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Forestry Journal

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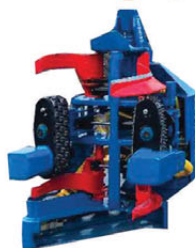


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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



What could plant passports mean for your business? Turn to page 38 to find out.

BE honest: how closely have you examined the new rules and regulations around plant passports for timber movements?

If you're answer is "not very much", you can be forgiven and count yourself among the majority.

There is a general assumption, when it comes to plant passports (introduced to align the UK with the European Union's new Plant Health Regulation, brought into force in December), that only those involved in timber haulage need concern themselves.

However, a more careful analysis reveals far more wide-reaching implications for forestry contractors and arborists, who risk leaving themselves liable.

For example, it may not occur to a contractor felling sweet chestnut that they will require a plant passport to transport it half a mile up the road to their own yard, but, according to the rules, they will.

While you would hope that, during the early days of their introduction, people in such scenarios would be forgiven for not adhering to the strict letter of the law, I think we've all encountered over-zealous officials looking for people to make examples of.

With that in mind, it's worth educating yourself about your responsibilities. In this issue, we have prepared an extensive examination of plant passports, with a range of examples demonstrating their relevance to contractors in the forest and arb sectors.

The Forestry Commission has been very helpful in supplying guidance for each scenario, so I hope you find it useful.

Our investigation was prompted by the concerns of a reader, and I'd like to remind all readers that if there's an issue within the industry you feel needs to be highlighted, we're only an email or phone call away.

John McNee, Editor

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Three arborists from Westonbirt The National Arboretum stand in a forest, each holding a STIHL chainsaw. They are wearing green t-shirts with the arboretum's name, safety harnesses, and orange gloves. The background is a dense forest with large trees and fallen leaves on the ground.**STIHL**

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Sir William Worsley to chair Forestry Commission



SIR William Worsley has been confirmed as the new chair of the Forestry Commission.

The announcement comes as Sir Harry Studholme's time at the Forestry Commission chair ends after seven years.

Sir William has stepped down as the government's Tree Champion, having held the position since June 2018. He took on his new role on 10 February. He will be in post for three years.

He currently holds the posts of chair of the National Forest Company as well as chairman of the Howardian Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee. He will be standing down from his role as National Forest Company chair in May.

Environment Secretary Theresa Villiers, who confirmed Sir William's appointment, said: "With his great expertise in forestry and passion for nature and trees, Sir William will play a pivotal role in leading the Forestry Commission at a critical time as it moves into its second century.

"Tree planting will play a crucial

part in the government's bold action to combat climate change, and the Forestry Commission has a vital role in delivering our ambitious plans for England's forests."

Sir William said: "Trees, woods and forests are so important to us – improving our landscapes, helping capture carbon, improving our general wellbeing and providing a renewable resource in the timber they produce.

"As Chair, my aim will be to celebrate, protect and deepen the impact of its excellent work, not only for the sake of our environment but also for the huge benefits that our success brings for society."

Stuart Goodall, Confor chief executive, commented: "I have known Sir William for many years and served with him on the independent panel that was established under Bishop James Jones to advise the UK Government. Sir William has long experience in both managing forestry as part of his estate and in working with ministers."

DON'T JUST PLANT, GROW, SAYS RFS

RECENT calls to plant millions more trees are missing a raft of opportunities to maximise impact on climate change, the Royal Forestry Society (RFS) has warned.

The charity fears planting millions of trees risks being a short-term indulgence if it is not followed by long-term sustainable management, which starts with recognising timber as a carbon store.

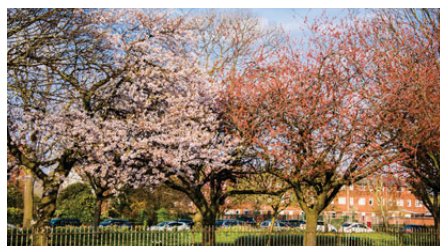
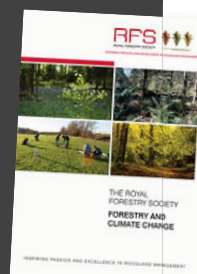
Following the publication of its Forestry and Climate Change policy, RFS chief executive Simon Lloyd said: "Climate change is now a national priority and should rightly be at the core of governments' forestry policies. Such a policy focus will drive real change while delivering multiple environmental benefits of trees, woods and forests.

"But to be truly successful, climate change policies for forestry must not overlook the enormous carbon capture potential in developing markets such as switching to more timber-based construction.

"Planting millions of trees risks being a short-term indulgence if we don't then commit to long-term sustainable management. For many land managers, the costs of planting and maintaining trees and woodland will generate income from timber and woodfuel in 50 or 100 years' time to re-invest in more trees. We need to be developing markets geared to this growth in home-grown production."

The charity has called for a clearer policy focus which underlines the cumulative benefit of planting resilient species and sustainably managing pre-existing woodland.

Read the full policy at www.rfs.org.uk.



FIRST ROUND OF SUCCESSFUL BIDDERS TO URBAN TREE CHALLENGE FUND ANNOUNCED

TENS of thousands of city trees are to be planted across England in the first round of Urban Tree Challenge Fund.

13 projects in urban communities have been awarded a share of the £10 million fund, with over 22,000 large trees and 28,000 small trees to be planted in areas including Middlesbrough, Merseyside and Bristol.

Launched in May 2019, the scheme will see 130,000 trees planted across England's towns and cities by 2021.

Environment Secretary Theresa Villiers said: "Trees are vital in the fight against climate change, to tackle air pollution and help us achieve our net-zero target by 2050. But for local communities they are so much more. They allow green spaces to come together, help both physical and mental wellbeing, and connect children and young people with nature.

"Our manifesto sets out our ambition to have every new street lined with trees, and the Urban Tree Challenge Fund complements this ambition, benefitting thousands of people for years to come."



Sale of wet firewood to be phased out

THE UK Government has confirmed plans to phase out the sale of wet firewood and coal for domestic burning in England.

Wet firewood and coal will be phased out between 2021 and 2023, giving suppliers and the public time to move to alternatives such as dry wood and manufactured solid fuels.

Sales of wet wood in units of under 2 m³ will be restricted from February 2021, allowing existing stocks to be used up. From this date, wet wood sold in volumes greater than 2 m³ will need to be sold with advice on how to dry it before burning.

Wood-burning stoves and coal fires are the single largest source of pollutant PM2.5, which consists of tiny particles that find their way into the body's lungs and blood.

The announcement by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is in line with Confor's response to the government consultation on domestic burning.

Caroline Ayre, national manager for England for Confor, said: "Processing and seasoning high-quality firewood is an important business for many of our members. We recommend customers buy local – burn local, and choose firewood with the Woodsure Ready to Burn label.

"Local firewood not only supports UK jobs and the rural economy, it is also crucial to managing our native woodlands. This is vital to ensure these woodlands' health and existence as carbon stores and biodiversity habitats for the long term.

"Buying local, seasoned firewood also helps to protect our woodlands from invasive pests, which can be imported on wet wood."

Environment Secretary George Eustice said: "Cosy open fires and wood-burning stoves are at the heart of many homes up and down the country, but the use of certain fuels means that they are also the biggest source of the most harmful pollutant that is affecting people in the UK. By moving towards the use of cleaner fuels such as dry wood we can all play a part in improving the health of millions of people.

"This is the latest step in delivering on the challenge we set ourselves in our world-leading Clean Air Strategy. We will continue to be ambitious and innovative in tackling air pollution from all sources as we work towards our goal to halve the harm to human health from air pollution by 2030."

TREE-PLANTING PLAN TO SAVE SCOTS SALMON

THE River Dee Trust has announced plans to plant a million native trees in the Cairngorms, with the aim of recreating areas of landscape that have been lost for 2,000 years.

The trees will help prevent a repetition of the high river temperatures which damaged young salmon stocks on the Upper Dee two years ago. They will provide nutrition and shelter for all river species, and will encourage a wide range of wildlife to thrive.

The £5.5 million project is being led by the Trust with the support of the Dee District Salmon Fishery Board.

River Dee director Dr Lorraine Hawkins said: "Atlantic salmon are now virtually extinct across their southern European range and are vanishing fast in the south of England. All the major Scottish salmon rivers have seen drastic declines. At current rates, we may have just 20 years to save the species.

"We know there are catastrophic losses at sea. Those factors must be tackled urgently. But we can take action now to give the young fish their best chance of survival before leaving their native rivers.

"Several current projects should produce immediate benefits. But we must also provide shade against more of the extreme temperatures we have been told to expect, while restoring a whole ecosystem that's been degraded over many centuries. This will help our threatened salmon, and all wildlife will benefit.

"We are determined to do everything we can to help nature help itself."



CONFOR WELCOMES SCOTTISH FORESTRY FUNDING BOOST

THE Scottish Government's allocation of an additional £6 million for the forestry sector in its Budget has been praised by Confor.

Stuart Goodall, CEO of Confor, welcomed the extra support for the industry as part of the Scottish Government's focus on tackling climate change.

Mr Goodall said: "In the year that COP26 comes to Scotland, this is further recognition that tree planting and wood use have a key role to play in addressing the climate emergency. I strongly welcome the Scottish Government's commitment to deliver on its tree-planting targets with an extra £6 million allocated in the coming year. Against a backdrop of the new UK Government's commitment to plant 30,000 ha a year by 2025 across the UK, Scotland is showing the way by planting 84 per cent of all trees last year.

"Scotland is now on track to increase this to 15,000 ha a year by 2025. The Government is putting its money where its mouth is because it understands the multiple benefits that forestry and wood can deliver – not just for climate change, but for wildlife, people and the economy."

Mr Goodall urged all parties in the Scottish Parliament to support the Budget, which allocates a total of £64 million to forestry.

After beating its tree-planting target of 10,000 ha in 2018/19, the Scottish Government has committed to increasing planting to 15,000 ha annually by the mid 2020s.

BSW Group acquired by Endless LLP

BSW Group, the UK's largest integrated forestry and sawmilling business, has been acquired by private equity firm Endless LLP as part of a multi-level growth plan for the company.

The sawmiller, which employs over 1,200 people and turns over £350 million annually, has previously expanded the business and integrated its supply chain through acquisitions such as Tilhill Forestry, Alvic Plastics and, more recently, Maelor Forest Nurseries.

Endless' purchase of BSW provides the capital to support BSW's future growth plans through further expansion of its

market position.

BSW CEO Tony Hackney, and CFO Alan Milne, will remain at the helm of the business and will continue to assist in driving the group's future growth.

Tony Hackney said: "This is fantastic news for BSW. Whilst it is business as usual, we are excited by the opportunities new ownership will bring us and we look forward to entering a new era of rapid growth and development under Endless' ownership. We would also like to thank the Brownlie family for creating such a strong legacy and supporting the growth of the company and its employees."

Aidan Robson, partner



L-R: Martin Gale (Chairman, BSW), Tom Callaghan (Investment Manager, Endless), Tony Hackney (CEO, BSW), Alan Milne (CFO, BSW), Aidan Robson (Partner, Endless).

at Endless, added: "We are delighted to have been selected to support the acquisition of BSW, a business with fantastic prospects and one that we believe has a very exciting future. As the country's largest timber producer, BSW plays a critical role in supporting the UK's commitment to using more local and sustainable raw materials and becoming

carbon neutral by 2050. We look forward to working closely with Tony, Alan and the rest of the BSW team to deliver continued organic growth and further diversification through investment and acquisition."

Founded in 1848 in Berwickshire, BSW is the largest sawmilling group in the UK, and is within the top 20 timber producers in Europe.



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CHRISTMAS TREES RECYCLED FOR CHARITY

AW Jenkinson Forest Products has helped raise vital funds for Sheffield Children's Hospital Charity thanks to an innovative Christmas tree pick-up service.

The initiative was launched last year by tree surgeons and landscape gardeners Mitchel Ingham of JM Groundcare and Joel Berry of Berry's Trees and Gardens. They managed to raise £7,300 in the process and were aiming for £10,000 this winter. However, the duo was delighted with the final total of £13,460.

The charity is close to the pair's heart. At the age of 13, Joel broke his hip joint badly and spent months receiving support from the hospital, while Mitchel's son was treated there.

The fundraisers collected 2,500 discarded trees from all over the city, asking people for a £10 donation in return. The trees were then chipped for free by AW Jenkinson Forest Products directly into one of their walking-floor artic trailers. The material was hauled to AW Jenkinson's processing facility at Clifton, where it will be turned into biomass fuel for power generation.

Mitchel and Joe are hoping to continue the initiative next year.

See www.christmastreecollections.uk for more details.



Industry accused of "taking advantage" of seasonal workers

CONCERN has been raised about the welfare of tree planters after evidence suggested some are sleeping in tents on site.

Forestry Journal was contacted by an individual within the tree-planting sector who said a number of his colleagues were concerned that landowners, forestry managers and contractors were taking advantage of ignorance around welfare regulations to keep costs low.

While some tree-planting companies hire temporary accommodation and provide welfare facilities for their seasonal employees, he said it was not uncommon for tree planters to be living on site in tents and caravans in the dead of winter.

He said: "There are guidelines in place that stipulate the minimum requirements for on-site welfare for workers, but they don't go into details about living conditions. From my understanding, no-one has really raised this issue about the deplorable living conditions people are being put into."

"They're planting chemically treated trees, getting coated with insecticides and living in caravans with no access to decontamination facilities. It's a bit of a concern that this issue hasn't been highlighted before. Without acknowledgement that there is an issue, there is acceptance of this kind of behaviour."

The individual, who asked not to be named, said he had been prompted to contact *Forestry Journal* after a social media post circulated among his colleagues showing a photo of a



tree planter's snow-covered tent with the message: 'Ready for bed, work tomorrow.'

He said: "The older, more experienced tree planters, who have a background of living in motor homes and caravans, act like this is an acceptable practice. As a result, anybody new coming into the industry

expects this as standard, unaware of the health and safety regulations associated with welfare."

"I see this as an opportunity to highlight a plight during a politically sensitive time for the forestry industry when the world is craving more trees. It's not slave labour, but it's absolutely taking advantage of someone who is not very well educated in the regulations."

Confor said it was unable to find evidence of planters sleeping in tents on planting sites.

Technical director Andrew Heald commented: "The welfare of everyone working on forestry sites is of great importance, and that includes access to toilets, washing facilities and somewhere dry to eat lunch or stop for a hot drink."

"Forestry workers carry out very physical work, often in isolated and challenging locations, and are expected to undertake difficult tasks to high professional standards. The provision of facilities for their general welfare has been required by law since 1992. The exact requirements are set out in FISA Safety Guide 806."

For more on welfare, see page 32.

I-JOIST LAUNCHES AT JAMES JONES AND SONS

FORESTRY and sawmilling business James Jones and Sons has launched a new I-Joist production line which it says is the largest, fastest and most efficient in Europe.

The investment of £8.5m will not only significantly increase the production capacity to 20 million linear metres a year, but will allow faster production times. This increased production speed will ensure increased stock levels and better service for distributors and end users. In-line innovations include a tension tester and precision end-trim saws, which will help reduce on-site waste and maximise floor and roof design optimisation by cutting to specified lengths suited to off-site manufacturing.

Angus Macfarlane, general manager of James Jones and Sons' Timber Systems Division, said: "House builders are under some pressure to meet the government's new home build figures. We believe our investment in the new facility comes at a vital time and will enable us to support the UK's construction industry to meet these targets."



Englefield Estate helps train next generation of foresters

WORKERS at the Englefield Estate in West Berkshire are passing on their skills to the next generation by mentoring a trainee with the Royal Forestry Society (RFS).

Pip Pearson was one of just five young people given the opportunity to take part in the RFS Forestry Roots Project 2020 which is supported by the ALA Green Charitable Trust. The project aims to provide college and university leavers with a one-year placement in the industry, leading to them gaining RFS certification.

Pip, who has a diploma in practical environmental conservation from the National Open College Network, has been mentored by the Englefield Estate's team including forestry worker Rob Allen.

Rob said: "Pip is very keen to learn. Working with us has given her the chance to put a lot of her previous training to practical use. We've been making sure that she has had an opportunity to take part in the full range of work we do.

"Just recently we've been thinning out a 30-year-old woodland on the Estate, making room for broadleaf trees such as chestnut and oak to thrive – they have a high biodiversity value and through active management the woodland can be more resistant to pests and diseases."

Pip said: "I was on an internship in Yorkshire with the Wildlife Trust when I saw the chance to apply for the Forestry Roots Project and leapt at the chance. I've always loved practical work, and working outdoors, so this is just about my ideal job.

"Every day is different. There's a lot to learn, and I've been involved in felling, pruning, brush cutting and planting, which means I've been able to use a lot of the equipment I've been trained on.

"I started here in September and I've already recommended forestry as a career to lots of my friends. This is a brilliant experience for me and I'm grateful to the people at the Englefield Estate and the Royal Forestry



Society for giving me this opportunity."

RFS Future Foresters officer Adam Pickles added: "Forestry is an exciting career with a great many different opportunities opening up. We are delighted to have been able to pair Englefield Estate with Pip and to see her develop her knowledge and skills during this year.

"We will be offering Forestry Roots placements again later in the year and hope many will be inspired by Pip's experiences."

The Englefield Estate manages around 3,500 acres of woodland under a long-term plan which ensures a sustainable timber crop.

Timber from Englefield is used for a wide range of products including flooring, construction and furniture-making, as well as fencing, chipboard and horse-bedding.

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FUTURE TREES TRUST ROLE FOR JOE BEESLEY

THE Future Trees Trust has announced the appointment of new research assistant Joe Beesley.

Joe will be supporting head of research Jo Clark in his role, which will consist of designing and analysing field trials, interpreting data and communicating the findings to a range of audiences.

Joe studied and graduated with a BSc and PhD in biochemistry at the University of Bristol before joining the charity.

Joe said: "I'm really excited to be joining Future Trees Trust and to be working with native tree species out in the field. I'm particularly interested in how we can use selective tree breeding to support ecological forestry and to provide resilience to climate change and tree disease. With my background in molecular genetics and disease, I hope I can bring new insights to our research approach."

Future Trees Trust CEO Tim Rowland added: "We're so pleased to welcome Joe to Future Trees Trust. Joe will make a huge difference to the scale, extent and scope of the work we carry out, and with his arrival we've moved up another gear. Joe joins us at an exciting time, as our work with the Living Ash Project, the PhD we're fully funding into oak flowering and all our other broadleaved improvement projects mean that we're committing more funds to our research than ever before."



Alba Trees MD to step down

THE managing director of cell-grown plant producer Alba Trees has announced his decision to step down.

Rodney Shearer, who has been with Alba for over 31 years, will step down following the company's AGM on 2 March.

Alba has grown significantly under Rodney's leadership, with the company occupying 13 ha of land across two sites in East Lothian, producing over 16 million trees in the last financial year, and now employing over 60 people.

Rodney Shearer said: "Alba has been a huge part of my life; my decision to leave the business has been incredibly hard, but now is the right time to step down. The business is in great shape to move forward with a staff and leadership team that is the best in the sector. My best wishes go to everyone at Alba and I look forward to watching it go from strength to strength."

Jon Alexander, chairman of Alba, said: "Rodney has been one of the driving forces in making Alba the largest producer of cell-



grown plants in the UK. It would not exist without the huge commitment he has shown to the business over the last 31 years.

"Rodney took a greenfield site and developed it into the nursery that it is now – seeing significant expansion over the 31-year period including many vital improvements that have positioned Alba where it is today.

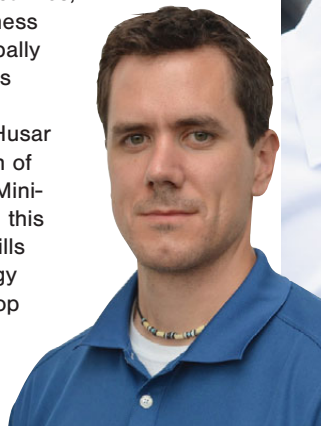
"Craig Turner, chief operations officer, will continue to lead the business. Craig joined the organisation in 2019 and has become a vital part of Alba's continuing growth. Together with Craig and the wider Alba team, we look forward to continuing Rodney's legacy and fulfilling the ambitious plans in place for the future of the company."

NEW PRODUCT MANAGEMENT APPOINTMENTS AT BOBCAT

DOOSAN Bobcat has bolstered its product management team for the Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) region with two new appointments.

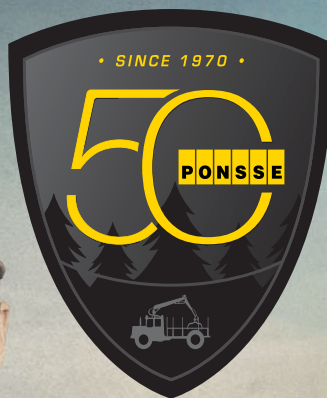
Based in the Dobříš headquarters in the Czech Republic, Jaroslav Fišer is now responsible for leading the skid-steer and compact track loader, backhoe loader and future loader product lines in the EMEA region. In this new role, Jaroslav will develop and implement the long-term strategies for the product lines, facilitate the development of business opportunities and collaborate globally with the various regional resources within Doosan Bobcat.

Also located in Dobříš, Robert Husar has been promoted to the position of product line manager for Bobcat Mini-Excavators in the EMEA region. In this role, he will use his portfolio of skills to further enhance product strategy and business development, develop the current portfolio of 17 mini-excavators and drive activities to achieve Doosan Bobcat's market share targets.



Above: Jaroslav Fišer.
Left: Robert Husar.

TOGETHER



Pekka Hakkarainen is one of the first Ponsse machine entrepreneurs. In the early stages of their business, Pekka's company forwarded wood to the roadside with Ponsse PAZ.

Synne Henriksen, is a new generation forestry machine operator, working with Ponsse machines in Norway. She is working with both, harvesters and forwarders full of enthusiasm and professionalism.

WE WOULD LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO OUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY ROAD SHOW

It's not always possible for You to visit our place, so we have decided to bring our celebration to a Location near You.

