taking office, the new Scottish Government has sought to place rural Scotland firmly on its agenda. At this year's Royal Highland Show, First Minister John Swinney reaffirmed the commitment to engaging with the proposed Rural Renewal Bill – aimed at supporting the sustainable growth of rural communities – within the first 100 days of government.

While forestry is not a central focus of the proposed legislation, it acts as an important reminder of the government's broader vision for rural Scotland. The SNP manifesto included ambitions to support the creation of 18,000 hectares of woodland annually by 2029, with at least 40% of new native woodland by 2045. In addition, it pledged to strengthen biosecurity, support deer control incentives and committed to the completion of a National Register of Ancient Woodland.

Taken together, there is a clear indication that forestry will play a central role in meeting Scotland's environmental and economic goals.

For the forestry sector, these planting targets are welcome. But the focus for many forestry businesses and forest owners will be less about these headlines and more about how the policies are implemented during the term of this government.

While there have been some success stories surrounding woodland creation in recent years, there have also been difficulties in meeting targets. Maintaining momentum and long-term investment – often measured over decades – will be key. Businesses and investors need confidence that funding support will remain consistent.

Equally important is the wider land-use framework within which forestry operates. Proponents of planting projects must navigate

complex and, oftentimes, competing interests. Considered scrutiny will always remain integral to the process, but maintaining progress towards woodland creation targets will require clear and proportionate decision-making frameworks that are capable of providing timely outcomes. If targets are to be met, policies around land use, community engagement and regulatory requirements must be aligned with the strategy of increasing tree cover.

As the policy landscape continues to evolve, the climate also offers up an opportunity for greater collaboration across the forestry sector itself. Many challenges and opportunities are shared ones. From landowners and forest managers to communities and environmental stakeholders, strengthening domestic timber supply chains in Scotland and supporting sustainable rural growth requires a pull in the same direction.

By working together and engaging constructively in discussions around land use and rural development, the sector will be well placed to secure a successful future for Scotland.

For forestry in Scotland, therefore, success will mean turning ambition into delivery. The commitments set out by the

Scottish Government indicate a positive direction of travel.

Yet the long-term health of the sector will require the necessary conditions that mean these objectives can be put into practice. With forestry already proving its

place in Scotland's rural economy, the right framework will only allow it to flourish further and emerge stronger in the years to come.



SHAPING SCOTLAND'S RURAL RENEWAL: FORESTRY, TIMBER & THE ROAD AHEAD

Brodies and Confor are delighted to host a half-day conference on Thursday 8 October at Brodies' Edinburgh office.

Bringing together industry leaders, policymakers and key stakeholders, the event will explore the opportunities and challenges facing Scotland's forestry and timber sectors, and the vital role they play in supporting rural renewal, economic growth and Scotland's net zero ambitions.

Following the conference, we'll also host an exclusive Employment Law Workshop, covering recent and upcoming changes following the Employment Rights Act 2025, with practical actions that forestry businesses can take now.

You can find out more information and RSVP via the QR code.



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CREATING THE INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDED FOR TOMORROW'S TIMBER

Ed Willis, Legal Director at Michelmores, considers the infrastructure planning required to support a growing timber supply chain.

Recent years have seen an unprecedented focus on woodland creation, whether for commercial forestry, environmental enhancement or amenity purposes. At the same time, increasing attention is being given to strengthening domestic timber production, with Confor leading the charge in having this recognised as a matter of national security.

However, there has been much less discussion on where that timber will ultimately be processed.

A productive forestry sector depends on far more than woodland creation. Extraction tracks, forest roads, transfer points, timber yards, sawmills, drying facilities and processing plants are all critical parts of the supply chain. Without this infrastructure, woodland creation risks becoming disconnected from the commercial systems needed to harvest, process and utilise timber effectively.

This article considers the role that planning plays in delivering that infrastructure. It focuses on England, although many of the same practical issues arise elsewhere in Great Britain.

The role of forestry permitted development rights

Many landowners assume forestry infrastructure will always require a planning application. In reality, certain forestry developments benefit from 'permitted development' rights. These rights apply where development is reasonably necessary for forestry purposes on land used for forestry. Forestry benefits from its own permitted development regime and should not simply be treated as a subset of agriculture.