Saturday 18th April

Cambusmore Estate, Callander, FK17 8LL

Starts at 9am - 5pm

Wednesday 15th April

Tan y Coed, Pantperthog, Machynlleth, SY20 9AT

Starts at 9am - 5pm

At the shows you will be able to see a wide range of Ponsse Harvesters and Forwarders on display, Including the **New Bison Forwarder** and **Cobra Harvester**. We will have live demonstrations and also test drives will be available throughout the day. There will be Experienced personnel from UK and Finland to answer any questions you may have.

In our fully equipped Road Show display trailer we have our New state of the art Simulator that will be available for you to test your operating skills on.

FANTASTIC PROMOTIONS AND OFFERS AVAILABLE ONLY ON THE ROAD SHOW DAYS:

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New Harvester Head

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www.ponsse.com



A weekend away with Woodland Heritage

VISITS to some of Devon's finest woodlands, including the Clinton Devon, Perridge and Great Fulford estates, will take place at this year's Woodland Heritage Field Weekend.

With the first day of the weekend including a visit to Hooke Park in West Dorset to talk both timber construction techniques and woodland management, June 11–13 looks to offer three stimulating days for novice and experienced forester alike, the charity said.

Woodland Heritage administrator Kelly Morss commented: "Woodland Heritage is delighted to welcome new members

at any time of year and has a good-value membership offer, but with preference going to members to be allocated spaces at the Field Weekend each year, it's a good time to spring into action and join to support a charity that is doing so much to help the timber supply chain."

This year will also see the launch of a new grant scheme aimed at helping forestry students to attend the Field Weekend. With travel and overnight costs always a challenge, the new fund is intended to help new entrants to the industry pick up some invaluable first-

hand advice.

The Woodland Heritage Field Weekend starts on 11 June at John Makepeace's home in West Dorset, where the internationally acclaimed designer and furniture maker will talk about how he designed and made some of the pieces he will have on show. That afternoon, the teaching and experimental timber construction campus that John established in 1983 at Hooke Park will showcase its latest developments.

Now run by the Architectural Association, Hooke Park acts as a way for trainee architects from around the world to get to grips with both forestry and using timber in buildings.

Guided tours of both the Perridge and Great Fulford estate woodlands are planned for 12 June, with the forestry learning continuing on 13 June at Clinton Devon woodlands, courtesy of Lord Clinton and led by John Wilding.

RESEARCH TO COMBAT GREY SQUIRREL TREE DAMAGE

AN oral contraceptive being researched by the UK Squirrel Accord (UKSA) could help protect tree health by halting grey squirrel population growth, reducing their numbers and negative impacts.

Grey squirrels are damaging broadleaf trees and causing local extinctions of the native red squirrel, with the situation being so serious, the UKSA said, that it was part of a key House of Lords debate on threats from tree pests and diseases (13 February 2020) and was directly highlighted by 14 of the 24 speakers.

Intensive bark stripping by invasive non-native greys creates wounds that pathogens can infect. High densities of juveniles can strip bark from the main stem and branches of trees between April and September, with particularly susceptible tree species including oak, beech, hornbeam and sweet chestnut.

Grey squirrels are said to target young broadleaved trees, mostly 10–40 years of age, and repeat the damage year after year if their densities are high and unmanaged.

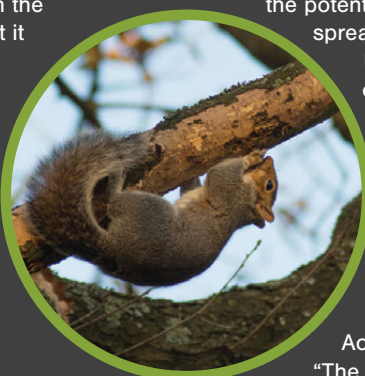
Lord Gardiner of Kimble, parliamentary under secretary of state for rural affairs and biosecurity, said: "I should also turn to the grey squirrel, how could I not acknowledge the

noble Earl Lord Kinnoull and all that he and the UK Squirrel Accord are undertaking. With support from DEFRA, the Accord's research to develop an oral contraceptive as an effective method for controlling grey squirrel populations is delivering promising initial results. Fertility control does have the potential to reduce grey squirrel populations and the spread of the squirrel pox virus."

UKSA is fundraising for research into an oral contraceptive to tackle the negative impacts the invasive non-native grey squirrel causes to native red squirrels and broadleaf trees. Researchers are working to turn a proven injectable formulation into an oral contraceptive that will be delivered to grey squirrels via food in a species-specific feeding hopper.

The Earl of Kinnoull, chair of the UK Squirrel Accord and Red Squirrel Survival Trust, said:

"The UK Squirrel Accord has commissioned a fertility-control project at the Animal and Plant Health Agency, which it is hoped will perfect a suitable active substance and hopper delivery method to allow fertility control to shrink grey squirrel numbers significantly, allowing forestry a chance."



www.squirrelaccord.uk/donate.



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LMS Excavator Attachments



The Scorpion 440 Tree Shear; a tree removal and shearing device to cut through trunks of up to 440mm diameter in a matter of seconds. Huge saving on expensive man hour labour costs, safe and controlled operation from the comfort of an excavator cab.

Make tree work more cost effective with the Scorpion 440. The Scorpion 440 tree shear attaches to most excavators or telehandlers and features built-in limb support and 25mm Hardox shearing blades.



LMS 440 Tree Shear



LMS 870 870



The Woodbuster 870 will easily preclear oversized timber sections for further processing and features LMS Design's unique sweeper arms which prevent logs sticking on the cutting jaws.



STANDARD FEATURES

- 2 no. heavy duty 25mm Hardox shearing blades (interchangeable)
- 2 no. 26 ton hydraulic blade shearing rams
- Heavy duty grapple
- 550 head tilt: left to right from centre point
- Hardox metal frame
- Easy access grease points
- Easy to replace brush back bushes
- Supplied with 15mm base plate
- Heavy duty de-mountable limb support
- 100kg

OPTIONS

- 28-well 6 port/120 litre diverter valve; for single hydraulic supply to service shear and switch to tilt
- Excavator mounting hitch if required

The upgraded Scorpion 440 Tree Shear features thicker grapple arms, thicker blades and limb supports. "A powerful labour saving tool to shear tree sections at ground level".

Suitable to fit to excavators 8 ton and above.

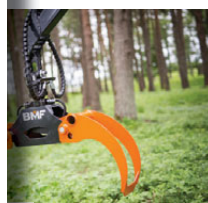
Energy Grapples



Energy grapples are specially engineered forestry grapples designed for harvesting energy wood efficiently and rapidly. With built in grapple and cutting actions plus a range of options for bundling and de-barking, energy grapples will make short work of thinning and wood up to 300mm. Stocking energy grapples from renowned European manufacturers such as Biojack.

Crane mounted 100 complete with diverting arms

BMF



Hakki Pilke Eagle



Max log diameter 270 mm
Max wood length 400 mm
Cutting blade Ø 200 mm
Power source 170A electric motor
4 kW

Hakki Feed 472



Quick connector QMT C20

The quick connector can be mounted between any wood grapple, rotator and felling grapple. Due to the unique rugged design, you can switch between grapples quickly and easily.



QMT C20



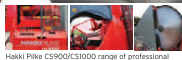
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Hakki Feed 472

Hakki Pilke Roller

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Welcoming the new 2020-21 M.LARGE Product Guide

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www.mlarge.com



Spaldings expands TMC Cancela mulcher range

A new addition to the tractor-mounted mulcher range supplied throughout the UK and Ireland by Spaldings is said to produce a fine and firm tilth ready for woodland replanting or sowing of other crops.

The TMC Cancela MPK-225 has a working width of 2.25 m (a 2.5 m version is also available), operates on the rear three-point linkage of a 220–300 hp tractor, and has 58 rigidly mounted hammers arranged in a helix pattern.

Each hammer has a single carbide tip that shreds residue against six rows of replaceable counter knives and incorporates the resulting mulched material into finely tilled topsoil.

Unlike other machines in the extensive range of mulchers from TMC Cancela, the MPK has a two-speed gearbox, providing a slower rotor speed for shredding and incorporation, and a faster speed for

grinding stumps up to 450 mm diameter.

Another feature unique to this model is a steel finishing roller equipped with six serrated traction rings and mounted on hydraulic cylinders to regulate the working depth and lift the roller out of work when not required.

Hefin Evans, forestry equipment sales specialist at Spaldings, explained how this machine came about: “We had a potential customer who was impressed with the structure and engineering quality of TMC Cancela’s mulchers but who had particular requirements for the land regeneration contract work he carries out.

“It’s a measure of TMC Cancela’s willingness to respond to different requirements that, after discussions with the company’s engineers, a prototype was built and extensively tested.”

www.spaldings.co.uk



NEW LOW-EMISSION CHAINSAW FROM ECHO

ECHO has launched the CS-621SX heavy-duty rear-handle chainsaw.

Built for arborists and landscaping professionals who use this type of saw daily for felling large trees, the new saw is a reduced-emissions version of the manufacturer’s best-selling CS-620SX.

The CS-621SX features a new 59.8 cc low-emission, professional-grade two-stroke ECHO engine, designed and manufactured in Japan. It is the latest chainsaw in the ECHO X-series of ‘Best in Class’ products, which aim to be industry-leading in terms of power and performance. The saw weighs 6.3kg (dry weight). Its balance and ergonomic design are said to offer manoeuvrability and precision, with dual bumper spikes enabling better control when sawing through stumps and thicker branches.

The CS-621SX features a decompression button for easy starting, a side-access chain tensioner and drop-prevention nuts which can’t be lost during maintenance. A rotating plastic chain catcher is designed to help protect the user from potential injury while also preventing chain damage. The heavy-duty aluminium handle has a secure rubber grip and reduces vibration in the hand. Fuel and oil caps are made larger for easier filling and the fuel tank is translucent to show the fuel level. The ‘G-FORCE’ air cleaner system features a large air filter to keep out debris.

Visit www.echo-tools.co.uk or call 01844 278800 for more information.

ROTOTILT LAUNCHES NEW QUICK COUPLER SYSTEM



ROTOTILT is launching a fully automatic quick coupler system for tiltrotators, machine couplers and tools, which aims to provide higher performance, safety and equipment longevity than existing market solutions.

“By taking over product development for the entire system, we can push the technology forward in a completely newer way than before, which has led to several patent applications,” explained Sven-Roger Ekström, product manager at Rototilt. “QuickChange is our largest-ever development project and opens completely new opportunities for excavator operators and our partners, as well

as for our own operations. We’re doing this as a result of major demand from our customers who want to see a comprehensive solution from us in which we take full product responsibility.”

According to Rototilt, extensive testing shows that the hydraulics on QuickChange offer significantly longer service life than the previous top solutions on the market.

Rototilt QuickChange will begin shipping in April.



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Husqvarna launches battery-powered duo

SWEDISH manufacturer Husqvarna has launched two new battery-powered chainsaws – the top-handle T540i XP and the rear-handle 540i XP.

Developed with professional users in mind, the saws use the newly released Husqvarna BLi200X (T540i XP) or Husqvarna BLi300 (540i XP) batteries, and are described as having capabilities equivalent to professional 40 cc class petrol chainsaws, making them ideal for tree removals and smaller felling tasks.

With the completely redesigned and optimised system, power is said to have been increased by more than 30 per cent compared to previous Husqvarna battery chainsaws, opening up opportunities that previously have been exclusive to petrol chainsaws.

Thanks to Husqvarna's battery technology, the latest Husqvarna X-Cut

chain SP21G and Husqvarna X-PRECISION bar, the new Husqvarna T540i XP offers cutting capacity for drop cuts of thick trunks and branches, while also being fast and nimble enough to take on smaller tasks. The rear-handle version boasts the same power and is described by the manufacturer as being the perfect all-round saw for any kind of groundwork.

Andreas Rangert, vice president for the tree professional unit at Husqvarna, said: "This is the most exciting battery launch we've had in many years, and I am confident these chainsaws will be game changers. The T540i XP and 540i XP saws have been designed for cutting capacity and convenience for the user, meaning the battery power is complemented by manoeuvrability, ergonomics and a user-friendly interface with quick control."

www.husqvarna.com



NEW TOUGH TABLET FROM HANDHELD

TECH manufacturer Handheld has launched a new "ultra-rugged" tablet, designed to increase fieldwork efficiency.

The Algiz RT8 Android tablet has an eight-inch capacitive, multi-touch display, strengthened with Gorilla Glass, rain- and glove-mode settings, 13-megapixel rear-facing and 5-megapixel front-facing cameras, and an all-day, field-replaceable battery.

"The Algiz RT8 is incredibly lightweight and compact for an ultra-rugged tablet," said Johan Hed, director of product management at Handheld Group. "It has a durable, sunlight-readable, 8-inch screen. This, coupled with the benefits of Android 9 and a lineup of enterprise-focused accessories, makes the Algiz RT8 a very versatile tool for field workers."

Thomas Löfblad, CEO Handheld Group, added: "We see the demand for Android tablets and phablets consistently increasing. We focus on developing products that meet the tough requirements our customers encounter in their real working environments. The new Algiz RT8 is built rugged from the inside out, which our customers have come to expect from us."

BOOTS BREAK FRESH GROUND

AMERICAN performance footwear brand Ariat has launched its Groundbreaker boot, which has been designed with the everyday tradesperson in mind.

Ariat's Groundbreaker boots have been designed to be worn in the forestry, construction and factory industries with maximum protection. Its protection technology conforms to EN ISO 20435 safety standards, featuring Ariat's unique 4LR footbed for support and cushioning. The 4LR footbed is a quadruple-layered sole, made up of an outsole providing maximum wear resistance, a lightweight stabilising shank for support, a contoured cushioning insole for all-day comfort, and a moisture-wicking liner with



odour defence.

Ariat's Duratread outsole has also been added – a rubber compound which is said to offer maximum wear-resistance with comfort and flexibility. The Duratread sole is described as being extremely flexible for ergonomic performance, while also being highly resistant to acids, oils and slips. Finally,

the Groundbreaker boots have been made from a waterproof construction with full-grain leather and mesh lining.

The Groundbreaker boots retail for £110 and are available at www.ariat.com/gb/en.



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4-Stroke Petrol



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Wood-Mizer Open House event set for Dundee

THIS April, Wood-Mizer will host its annual Spring Scottish Open House event over two days, with the support of Jas P Wilson and Multi-Log Systems. This event will showcase the latest in timber processing, firewood production and handling systems; it will be open to all, and will be free to attend.

Taking place on Friday 24 and Saturday 25 April, the event will be hosted at Tayside Forestry, one of the UK's largest Christmas tree growers and a business which has been

producing Christmas trees in the heart of the Angus countryside for nearly 60 years. It also operates a successful firewood business on site, with machinery which will be operating on site over the event.

This farm location will play host to three other forestry machinery suppliers.

Firstly, fronting this event will be Wood-Mizer, using this occasion to showcase their latest innovations and models at what will be their first UK open-house event of the year. Keith Threadgall of Wood-Mizer has stated that visitors will see live demonstrations covering a wide cross-section of their range, including small to large sawmills, planer/moulders and edging machines.

Secondly, Jas P Wilson Forest Machines will be on hand to showcase their Posch firewood processing machinery, and Botex forestry tractor-roof-mounted loaders and timber trailers. Other equipment, including their increasingly popular range of attachments including their JAK tree shears, Lasco cone splitters and FAE mulchers, will also be present.

The third supplier showcasing machinery is Multi-Log Systems, which produces the Eazi-Pak firewood log-bagging machine. Ideal for those looking to cut the handling requirements and effort out of net bagging, director John Wilson will be ensuring this revolutionary new machine is put through its paces with demonstrations throughout the two-day event.



EVENT TO SHOWCASE BIOCHAR BENEFITS

HEREFORDSHIRE-BASED forestry and timber company Say it with Wood (SIWW) is hosting a biochar information event on 25 April.

As trees grow, they draw CO² from the air, and with careful management they can replace environmentally damaging products such as plastic, steel and concrete. They can also replace carbon-emitting fossil fuels to provide heat or energy. One of the best methods for carbon sequestration is using biochar to build soil carbon.

Put simply, biochar is biomass heated in the absence of oxygen to make charcoal. When charged with nutrients and used in the soil it becomes a perfect habitat for soil mycorrhizal fungi, which provide plants with essential nutrients in exchange for carbohydrates.

Aly May, partner at SIWW, explained: "We are very excited about biochar. Many of our customers care deeply about sustainability, and adding biochar as a product is a logical step. Using charcoal in soil firstly locks that carbon away for thousands of years. It regulates water and nutrients in the soil, but it's mycorrhizas that do the magic. They have a symbiotic relationship with plants. Unlike other soil additives, it doesn't break down and the effects get better over time."

Say it with Wood is welcoming anyone wishing to learn more to attend the information day at its Herefordshire premises.

The day costs £20. For more information or to book a place on the day, email info@sayitwithwood.co.uk or call 07958 345 833.



FORESTRY FAIR TO TAKE PLACE IN THE HEART OF GERMANY

THE 18th KWF-Tagung will take place from 1–4 July 2020, in Schwarzenborn, Hessa, Germany.

Across 140 ha of field and forest area, approximately 500 exhibitors from over 25 countries will present their latest state-of-the-art technological developments, with 50,000 trade visitors expected to attend.

The KWF-Tagung consists of three elements – the KWF-Expo (forestry machines and innovations show), in-field demonstrations and the congress.

Products from all areas of forestry technology will be shown – from splitting wedges to personal protective equipment, chainsaws and log splitters to large machines including ICT, timber transport, municipal applications, energy engineering and occupational safety.

Outstanding innovations are awarded with KWF-innovation medals and laureates, and nominees will also give audiences a broad impression of the innovative strength and inventiveness of forestry technology.

Modern forestry technology will be presented in live operation at the in-field demonstrations.

For further information, visit www.kwf-tagung.de.

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UPCOMING EVENTS



From wood fairs to countryside shows and conferences, our events listing will keep you up to date on everything happening in the forestry industry over the next few months.

MARCH

Las-Expo

13–15 March, Kielce, Poland

THE Timber Industry and Forest Resources Management Fair is one of Poland's most important events. The Las-Expo trade fair promotes modern technologies for the timber industry. Now in its 20th year, it provides exhibitors with the opportunity to present tools and machines utilised in the transport and processing of timber, and also forest pesticides, maps and hunting equipment. Las-Expo is a meeting place for timber industry professionals and foresters.

www.targikielce.pl/en

Dubai WoodShow

16–18 March, Dubai World Trade Centre, UAE

THE only dedicated trade show in the Middle East for the wood and woodworking machinery industry. A convergence point for manufacturers, traders, suppliers, machinery companies and end-users in the wood industry chain.

www.woodshowglobal.com/Dubai

World Wood Day

17–22 March, Tokyo, Japan
THEMED around 'Legacy', 2020 World Wood Day will celebrate its eighth year with an international event in Tokyo, as well as various regional events. World Wood Day is a multicultural and multifaceted approach to promote wood as a good eco-friendly material. This year will explore legacies of wood use, rooted in tradition and culture, and what these mean for the future. Participants and public alike will be able to exchange and experience a diverse array of wood culture tied to legacy that will guide them to better contribute towards a sustainable future.

www.worldwoodday.org



APRIL

FORST Live

3–5 April, Exhibition Centre

Offenburg, Germany

DURING the 21st edition of FORST Live, more than 32,000 trade visitors from all over Europe are expected on the 46,000+ sq. m exhibition ground in the halls and open air. More than 340 exhibitors from 15 nations will present a detailed range of products and offers, with numerous developments and innovations. The varied machinery demonstrations emphasise the unique character of this international demo show for forestry technology and renewable energies.

www.forst-live.de/en/forst-live-en



Ponsse 50th Anniversary Roadshows

15 April, Tan y Coed, Pantperthog,
18 April, Cambusmore Estate, Callander

A wide range of Ponsse harvesters and forwarders will be on display, including the new Bison forwarder and Cobra harvester, with live demonstrations and test drives, as well as fantastic promotions and offers.

www.ponsse.com

Trees, People and the Built Environment 4

22–23 April, University of Birmingham

EVERY three years, the Institute of Chartered Foresters partners with academic institutions and chartered institutes to host an international cross-discipline conference on urban greenspace. The conference provides a platform for UK and international researchers and practitioners to showcase work in these areas.

www.charteredforesters.org

Wood-Mizer Open House Event

24–25 April, Tayside Forestry, Dundee

WOOD-Mizer is hosting its annual Spring Scottish Open House event over two days, with the support of Jas P Wilson and Multi-Log Systems. This event will showcase the latest in timber processing, firewood production and handling systems; it will be open to all, and will be free to attend.

www.woodmizer.co.uk

East Anglian Game & Country Fair

25–26 April, Euston Estate, Thetford

THE East Anglian Game & Country Fair is an annual two-day, family event taking place at the Euston Estate. Home to the Duke and Duchess of Grafton, Euston Hall is steeped in history and provides a beautiful backdrop to the event.

www.ukgamefair.co.uk

LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR

DEAR EDITOR,

I read with interest the article 'A recipe for disaster' by Ross Hamilton of Australia in *FJ* last month. Although it is beyond doubt that fuel load makes a contribution to wildfires, I wasn't convinced that the solution proposed of opening up the national parks to logging was not an even more certain recipe for disaster. Some sort of targeted intervention might have seemed less greedy.

I would have forgotten his name and the article had he not been quoted two days later on UK news sites following the discovery of dozens of dead, injured and starving koala bears in a recently felled blue gum plantation, claiming "it is absolutely certain that this was not a plantation or a forestry company". Whatever the facts turn out to be, it seems difficult to imagine that a large commercial felling did not involve a logging company.

The Australian political class seem to feel destruction of the environment (both local and global) to be worthwhile for short-term profits. That gives confidence to the lawbreakers, but ultimately leads to a backlash that affects us all.

At the other end of this edition of *FJ*, we have a Bites from the Blog discussion about the public's negative view of the industry. I agree with all the sentiments expressed, including about trees being 'spiked' to prevent their felling, but such extreme views in the activists may be a reaction to the extreme views of those few in the industry who attract negative publicity by bulldozing koalas or hedgerows. The frustration is that the public's incomplete understanding leads to them spiking the goodies, not the baddies.

FJ properly reports on a range of views, but I wish some of its UK contributors too would bear in mind that what can be read as strong support for the industry can also be read as a justification to be reckless by the few wishing to put their personal 'right to profits' before the long-term value of the industry.

So, returning to Ross Hamilton's plea to open up Australia's national parks to commercial logging: after the international outrage over the koala massacre, there is no chance for a generation, regardless of the underlying facts. If we want the UK public to get on our side, we need to show them that the UK industry is on their side by making sure we, and our friends, colleagues (including journalists) and neighbours are in no doubt of the consequences of bad publicity and put the long-term value of the industry ahead of short-term personal profits.

Will Bond

MD, Alaska Ecological Contracting, Stokeford Farm, East Stoke, Wareham, Dorset BH20 6AN

DEAR EDITOR,

Don't ever mention the 'c' word!!!

Forestry and tree planting in the UK has never had such wall-to-wall coverage as during the last three months. However, the industry (yes, that's all of us in the supply chain) are not making the most of this tremendous opportunity.

Where is our quantifiable strategy for the next 30 years? Who is reporting on the actual area planted against target? Who is our industry spokesman?

Frequently, I hear Minette Batters, president of the NFU, forcefully putting forth the case for British farmers and British farm produce. Who is speaking for us?

The media is full of stories about local communities and schoolchildren planting a few hardwoods. Very laudable, but it won't make a jot of difference to the bigger picture. Not until we see large areas of CONIFERS being planted are we going to see any significant change in the area of UK land under forest and/or woodland.

I will believe it when I see it.

Andy Chalmers

MD, Melcourt Industries, Boldridge Brake, Long Newnton, Tetbury, Gloucestershire GL8 8RT

P.S. What ever happened to the 'Tree Tsar'?

editor@forestryjournal.co.uk

Postal address: The Editor, Forestry Journal, 200 Renfield Street, Glasgow G2 3QB

Letters may be edited for clarity or to fit the space available.



GLOBAL LOG

A TOUR OF THE FORESTRY WORLD

USA

DOG detectives might be able to help save ailing citrus groves, new research suggests.

Scientists trained dogs to sniff out a crop disease called citrus greening that has hit orange, lemon and grapefruit orchards in Florida, California and Texas. The dogs can detect it weeks to years before it shows up on tree leaves and roots, the researchers report.

"This technology is thousands of years old – the dog's nose," said Timothy Gottwald, a researcher with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and a co-author of the study. "We've just trained dogs to hunt new prey: the bacteria that causes a very damaging crop disease."

Dog sleuths are also faster, cheaper and more accurate than people collecting hundreds of leaves for lab analysis, according to the study in the *Proceedings of the National Academies of Sciences*. Citrus greening – also called huanglongbing – is caused by a bacteria that is spread by a tiny insect that feeds on the leaves and stems of citrus trees. Once a tree is infected, there's no cure.

The disease has also hurt citrus crops in Central and South America and Asia.

In one experiment in a Texas grapefruit orchard, trained dogs were accurate 95 per cent of the time in distinguishing between newly infected trees and healthy ones.



BRAZIL

BEES facilitate pollination over great distances, increase the genetic diversity of plants, and stimulate the reproduction and resilience of native species in degraded ecosystems. That's why conserving these declining insects should be a priority in forest restoration projects, according to a study by Brazilian scientists published in *Ecological Applications*.

The study analysed how different bee species responded to changes in Brazilian forest landscapes. It investigated how increasing bee populations may boost pollen dispersal when planting trees in restoration projects, and also help re-establish diverse forests in disturbed areas in Brazil.

Researchers carried out fieldwork in an agricultural area of the Atlantic Forest in the country's south-east, which had been turned into sugarcane fields. Only about seven per cent of the original vegetation remains there, in small fragments of primary forest comprised of discontinuous canopies covered by vines and bordered by invasive grasses.

The team also included two other less degraded areas as reference ecosystems. One of these contained highly diverse trees reintroduced by researchers about two decades ago to increase forest cover, while the other consisted of wetlands, dominated by herbaceous vegetation.

In each of these landscapes, researchers installed 'pan traps' – a standard method for capturing bees – with the aim of collecting insect samples at the peak of the flowering season, between October 2015 and January 2017.

They compared the abundance and diversity of



bee populations in each habitat and analysed the pollen grains stuck to their bodies to determine which plant species the insects had interacted with.

The team collected 727 bees of 85 species, with different sizes and flight skills, social behaviour, nesting sites and diets, and found that these had interacted with 220 different plant species.

The abundance of bees responded negatively to habitat change, decreasing in highly disturbed environments – such as anthropogenic wetlands and sugarcane fields. But their number increased in areas where forest had been restored, as well as in original forest fragments, where large and medium-sized species that nest above ground were predominant.

JAPAN

AT least a combined 386 hectares of private forests that were logged illegally in 858 cases across Japan had yet to be regrown as of March 2018, the *Mainichi Shimbun* newspaper has found.

Owners of private forests are required under the Forest Act to notify local governments of any logging, but did not do so in the 858 cases. It is believed to be the first time that the scale of deforestation without notice across the country has been clarified.

In at least one of the cases, a landslide occurred on a piece of land that was left exposed after being logged.

The *Mainichi Shimbun* filed a freedom of information request with the Forestry Agency to obtain internal documents that the country's 47 prefectural governments had submitted on the logging of both natural and planted privately owned forests. It then tallied the number of cases in which the prefectural governments reported that illegally logged forests had not been replanted as of the end of fiscal 2017, as well as the total areas of these forests.



JAMAICA

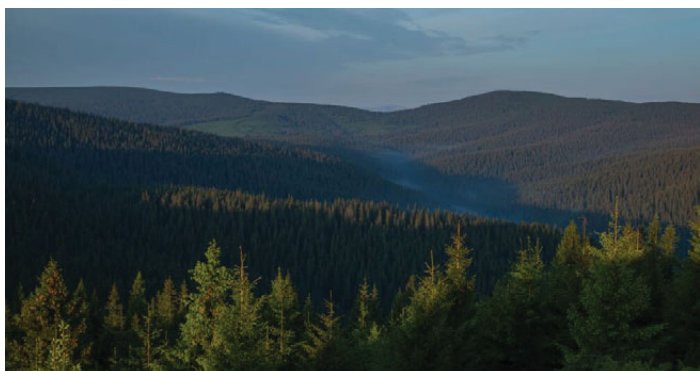
JAMAICA'S push to become an efficient player in the green economy is set to receive a major boost through an €850,000 (J\$128 million) European Union-funded technical assistance to the Forestry Department.



The technical assistance is providing support to develop a suitable business model for the Forestry Department which will assist it in achieving increased levels of operational efficiency, as well as identifying new and emerging business opportunities for the organisation. This will contribute positively to the agency's thrust to expand the portfolio of goods and services from which it derives revenue and will provide information to support business-related discussions on Jamaica's forest sector generally.

The business model will outline costing models, marketing strategies for traditional and non-traditional goods and services offered by the Forestry Department, as well as the integration of online services, e-commerce processes and application models within the existing operational framework of the agency. It will also include some of the more readily appreciable income generating opportunities offered by Jamaica's forests, namely ecotourism, with specific attention being given to the recreational facility managed by the agency in the Gourie Forest Management Area which has significant potential in the local and global sustainable tourism market.

Special attention will also be dedicated to the management of nurseries producing tropical forest species and the implementation of an e-commerce platform to facilitate ease of carrying out business with the Forestry Department.



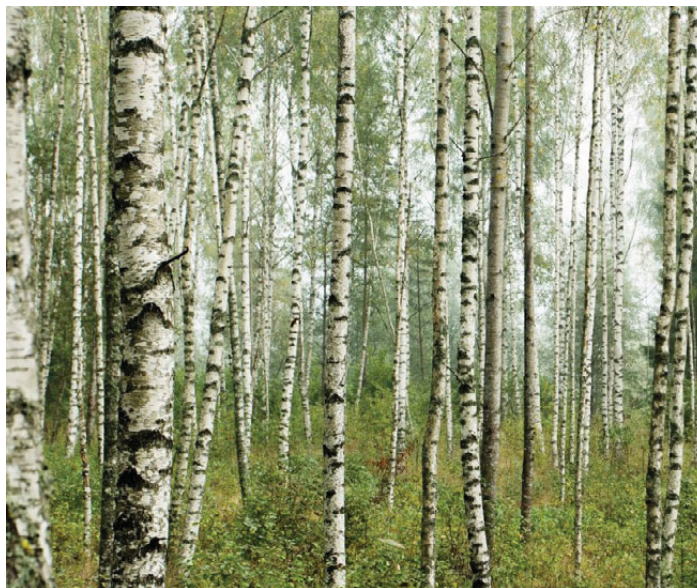
UKRAINE

WWF-UKRAINE has submitted a package of documents to the Trans-Carpathian and Ivano-Frankivsk Regional Environmental Departments to complete the process of granting more than 20,000 ha of virgin Ukrainian forests protected natural monument status.

Although the first 20,000 ha of these virgin forests found in the Trans-Carpathian and Ivano-Frankivsk Regions have received confirmation from the local forestry agencies, their possible high conservation status as natural monuments completely depends on the decisions of regional councils.

If this decision is approved, the area of natural monuments in Ukraine will increase 200-fold. Until now, only 100 ha of forests have received highest conservation status and protection as natural monuments in Ukraine, and those are in the Lviv Region. In this territory, all types of logging and any economic activity are prohibited.

The special subcategory of forests as natural monuments was introduced through Ukrainian legislation in 2017 with the aim of protecting virgin, quasi-virgin and natural forests. The regime of management of these natural monuments is the same as in nature reserves and in strictly protected zones in national parks.



ESTONIA

SCIENTISTS from the Estonian University of Life Sciences have discovered that a larger area of the Estonian land territory is covered by forests than previously measured.

Based on previously acquired data, the general knowledge was that approximately half of Estonia is covered by forest. But when the forest scientists used an alternative method to acquire data for the international Bioatlas portal about the species, growing stock and age of forests, they discovered that, compared with the previous assessments, the forest coverage is up to 90,000 ha larger.

Until now, the forest coverage has been estimated using the Statistical Forest Inventory sample plots method, but this time it was done by remote sensing and land survey maps, which were combined with the survey data for all Estonian forest areas.



ROMANIA

THE European Commission has announced its decision to pursue legal action against Romanian authorities over their "systemic and continuous failure to protect Europe's last natural forest".

The announcement follows complaints submitted last year to the European Commission by environmental groups Agent Green, ClientEarth and EuroNatur against Romania's "ongoing and deliberate destruction of tens of thousands of hectares of its protected old-growth and primeval forests".

The groups claimed that Romania's state forestry management is conducting logging operations within protected Natura 2000 areas without proper analysis of the impact in these unique sites. Failure to carry adequate and strategic environmental assessments when approving logging in protected areas and lack of access to environmental information breaches EU law.

ClientEarth lawyer Ewelina Tylec-Bakalarz said: "The destruction of Romanian forests is a huge systemic problem far exceeding in scale the illegal logging of Poland's Bialowieza forest, which was the basis of our legal challenge three years ago.

"The Romanian government has repeatedly failed to fulfil its obligations to protect its forests under a number of European environmental laws. By opening infringement proceedings against Romania, the European Commission is sending a clear signal that it takes this problem very seriously. This is an important warning that Romania must stop blatantly disregarding its legal obligation to protect these unique forests."





Step right up

The APF Exhibition is the UK's largest forestry, woodland, arboriculture, fencing and biomass show. As such, it requires a lot of planning. In this series, exhibition secretary Ian Millward offers readers a glimpse behind the scenes to learn how the show is organised and how preparations are coming along for APF 2020.

THE very good news is that, after opening our online ticket system last month, we have sold our first tickets, so we know we will have some visitors through the gate!

Buying a ticket online saves £4 on the gate price and should ensure minimal delays on entering.

Although it is only February as I write this, there is a surprising amount of work going on behind the scenes. Not only are we working towards APF 2020, but we already have draft plans for APF 2022. Our chief co-ordinator, Mark Steele, and assistant chief co-ordinator, Jemma Bargery, have been on site for a couple of days, meeting with Ragley Estate and discussing possible plans for 2022. This may seem a bit premature, but we are only two and a half years out from APF 2022 and we want to be able to announce dates and details during APF 2020. We held our second exhibitor site meeting on 19 February and I will report on how that went in the next issue.

Susie has completed the year-end accounts and everything is ready to send to our auditors. She can now concentrate on chasing up exhibitors who have not yet paid for their sites. We have a very good, foolproof system for this which thankfully doesn't involve 'sending the boys round'. Any exhibitor who has not paid for their site by the time of our next site meeting loses the site they have

APF 2020

chosen and, if they have not paid by the time of the exhibition, they are simply not allowed onto the showground to set up.

I have enjoyed being 'courted' for the last month by all the various trade magazines as I sort out my media spend budget. This is largely complete now and our first advert is ready to roll. Look out for it in any of the magazines you get and ensure you put the dates in your diary.

One thing that we have been a little weak on in the past is our social media presence. While we have a decent Facebook and Twitter presence, we could certainly do a lot more and we have not utilised the power of Instagram yet. A priority for this month is to up our game for all three. At every show we have a professional photographer present taking photos both manually and with a drone, so we have a huge library of great shots backed up by ones taken by our own staff during the event. Instagram is clearly an app for photos, so we will be looking to build our presence there. While many of you will enjoy social media for personal use, how many of you use it to promote your business? This is where our relationship with *Forestry Journal* as our media partner really kicks in. We are tapping into their expertise for help and advice. One of the issues we have is how to target all the various industry sectors we cover: forestry, woodlands, arboriculture, estate management,

Above: Ian and the team may be working towards APF 2020, but plans for the 2022 show are already under way as well.

grounds maintenance, biomass and bioenergy, fencing and farmers.

Forestry Journal fortunately has access to experts who will help us with this and we look forward to working closely with them to develop our presence and enable us to get information about the event to all our potential exhibitors and visitors. It will also be another way in which you can engage with us.

I am very keen to ensure what we put out is relevant, interesting and informative rather than just bombarding your phone with nonsense. Please look out for us on all three platforms and 'like' us to get the word out there.

It is quite hard sometimes, as I sit here typing this diary, not to simply rehash articles or press releases produced for other titles, but to bring something new and fresh to each one (editors, as a rule, don't like seeing an article they are about to publish appearing almost word-for-word in another title the week before).

As you know, Confor is our parent company and produces the bi-monthly *Forestry & Timber News*. We are working with them to help promote the event with a series of targeted articles to fit in with the themes for each edition. The next *FTN* is focusing on skills and training, so I will produce something highlighting the opportunities that exist at APF 2020 for training, skills updates, workshops, booking courses, etc. With regard to the above, I hope I will soon be able to announce some exciting new events for APF 2020 aimed squarely at the working arborist.



We are hoping to be able to stage a tree-climbing competition at the show – something we have not done before, chiefly due to the lack of suitable trees. We believe we have some decent trees this time, so if you are able to help us put on a high-level climbing competition this year, please let me know.

Finally, the 'Wally of the Month' award once again goes to our parent company, Confor. Its e-newsletter, sent to all Confor members last month, gave the dates for APF 2020 as 24/25/26th September 2010! It looks like we may have to hire a minibus to take the guilty parties to Kielder for a week of brashing Sitka!

APF 2020 will be held at the Ragley Estate, Alcester, Warwickshire on 24–26 September 2020. For more details visit www.apfexhibition.co.uk or email info@apfexhibition.co.uk.

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Possibilities for planting

A new name and new faces made for a fresh outlook at the most recent meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Forestry and Tree Planting. Carolynne Locher reports from Westminster.

As the last gasp of Storm Ciara whipped through the trees bordering Black Rod's Garden, the entrance to the House of Lords in Westminster, on 11 February, the newly renamed All Party Parliamentary Group on Forestry and Tree Planting (APPGFTP) convened for the first meeting of the new parliamentary session.

The meeting's timing coincided with the Prime Minister making a statement on transport infrastructure (HS2) to the House of Commons, so it seemed unlikely many MPs would attend. Nonetheless, Lord Colgrain, Lord Carrington, Lord Caithness, Lord Clark and Baroness Young (chair of the Woodland Trust) took their seats, as did two young parliamentary civil servants, who explained they write for 'post' publications (briefing summaries of public policy issues offering parliamentarians advance knowledge of key issues before they reach the top of the political agenda).

Lord Colgrain, acting chair of the APPGFTP, welcomed all to the meeting and explained it is his role to get this APPG up and running, with former officers "either having lost their seats at the last election or moving to other roles".

The first order of business was to elect four new APPG office bearers. Ben Lake, MP for Ceredigion (Plaid Cymru), made a timely entrance and agreed to take on the chairman's role, with Lords Carrington, Caithness, Clark and Colgrain assuming other responsibilities.

The day's presentation, 'Forestry and wood processing in the UK: why we need to get tree planting done now', was given by Stuart Goodall, chief executive of Confor.

He said: "Following the zeitgeist surrounding tree planting, we are renaming the group. The presentation will give an update on the sector, the interest in planting, and the context.

"During 2019's general election, trees came to prominence because of 'net zero'. Previously, climate change aspirations were

about reducing emissions. Under net zero, it became about offsetting as well. Tree planting is one opportunity to deliver that.

"Reports written by the UK committee on climate change highlighted this and Theresa Villiers, (then) secretary of state for environment, food and rural affairs, said on January 8th, 'This was the first election where there was a bidding war between the parties on tree planting'. From our perspective, the bidding war was fantastic. Most ambitious was Labour, who promised two billion trees by 2040. The Liberal Democrats offered 60 million trees a year. The Greens 700 million trees by 2030. The Conservative party offered 30,000 ha by 2030.

"30,000 ha. Is that UK-wide or for England alone? England has, in the last few years, been averaging 1,300 to 1,500 ha a year. Last week, we asked forestry minister Zac Goldsmith what England would commit to. There is no scoop. Our best guess is 9,000 to 10,000 ha a year by 2025 and moving on from there."

Planting 30,000 ha a year was last achieved

"As well as planting, we want more management and more wood products being produced. In the next parliamentary session, we are looking to hold government to account on its pledges: tree planting targets and meeting zero-carbon targets. Forestry and wood are part of this and we must get the message out there."

in the 1970s. "By 2009 to 2011, we were planting under 3,000 ha a year. Last year, the figure jumped to a total of 13,000 ha, with Scotland planting 11,200 ha in total. To move from that to 30,000 by the end of the decade will be challenging."

Outlining Confor's current activities, Stuart said: "In England, we are working regionally, in places like Northumberland, with county councils and local stakeholders to develop



local forestry partnerships. At COP 26 in Glasgow, in November, we are looking to work with government on a forestry and timber event, focused on how to deliver tree planting.

"We are launching Wood Co2ts Less, a campaign that says using more wood is actually good for the environment and helping to tackle climate change. Wood locks up carbon. Growing more trees locks up more carbon. The amount of energy required to

produce timber is comparatively low and it therefore produces less emissions and is easy to recycle.

"As the second-biggest net importer of wood products in the world after China, we have a global impact and a global responsibility. Using the UK's forests to produce wood in a sustainable way reduces our global environmental impact. With the global demand for wood set to increase and



(Left to right): Lord Carrington, Lord Caithness, Lord Colgrain, Ben Lake MP and Stuart Goodall.

not many forests being planted across the globe, even a small increase in demand will put pressure on supply. 40 to 45 per cent of our broadleaf resource is undermanaged. Managing woods sustainably has a positive impact for biodiversity, for local employment and for climate change.

"As well as planting, we want more management and more wood products being produced. In the next parliamentary session, we are looking to hold government account on its pledges: tree planting targets and meeting zero-carbon targets. Forestry and wood are part of this and we must get the message out there."

Parliamentarians can help by holding government to account in Westminster Hall debates and at Prime Minister's Questions. "We have suggested to Neil Parish, chair of the EFRA committee, that it is time for another inquiry into forestry and tree planting. He did not say no. Speak up for local forest enterprises. On March 24th, Forestry Minister Zac Goldsmith will present the #TheFutureisForestry Essay and Video Prize, which answers a question linked to trees and carbon. Generally, we need to make sure that forestry is kept on the government's agenda."

LORD COLGRAIN OPENED THE Q&A:

Q: We are the second-largest importer of timber and 45 per cent of our broadleaf woodlands are unmanaged. Why, when we

have a country that can grow trees, is forestry in such an appalling state?

A: We have lost the cultural connection of managing forests to produce products and the cultural sense that interventions in forests are positive. Plant a forest and everything happens so slowly that we forget where wood products come from. This is changing in Scotland, where we have seen more planting and management. In England, we need to change that understanding so that people do engage and want to manage their woods. If we can change the mindset, we reduce the number of unmanaged woodlands and start to reduce our imports as well.

Q: Surely, a major aspect of this has to be the commercial return? A large forest area will give a return, whereas in a small area in the south of England it is hard to make a commercial return.

A: Wood prices are relatively high now. For unmanaged woodlands, the obstacle is often a lack of access to advice on how to access the timber. Then there is the cost of the additional infrastructure (roading, stacking areas). We have called on government to offer a capital grant for that 'one off' infrastructure intervention. Alongside access to advice, people can then start to manage their woods. For relatively small woodlands, this could work.

Q: The planting figures (aspiration) are quite impressive. What are the main blockages?

A: It must be a UK-wide endeavour. Scotland is hoping to plant 12,000 ha this year. Wales has suitable land but no grant scheme in place. When there was £1 million or so, it was hugely oversubscribed, showing the desire to plant a lot more in Wales. In England, we need to change the mindset towards changing the land use. The process of planting permission has to be quicker and the officials must be much bolder, accepting that not everyone will be happy, but that overall it is the right thing to do. We are now in a climate emergency and the evidence is clear: trees lock up carbon. We should get on with it!

Q. Getting permissions quickly would make a difference. For me, it is the scale of what is being asked for. I want a land-use strategy for England. There are many competing demands for land. Friction could be removed by taking a strategic view on the most appropriate use for land and having it deliver multiple benefits rather than just one, otherwise there will be more friction.