Depending on the circumstances, extraction tracks, forest roads, turning areas, timber transfer points, stacking areas and associated drainage works may all fall within permitted development rights. Whether they do so will depend on the nature, scale and location of the proposal and whether the works are genuinely required for forestry operations.

However, forestry permitted development rights are not available



where the development is located within 25 metres of a trunk road or classified road. Consequently, access points and connections to the road network often become the critical planning issue.

Forestry buildings

Forestry permitted development rights also extend to buildings that are reasonably necessary for forestry purposes.

Unlike the agricultural permitted development regime, there are no minimum holding sizes, specific floor area thresholds or requirements for the activity to be carried on as a trade or business. Whether a building is reasonably necessary remains a question of planning judgment in each case.

Examples may include equipment stores, timber storage buildings, operational offices or shelters associated with woodland management. However, buildings intended for residential, tourism, leisure, retail or broader commercial purposes are unlikely to fall within the forestry permitted development regime and would normally require planning permission.

Prior notification and prior approval

Permitted development rights do not

mean a complete exemption from planning control. Forestry development is commonly subject to a prior notification procedure, under which details of the proposed works are submitted to the local planning authority before development begins.

The authority then decides whether prior approval is required. Where it is, the authority's consideration is generally limited to matters such as siting, design and external appearance, rather than the wider planning merits of the scheme.

Obtaining confirmation from the local authority at an early stage can provide valuable certainty for landowners, investors and contractors before significant expenditure is incurred.

It is also important to remember that planning is only one part of the regulatory picture. Depending on the site and proposal, other consents may be required, including those related to environmental impact, protected species, watercourses, felling, Scheduled Monuments and SSSIs.

Where forestry ends and timber processing begins

The position changes, however, once development moves beyond forestry operations and into timber processing.

Small-scale activities such as

continued on p76

continued from p75

planking, chipping or charcoal production may, depending on their scale and relationship to woodland management, be regarded as ancillary to forestry. However, the position becomes less straightforward where timber is imported from elsewhere, processing takes place at an industrial scale or the operation serves a wider commercial market.

Developments that will often require planning permission include sawmills, kiln drying and timber seasoning facilities, biomass processing operations, large-scale timber storage and distribution facilities and substantial processing buildings.

In such cases, planning authorities are likely to consider issues including traffic generation, landscape impact, ecology, biodiversity, drainage, noise and visual amenity.

Planning permission: The real bottleneck?

For larger processing facilities, securing planning permission can be a significant undertaking. The challenges may be even greater where sites are located within the Green Belt, National Landscapes or other environmentally sensitive locations.

The practical implications should not be underestimated. Whilst the statutory period for determining major planning applications is generally 13 weeks, government statistics show that only 19% of major applications were determined within that timescale during the first quarter of 2026.

Forestry-related developments are not immune from these delays. Recent appeal decisions in Surrey, for example, involving forestry buildings, hardstanding and sawmill operations, demonstrate that projects designed to support woodland management can still become entangled in lengthy planning and appeal processes.

Looking ahead

If the UK's woodland creation ambitions are to deliver a thriving domestic timber sector, attention must increasingly turn from planting trees to building the infrastructure that allows timber to reach the market. The long-term success of forestry may depend as much on roads, yards and processing facilities as on the woodlands themselves.

michelmores

Latest updates from the Timber Transport Forum

The **Tread Softly; Lower Impact Vehicles for Timber Haulage** good practice guide has been updated for 2026. It explains the limitations of forest and public roads and describes the range of haulage vehicles used in timber transport.

Huge thanks go to Frank MacCulloch, Highland Region Timber Transport Officer, for coordinating.

He said: "After 12 years since its original publication, Tread Softly has been refreshed with a new foreword explaining how to use the document. Also, following input from timber hauliers, the vehicle selection table has also been updated to better reflect vehicle impacts"

Further additions include low ground pressure systems (LGP) vehicle configurations and truck wear factors, alongside an updated table for selecting appropriate vehicles.