A: Availability of land is key. Since leaving the CAP has been confirmed, more in Scotland have expressed interest in planting trees, not by coming out of farming but by diversifying. As of next year, there is 17,000 ha of interest more than there is funding available. In northern England, there is also more interest, but concern that the process is just too long. I am in favour of a regional approach to land use and engaging with local people. We took the NFU to planting sites in Northumberland and they were receptive.

In Wales, we want to avoid planting whole valleys full of trees. There is more employment (and higher-value jobs) in managing trees than in sheep farming, but these jobs don't appear overnight. Highlighting suitable areas and introducing planting into these areas, you then start that transition of the economy, which is vital and beneficial for farming communities. It is trying to get to the point where people see it as an opportunity and embrace it as a choice. With clear national guidance, you can then target funding and facilitation of the initiative.

Q. Would you agree that, given our past record, 95 per cent of what we are going to plant is never going to reach maturity in a commercial woodland?

A: If we plant, are we going to see that woodland managed on an ongoing basis? We should. Creating a woodland and then walking away is suboptimal. We must address the issue of management. It is linked to future timber income and carbon values. Some will invest and then take a return on the carbon or from the future sale price of the timber. Without this, we will add to our unmanaged woodland resource.



Celebrating Scotland's finest woods

With the deadline for entries to this year's Scotland's Finest Woods Awards fast approaching on 31 March, we take a look at the highly contested categories and the 2019 winners.

FROM experienced professionals caring for large, complex forests over several generations, to nursery children discovering wonderful woodlands for the first time, Scotland's Finest Woods Awards 2019 honoured the most diverse group of tree-lovers imaginable.

Now the hunt is on to find more worthy winners for the 35th anniversary of the Awards in 2020, at a time described as 'a golden era for forestry and woods in Scotland'.

Those words were used to launch the 2020 Awards programme by Fergus Ewing, cabinet secretary for rural economy in the Scottish Government. "The winners represent exceptional individuals and groups who create fantastic spaces to allow us all to enjoy our forests and woods," he said.

The geographical spread of the winners was immense – from Aith, Shetland (the overall Community Woodlands Award went to Michaelswood Public Amenity) to Beirhope, near Kelso in the Scottish Borders (where Mervyn Harrison won the New Commercial Woods Award).

Beirhope, previously better-known for alpacas than trees, won high praise from expert judges as an "exemplar of commercial woodland establishment". They said: "Everything about it is impressive, from the improved Norway Spruce to high-quality machine planting of Sitka. Planning and design have been very effective and the team has clearly worked closely with archaeological interests. A great deal of care has gone into appropriate

David Shepherd and Annie Griffiths at Craggach Wood, Kirkhill, near Inverness: winner, Hunter Blair Trophy for Silvicultural Excellence (Quality Timber Award for a single stand/compartment of trees or small wood).

cultivation and the establishment of what will become a commercial forest of consistently high quality."

The two other Quality Timber Award winners also received glowing endorsements.

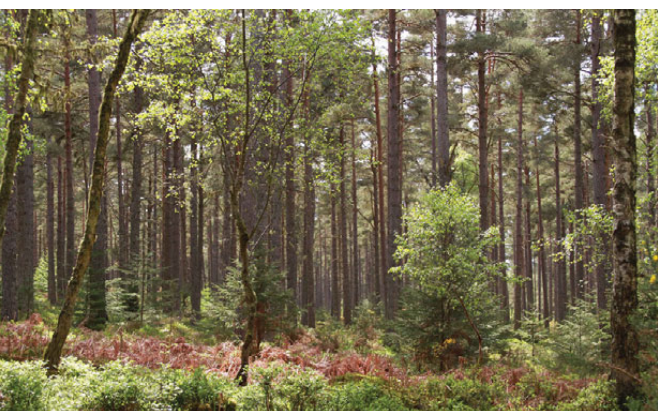
David Shepherd and Annie Griffiths were honoured with the Hunter Blair Trophy for silvicultural excellence, for their focused approach at Craggach Woods, Kirkhill, near Inverness. David said the couple were trying to break down barriers by "showing you can have broadleaf native woodland and still have timber growing there".

The judges said: "Craggach demonstrates how well-researched appropriate broadleaved silviculture can be applied to native woodlands at a relatively small, intimate scale to generate income. Everything is done for a purpose – no effort is wasted. Throughout the wood, the judges saw broadleaved silviculture in action from halo thinning to high pruning.

"They have installed a mill and sophisticated kiln dryer and the timber is increasingly popular with local furniture-makers. There are enormous biological benefits, but this is unashamedly a commercial venture in an increasingly attractive woodland setting."

James Evan Baillie, winner of the John Kennedy Trophy for Multi-Purpose Woodlands, was also highly praised for delivering wide-ranging benefits on the banks of the Ness at Darroch Wood, on the Scaniport Estate.

The judges said of the wood, managed by Bowlts Chartered Surveyors: "Stands of Douglas fir and larch in Darroch woods can only be described as magnificent, in terms of timber quality and visual appeal.



"The conifers run into extensive oak woods and both provide an exceptional backdrop for a network of footpaths through the wood and the walking/cycling route between Inverness and Dores. The owner is committed to managing the woods as continuous-cover forests which will safeguard social, economic and environmental benefits for the long term."

The long-term approach at Fort Augustus Woodlands was rewarded in 2019 as Forestry and Land Scotland's North Region team won the one-off Centenary Trophy to mark the 100th anniversary of the Forestry Act.

The woods, covering almost 10,000 ha, are "steeped in the history of the development of forestry, including the first acquisition by the Forestry Commission in Scotland.

"Evident within the forest area is the full spectrum of challenges faced by forest managers over 100 years along with their efforts, responses and initiatives to overcome substantial challenges whilst reflecting contemporary policy and management approach," said the judges. "The forest is an excellent example of multiple use forestry where the often competing objectives have been married together to provide a cohesive and effective plan for future management."

The awards programme has embraced the growth in farm woodland, with two prizes on offer. In 2019, Kilrie Farm in Kirkcaldy won the open Farm Woodland Award.

Kilrie owner John Drysdale and forester Kieran Kelly "displayed tremendous enthusiasm and pride in what had been achieved, with plans well in place to achieve a viable, sustainable woodland enterprise," the judges

said. "Already, the woodlands are generating significant employment and plans are in place to add value from the forestry business."

The Farm Woodlands Award for Young People was new in 2019 – and won by Lynn Cassells and Sandra Baer of Lynbeck Croft, near Grantown on Spey. The judges identified "undoubted productivity gains" and Lynn explained why trees were so important: "We have tried to achieve full integration of the trees and woodland into the croft business. They are a valuable asset in terms of shelter for animals and fuel for us, as well as all they do for biodiversity and soaking up carbon."

Much younger people were honoured in the Schools Award, with Earthtime Forest School Nursery in Duffus, Moray – where children can spend an entire session learning outside in the woods – winning top prize. Levenmouth Academy in Fife, where pupils have helped plant 8,000 trees outside the school, was a runner-up.

One area rarely featured in the awards is Shetland, a predominantly treeless landscape – a fact not lost on the judges who awarded the Small Community Woodlands Award (and Tim Stead Trophy for best overall community woods) to Michaelswood Public Amenity, Aith.

They found Michaelswood exemplary: "Boldly and successfully, it demonstrates that, in a largely treeless landscape, woodland establishment is possible, providing encouragement to others interested in planting trees."

The Large Community Woodlands winner, Gifford Community Woodland, was "an exemplar for biodiversity-led woodland management by a community group", judges said. "Although it is a young project, the group is demonstrating how to bring a neglected mature woodland back into long-term sustainable management that is biodiversity-led whilst delivering a wide range of community benefits."

The final award (New Native Woods) went to Jahama Highland Estates for Kinlochleven Native Woodland in Lochaber. The judges reported that "the planting and natural regeneration of the 228 ha Kinlochleven Native Woodland Restoration project has made, and continues to make, a significant impact on the long-term future of native woodland in this part of the west coast of Scotland."

Angela Douglas, Executive Director of Scotland's Finest Woods Awards, said: "2019 was a very special year for the awards, but we know there are many more brilliant forests and woods in Scotland and we look forward to honouring them in their glorious variety."

Entries must be submitted by 31 March, 2020. For full details, visit www.sfga.co.uk.



Above left: New conifers growing at Beirhope, near Kelso (Quality Timber Award for New Commercial Woods).

Above: Aerial view of Gifford Community Woodland, East Lothian (winner, Large Community Woodlands).

Left top: Pupils outside Levenmouth Academy, Buckhaven (runner-up, Schools Award).

Left bottom: Darroch Wood, Scaniport Estate, near Inverness: winner, John Kennedy Trophy for Multi-purpose Forestry (Quality Timber Award for whole forest or estate).

Taking responsibilities seriously

Prompted by concerns over the welfare of tree planters, *Forestry Journal* approached the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Forest Industry Safety Accord (FISA) for guidance. In this article, they lay out the most up-to-date requirements for companies and individuals involved in forestry work, with special attention on unskilled, seasonal workers.

FORESTRY workers often work in isolated and challenging locations and are expected to undertake difficult tasks to a professional standard. The provision of facilities for their general welfare has been required by law for over 20 years.

The FISA Worksite Operations Working Group, in consultation with HSE and together with forestry safety professionals and the wider industry, has produced the FISA 806 Welfare Safety Guide to assist duty holders in understanding what the existing Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 require. This FISA guide also gives clear examples of types of welfare provision that are considered reasonably practicable on

forestry sites. These examples demonstrate how on larger/more complex sites this provision can include – as well as welfare facilities – a seated team discussion/ planning/training area, space to store site paperwork, and provision of drying facilities.

FISA 806 WELFARE SAFETY GUIDE

The FISA guide on welfare is new to the forestry industry and has been released to give the industry guidance on how to meet the legislation. The guide has an 18-month feedback period with request for comments to be sent to FISA (info@ukfisa.com). Comments will be fed back to the Worksite

Operations Working Group and the guide will be reviewed 18 months after release. Having this review period will assist in getting the guide right for the industry. This is important as we want to encourage the industry to step forward and improve the approach to welfare provision on forestry sites.

Regs 4 (1) and (2) require that both employers and those who, to any extent, have control of a workplace must provide welfare facilities. In a forestry setting, this is employers and forestry works managers (FWMs). The FWM must ensure that adequate welfare facilities have been provided for those working on site by agreeing who is responsible for providing them (either the FWM and/or the contractors).

Paras 203 and 204 of the Approved Code of Practice (remote workplaces and temporary worksites) state that, as far as possible, chemical toilets which have to be emptied manually should be avoided, and that toilets should be of flushing type. Pumped-out holding tank type toilets in portable units are becoming readily available and the reasonable practicality of their use should be considered a priority.

The ACOP reiterates the requirement for warm running water for washing. The FISA guide contains a table which shows a range of options that may be suitable for a variety of site situations. Drinking water must be provided whichever option is chosen. Sites should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Facilities need to be fit for purpose, well maintained, and safe for people and the environment. When you review the site requirements, consider the additional benefits that could be added, such as a seating area (while not a legal requirement under the workplace regulations), which could be used for site meetings and briefings/toolbox talks or for rest and shelter from the weather.

WELFARE OF TREE PLANTERS

When planting/spraying work is being



Tree planters at work out in the field.



Left: A typical remote forestry planting work site.

Right: The provision of facilities for the general welfare of forestry workers has been required by law since 1992. The exact requirements are set out in FISA Safety Guide 806.

Below: One example of a welfare solution is this welfare van, kitted out with toilet, hot and cold water, rest area and heating.



undertaken on site, other legal requirements must be considered, for example specific washing facilities for chemical products required by their approval or COSHH for planting and/or spraying activities over large areas of land. A purpose-built welfare unit should be positioned at a suitable location (e.g. where vehicles are parked). Additional welfare provision should be considered as the work moves across site.

COSHH Regulations 2002 (as amended) require employers to control substances that are hazardous to health. As an employer, you are responsible for taking effective measures to control exposure and protect health. If you have employees (you control their work), every part of COSHH applies. If you engage 'self-employed' labour on a planting site, you also 'control /give direction for their work', so you are responsible for their protection under the COSHH regulations.

The safety data sheet for the products used (e.g. insecticide) could identify a higher level of welfare requirements (than the workplace regs described above). These should be outlined in a COSHH assessment and may include facilities to wash down and dry personal protective equipment (PPE).

Unskilled, seasonal workers are often employed in the forestry industry to undertake tasks such as planting. Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 puts duties on those in control of an undertaking, which would include organisation of tree planting. All workers, including those on temporary contracts, are entitled to work in an environment where the risks to their health and safety are properly controlled. The employer must provide PPE at no cost to the temporary worker, and is responsible for making arrangements to supply and maintain the PPE. If the accommodation is provided by the employer and is used as the welfare



facilities on the site, health and safety welfare requirements as above will apply.

Guidance on this issue has been included in the FISA guide and will be focused on by HSE.

GMHSF

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For more information visit www.ukfisa.com



A fruitful future?

With the Scottish Government planning to plant 36 million trees by 2030, John Hancox, director of Scottish Fruit Trees, says that by making just 10 per cent of them fruit trees Scotland could boost its employment, public health, wildlife, biodiversity and tourism, reports Jonathan Watt.

“SURELY the apple is the noblest of fruits,” said the 19th-century naturalist Henry David Thoreau. And it’s not difficult to see why the acclaimed American essayist would reach such a conclusion as the denizens of his home town of Concord, Massachusetts, were nourished by the fruit for generations and lived just 20 miles from the birthplace of arguably the world’s most famous nurseryman in John Chapman – more commonly known as Johnny Appleseed.

Closer to home, bringing back the benefits of more commercial-sized and small-scale orchards of old Scottish heritage fruit varieties – which used to be far more prominent and where Scotland’s fruit came from – to the country has been touted as a potential win-win for the government as it looks to nature to help tackle climate change, by John Hancox of Scottish Fruit Trees.

A former journalist specialising in environmental and food policy issues, John has spent the last 15 years working with over 500 schools and community groups to help them grow their own nurseries and subsequent orchards, and is a commercial supplier of fruit trees as well as producing his own Clyde Cider.

Now, as discussion around mass tree planting and reducing carbon footprints reaches fever pitch, he is lobbying the Scottish Government to commit to ensuring that fruit trees will make up a sizeable fraction of new forest plantations.

Launching his campaign at Holyrood Apple Day, held during National Tree Planting week at the Scottish Parliament late last year, John said there is a good deal of cross-party support from MSPs.

“It’s not a party-political issue. Everyone likes fruit trees

so we have support from all parties, and gently lobbying MSPs is a way of subtly saying you should be looking at this and put the idea that fruit tree growing is a good move onto the agenda.”

And the plethora of advantages that a thriving fruit-tree-growing culture brings means that forestry in Scotland would be much richer as a result, according to John.

He said: “There are a lot of benefits to be gained for many people from planting fruit trees. It could improve health and wellbeing, and make the environment better for people and for wildlife. Additionally, normally when you plant trees you have to wait 25 to 30 years for produce, but with fruit trees you can plant them and in three to four years get a good, usable crop.

“There’s a danger when you start talking about a large number of trees to be planted that you go for quantity rather than quality. And I think there is a certain amount of nervousness in Scotland; forestry isn’t universally popular. There is a tradition of large, dense blocks of trees which don’t really sustain much in terms of people’s work or wildlife.

“The thing about fruit growing is that orchards are fundamentally nice things and they need quite a lot of work put into them. It’s not just something you plant and come back to 25 years later. They need ongoing care and attention, so it has the potential to create a lot of jobs.”

The cost of labour on orchards would more than pay for itself and boost local economies, in part via tourism, according to John, who cited the example of the Styria area of Austria which has a variety of apples and picturesque orchards at the core of its offer to visitors.

The historic area, which is known as Austria’s garden, creates a broad selection of products from its apples –

John Hancox
pictured above.



from juice and bread to schnapps and truffles.

Those visiting Styria can also choose from a range of apple-related excursions such as roaming the seemingly endless orchards, taking behind-the-scenes tours of organic farms and artisanal apple cider vinegar producers, and even taking a visit to an apple museum.

"It was created on a whim by an Austrian emperor who planted a million or so fruit trees," explained John. "Now the orchards sustain a spring festival, autumn festival, cider festival and apple wines. There's a whole industry based on apples.

"With all the enthusiasm for planting trees now there is the potential to do something for tourism, which is very important to Scotland, and it would give something at the beginning of the season with a blossom festival and something at the tail end of the season with a harvest festival. It could effectively extend the tourist season and add another tier of interest for visitors to the country.

"There is a lot of interest in it. On a small scale, there is a privately owned orchard in Ayrshire which had far more apples than the owner could use so I suggested why not open up and let people into the orchard and there were heaps of families that turned up with their kids. It's a really nice thing to do.

"If you look at the States, there's a massive tradition of people going apple picking in the fall and juicing, etc."

While there has been casual support for the plantation of orchards within the industry, John is calling for more key players and politicians to start viewing the introduction of more fruit trees as a seriously beneficial project rather than a fringe, and perhaps tokenistic, one.

He said: "This should be a properly organised endeavour where, to some extent, what we are trying to do is feed the country, make people healthy and create local employment with all the knock-on effects that has. It should be treated as a real economic activity rather than saying 'Well, if you want to, you can stick a few round the edges of the serious trees.'"

With tree planting rightly now being made a priority by politicians keen to do something about climate change thanks to trees' ability to absorb carbon dioxide in a cost-effective way, fruit trees have extra benefits for their local ecosystems, said John.

"It's not only the carbon that goes into the trees but planting broadleaved trees tends to improve soil quality

and absorbs a lot of carbon into the soil," he said. "And there's an additional carbon benefit in terms of orchards, as growing our fruit here in Scotland would displace food miles from importing so much of it from all over the world.

"Orchards have particular ecosystems associated with them; we need pollinators and orchards encourage pollinators, so having a wide biodiversity is an extra incentive, while a small percentage of the fruit will support more wildlife as well."

However, there are some obstacles to the plan to plant well in excess of a million fruit trees. At present, tree stands in agricultural production systems such as orchards are excluded from the internationally recognised definition of forest and other wooded land. As such, orchards do not benefit from the legal protection given to forests and woodland under the Forestry and Land Management (Scotland) Act 2018 or the Forestry (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.

The Scottish Government has said the conversion of forestland to orchards would leave it unable to prevent a later removal of the fruit trees and conversion to another land use, at odds with its woodland removal policy.

And John said he has seen evidence that landowners interested in replanting orchards in place of cleared forestry have been prevented from doing so by Scottish Forestry on the grounds that this is a change of use.

"There's also probably a need to look at the forestry grant system and see if there's a way it can make it a bit easier for forestry and land managers to plant orchards," he said. "I suspect it wouldn't take much."

He continued: "If over the next 10 years we were to plant 36 million trees, having 3.5 million of them being fruit trees is not an unrealistic target. People like apple juice, apple cakes, cider and many swear by apple cider vinegar and its health benefits, so on lots of different levels this can work."

A spokesman for the Scottish Government told *Forestry Journal* the administration would look at new ways in which it could support fruit tree growing on small and large scales as part of its efforts to tackle climate change, but would not be drawn on committing to a target of new fruit trees to be planted.

Without serious discussion leading to proper action, John believes there is a chance Scotland could miss out on all the benefits that more orchards can bring to the country, to younger generations and to their children.

Top right: John has spent the last 15 years working with over 500 schools and community groups to help them grow their own nurseries.

Above right: Fruit trees can produce a usable crop within three to four years, John said.

Above: John's Clyde Cider.

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More martens means fewer greys and returning reds

Return and recolonisation by pine marten, either naturally or by reintroduction, is seen as a silver bullet to stop the grey squirrel in its tracks and save the red, although not all are convinced, writes Dr Terry Mabbett.

MORE pine martens means fewer alien eastern grey squirrels and returning native European red squirrels, according to research carried out in Scotland (Sheehy et al. 2018). In places where pine martens were more common, red squirrels were much less likely to visit nut feeders, but greys were not.

“It suggests greys are totally naive to the risks of the pine marten as a predator,” said lead author Emma Sheehy. “In their native range (eastern North America), they don’t have similar predators and that leaves them much more susceptible here,” she said. These potentially exciting findings are now backed up by research carried out in Northern Ireland by scientists at Queen’s University, Belfast.

Pine marten (*Martes martes*) and European red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) have several things in common. Both are British natives, and both have previously faced real threats of extinction in mainland England at least. Pine martens, with a long-standing reputation for preying on game birds and raiding poultry runs, were persecuted by farmers and gamekeepers. Pine martens are especially susceptible to persecution because they are slow breeders, with females not usually breeding until their third year. By 1920, pine martens were facing extinction in Britain.

European red squirrels’ problems started towards the end of the 19th century when the North American eastern grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) was introduced into Britain. Grey squirrels were imported from New Jersey, released in Bedfordshire and also sent to other estates around the country. Grey squirrels were also released



at Regents Park in London, an act credited with creating contemporary London’s huge grey squirrel population (Shorten, 1954; Signorile, 2014; Knapton, 2016).

Consequent demise of the native red squirrel was quick and complete. In 1945, red squirrels were still present in southern England, albeit together with grey squirrels, but they still had a free run across East Anglia. Kevin Ross, a woodsman who grew up in a forested area of Suffolk, speaks fondly of red squirrels frequent there as late as the 1960s (Ross, 2018). However, by 2000 red squirrels were virtually excluded from the whole of mainland England and Wales, apart from Cumbria and across into Northumberland (Signorile, 2014). Greys had outcompeted reds right across the board in feeding and breeding, but most of all in the

capacity to carry and transmit the squirrel pox virus, which is lethal to red squirrels.

Northern Ireland research confirming earlier findings in Scotland and indicating an antagonistic effect of pine martens on grey squirrels, but apparently not reds, is conducted by Josh Twinings and colleagues at Queen’s University, Belfast. Interest was initially triggered by landowners describing how the appearance of pine martens was accompanied by a disappearance of grey squirrels and reappearance of red squirrels. Josh and his colleagues confirmed the relationship by sampling 330 sites across Northern Ireland.

The speed with which this apparently happens suggests pine martens are driving grey squirrels away rather than killing and eating them in large numbers. Red squirrels’

ability to exist quite comfortably alongside a fellow native but nominally predatory species (the pine marten) would appear to be down to innateness and instinct rather than learning. The last time pine martens and red squirrels existed alongside each other in numbers across large tracts of the UK was the first half of the 19th century, if not earlier.

This fits in with what Josh Twining told the national press. He said: "Red squirrels have evolved alongside pine martens and adapted to find ways not to be eaten by them. The grey squirrel is completely naive and doesn't know how to react, so it becomes lunch."

Return and recolonisation by pine marten, either naturally or by reintroduction, is seen as a silver bullet to stop the grey in its tracks and save the red, although not all are convinced and claim it is not a black-and-white – or red-and-grey – situation. They point to areas in Europe where red squirrels make up a significant slice of prey taken by pine martens and how these weasel-like mammals will happily slit the throats of red squirrels if they are the most frequent potential prey.

However, the last word goes to the

researchers at Queen's University and how recolonisation of Britain by pine martens could have the knock-on effect of pushing more grey squirrels into urban areas.

"Unless the issue of control within (human-) populated areas is addressed, we risk creating a situation where marten-savvy grey squirrels could recolonise the wider

landscape in the future," says Josh Twining (Bawden, 2019).

And here's where the superior ability of the grey squirrel in solving problems, especially more complex ones, as demonstrated by behavioural research carried out at the University of Exeter, could come into play (Yee Chow et al., 2018).

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Passport to puzzlement

The recent introduction of plant passports for certain timber movements within the UK seems a sensible step to improve biosecurity. However, the implications for the forestry and arboricultural sectors may be wider than many have realised. Dr Terry Mabbett set out to investigate what the requirements are for the people on the ground, from forestry contractors to tree surgeons, local authorities and sawmill operators. Here's what you need to know.

JUST weeks before Brexit (31 January, 2020) and a right old 'ding dong' over Big Ben's bongos, UK government fell smartly into alignment with the EU's new Plant Health Regulation (PHR), coming into force on 14 December 2019. From that point on, plant passports have been required for the movement of Plant Health Forestry Regulated Material (PHFRM) within the UK. So what does that entail?

A detailed and clear account was set out in an article by Ian Murgatroyd (EU Exit Plant Health Regulations Lead) and Dr John Morgan (Head of Plant Health, Forestry Commission England). Entitled 'All you need to know about plant passporting', the article was published in the October 2019 issue of Confor's *Forestry and Timber News*. The article says that PHFRM includes:

- all conifers,
- Castanea (including sweet chestnut) with bark,
- Platanus (including London plane) with or without bark.

Plant passports for movement of these species are required at each stage of the supply chain – where whole or chipped roundwood (including brash) is moved from the harvesting site and/or site of aggregation (e.g. sawlogs stacked roadside), and to the processor which may be a sawmill or a biomass or fuelwood processor.

A plant passport is also required for movement of isolated bark from a wood processor, for Christmas trees more than three metres in height, and for cut foliage from such trees.

Isolated bark is defined as bark which

has been removed by debarking or other processes, or has become detached from living, felled or fallen trees.

Examples of businesses which need to at least investigate these developments, if they have not already done so, include:

- Home Counties-based arborists working in Central London, where London plane is the most frequently occurring parkland and street tree species, and transporting arborists' 'arising' away from the site;
- small forestry contractors felling Corsican pine and other conifers for delivery to, and chipping by, a commercial biomass producer
- forestry contractors specialising in sweet chestnut coppice for the production of cleft, chestnut fencing away from the harvesting site.

Other companies and individuals that clearly need to take note of and act on these developments are those in the woodfuel sector. Woodsure (the UK's only woodfuel certification scheme) said: "This regulation and the application for a plant passport may impact on woodfuel processors with their own woodland. Fuel processors purchasing timber should be looking for a compliant passport as part of the delivery note or incorporated into the weight ticket. Otherwise, they will need to seek reassurance that the timber species don't require a plant passport as part of their ordering process."

Confor has said anyone responsible for movement of PHFRM needs to become a Registered Authorised Professional Operator (RAPO).





The new requirements appear all-encompassing, impacting companies and individuals across the forestry and arb sectors, all the way down the 'wood chain' to woodsmen and tree surgeons. It is here where *Forestry Journal's* initial interest and concern lies, following contact by a reader working as a dual forestry/arb contractor. He was not so much worried about himself, having learned of the new requirements from the Royal Forestry Society (RFS), of which he is a member. His immediate concern was for the countless contractors in forestry and arb who are not paid-up members of either Confor or the RFS and as such may not be aware of the requirements, leaving them vulnerable to "overzealous inspectors".

Having been drawn up by the FC and Confor, the requirements made him suspicious about just how much consideration had been given to the smaller operator, and especially arborists and tree surgeons. To this end, he telephoned the FC to find out. When asked whether plant passporting requirements would apply right across the board and down the line, and if the FC was aware of the implications for small operators including arborists, their spokesperson said they had not considered this aspect.

ANYONE RESPONSIBLE FOR
MOVEMENT OF PHRM NEEDS
TO BECOME A REGISTERED
AUTHORISED PROFESSIONAL
OPERATOR (RAPO)

THE VIEW ON THE GROUND

I spoke with a number of forestry contractors and arborists with whom I work as a contributor to *Forestry Journal*. Virtually all were completely unaware of these plant passporting requirements. A senior manager at a large arb contracting company said if he saw the words 'plant passports for timber transport' in the Confor magazine he would automatically assume it did not apply to arboriculture. A small forestry contractor felling and moving softwood sawlogs and over-stood chestnut coppice thinks that on past experience the FC will introduce a tonnage threshold

and that he may well escape in this way. However, others acknowledge there is no point in plant passports unless everyone down to florists and funeral directors is obliged to sign up. Some said the system would stall due to insufficient in-house inspectors, though the FC is considering the use of contract inspectors to reduce the burden on the industry.

A Home Counties-based arborist working south of the River Thames thought it would be completely impossible to monitor what goes on under the name of arboriculture.

"There are countless unqualified and inexperienced people out there masquerading as arborists and tree

Far left: Christmas trees exceeding three metres in height require a plant passport for their movement.

Top centre: Looks like a lot of paperwork to legally move this lot. Thank goodness it's beech – no plant passport required.

Above: A Surrey Woodland being felled and cleared and the wood material destined for fuelwood and biomass back at the contractor's yard. Predominantly broadleaf deciduous and mainly birch but also some Norway spruce, which means a plant passport is required for movement.

Left: One of the many Veteran London Plane trees at Old St Pancras churchyard in north-west London. Any 'arisings' from this and other London plane trees now require a plant passport for movement off site.

PLANT PASSPORTS

surgeons and causing massive amounts of damage to trees," he said.

"No-one monitors what they do to trees on site, so why should they bother about what wood materials they are taking away?"

I asked another Home Counties-based arborist, this time working north of the River Thames, if he thought the extra administration and paperwork relating to species such as sweet chestnut and London plane might cause professional arborists with a full workload to avoid jobs involving these species. He wasn't sure, but said the client could always find casual, unqualified workers who are not bothered about regulations to carry out the work.

"And in such cases you will have to worry about where the arisings will end up," he said.

AN IMPORTANT MEASURE

UK Chief Plant Health Officer Nicola Spence has said: "I am delighted to see the introduction of timber plant passporting. It's important that our biosecurity measures meet the highest of standards and we need to do all we can to ensure any plant material being transported to the UK is free from regulated pests. I'm really pleased that the Forestry Commission is working with Confor and the wider forestry sector to help achieve this, and I fully support the work they are doing."

Alignment with the new EU PHR is obviously regarded as a smart move, but it could rapidly go from sublime to ridiculous if florists and funeral directors moving cut conifer foliage get caught up in the requirements. A ridiculous scenario you may say, but entirely possible given the apparently all-encompassing and unyielding scope of the new legislation.

To see if there is any flexibility with regard to the type and size of business and the nature and size of material movements, I asked the Forestry Commission (Plant Health) to consider and comment on six scenarios (no names, but real people and companies I deal with) to find out if they would be caught up in these new plant passporting requirements.

The FC reply, which is both clear and comprehensive, is given alongside the six scenarios at the end of this article, selected to cover as many types of operators and companies as possible. Hopefully the information provided by the FC, and related specifically to these six scenarios, will go some way in answering questions and allaying fears for many people.

WHY TIMBER AND WOOD FROM THESE TREE SPECIES?

So what are the risk factors which made UK plant health authorities single out these species (conifers, *Castanea* and *Platanus*)



**PHYTOPHTHORA RAMORUM
HAS BEEN RECORDED
ON SWEET CHESTNUT
AT MORE THAN
30 SITES**

for special treatment?

Castanea

The *Castanea* genus comprises some seven species spread across North America, Europe and Asia. Main UK interest is in sweet or Spanish chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), an exotic but naturalised tree with a two-millennium UK provenance and generally regarded as an honorary British native tree. Estimated area of sweet chestnut woodland in UK is 20,000 hectares.

UK sweet chestnut led a relatively charmed life until hit in succession by an alien fungal pathogen (*Cryphonectria parastica* or sweet chestnut blight) and an alien insect pest (*Dryocosmus kuriphilus* or oriental chestnut gall wasp), regarded as the world's worst disease and insect pest, respectively, of the genus *Castanea*. The FC may also be concerned about *Phytophthora ramorum* recorded on sweet chestnut at more than 30 sites, mostly in Cornwall and Devon but as far east as Wiltshire. Sweet chestnut is also suffering from resurgence in ink disease caused by a pair of *Phytophthora* pathogens (*Phytophthora cinnamomi* and *Phytophthora cambivora*). The fungus-like pathogens were documented as causing this disease in UK-grown sweet chestnut as early as the 1930s but are now on the increase, in response (it is thought) to a warming climate.

However, of most concern to UK plant health authorities is chestnut blight, ever

since it was found at a Warwickshire farm in 2011 on sweet chestnut trees planted in 2007 as part of a consignment of planting material imported from a nursery in France. Between 2011 and 2018, the FC issued SPHNs (Statutory Plant Health Notices) for the destruction of blight-infected sweet chestnut trees at 37 sites across England. More were issued in 2019, including at sites where the pathogen had been previously been dealt with and disease eradication was presumed.

Apart from a cluster of outbreaks in south-west England during 2016/2017, the chestnut blight situation in the UK, including the location of outbreaks and nature of affected sites and infected sweet chestnut trees, has been shrouded in secrecy, with the FC keeping details well under wraps.

Conifers

That plant passports are now required for the movement of all extant (living as opposed to fossil) conifers in the order Pinales means the plant health authorities could well be mindful of a panoply of pests and pathogens, though inclusion of Christmas trees exceeding three metres plus specific comments in the Confor article give the game away.

The FC appears most concerned about *Ips typographicus* (larger eight-toothed European spruce bark beetle), currently

Left: Finished fencing products cleaved from over-stood sweet chestnut coppice. A plant passport was required to bring the coppice poles to the contractor's yard but is apparently not required for movement of the finished product, with or without bark, off site and to the customer.

Right: A Hertfordshire-based arborist chipping Leyland cypress and Eucalyptus arisings on site in north-west London from several trees felled at a private residence. Plant passport apparently not required to take the chippings back to the yard even though the chippings will contain conifer.



Above: Sweet chestnut coppice poles in Kent destined for the coppice contractor's yard and cleaving into chestnut fencing. Plant passport required for movement off site.

causing havoc in central Europe. The pest was identified for the first time in the UK at two sites at Ashford in Kent during December 2018. Since then, the FC has conducted a prototype plant passporting system for spruce timber movements within a large Demarcated Area of south-east England. The Demarcated Area comprises the whole of Kent (apart from a small north-west section which includes the area around Sevenoaks) and a portion of East Sussex adjoining West Kent.

There is evidence to suggest this particular spruce bark beetle may also be present in Surrey. Photographic evidence was posted on 26 December 2018 by a forestry contractor working on a private estate in Surrey, though the location was not divulged at the time, apparently due to commercial considerations.

Norway spruce is the primary plant host for *Ips typographus*. It only attacks trees taller than three metres, hence the stipulation on Christmas trees. Other conifer bark beetles of concern in the context of timber and wood movement mentioned by FC include *Ips amitinus* (eight-toothed spruce bark beetle) and *Ips duplicatus* (double-spined spruce bark beetle).

Platanus

Platanus genus consists of a dozen species native to the northern hemisphere, with UK interest focussed on *Planatus x acerifolia* or London plane. Ironically, it is not a

true species, but thought to be a natural hybrid between *Planatus orientalis* (oriental plane) and *Planatus occidentalis* (American sycamore) originating some time in the 17th century when the two species were grown together for the first time in Europe. Many believe it occurred in Spain, hence the alternative name *Planatus x hispanica*, but the more likely location is Vauxhall Gardens (London) where famous botanist John Tradescant the Younger discovered the tree, making it deserving of the name London plane. Today the tree is widely planted in Britain's towns and cities, and it is by far the most frequently occurring street and parkland tree in its namesake city.

The only pest or disease of London plane currently present in the UK and of some concern is Massaria disease, caused by the fungus *Splanchnonema platani*. Massaria is by no means lethal (to plane trees) but is responsible for weakening large branches and triggering sudden branch drop, which occurs naturally in English elm and red river gum in Australia. Massaria may well have the potential to wipe out a group of tourists admiring a huge London plane but is unlikely to be the reason behind these new plant passporting requirements.

That is more likely to be a pre-emptive strike against plane wilt (*Ceratocystis platani*) causing carnage in plane trees in France and Italy and with a capacity to completely alter the London landscape. Taxonomists are constantly revising the classifications and scientific names of

fungal pathogens, and in this context the fungus *Ceratocystis platani* was linked with Chalara. According to CABI (Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International): "*Ceratocystis* was linked to the anamorphic state *Chalara* on the basis of phialidic conidiogenesis in the anamorph."

That may be gobbledegook to most people (including me, without my dictionary of mycological terms), but it is enough to strike fear into the hearts of arborists at least. Foresters should also take note, because London plane, with its good canopy structure, fast growth rate and high yield of quality timber, has been singled out as an alternative hardwood species. This may be of little consequence, however, if plane wilt gets into the UK causing London plane to suffer a similar fate to common ash.

PRIORITIES AND FOCI

The FC says the adoption of timber plant passporting will demonstrate that the forest industry is committed to the highest standards of biosecurity and will improve awareness of biosecurity threats posed by quarantine pests. Maybe so, but perhaps the priority should be excluding quarantine pests in the first place. Exclusion of quarantine pests from so-called third (non-EU) countries continues to be largely successful, but entry from EU countries on the back of 'floppy' EU plant passports is an obvious weak link in our defences.

The United Kingdom is a densely

PLANT PASSPORTS

populated small land area with high industrial activity. Waiting until quarantine pests and pathogens arrive – *Phytophthora ramorum*, oak processionary moth, *Phytophthora lateralis*, *Phytophthora austrocedri*, Chalara ash dieback, sweet chestnut blight and oriental chestnut gall wasp – has already proved to be too late.

These new plant passporting requirements for timber movement in the UK are far-reaching and comprehensive. If the same level of forethought and rigour could be invested in biosecurity and quarantine against entry of pests and pathogens we would be in better place right now. Our strength is being an island nation, which better equips us to exclude alien pests and pathogens. Our weakness is being a small land area with high population density and industrial activity, thus making it more difficult to deal with an alien pest or pathogen once it has arrived.

The article by Ian Murgatroyd and John Morgan can be accessed online (see References section). It contains a sample plant passport showing the detailed layout of the document and a contact email address for enquires about how to register to become a RAPO.

Subsequent updates from the FC and Confor imply a still evolving situation with regard to:

- exactly who and what will eventually be covered by the new plant passporting process,
- the layout and content of plant passports
- the nature and mechanics of future inspections of Registered Authorised Professional Operators (RAPOs).

Contact for the latest information, including registration for RAPO status: plant.health@forestrycommission.gov.uk



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Above: P60's Norway spruce being felled in the Surrey Hills. Movement of material off site from this operation will require a plant passport.

Left: Over-stood coppice stacked and ready to move roadside and off site for woodfuel. Don't panic, my friends; you are standing on hornbeam – plant passport not required.

PLANT PASSPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR SIX MOVEMENT SCENARIOS IN FORESTRY AND ARB

SOUTH-OF-ENGLAND CONTRACTOR ENGAGED IN FORESTRY AND ARB (ALSO WITH A FIREWOOD AND BIOMASS OPERATION)

Situation: Felling a range of conifer species – Douglas fir, western red cedar, Corsican pine and Scots pine – at a sports facility.

Forestry Commission: Where the felling is not taking place in an arboricultural setting, i.e. felling single trees or small groups of trees; where industrial sized/sawlog sized loads are being moved and where biomass companies are being supplied (some may require loads to be plant passported for chain of custody), then it would be compulsory for the professional operator(s) commissioning the transport of this material, to move all this material with plant passports. This will support biosecurity and chain of custody in this larger-scale urban scenario. The professional operator commissioning the movement of isolated bark to other processors or to retailers must issue a plant passport.

- Sawlogs of required specifications stacked roadside for transport to sawmill: **The professional operator commissioning the transport of the sawlogs must issue a plant passport.**
- Other roundwood and brash chipped on site transported to contractor's site for fuelwood/biomass operation: **The professional operator commissioning the transport of the chipped wood must issue a plant passport.**
- Firewood and biomass chip delivered to customers in industrial-size loads: **The professional operator commissioning the transport of the firewood and chipped wood must issue a plant passport.**

EAST-OF-ENGLAND CONTRACTOR SPECIALISING IN SWEET CHESTNUT, MAINLY COPPICE BUT ALSO SAWLOGS

Situation: Cutting sweet chestnut coppice and felling mature trees.

FC: In this scenario, where the professional operator is commissioning the transport of sweet chestnut with bark to his processing yard/premise, the movement of the sweet chestnut must be supported with a plant passport. The professional operator commissioning the movement of isolated

bark to other processors or to retailers must issue a plant passport when isolated bark is moved. It is not a priority to use a plant passport to support the movement of processed product (chestnut fencing, sawn timber, with or without residual bark) to final users.

- Transporting sweet chestnut coppice back to yard for cleaving into chestnut fencing: **The professional operator commissioning the transport of the chestnut coppice must issue a plant passport.**
- Transporting sweet chestnut sawlogs for milling at his own premises: **The professional operator commissioning the transport of the sawlogs must issue a plant passport.**

EAST ANGLIAN WOODSMEN OPERATING A FIREWOOD BUSINESS AND CARRYING OUT MILLING ON A SMALL SAWMILL AT HIS PREMISES

Situation: felling a wide range of conifer species and some sweet chestnut.

FC: In this scenario, where the professional operator is commissioning the transport of conifers and sweet chestnut with bark to his processing yard/premise, the movement of the conifer and sweet chestnut must be supported with a plant passport. The professional operator commissioning the movement of isolated bark to other processors or to retailers must issue a plant passport when isolated bark is moved. It is not a priority to use a plant passport to support the movement of processed product (woodfuel, sawn timber, with or without residual bark) to final users.

- Transporting roundwood back to yard for milling and the woodfuel operation: **The professional operator commissioning the transport of the roundwood must issue a plant passport.**
- Transporting processed mixed-species firewood in relatively small quantities to local customers: **A plant passport is currently not required.**
- Transporting Corsican pine roundwood to an industrial-size, biomass chipping operation within the same county: **The professional operator commissioning the transport of Corsican roundwood to a processor (e.g. biomass company) must issue a plant passport.**

HOME COUNTIES-BASED ARBORIST

Situation: working in Central London on London plane trees.

FC: All London plane 'arising' including roundwood and material chipped on

site is transported back to his site in the Home Counties: **The professional operator commissioning the transport of the chipped wood must issue a plant passport.**

To support biosecurity and follow best practice, professional operators managing operations with plane trees, who commission the movement of plane material, must issue a plant passport when moving plane material to a processing site.

LOCAL AUTHORITY OPERATING A CHRISTMAS TREE RECYCLING OPERATION

Situation: Recycling Christmas trees, some of which will exceed three metres in height.

- Christmas trees exceeding three metres tall transported to local authority recycling centre by local residents: **A plant passport is not required.**
- Chipped biomass containing some material sourced from Christmas trees exceeding three metres in height and transported from recycling centre to biomass chip users: **The professional operator commissioning the transport of the chipped trees must issue a plant passport. To support biosecurity and follow best practice, the professional operator commissioning the movement of this chipped material to a biomass company must issue a plant passport. Some biomass companies may require a plant passport for chain of custody.**

HERTFORDSHIRE-BASED ARBORIST – TWO-MAN TEAM

Situation: reducing and or removing Leyland cypress trees from the gardens of residential properties.

FC: Where single trees or small groups of Leyland cypress trees are being felled in arboricultural work then it is not a priority to use a plant passport to support the movement of this type of material to the arboriculturalist's premises because the biosecurity risk is understood to be low. If the aggregated chipped material is then moved to a biomass company, it is possible that some biomass companies may require a plant passport for chain of custody. In this case for business reasons, the professional operator commissioning the transport of the aggregated chipped material to the biomass company, would have to issue a plant passport.

- Arborist's arising including roundwood and brash which is chipped on site transported back to premises: **A plant passport is currently not required, unless the biomass company requires a plant passport.**

British heavy metal

Paul Ramsay pays a visit to Watford-based forest equipment manufacturer RSL Engineering, which has come a long way from its first base in director Richard Page's suburban garage in Potters Bar.

WATFORD is a strange place to end up when seeking out forestry equipment. It's a place better known for Elton John's lifelong commitment as supporter of its football club than its trees. But just on the outskirts of Aldenham, where the urban sprawl of north Greater London starts to give way to countryside, a small farm is home to RSL Engineering, where British manufacturing is booming.

Forestry Journal visited RSL in late January 2020 just after the company had held a demo day of its forestry products. Director Richard Page and sales manager Tony Abis were effusive about how well it had gone.

"The main issue we've had is the lack of decent videos," explained Tony when describing why the event had been arranged. "Like everything, we want to control the quality of any demos and make sure we showcase the products Richard has invented, and the demo day let us do that."

Reaching your customers in a way that is acceptable is not always an easy proposition as RSL has found out. Eventually it prompted the company to add a JCB to its inventory.