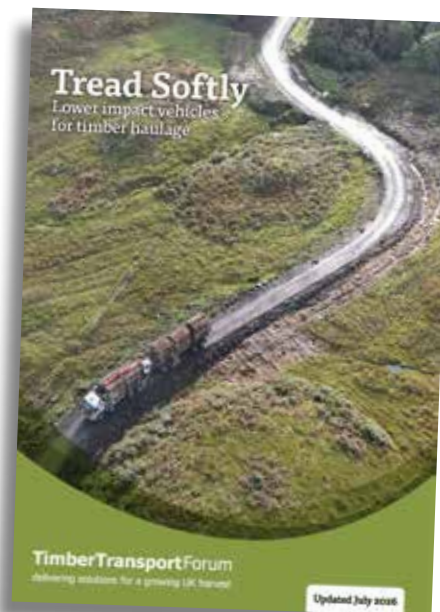
Tread Softly should be read alongside 'Transporting Timber on Public Roads Good Practice Guidance' and the 'Our Timber; Our Roads; Our communities' position statements, which set out the wider partnership framework through which timber haulage is planned and managed.

Vehicle configuration in Tread Softly is just one element of the broader approach supporting proportionate, collaborative decision making between the forest industry and roads authorities to protect infrastructure and manage impacts while enabling sustainable timber transport.

<https://timbertransportforum.org.uk/good-practice-guides/#treadsoftly>

The **Strategic Timber Transport Fund** has provided a £2 million boost across Scotland. £900,000 has been allocated to nine new projects for upgrades to fragile rural roads, creating passing places or building short routes to take timber traffic away from people's homes. A further £1.1 million has already been committed this year to funding ongoing initiatives including the TimberLINK coastal shipping project and the network of Regional Timber Transport officers across Scotland.

Simon Oldham, TTF Chair, commented: "Forests in Scotland absorb roughly 7.5 million tonnes of CO₂ every year and produce wood products that sustain over 34,000 jobs in forestry and wood processing. Most timber products



help to store the CO₂ absorbed by the forests and reduce the amount of timber we need to import every year to meet our needs.

"Processing the trees from our forests requires timber transport. This important new investment by Scottish Forestry will help the UK to realise the sustainable benefits provided by our forests while reducing the effects on the communities that live closest to them.

"On behalf of The Timber Transport Forum I thank all those local authorities and forest owners who have developed the projects that will be supported by the Strategic Timber Transport Fund as well as the regional timber transport and Scottish Forestry officers involved in delivery of this important initiative"

Join the **Timber Transport Forum and ROADEX Network** for a joint conference on 8 October in Aviemore. Hear updates and learn more on innovations, international perspectives, decarbonisation, monitoring of gravel roads, and much more. A networking dinner takes place the evening before.

A number of free tickets are available for hauliers and students. Please submit a 100 word paragraph on how you would benefit from this to ttf@timbertransportforum.org.uk.

For tickets and more, visit <https://timbertransportforum.org.uk/timber-transport-conference-8th-october-2026>.



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Audi now produces 16 models, four of which are fully electric, and others are either diesel, petrol or plug-in hybrid petrol. **Eamonn Wall** gets behind the wheel of the fully electric Q6 e-tron Quattro to see how it performs.

Audi's car range includes the familiar A1 small hatchback, A3 hatchback, A5 saloon and estate (which replaced the A4), the new A6 saloon and A6 estate, and the large A8 saloon. Their SUV range starts off with the smaller Q2, then onto Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7 and Q8. The range topper is the all-electric sports saloon, the e-tron GT.

In Audi speak, all fully electric models are designated e-tron. The four fully electric models are the Q4, Q6, A6 e-tron and the GT. The full Audi range spans the £25k-£165k price brackets.

Here we now review the Q6 e-tron Quattro, whose prices start off at £61k but the Edition 1 vehicle reviewed here has a price tag of £81k, being also enhanced by Ascari blue paint (£1,495) and sunroof (£1,525).

The Q6 has a large battery with a usable capacity of 95kw. When fully charged in the cold February weather (0°C), it had a range of 232 miles returning just 2.5 miles per kilowatt hour. The Audi brochure gives it a range of 344 miles and 3.6m/kwh, which is much more than I experienced.

It has a 285bhp motor providing power to all four wheels. Also, an official 0-60mph acceleration of 5.9 seconds. It is a heavy car at 2,325kg which is not unusual for a larger electric vehicle.

It comes fully loaded with heated front and rear seats, steering wheel, adaptive cruise control etc. The wheels are 21-inch 255/40 at the front and wider 285/40 at the rear. Towing is limited to a useful 2,400kg for a braked trailer.