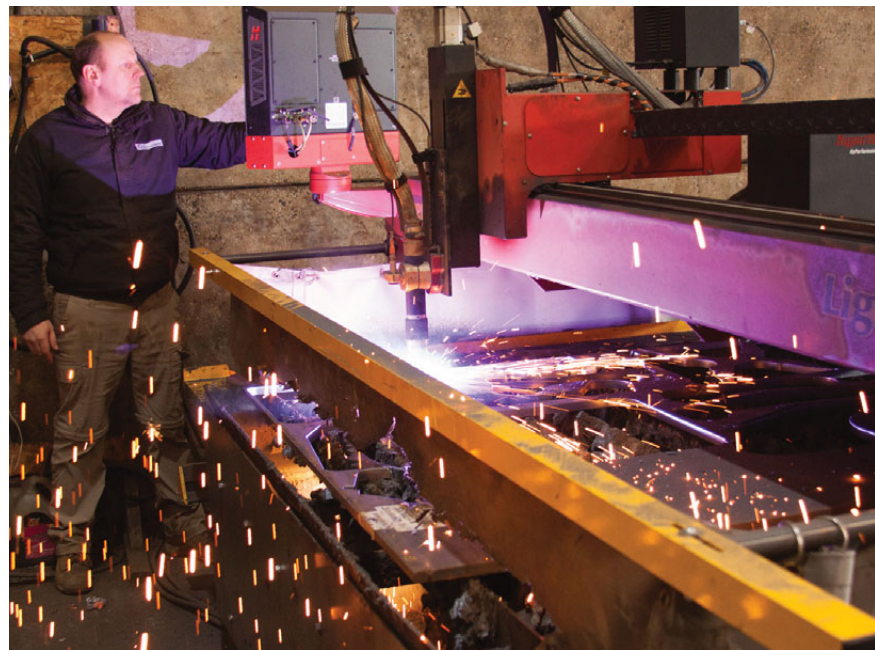
"JCB were extremely helpful," explained Richard. "We needed something to run our products on and they were really competitive when we explained what we needed. And it's great to be able to showcase a British-built item on a British machine." The repeated referrals to British manufacturing are telling, in a time in which the country has been beset by uncertainty and instability. "It's been a really weird year," Richard said. "There has been a lot of uncertainty and disruption over Brexit," said Tony. "Everyone has been lacking confidence. There has been no momentum and everybody was hit badly."

Richard chipped in, smiling: "Since the elections confidence seems to have come back into the market and now we can all carry on!"

Tony explained that it was the obvious success of Richard's enterprise in a time of deepening recession which brought him to the company. "I was working in sales for a corporate clothing company, which was struggling," he explained. "All I could hear was this racket coming from next door. Whatever was happening in the country at that time, there was definitely plenty happening in those sheds!"

Tony decided to investigate further and subsequently met Richard, who was already starting to feel he might need some help in getting his products out to customers. But it had been a long road to that point, and as Richard explained, hard work is what had done it.

Richard's story started in 1991 as a 16-year-old in Lincolnshire, leaving school early to work for his dad's



local agricultural contracting and waste-management business. Here he learned the basics of how to fabricate metal, before a meeting with his soon-to-be wife drew him down south and into London.

"I set up a property business and did pretty well," Richard remembers, "but it didn't feel natural and I wanted to get back into engineering."

Richard was living in Potters Bar and started to work out of a white van, using a mini-digger to do the odd job. "I really needed something to pick up concrete," he said, and, knowing thumb grabs

Above: Richard operates the company's CNC controlled plasma cutter to produce parts from raw materials.

Left: The Mother Kutter.





were big in America, Richard decided to design and make his own.

Richard set to work in his garage at home, cutting the parts from a plywood template and welding them together with a MIG. As soon as he'd finished and surveyed his work, Richard made another and stuck it on eBay to see if it would sell. It was gone in a couple of days. He made five more – they sold within a couple of weeks. It seemed clear he was onto something.

"Everything was cut using a handheld plasma, cleaned up, drilled, welded and sprayed. It was all high-tensile steel."

At this point Richard chuckled before explaining the rather primitive process.

"I'd hang them up on beams, open the door, hold my breath, spray the parts and then dash out to have a breather before going back in to finish them off."

But after the grabs kept selling, he knew he had to tighten up his operation.

"I got hold of a CNC (computer numerical control) machine and managed to get it in my garage. I sold my motorbike, paid for a cutting table and then found an electrician to get it all wired in." Richard admits it was a tight fit once the welder, lathe and cabinets were taken care of, but he made it work and gives full credit to the electrician mate that helped him.

Production soon outran the garage and moved to a small farm premises in Kitts End. "The farmer's wife was vociferous in her criticism of the noise," said Richard. "Finding the right premises is really hard. Engineering means noise and this makes it difficult." But thankfully he did and this led to the racket noticed by Tony next door.

Kitts End was soon too small and the pair started to look around for somewhere bigger. The site at Aldenham was the result.

"I took a risk but suddenly I had the space to be more efficient and soon our manufacturing output started to cover the costs."

And so it is that the company continues to turn out

Above: The new addition of a JCB made demos easier for quality control.

Above right: RSL is Richard's company, but friend Tony (left) has been instrumental in getting the message out there.

Below: RSL Engineering recently bought a JCB machine, principally to demo their products.

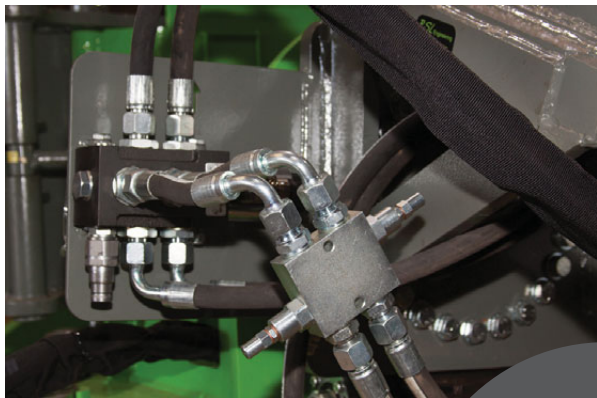
products for the market and is doing very well indeed, using the latest high-definition plasma unit and MIG welders, with plans to upgrade to the latest CNC machines for turning.

Richard and Tony were keen to talk about their range of timber grabs and tree shears, which they showcased at their demo day. "We had two principal demos," said Richard. "One was the tree shears and the other was the timber grab," the latter design having been invented by Richard himself. It's a new two-tonne-capacity model where the mechanical link has been replaced by a hydraulic valve, removing the primary area of failure.

"I try and keep everything in-house as much as possible," explained Richard, "including design."

Also on show was the RSL Mother Kutter. A 300 mm cut capacity head which can handle softwoods up to capacity, and oak to nine and a half inches. It incorporates a fixed-





blade shear where the arm pulls the timber over the blade before cutting. It has an interchangeable blade and has a high power-to-weight ratio at 190 kg and 25-tonne push at 200 bar. "It's a good machine," explained Richard, before saying how their standard shear has an added safety feature over the Mother Kutter.

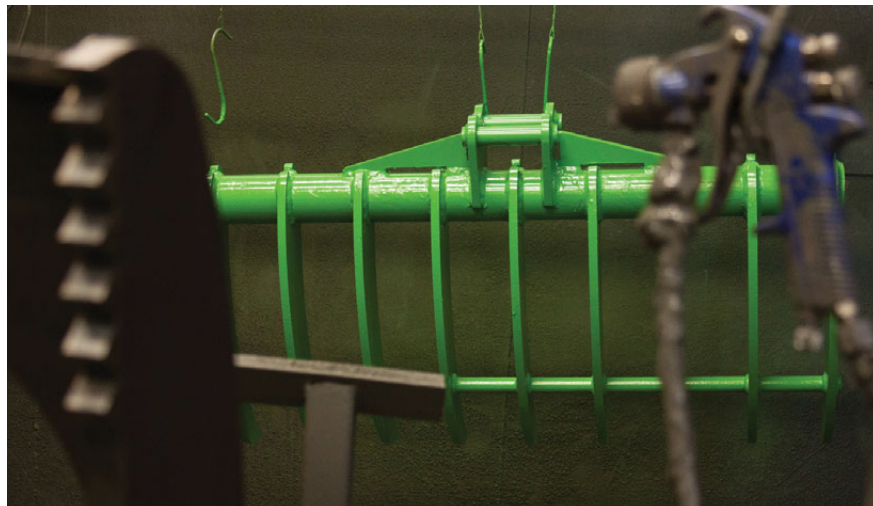
The RSL standard tree shear has been tweaked over the years and is one of those areas in which Tony describes Richard's knowledge of their machines.

"This is a testament to British manufacturing. It's in Richard's blood. He knows every nut and bolt." The shear comes in a range of sizes up to 20" and is more powerful than the Mother Kutter. With the standard you can cut 12-inch hardwood and softwood. "What you can get in the jaw, it will cut," said Richard. The added safety is from the grab timing. The timber is grabbed first, then cut, preventing it from falling back onto a whole host of hazards which might be around. It's a significant safety feature.

Forestry Journal quizzed the pair on what are the greatest challenges that lie ahead. The answer is unanimous – labour.

"Skilled labour is the biggest problem. I've paid peanuts and had bad work. I've paid a fortune and had bad work. It's about finding the right person with a desire to do a good job, and they are hard to come by."

RSL has decided to deal with the shortages by running an extensive in-house training programme. Training each employee from scratch, Richard acknowledges, is quite tough, but he's been rewarded with a motivated and happy workforce, with very small staff turnover. "They come from really diverse backgrounds. I've got an ex-



courier, ex-printer, and ex-lorry driver; all sorts. All of the training is done on site and we teach them everything. We pay them good money and make sure they've all got the flexibility they need to want to stay. It's a good team."

RSL regularly advertises online to attract trainees and, while supportive, are critical of the government's apprenticeship scheme. "It's a good idea," said Richard, "but the apprentices struggle to be able to afford to get to the colleges, so it doesn't work for all.

Here, we give them everything they need."

Imported products are another threat, but no one seems to be overly concerned at RSL. "Some of our greatest challenges come from bespoke items, but we're not put off by anything. If you ask us 'Can you make this?' the answer is usually yes."

This flexible attitude to manufacturing bolsters the company against high-production items which are easily copied by overseas makers.

"I stand by my products and won't put my name to anything that has come from elsewhere," said Richard, critical of other companies that will.

"Stuff that is made here will go out with our name on it. Stand by your product and know your market. Set your own high standards and stick to them." Simple rules for staying competitive in difficult times.

Tony finished off *Forestry Journal's* visit to RSL with some simple comments about customer service. A background in sales has set him up neatly to ensure that aftersales is a critical element in the business.

"We score really highly in our personal customer service. We have a world-class tree shear. We've got a really good product to take to market and we want to make sure our customers are happy and stay that way."

If Google reviews, Twitter and the RSL website are anything to go by, they're hitting the numbers with some terrific testimonies. Perhaps the last word goes to Richard, who has brought the company so far, from a garage in Potters Bar to the facility they have today. When asked what really makes the products an overwhelming success – "There really is no substitute for good metal, and plenty of it!"

Above left: Items are assembled before they go to the bay for spraying. Everything is done on site from raw materials.

Left: Valve packages can be added as an optional extra if customers need it.

Above: RSL have an on-site spraying bay where parts are coated for assembly.

"SKILLED LABOUR IS THE BIGGEST PROBLEM. I'VE PAID PEANUTS AND HAD BAD WORK. I'VE PAID A FORTUNE AND HAD BAD WORK."

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Established in Derbyshire over 20 years ago as a log and kindling supplier, Midlands Logging Company has grown to become one of the region's leading timber contracting businesses. Hilary Burke met with owner and managing director Luke Evans to learn about his operations in Martinshaw Wood and discuss site security.

THE weather in the English Midlands took a turn for the worse as winter set in. On the outskirts of the city of Leicester, the soils of Martinshaw Wood were deteriorating and a few more weeks of timber extraction was threatening to cause unacceptable damage to the forest floor.

Fortunately for Luke Evans of the Midlands Logging Company, the forest works manager was agreeable to a postponement of timber harvesting operations. The contract could recommence in 2020 when ground conditions were more favourable. The John Deere 1270D harvester would start on another timber harvesting site and the two Valmet forwarders would follow when the last of the cut produce had been lifted.

Flexibility is key to the success of a timber contracting business in the centre of England and Luke has now built up an order book that can keep the 10 or so regular operatives gainfully employed, usually within striking distance of the Midlands area. A wide range of kit, including Valtra tractors and Botex, Farmi and Mowi timber forwarding trailers, allows the team to undertake a wide range of timber harvesting activities.

The Midlands Logging Company is well adapted to working the small and medium-sized woodlands – coniferous, broadleaved and mixed – that are so common among the agricultural lands that predominate in the English central counties. Luke has expanded his opportunities with the offer to purchase timber from landowners: for use in his own firewood business, for

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biomass production, but preferably for milling in English sawmills.

While consideration is now being given to the acquisition of another harvester to increase the production of quality timber for milling, Luke himself started out on the family farm with a small firewood delivery business – mainly sourced from the farm's own ash trees. As the demand increased year on year, raw material was soon being purchased from neighbouring woodlands in the South Derbyshire area. A natural progression was the purchase of a timber harvester.

The Swadlincote farm was within the National Forest area and the Evans family took the opportunity to convert almost all the land to timber production. The crop has now reached thinning age. The opportunity

to produce timber from his own farmland is, of course, a tempting prospect for Luke, and the option to schedule operations to fit in with the Midlands Logging Company's workload is an added bonus. Felling and processing quality stems on the Derbyshire farm for specialist English hardwood sawmillers, on the other hand, may still seem like a somewhat distant prospect.

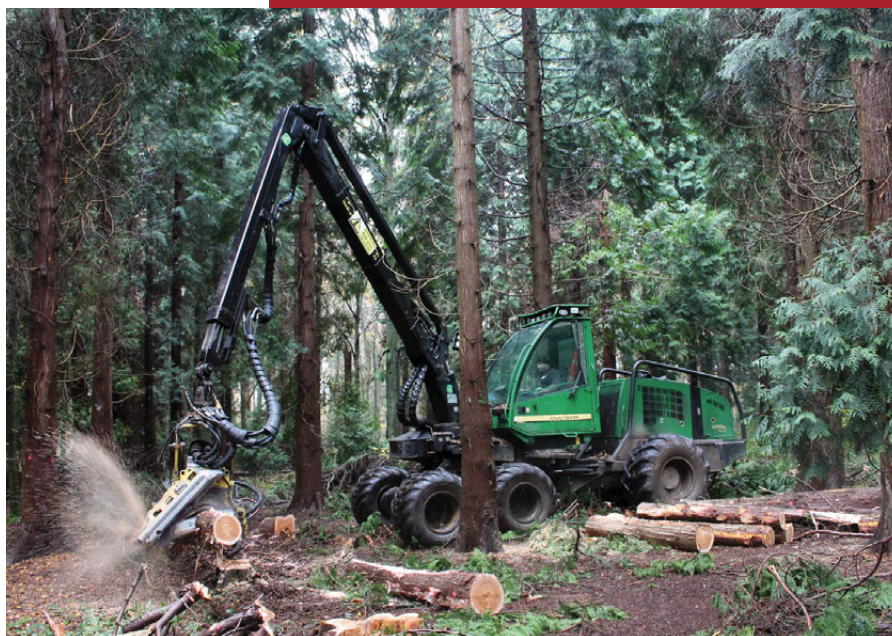
Across the county border in Leicestershire, Martinshaw Wood is also in the National Forest area but its most noticeable trees are now fairly sizeable conifers. While the woodland may have been one in the vicinity referred to in the Domesday Book, written records from the 13th century almost certainly identify it as 'The Shaw' and the property of the predecessors of the Earls of Stamford.

It seems to have remained for five centuries as 'coppice with standards',

Secure logging

Right: In the cab of the John Deere 1070D harvester, operator Paul Kendall works his way through a stand of pure conifers. The forester charged by the Woodland Trust with marking the trees for removal has ensured the canopy is well opened to give native species a fair chance of survival, but has wisely retained conifer stems of the best form for future timber production.

Below: The rough and forked Western red cedars in the crop have been earmarked for harvesting. With the ever-increasing demand for chipped biomass material and the current prices offered, many foresters judge that it is a good moment to clear out poor-quality growth. Both Paul Kendall and Luke Evans agree that John Deere harvesting heads have the robust design to cope with the toughest challenges.



Below: Timber harvesting contractor, Luke Evans (left) speaks with a couple of Ratby residents who seem to be wandering in the direction of the forest operations risk zone. Luke explains the part thinnings operations play in the management plan and points out that they will be free to roam in all parts of their precious local woodland when harvesting operations conclude.



supplying timber and woodland products to the city of Leicester and surrounding areas. The 20th century saw the character of the wood change dramatically as the Earls of Stamford introduced exotic species, including American conifers, to Martinshaw Wood. Clearfelling before and during World War II saw the removal of almost all the best oak, ash, beech and birch. The Forestry Commission took over the woodland in 1950 and, over a couple of decades, restocked with a wide range of native and exotic species. It is assumed the intention was to manage the plantation on a medium-term thin/clearfell rotation.

In 1967, the construction works of the M1 motorway reached the western outskirts of the city of Leicester. The route was driven north between the villages of Groby and Ratby and straight through the centre of Martinshaw Wood. Shortly

afterwards, the divided wood was acquired by the Woodland Trust. A more traditional woodland management system was envisaged.

The ultimate aim was to reinvest Martinshaw Wood with the characteristics it presented for almost 700 years as a social and landscape feature in the shires of central England. Nevertheless, the Woodland Trust was able to resist the easy option of 'purifying' the semi-ancient woodland with the elimination of all the alien species. After all, the exotic conifers had played a large part in shielding the residents of Groby and Ratby from the visual and acoustic disturbances entailed in the construction of the new road. As they matured, they also assisted in buffering the noise from the ever-increasing flow of traffic.

Few of the residents of the two villages on the northern outskirts of the city of

Leicester will now remember the building of the motorway. In the half century since Martinshaw Wood was divided, however, huge numbers of those living in the area have made use of the area in their leisure time. It has always been a great place for walking the dog, of course, and more recently for jogging and cycle riding.

Luke Evans is able to report that, despite the difficulties of restricting public access to areas where forestry operations are underway, most visitors to the woodland have caused no problems.

There has been, understandably, a little downtime for managers, machine operators and hauliers when risk zones are in danger of being breached. A few minutes spent explaining the nature of the thinning operation and the hazards of timber harvesting is almost always met with understanding by local people.

COMPANY PROFILE



Above: Luke Evans requests that the PID Systems control centre activates the Armadillo intruder-detection towers. As he approaches the compound, lights flash and warning voices ring out in Martinshaw Wood. Most intrusions take place under the cover of darkness and the deterrent effect is considerably enhanced. In vulnerable locations, in Luke's view, the hire charge is money well spent.

Right: The Armadillo is a wireless battery-operated tower that detects movement and relays warning signals when activated. A group of four towers can effectively guard the perimeter of the landing used for storing machinery, tools and fuel. An operator in a control centre arms the system shortly after receiving a phone call from the last of the forestry crew to leave the worksite.



Less welcome has been the accessing of the site – usually under the cover of darkness – by a few visitors Luke believes come from further afield. In such a densely populated area in the vicinity of one of central England's main motorways, traffic is on the move day and night, the vast majority engaged in lawful and necessary business. The odd few vehicles prowling around with

malicious intent are unlikely to be noticed with the constant flow of traffic keeping the UK economy running.

For large businesses, a viable full-time security system should present no problems. The motorway service area at Leicester

Forest East, just a couple of miles south of Martinshaw Wood, has been in operation for over 50 years, and no hour has gone by without personnel on site and a duty manager to oversee security issues. On the northern outskirts of Leicester, the fortunes of the construction industry – both

commercial and residential – have ebbed and flowed over the last half-century. Security measures have been upgraded in line with informal national industry standards over that period.

One of the recent trends has been to engage the services of a private security business to periodically visit worksites. The system is not without its disadvantages. Intruders with criminal aims can quietly bide their time. When the security operative has left after the inspection, they know the coast is clear. For the Midlands Logging Company, with valuable machinery, fuel and tools stored in a clearing in Martinshaw Wood, it was not a viable solution. Luke Evans engaged the services of PID Systems



Above: Leicestershire forestry contractor Eric Porter (now retired) last thinned Martinshaw Wood around 15 years ago. The Western red cedar he cut went south to Bedfordshire to be cleft into traditional shingles for a special project. The current and future production of this species from the Leicestershire woodland should be even better suited for the use – cleaner and with a higher proportion of heartwood.

Above: When 'working on rubber' is stipulated in the contract document, both the forest works manager and the harvesting contractor are aware when the limits are being reached. Water running off the tyres and a little slurry in the tracks brings an agreement. The Midlands Logging Company has work in hand on other sites and will return to Martinshaw Wood when conditions improve.

to protect his worksite in the Leicestershire woodland.

When set by the last operative leaving the worksite, four battery-operated armoured towers will detect any movement in the vicinity of the protected area and relay a signal to one of PID Systems' alarm-receiving centres. A nominated keyholder will be informed of the intrusion and, if necessary, the emergency services will be notified. One recent activation of the system occurred only a quarter of an hour after the machine operator had left the site – somebody, obviously, had been waiting and watching.

There are also benefits for the landowner. Churning up mud may have put the

Midlands Logging Company's contract on hold temporarily, but ground damage was probably a limiting factor when the Earls of Stamford had their men harvesting the oaks and hauling the stems out with horses. Unauthorised draining of diesel storage reservoirs and puncturing of machine fuel tanks constitutes a new risk to the soils of historic woodland.

Luke Evans explained that the cost of the system – around £300 per week – was money well spent. In every instance, the police patrol had been on site within 20 minutes and, as yet, the miscreants had been deterred from their criminal intentions by the flashing lights and audible warnings which they encountered. *As Forestry Journal*

was visiting the site, Luke Evans called the PID Systems control centre in Prestwick, Ayrshire, and requested activation of the Armadillo perimeter intruder-detection system.