The Q6 is 4,771mm long, 2,193mm wide and 1,648mm tall. The boot is of a reasonable size at 526 litres space, increasing to 1,529 litres with the rear seats folded which can be dropped by one or two thirds. The battery can be charged by fast chargers up to 270 KW (DC), and cables stored in the frunk.

The Q6 is a nice easy vehicle to drive, as is the case with electric vehicles generally. It corners very flat, so is easy to handle on twisty roads. On smooth roads the suspension is very quiet and even, but over bumps it feels very heavy and becomes a bit noisy and laden. The brakes are good, as are the lights.

The Edition 1 as tested at £81k seems expensive, especially as the new A6 now also comes with a full electric e-tron version priced at just £4k more.

The Q6 as tested looked good in its expensive blue paint which also covers some of the front grille reducing the amount of black paint on display. The Q6 is a solid performer.

Eamonn Wall BSc MSc Tech Cert Arb Dip GD (RBGE) FICFor is a Tree and Woodland Consultant and Director of Asset Management at Eamonn Wall & Co Ltd.



Change is afoot at FISA

The latest update on how the Forest Industry Safety Accord (FISA) is evolving.

FISA is undertaking a full circle review of how we work and how support can be increased for our members with enhanced, value-driven benefits. More than a decade after our inception, and under new leadership, now is the right time to build further from strong foundations.

Rethinking how and what we deliver

We are reviewing our governance input process alongside our guidance production procedures. The aim is a considered but timely service, putting in place robust processes that deliver results quicker for our members.

We are also, for the first time since 2012, reviewing the benefits of FISA membership. We want to ensure close alignment with contractor requirements, provide access to tools and benefits that enhance the member experience, and work with greater collaboration across the industry to help deliver a safer forest industry for all.

A fresh look

Our guidance is being redesigned. New and refreshed guidance will be produced in a single-column format for ease of readability. We are bringing back the tick boxes and numbered paragraphs for ease of reference and checking off. Where appropriate, main topic hazards will be highlighted at the top of each guide.

Guidance in production

Several new guides are progressing through production and are due to be published by the end of 2026: Drone Guidance, Managing Public Safety, First Aid, and Roadside Working.

FISA 701 Quads and All-Terrain Vehicles was relaunched at the Royal Welsh Show 2026. This is the first guide to be published in our new format.

In response to a rising incident rate involving ATVs, a dedicated Task & Finish Group within FISA's Plant & Equipment Group was swiftly convened to review the document, apply changes, and take it through to publication. Printed copies were distributed at the Show to all stands promoting quads and ATVs, so the guide reached farmers as well as foresters.

Further guidance and Technical



Notes currently being refreshed include TN004 Chainshot Risk Zones, FISA 808 CDM in Relation to Forestry, FISA 302 Basic Chainsaw Felling, FISA 310 Use of Winches, TN001 Using a Tree Jack, and FISA 603 Mechanical Harvesting.

FISA's flagship publication, Guidance on Managing Health & Safety in Forestry (GMHSF), is also being refreshed with a newly formed Task & Finish Group holding its first meeting in August.

Working groups

All nine of FISA's working groups are either operating effectively or due to hold their first meeting for some time; groups that had become less productive have been reformed so that outputs can resume. The Chainsaw Working Group reformation is a key highlight of our success so far.

On show

FISA will be attending the APF this year, with stands in both the Confor marquee and the Forestry Workers marquee. Members and prospective members are more than welcome to visit and have a chat with the FISA team.

Looking ahead

Recruitment for a FISA Technical Officer is underway with a focus on Chartered IOSH status coupled with forestry experience. The Technical Officer will bring their legislative knowledge and experience to help inform our guidance production process.

Our proposals, once refined, will be put forward to the Steering Group for approval. Our aim is to continue FISA's commitment to serving our members and the wider forest industry, and to helping keep everyone safe in our forests and woodlands. Further updates will follow via our e-updates and LinkedIn account as this work progresses.





Showtime!



Julian Evans shares his highlights from the Royal Welsh Show and thoughts about woodland planning going forward.

At this year's Royal Welsh Show there was much to interest the woodland owner, large or small. Many will know that the Tuesday is the key forestry day for talks, networking and activity in the far western corner of the huge showground in Builth Wells, and this year did not disappoint.