Lights flashed and voices boomed when Luke approached the protected area. In this instance, of course, the attendance of the emergency services was not required. Just as well. The M1 southbound traffic was, for a change, not rocketing along between the two halves of Martinshaw Wood. It was totally gridlocked and all available Leicestershire Constabulary officers were fully committed to sorting out the chaos ensuing from a major traffic incident at Junction 21.

Small-scale machinery for woodland management

When it comes to woodland and forest management, small-scale machinery plays a huge role in getting the job done. Whether you are working in a confined space, tackling tricky terrain or on a sensitive site, this month's Buyer's Guide brings you the latest in small-scale machinery.

ORION FORESTRY PORTABLE CAPSTAN ROPE WINCHES

CANADIAN company Portable Winch specialises in powerful but lightweight winches that pull rope; ideally suited to small woodland owners, conservation projects and people working in areas that are inaccessible to motor vehicles.

The winches can be anchored to other trees or any fixed object. Extractions can be carried out through dense woodland by moving anchor points or introducing pulleys to redirect a load. Well-designed accessories include skidding cones for guiding timber around obstacles, plus a variety of anchors for fixed-position pulls or anchoring off a tow ball.

Using a capstan drum on a sealed gearbox, the rope is only pulled when you apply a gentle force on the end. Length of rope is only limited by what you choose to carry in the bag, then pull out as much as you need and wrap it round the capstan three times. There are no short cables to snap or tangle, making operation safe, versatile and reliable. With two Honda engine-powered winches and an equally powerful lithium battery-powered winch to choose from, users can tailor the kit to extracting timber, recovering game or landing boats.

The four-stroke petrol version can run for hours at a time on one fill of fuel. The lithium battery version comes with a choice of three battery sizes and offers zero-maintenance pulling power when required.

Increasingly, customers are looking for power tools for



use in sensitive areas or where petrol is not permitted. The 80/82 Volt battery technology is compatible with Cramer, Greenworks, Stiga, and Briggs and Stratton, for users looking to simplify their range of tools.

Orion Forestry in Essex has been an authorised dealer of Portable Winch products for over eight years. The company's experience with the product means that accessories and winches can be picked to suit.

For more information, please contact 01279 813591 or visit www.orionforestry.co.uk

M. LARGE TREE SERVICES HAKKI PILKE PRO RANGE

FAMILY-owned machinery supplier M. Large Tree Services is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year and is marking the occasion with the launch of a new product guide detailing its 2020-21 offering, including the Hakki Pilke range of firewood processors.

The County Antrim-based firm is the UK and Ireland supplier of Hakki Pilke firewood processors, for professional, semi-professional and domestic users. Power options include tractor PTO, three-phase electric and combi models. Chainsaw and TCT circular cutting options are available.

The Hakki Pilke 38 Pro brings unparalleled efficiency to firewood processing. An effortless, ergonomic and efficient HakkiCut cutting control enables sawing with a single press of a joystick button. During cutting, the lowering speed of the saw bar is automatically adjusted according to the resistance, ensuring an efficient and fast process. At a splitting force of 10 tonnes, the 38 Pro can split even the hardest wood, achieving a splitting cycle of no more than three seconds. In the 38 Pro processor, the AC10 automatic chain tensioner functions mechanically. The patented AC10 system maintains the chain at optimal tension, improving the efficiency of the sawing process and providing a significant increase to the life span of the chain and bar. In addition to sawing and cutting, the joystick is used to adjust the height

of the splitting blade and control the infeed conveyor. The 38 Pro model also features the familiar Hakki Pilke cleaning outfeed conveyor, which separates debris from firewood without any additional accessories. As a new feature, the machine also includes a control valve for the outfeed conveyor, which can be used to reverse or stop the conveyor belt as necessary.

The Hakki Pilke 43 Pro firewood processor is a combination of experience and innovations. The 43 Pro is an entirely new machine based on the Easy 42 model. Despite the increased robustness of the frame, the log splitter is compact in terms of its dimensions and weight. The productivity of the processor has been improved with delay-free HakkiSplit splitting force. New features like a

hydraulic log clamp, a hydraulically retracting measuring device and log landing plates ensures uninterrupted material flow.

The Hakki Pilke 50 Pro is a heavy-duty machine with superior performance, designed in close cooperation with firewood professionals. It has been tested with a variety of wood types across the globe to ensure international viability as a professional-grade machine for industrial firewood production and consistently superior performance in all conditions.

For further information and prices or to view one of the biggest ranges of Forestry Equipment in the UK and Ireland, contact +44 28 9034 2838 or visit www.mlarge.com



GREENMECH CS80

The CS80 is the latest addition to the pedestrian woodchipper range from GreenMech. The range is known for combining usable power with accessibility, making it ideal for use in gardens, estates and leisure applications.

The new, entry-level CS80 is powered by a 12 hp Loncin pull-start engine and features an impressive 100 mm chipping capacity that makes light work of timber, woody waste and vegetation – with an adjustable discharge chute dispersing the chip produced up to 5 m in any direction. At just 760 mm in width, its size and manoeuvrability make it ideal for jobs in small spaces

Moving up through the range, the CS100 chippers from GreenMech are designed with the professional landscaper, arborist or parks manager in mind. Small yet mighty workhorses, they are powered by either a 16 or 18 hp Vanguard petrol engine. Their wide, open design infeed chute enables large volumes of bushy material or timber to be processed, with its impressive chipping ability provided by two high-grade steel, long-life reversible blades that are easily re-sharpened – thus ensuring low running costs. The tractor-mounted CS100 TMP model is also available, designed to suit compact tractors of



between 15 hp and 30 hp.

The CS80 and CS100 also come with the option of their own bespoke trailer for additional convenience in transportation. As with the whole GreenMech range, they are covered by three-year, no-quibble parts and labour warranty as standard and enjoy back-up support from a comprehensive nationwide dealer network.

For more information, please contact 01789 400 044 or visit www.greenmech.co.uk



OAKLEAF FORESTRY SAMPO ROSENLEW AND HYPRO

SAMPO Rosenlew provides a wide range of harvesters and forwarders, with the leading principle being to offer customers high-quality products specifically designed for their needs and a cost structure that allows profitable harvesting when thinning.

The Sampo Rosenlew FR48 Forwarder is designed and built in Finland using proven components. This 14-tonne forwarder thrives in young, dense forests due to its small dimensions and optimised weight distribution between the front and rear axles. This ensures that the ground and remaining trees are hardly affected by operations. The cab of the forwarder is very spacious with excellent visibility. The rear chassis frame is now extended by 1.2 metres and it has been slightly redesigned, reinforced and widened to handle the 14 tonnes of load and the bigger bogies.

The Hypro 755HB tractor processor is capable of cutting and delimbing trees from 50 cm in diameter right down to 3 cm. It is a fully-equipped machine with a built-in hydraulic system. Pump and tank are both mounted on the machine. The new 7.5 m crane provides increased range and enables the grapple to reach the centre of the machine bed. This also provides the possibility to cut and drop trees in the centre of the processor table when using a felling grapple without having to make any repeating grabs on the tree with the grapple to place it correctly. It can also be fitted with the optional FG45 felling grapple to make it an all-round harvesting solution.

For further details, please contact Oakleaf Forestry on 028 3833 0011 or visit www.oakleafforestry.com

FUELWOOD

FUELWOOD supplies both large- and small-scale forestry equipment designed to make life easier, safer and more profitable for its customers. End users involved in smaller-scale woodland management need versatility in their equipment and if a tool can have multiple uses, it can keep costs down while keeping productivity high.

Fuelwood offers various solutions for timber extraction with two ranges of smaller trailers from Avesta Vagnen and FTG Forest, equipped with either radio-controlled winch or a crane for loading the timber. Optional trailer sides and bodies can turn these timber trailers into conventional or tipping trailers for moving much more than just logs.

For landowners and estate managers with their own woodlands and biomass heating facilities, the Heizohack range of chippers enable self-sufficiency in fuel supply for relatively little cost. Many biomass chip contractors need a huge amount of timber to make a day's chipping worthwhile, and storage space for a huge amount of chip to last between visits. The versatility of owning your own biomass chipper means you can chip little and often, as and when the need to top up the fuel store arises. The energy efficiency designed into the Heizohack range of machines means that only



relatively small tractors, the type that most estates and farms will have already, are needed to power these chippers.

As anybody involved with forestry knows, one of the most difficult and time-consuming tasks is handling timber. For those lucky enough to own a mini-digger, Fuelwood can offer a range of accessories and attachments including grapples, cone splitters, tree shears, post hole borers, concrete mixing bowls, stump planers, screening baskets and brooms, thus making your excavator the most versatile tool in the shed, and making the majority of tasks within the woodland a lot safer. Accessories are

available for 1.5-tonne machines upwards.

Once extracted, there are numerous ways to capitalise on the valuable resource that timber has become. The range of Lucas Mill portable sawmills enable sawmilling and slabbing of timber, while the range of Japa firewood processors and the range of AMR log splitters and saws enable automated firewood production, transforming surplus timber from the woodland management into a quick return on investment.

Fuelwood also manufactures its own range of machinery including firewood processors for larger-scale producers, and kindling machines for anybody with access to a surplus of softwood. Powered by either single or three-phase electric, tractor PTO or hydraulics they can be operated out in the woods or back at a yard. With the capability to produce 60+ nets of kindling an hour, these machines also offer a great solution to processing the timber that can be collected from managing woodland, creating an additional revenue stream.

For more information on the Fuelwood range of forestry and firewood machines that can help existing organisations to diversify profitably, contact 01926 484673 or visit www.fuelwood.co.uk



FORS MW FARMA

FARMA, one of the leading European brands within forestry equipment, offers the largest range of cranes available on the market, running from the compact C3.8 up to the range-leading C8.5 m crane. Add to this an extensive range of trailers and Farma is able to offer its customers the perfect combination to suit their needs, right down to the last nut and bolt.

If cranes are your requirement, Farma produces cranes to fit a wide range of other equipment such as tractors, chippers, firewood machinery, boats and small, compact forwarders. In this field the C4.2 is the market leader with its lifting power of almost 500 kg and the compact nature when folded away. For those in need of a longer reach, yet still small scale, Farma recently introduced the C5.0 crane to the market.

Farma also offers an extensive list of accessories such as grapples, skidders, tree processors and tree shears.

The producers of Farma trailers, cranes and accessories are also the producers behind the market-leading brand Bigab hook-lift trailers, available with factory-fitted cranes tailored to suit.

For more information, visit www.forsmw.com, contact UK/international sales representative Tom Belton on 07860 951 485, or email tom.belton@forsmw.com



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Our Expertise, Your Environment



Where there's a winch, there's a way

Andy Fielding of CTS Forestry & Arboriculture puts the PCW5000 portable winch to the test.

TO support our business needs, we recently had the opportunity to try out a portable winch to decide whether or not this was a piece of kit worth investing in. Having looked at the options available, we opted for the petrol-powered PCW5000 winch as the marketing information stated that it would be an asset for workers in the forestry industry. We put that statement to the test.

So, how portable is portable? The winch is made up of a Honda four-stroke GXH-50 cc engine, an aluminium alloy gearbox, capstan and attachment points. In total that lot weighs in at just 16 kg, so we consider the winch to be both compact and portable. We've been carrying it over some rough ground through the autumn and winter without any major problems. There is an optional carry case, which will take not only the winch but various accessories as well. This helps protect the winch in transit too.

The winch has a pulling force of 1,000 kg and a pulling speed of 12 metres per minute. We've found this speed to be sufficient for directional felling, removing hung-up trees and the relatively short distances we've

pulled timber. We could have opted for the High-Speed version, which will pull faster at 36 metres per minute but at a much reduced pulling force. On the outside they are the same machine except the standard 57 mm diameter capstan drum is replaced with an 85 mm drum on the High-Speed version. On the inside (the bit you cannot see), the gearing ratio is different.

One of the main advantages we found of choosing a capstan-type winch is that there is no limit to the length of rope used. Rope diameters of between 10 mm and 16 mm can be used but we opted for a 12 mm Stein Omega (double-braid polyester) rope as this is what is recommended in the specifications.

Another factor we looked at was the safety issue of wire rope versus synthetic rope in the event of a rope failure. Synthetic rope will not recoil in the same way that a wire rope will and, due to the rope exit guide, the operator (that's me) never has to stand in line with the direction of pull and therefore is away from the recoil zone.

As standard, the winch came with a 2,000 kg two-metre polyester sling which is wrapped around a convenient tree and

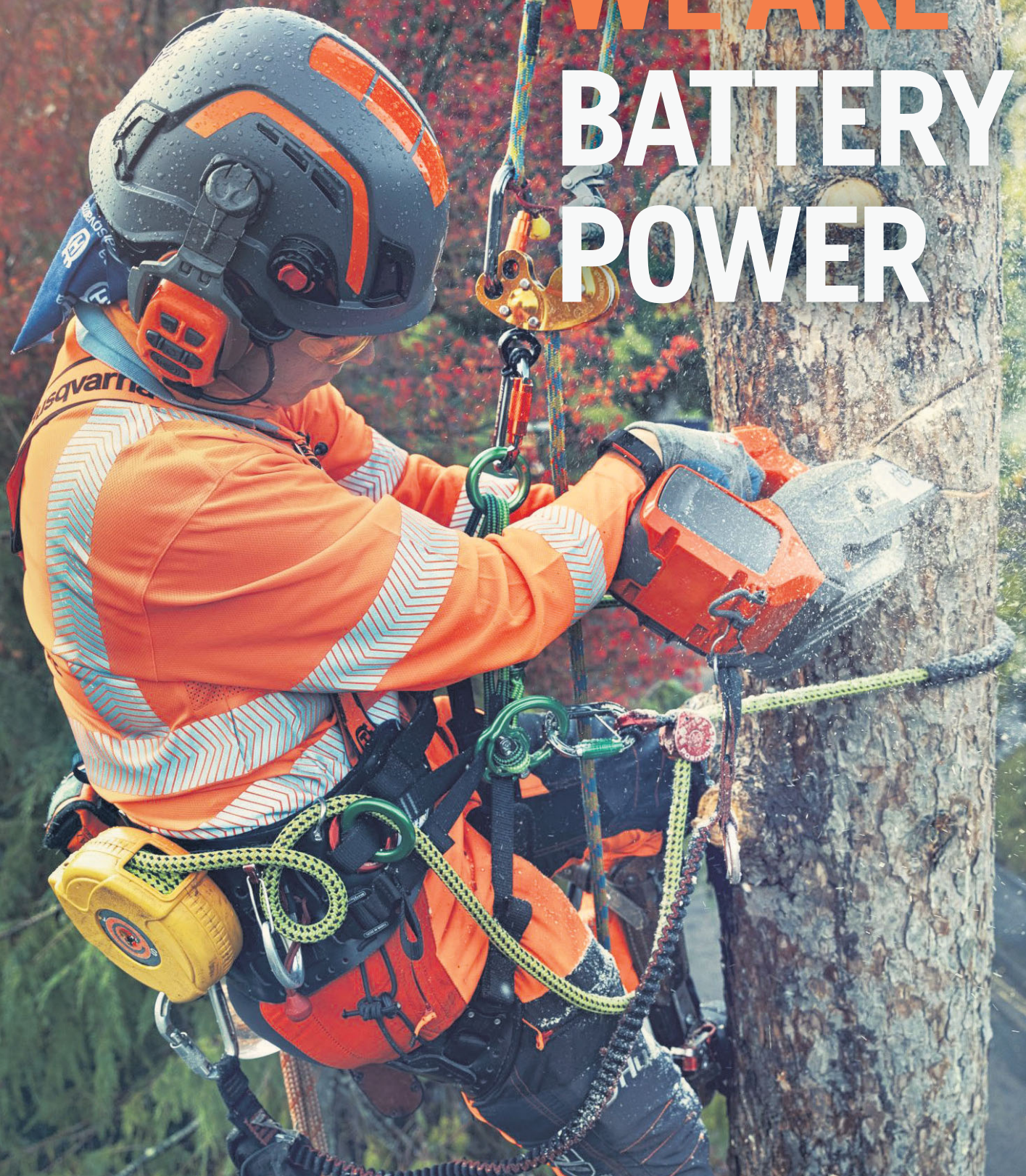
attached to the two anchor points located either side of the gear housing. There are optional extras available to enable the winch to be attached to the towbar of a vehicle or strapped directly onto a tree. We have used the towbar attachment, as this, in the right circumstances, can speed up the set-up time.

Most of the work we've put the winch through is doing simple straight-line pulls, sometimes with a directional pulley to help with where we stand during felling, or as an aid to reduce friction by changing the angle of pull. We've also added pulleys to increase the mechanical advantage of the winch up to a maximum of five times or 5,000 kg pulling force.

So, the million-dollar question: was this a good investment? In one word, yes. But is this the right winch for you?

If weight is an issue, the lighter (9.5 kg) PCW3000 winch would be an asset, albeit at a reduced (700 kg) pulling force. If your carbon footprint is an issue the PCW3000 also comes in a lithium-ion battery-powered version, also weighing just 9.5 kg but with an increased pulling force of 1,000 kg. The choice is yours.

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The future's bright

For the last few years, the Fife-based Our Bright Future programme has been providing the forestry industry with fresh, skilled recruits through its trees and timber apprenticeship. *Forestry Journal* recently paid a visit to its base in Falkland Estate to learn more and meet this year's apprentices.

ONCE a hunting ground for Stuart kings and queens, Falkland Estate sits at the heart of Fife, some 35 miles north of Edinburgh. Covering around 1,900 ha, just under one fourth of which is wooded, the estate is now a working landscape of upland pasture, farm and forest with pleasure walks.

Its diverse landscape requires a lot of maintenance, and among those ensuring it is at its most productive and looks its best are three young men hoping to become the foresters of the future.

Operating out of the Centre for Stewardship on Falkland Estate, the Fife-based project is part of the Our Bright Future programme, one of 31 projects across the UK funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. It aims to help young people gain vital skills and experience so they can take care of the environment.

This programme, set to run until March 2021, provides different types of activity teaching rural skills for different age groups, with level 2 offering Modern Apprenticeships to young people aged 16 to 24.

For trees and timber apprentices, the programme lasts 15 months, comprising a mix of college work and hands-on training to secure a range of valuable tickets recognised across the industry.

"When you look for the pathway into forestry, it isn't as clear as it could be," said project coordinator Sarah MacDonald. "That's why this programme was set up,

Left to right: Tom Corke, Lee Hutchison, Declan Lindsay and Billy Spence

to get people interested in the sector and entering at a skilled level, making them more appealing to employers.

"We're not looking for any particular skill set, just an interest in the rural sector. We run a two-week academy before they join us, which is an opportunity for them to come and see what it's like and meet the supervisors.

"Quite a lot of them may not have attained well at school and, as a result, will be concerned about the paperwork side. But we've found there's a really nice balance with the practical and they can deal with it well."

For those who proceed to the apprenticeship, 15 months of learning and hard graft under the direction of rural skills supervisor Tom Corke await.

"Day to day, we do lot of different jobs," said Tom. "It's not just forestry, trees and timber. We help out with estate maintenance, dealing with fencing, path works, road works. We have a sawmill too. The guys do their basic chainsaw training early on and consolidate that for three or four months. In April, we'll start tree climbing, consolidate that over the course of the summer and then they'll begin focussing on what they want to get better at. The estate is quite large, so there's always plenty to do.

"There's such a broad range of tasks to be done on the estate that we can do almost everything. There is commercial forestry here, so every couple of years a big forwarder and harvester will come in. Our apprentices get to do replanting, they're around for remounting, that kind of stuff. There's also the opportunity to pick an area of



Left: Billy cuts while Declan observes from a safe distance.

Below: Lee makes quick work of these branches.

woodland and try to improve it.

"You get to gain a little experience in a wide variety of area. What we offer are options, so the guys can try different things out and decide what they want to pursue.

"Along the way, we can improve things on the estate, which makes people happy. At the moment we're thinning a small section of woodland that probably wouldn't have been touched without the apprentices here, so over the years they have helped to bring a balance to the estate."

So far, the results have been excellent. Of the 10 trees and timber apprentices who have come through the programme since it was established, nine continue to work in forestry, with one at a paper mill.

This year, three trees and timber apprentices have been taken on (one more than in previous years) and, when *Forestry Journal* visited, they were five months in and growing more enthusiastic by the day.

Before he came to the Falkland Estate, Billy Spence had been doing labouring work in between bouts of unemployment. Then his friend showed him an ad for the apprenticeship.

"I applied and got a bit of a shock when I was accepted into the academy," he said. "By the last couple of days I was into the swing of it. I've said many a time that I don't think I would want to go back to an indoor job, ever again.

"Now that we've been here a while, it is getting tougher. The learning curve is steeper. But it's still fun."

Declan Lindsay had three years' experience labouring on an estate when he heard about the apprenticeship, which appealed to him more than higher education.

"You get an insight into what the industry's like being here four days a week," he said. "I'll leave with a load of tickets that are industry recognised, plus the experience. There's not a lot of apprenticeships going. I wanted to be working rather than going to college."

Lee Hutchison left school in fourth year. After four months of unemployment, he was warned by his mother that if he didn't find a job, he would need to join the Army.

"I applied for a few jobs like McDonald's, but never got anywhere," he said. "Then my brother told me about this apprenticeship. I went along to the induction day, spoke to Tom, did a little practical work and was told I could get into the academy.

"For the first week, I wasn't totally into it, but then I

"WHAT WE OFFER ARE
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TRY DIFFERENT THINGS
OUT AND DECIDE WHAT
THEY WANT
TO PURSUE."



started to get the hang of it and it became a really good laugh. I was really excited to start the chainsaw training."

All three said that at school they had been told next to nothing about careers in forestry or apprenticeships. It's fortunate, then, that they found their way into the Our Bright Future programme, which Tom believes will serve them and their future employers well.

"It's very hard to get work in forestry or arboriculture without qualifications," he said. "You can go and get them, but they're expensive. And, a week after doing a typical chainsaw course, are you going to be employable? I wouldn't give you a job. You need consolidation to become good. You don't need to be the best in the world, but you need to be competent and safe.