While for me the launch of Bangor University's forestry alumni initiative was a must – hosted by Confor and followed by the famous lunch of muntjac pate, grey squirrel pie and other game dishes – it was the presentation by Forest Research's (FR) Chief Scientist, Professor Bianca Ambrose-Oji, that I want to begin with.

She presented work by FR's David Edwards looking at species for planting

in the future to address climate change priorities and the need to diversify from over-reliance on Sitka spruce. In this she was assisted in the context of Wales by Gail Merriman, Welsh Government, who commissioned the research in Wales, Tom Henderson, Woodknowledge Wales, and Morwenna Spear Bangor University.

David's research first focussed on Scotland to narrow down potential species for future planting to around a dozen recommendations, using filters of site, suitability, seed availability, commercial usage, resilience, pest and disease risks and the like. This successful development has now been taken up in Wales - and appropriately tweaked, with work now starting on an English listing.

Whether a large or small woodland owner, if new planting is in the offing do visit Forest Research's website to see the species listings by country. Of course, they are only recommendations based on the best available research from numerous species trials, pest and diseases records, risk of invasiveness, and other attributes. As well as the main list there is a second showing species of good potential, but less well researched, and a third of possibles based on evidence of specimens in collections and arboreta.

I am reluctant to report here the actual species being suggested as it will depend on an owner's objectives, the site concerned and all the other issues one takes into consideration. But there

are now robust recommendations to assist nurseries, owners and managers, and industry in how Britain's palette of species will look like in the future.

Species trials are enjoying a resurgence, a much-valued renaissance, though one sadness of such long-term investment is the risk of storm or other damage devastating the plots just when they are becoming 'interesting'!

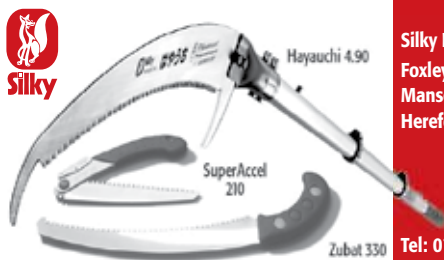
This happened to the numerous forest plots at the Bedgebury National Pinetum in the great storm of 1987 and Wales's less well-known but hugely valuable plots in the Brechfa Forest Garden in 2024 from Storm Darragh. In the latter case they had fortunately been assessed earlier that year by FR's Adam Offler and Chris Reynolds, the first full assessment for nearly 30 years. Their data were reported in January this year in the Quarterly Journal of Forestry 120(1): 18-29.

The other feature that impressed at the Royal Welsh was the huge transition to electrical and battery using equipment for many forestry operations. We know this is driven by our net zero ambition as a nation – and all of us wanting to do our bit to help mitigate climate change – but it was the evidence on stand after stand that struck home.

And talking of climate change and what we can do, a recent visit to Norway showed the near universal use of timber in construction and roofing with peat for insulation in out-of-town buildings. The latter may even sprout its own forest!

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Forestry expertise played an important role in a complex and co-ordinated response to a serious wildfire in Wales.

Cefn Ystrad Ffin, a woodland managed by Flintshire Woodlands (the trading arm of Scottish Woodlands in Wales and western England) was part of a large area affected after the wildfire broke out in August near Llandovery in Carmarthenshire.

Senior Forest Manager Charles Gittins said: “We worked with the landowner to ensure the insurance was in place to pay for the helicopter, then secured the helicopter, which played a significant role in bringing the wildfire under control.

“We also worked closely with the local farming community who, without hesitation, provided water bowsters to ensure the water was in the most accessible and convenient place for the helicopters.”

The damage is still being fully assessed, with the majority of trees affected being younger trees planted within the last ten years.

Want to see your picture here?

Forestry in Pictures is a regular feature in FTN. For every issue, we select the most impacting photograph sent by a reader. If you have a photo you would like to see published here, please send your file to ftn@confor.org.uk. Please include your name, a short comment text to go with the picture, and an image credit.

Photos should relate to forestry and timber and be of high-quality (minimum resolution 300dpi). Exceptional pictures might be considered for the front cover of a future FTN issue.

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

**COMING UP IN
OCT / NOV 26
– GET INVOLVED**

In our October / November issue we will be focusing on Professional Services and Policy & Political Engagement. 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.



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