"That's the great thing about the estate. We can provide constant activities to consolidate skills, including brush-cutting, chipping, chainsaws and, obviously, climbing, which will be a big part of the summer. There's so much to learn and here, our guys have the time and the opportunity to do it."

Above left: Billy takes down a tree in an area of previously unmanaged woodland on the Falkland Estate.

Above right: Declan reflects on his latest handiwork.

Grease is the word

Gateshead-based GB Lubricants may have been serving the forestry industry for some seven decades, but it is only in the last five years that the sector's true potential has been realised, with word of mouth, social media and a strong relationship with the Forest Machine Operators Blog helping the long-standing company grow its presence. **Here, Lorraine Smith, sales executive, speaks to *Forestry Journal* about what GB Lubricants can offer the industry.**

Q. What is the history of GB Lubricants?

A. Since its very formation in 1877, GB Lubricants has always been customer-focused. Of course, over the past 143 years we have evolved and invested to meet the changing requirements of the industries we serve. That includes ongoing investment in technology and manufacturing capability, etc. However, at its heart GB Lubricants is still driven by the customer and ensuring they get the right product, at the right time, to the right location, wherever they may be in the world.

Q. What does GB Lubricants specialise in?

A. GB specialises in the development, manufacture and supply of high-quality lubricants, many of which are approved by leading equipment manufacturers.

Q. Where are you based? How big is the GB Lubricants team?

A. Our manufacturing base is in Gateshead in the North-East of England. The GB team numbers 50 people.

Q. What sectors do you serve?

A. We serve a wide variety of sectors including agricultural, forestry, off-highway plant, commercial vehicle, automotive, industrial, and blue light amongst others. We have a large client base within the forestry sector and currently

blend chain oil for leading manufacturers within the industry.

Q. What is the reach of the business?

A. We supply nationally to all parts of the UK and Southern Ireland, and have a rapidly growing export function that distributes around the world.

Q. Can you provide an overview of the GB product range?

A. The GB product range of oils and greases is forever expanding! It consists of fairly simple low-treat mineral oils up to sophisticated synthetic products with an array of OEM approvals. Over the years the range has become more diverse, with the introduction of specialised products developed to meet the individual demands of different OEMs. We have a dedicated biodegradable range that incorporates many products required by forestry customers.

Q. What are the current talking points in the oil market?

A. Environmental legislation is always a big talking point, and often the key driver to the introduction of new specifications and associated lube oils. Corporate social responsibility is becoming a key talking point, and to us that incorporates our entire supply chain.



Electrification, and the new demands this puts on lubricants, is also a hot development topic for our technical specialists at present.

Q. What products do you supply into the forestry sector specifically? What is there demand for?

A. The biggest demand is for our chain oil, which we believe, listening to customer feedback, is one of the best on the market. We also supply engine oils, greases, hydraulic oils, AdBlue and gear oils within the forestry sector.

Q. What do you have to consider when creating forestry products?

A. There are many considerations when developing new products, not least of which is the ability of the lubricant to actually perform its desired function and protect the hardware in question. Environmental acceptance is clearly a major factor when looking at new formulations and raw materials for the forestry sector; this incorporates good biodegradability, non-pollution and sustainability.

Q. What challenges and opportunities does the forestry sector present for GB Lubricants?

A. The forestry sector has given GB a fantastic opportunity to grow, mainly





Top right: GB Lubricants has a 1.5 million-litre bulk storage capacity and warehousing for 700 internal pallet spaces, with plans to increase to 1,200 spaces.

Right: The company is based at a 10,000 m² site located in Gateshead, with modern laboratory and testing facilities.



through word of mouth and our existing customers' recommendations. Going back five years, many forestry companies hadn't heard of GB Lubricants and it was difficult to sell a product that nobody had heard of; but since we overcame the initial hurdle of supplying our chain oil within the sector, our customer feedback has been fantastic and the majority have committed to continue using our product.

Q. How does GB Lubricants stand out against its competition?

A. I can only go by customer feedback and I would say that our chain oil is one of the best on the market. I think that comes down to the tackifier and anti-fling properties in our chain oil. It's a good viscosity, high-quality chain oil, and most importantly, of consistent quality. Typically, a lot of chain oils on the general market won't use a virgin base oil, which we do, so a lot of our chain oil customers will say that they have been using other brands and feel like they don't get any consistency with the oil.

Q. Are there any common misconceptions when it comes to oil?

A. Oh, yes indeed, and that is why we work closely with our customers in providing both education and technical support. 'Any oil is better than no oil' is a commonly heard

phrase, and it is simply not true. A lot of damage can result if an incorrect lubricant is used. Also, just because a lubricant is described as biodegradable or environmentally acceptable doesn't mean that it should be used in the forest.

With lubricants in many applications we are reducing friction and levels of wear in the equipment. This in turn is prolonging the life of that equipment and reducing energy usage. Modern lubricants incorporate so many next-generation synthetic base oils and additives in order to achieve longer drain intervals and performance levels that their connection with simple base oils is increasingly removed.

Q. What achievement are you most proud of in terms of the work you have done?

A. Although GB has supplied to the forestry sector for over 70 years, in the last five years especially GB has made a big name for itself within the sector. Our products, especially our chain oil, have become a firm favourite within the industry and it is an industry where our product is being highly recommended to others by our end users. I would confidently say GB is now the market leader within the UK for its chain oils. The APF Exhibition has been a great platform for GB to promote its products and we will be attending the show again in September 2020.

Q. What are your hopes for the future of the business?

A. We are proud of our history at GB, but more importantly our commitment to serving the sectors where we see success. In the forestry sector particularly, we have invested heavily in brand awareness, marketing and expansion as we know our products are highly regarded as industry leading.

Q. Any plans for expansion, further training, new investments?

A. GB is investing in its infrastructure and capability in order to expand and grow in an ever-changing market. We continue to invest in new technology to increase the efficiency of our service, be that telemetry for remote tank monitoring at customers' sites, through to vehicle tracking and route planning. It's important that, as a key member of the supply chain into the sector, GB supports the training and development of young people entering the industry, and we have supported an apprentice scheme in conjunction with some of the leading forestry industry names such as John Deere, along with Forestry and Land Scotland.

Q. How would you sum up the company ethos of GB Lubricants?

A. Quality and integrity in everything we do.

Husqvarna saw chain
X-CUT C85 chisel.

Stihl 2-in-1 EasyFile.

Stihl
Connected.

Chainsaw accessories

From chains to oils, files and even smart metering, your chainsaw needs maintenance and accessories to ensure it operates at the optimum level. In this focus feature, we've brought together some of the chainsaw accessories currently on the market, to help you ensure your machine is always at its best.

STIHL

ALONGSIDE its extensive range of forestry saws, Stihl offers a host of chainsaw accessories to ensure professionals are fully equipped to handle any task.

Stihl Connected is a smart meter that, when combined with the Stihl app and web-based pro portal, provides a complete fleet-management tool. By logging the usage of products in the field, Stihl Connected gives professional users a detailed overview of a power tool's status to better understand how much tools are being used, when they need servicing, and what jobs they are being used on and where.

Stihl Connected comprises three central system components; Stihl Smart Connector, Stihl app, and Stihl connect pro portal. When used in conjunction, Stihl Connected enables professional users to easily analyse key machinery performance data that can be used to not only improve daily work processes, but also help achieve optimum



Stihl BioPlus chain and bar oil.

task scheduling for an even more efficient team.

To assist with chain cutting efficiency, the 2-in-1 EasyFile is a practical tool for quickly sharpening the teeth and depth gauge in a single action, significantly reducing chain maintenance time. The sturdy frame allows for a smooth filing action with highly accurate results, and helps keep downtime to a minimum.

When it comes to chain and bar lubricant, Stihl's BioPlus has been developed in-house specifically to lubricate fast-running saw chains and has a remarkably low tendency to resinification for a vegetable-oil-based bio oil. The high-performance lubricant demonstrates its strengths in temperate and hot climate zones, being very environmentally friendly with no loss of lubrication or adhesion. In addition, it degrades completely in the soil quickly, making it ideally suited for forestry use. This property has won BioPlus the Blue Angel

environmental award.

For more information on Stihl's range of chainsaw accessories visit www.stihl.co.uk.

HUSQVARNA

THE X-Cut C85 is a full chisel, high-performance 3/8" 1.5 mm chain available for full-time professional forestry saws.

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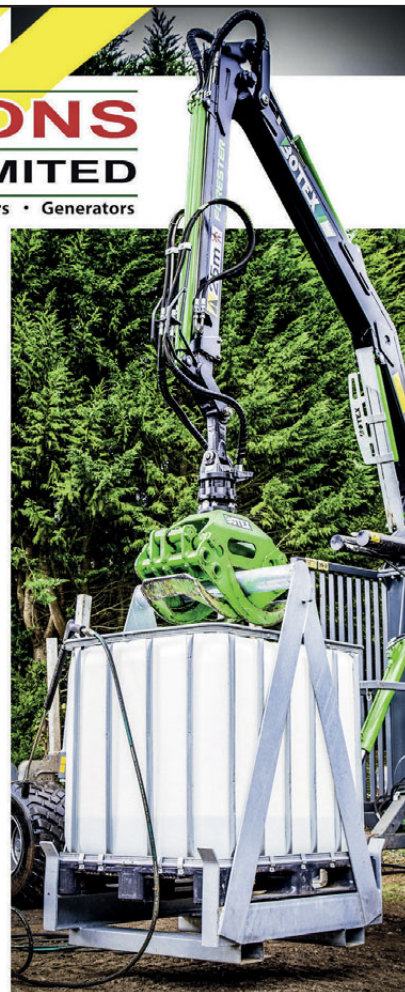
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Retirement can wait

Just when Simon Bowes thought he was out, he was pulled back in, and is now on the hunt for the perfect combo of head and harvester.

RETIREMENT? Really.

That's sort of ruined my plans. I had hoped to be well on the way to wrapping the harvesting side of my working life up by now. I've shifted some machinery, advertised some more, downsized, ready for an easier life. I have got my first novel in the bag with the second one well over half-written. I've had a slot in *Forestry Journal* for the last 20 years which will continue, at least for as long as they'll have me, and I had secured other work if I wanted it. Then it happened; the estates I've relied on for work over the last few years have both suddenly lost their fear of doing clearfells and this is all down to ash dieback.

We've been ahead of the game on one estate but now the safety felling we've been doing on roadsides and footpaths will be replaced by a wholesale clearance of hundreds of acres of ash from several sites on the estate. The other estate has less ash but more footpaths, and though I'm not looking to do too much of the ash there are a number of softwood clearfells to do. If I'm honest I should have bit the bullet when the chance presented itself and just walked away, but the old saying is true: You don't leave forestry, forestry leaves you.

It just hasn't left me yet. It nearly happened but having the opportunity to go over ground we have worked over the last ten years, including putting extraction roads in, making bridges and bringing woods back into management that haven't been touched since they were cleared off in the last war, is just too much of a challenge to walk away from.

The problem I'm having is that up until now I've been geared up to do a large proportion of the hardwood felling by hand.

This next year I will lose my hand-cutter who I've relied on for more than 20 years as he's hit retirement age, and despite my thinking he wouldn't retire he's categorically stated he's had enough. I'm waiting for a new knee, a consequence of a motorbike accident 40 years ago coupled with years of felling and cross-cutting by hand, which has meant I've been able to do less and less felling.

If I do have a knee replacement next summer the specialists all tell me it will mean no more felling in the future. I can carry on until I get the plastic joint fitted but that's not practical as a decent walk has my knee swelling up like a football and I need to buy ibuprofen in bulk. I have just recently been put on a course of corticosteroid injections which involves sticking a needle deep into the space in the knee joint and filling it with a long-lasting concoction of drugs. This provides a great deal of relief but if I push it too hard and the effect wears off too soon they won't continue with

the treatment and the operation to replace my knee will be brought forward. I have to make each injection last a minimum of 12 weeks so I can stay on them.

The preferred outcome is that I can maintain this injection therapy for at least two years.

I'd be happy for it to be a permanent solution but having seen the scans of my knee joint, it's obvious this won't happen.

The answer is to have a harvester with a head that's more suited to big, rough pine and larch that dominate the clearfells and final thinnings on one estate and the big larch and ash on the other. I've been running a couple of old Timberjack 1270s with Viking heads; one has a 625 fitted and the other runs a 520. These are basically the same capacity heads but the 625 is more modern and a bit more refined. I

"YOU DON'T LEAVE FORESTRY, FORESTRY LEAVES YOU."



moved the 520 on a while ago and replaced it with a Timberjack 743 that's been knocking about for years. Timberjack's early 1270s and indeed FMC's 250 Eva harvesters were generally fitted with the 746 head. The 743 was more suited to, and mainly fitted to, the four-wheeler 870 but I didn't have a 746 and sometimes you just have to go with what you've got. The 743 is a really fast little head anyway and with the bigger machine that's got more than enough power, it should be a great piece of kit, and as a bonus it'll be dirt cheap. All I really needed was a small thinning harvester. The 1270 has its wheels set in as close as they'll go and it has the long-extension crane so it will make an ideal small thinnings harvester. When I sell it I'll be pitching it to someone who needs a narrow machine that has lots of speed and power and who's not in the market for a £100,000 harvester.

The other machine is marked to go and be replaced with a newer 1270 that'll carry a bigger head. The ones I have are limited to a head of under about 1,000 kg that has



Two Timberjack 1270s is one too many just now. One with a Viking 520, the other with a Viking 625. They've been great in softwood but times have changed.



It's an old head but it hasn't done a lot of work by the look of it. The serial number would prove significant.

working in ash with dieback the safest place to be is in a cab and so we avoid being out on the floor as much as possible. Richard, on the harvester, is an artist at removing branches without using a saw. He can break a tree down using the saw on the Viking head in double-quick time but he hankers after something that only has two moving delimbing knives. Something like the three-knife Keto we used to run.

One of the main problems in the ash is that much of what goes through the head has to be picked up off the floor. This would immediately rule out something like the 743 as it has knives that are short and well tucked in; great for small softwood, but picking poles up with it is like picking up pins wearing boxing gloves. Then there's a need for something with exceptional feed-wheel traction that can ram trees through even when they're sappy and slippery, like ash in full leaf. This would perhaps make me consider something along the lines of a Keto 150, but finding a good three-knife 150 is a pretty tall order unless I were to look at a fairly new or reconditioned one, but the problem with that is that I'm from Yorkshire and spending money is against every principle instilled in me since I was at my mother's knee. Buying something with four feed wheels is also ruled out for the same reason. The final criterion is that anything suitable will have to be short and boxy to get around the many bends in hardwood.

So, after much head scratching, searching my memory banks and talking to people in the know, I came up with a candidate.

I recall watching a contractor I knew many years ago operating his JS digger fitted with a Lako 60 head. He was picking up larch poles that had been winched up

a steep bank, and rather than abusing the slew on the 360 he grabbed the trees straight out in front of the machine and used the power of the Lako to fire them up onto the landing. These were trees of a tonne plus and the Lako played with them. This, he explained was down to the fact that the feed wheels came up under the stem and pushed the pole into the head against a third drive motor that powered a short track drive in the same way a Keto does with its two opposed track drives. He was also very happy to explain that the long delimbing knives were almost as good as a grapple for picking poles up off the ground. I watched him for a half-hour and the power and the usability of the Lako impressed me. I wasn't so impressed with the obvious lack of speed, even allowing for the extreme circumstances of hauling the great big poles up onto the landing.

I searched YouTube and found lots of videos of the Lako working. I decided that a Lako 60 fitted to a 1270B or later would be ideal.

I've run Vikings for many years now and in that time I've almost exclusively dealt with Phil Cooper. What he doesn't know about Viking heads isn't worth knowing, and he's got an encyclopaedic knowledge of harvesters and forwarders and how to fit things together. So, I turned to Phil to find out just what it would take to fit a Lako to a Timberjack 1270.

I quickly got a history lesson on Lako and how the Lako 60 was phased out when it became the AFM 60. The AFM 60 has better hydraulics with a more modern valve block, it has longer delimbing knives and an AFM will be younger and as it was designed to be fitted on any suitably sized base it wouldn't

fairly moderate hydraulic demands. I've found a newer 1270 fitted with a Timberjack 762 which might be a great head in softwood but I need something that'll cope with a very specific and demanding series of tasks. It would be fine in the softwood fells, but it's an old head with lots of hours under its belt and it is showing its age; there are a lot of worn pins and bushes that would need replacing, and parts for heads from any of the big names are expensive. I've been used to maintaining Viking heads which are essentially made up of a collection of easily available components. The parts that are bespoke are robust, reliable and easily repairable. The 762 also has chain on rubber feed wheels which aren't my favourite things in hardwood.

The 625 Viking we use currently has Moipu feed rollers, which are ideal. We do too much hand-felling as it is and we've developed a method of dealing with the ash where we do as little dressing out as possible.

It has become obvious to me that when



The Keto 150. It's a five-knife one but it's got a few too many issues to be a serious candidate.

be too difficult to run it on the TM 3000 system fitted to a 1270. In fact, there is a custom fitting kit available to do just that. It's also handy that Phil was an AFM dealer at one time in the distant past.

I recalled seeing an AFM 60 in a yard on my travels but I couldn't for the life of me remember where it was – then it suddenly came to me. I restored an old 250 Osa a while back. It wasn't really a restoration, more of a rustoration; it was missing a grab, a rotator and it only had half a headboard. I found all the parts I needed from a guy across in Cumbria; it was in his yard that I had seen the AFM head and lying next to it was a Lako 60 of a similar vintage. I'd not really noticed them despite having walked past them on a number of occasions in the past. I've bought winches, cranes, gearboxes and even a couple of complete machines out of that yard but I'd guess a couple of outdated heads had never really piqued my interest – not until now.

All this means that the ideal piece of kit for me would be a tidy 1270 B or C, in a certain price bracket, with all the original computer equipment, fitted with an AFM 60.

I've found a 1270B that needs a bit of work, but that's not a problem, and as I've

found a very tidy, low-hours AFM 60 with a Lako 60 for spares, we could have a solution. The heads have been sitting for a long time and I'm torn; the AFM has a third feed wheel in the chassis rather than a track, but it's in much better fettle than the Lako. The Lako is missing its head module and the AFM didn't have one as they were usually paired with a Motomit that didn't need a module, but I know it's possible to fit the AFM using the Timberjack module from the Timberjack head, or at least I thought it was.

I've found all the parts I need and I know a man who can make it happen, so rather than the way we usually do it – sticking it all together while up to the ankles in mud and hoping for the best, using trial and error and sheer bloody mindedness – it'll be put together in a workshop by people who know what they're doing, if I can prise my wallet open long enough to pay for it.

Retirement can wait, as my friend and mentor the late Steve Dresser used to say when he showed me a job that had all sorts of drawbacks and complications. We all need a challenge to keep us interested. I'm interested again and I'll hopefully be reporting progress as it happens, if it happens.

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Stormy waters ahead for forestry



IF March was set to come in like a lion, then it got its timing very wrong. I speak with no little rancour as I sit down to write, knowing the night's gale ripped the roofing felt off our goose house and blew down a huge and impressive *macrocarpa* down in the village.

But as I sit here, viewing the scenes of distant flooding across the fields, I can consider myself lucky. There are many who will remember this spring with pain and suffering. We are 17 metres above high-tide mark, and the tidal river Severn flushes itself out twice a day. But we still have to negotiate our flooded access lane leading to the main road, which can be dodgy. But it's nothing like being faced with mopping out your home or business, again and yet again. Depressing, to put it mildly.

But in all this carnage, what damage have these storms done to the forest? Tucked under the edge of Wales, we seem to usually escape the sort of windblow which perturbed us years ago, as upland Sitka showed its vulnerable side. Surely however, with

gusts up to and over 100 miles per hour reported in the Highlands, there must be some catastrophic losses of plantations somewhere. I moaned recently that the media coverage of fires in Australia, among all the smoke and flames, all the aerial bombarding of wildfires and all the pictures of charred remains of unfortunate houses, there was absolutely zilch about the effects on the forest. Nothing about the economic losses and the ability (or otherwise) of the eucalyptus forest to withstand the blaze and recover. And just how much *Pinus radiata* plantation got clobbered? But we did get to hear about the sad koalas and the even sadder fate of those few brave souls who lost their lives firefighting.

In these early passages of our exposure to extreme climatic events, to climate change, it is easy to see floods, fire and pestilence as just about on the edge of normal, not happening again in a hundred years. Personally, I've been around in this world for long enough to take a far more alarmist and pessimistic view of our future. Something

unusual, sinister and worrying is now happening. You can feel it. The weather doesn't feel right and it's not going to go back to where it was fifty years ago. It is heading for uncharted and much more dangerous waters.

This presents our long-term plans, like dramatically increasing the rate of tree planting, with something of a problem. Are these new plantings destined to go up in smoke in the next drought? Will our carefully planted and tended new forests blow over in the inevitable storms to come? Should our new exotics be fundamentally fireproof? Eucalyptus again, plus Californian redwoods?

In passing, I have been studying the data in an attempt to design the ideal plantation for the warm future, and have been deeply disappointed. There's pages of blethering and an apparently wide range of species which can perhaps fit the bill. But there is too much choice and not enough clear instruction as to where to find seed or nursery stock, if any even exists. And I wish I were a contractor. I would focus

on members of the Country Landowner's Association who, it was reported in the *Sunday Times* (them again) think it costs £80 per acre per annum for 20 years to establish a plantation, on top of the costs of prep, ground, drainage and fencing, plants and planting. Their ideas once again seem (putting it politely) to be a little out. Incidentally, no-one has yet confronted the effects on land values when £10,000 an acre for medium-quality arable land becomes less than £1,000 an acre for forest land after planting. Bit of a disincentive for land-use change here, I think.

And now, would you believe it, it's raining again. And more is forecast for the week ahead. Whatever next? March coming in like a lamb? Or, at least, going out like one.

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Peter West

Quiet-spoken and pragmatic, assistant forest manager Peter West works out of Scottish Woodlands' offices in Fochabers alongside regional manager (north) Neil Crookston, two forest managers, two H&S compliance officers and two administrative staff. Most appear to be in the office as he talks about 'A Day in the Working life', one of an occasional series featuring those working in the industry.

It is early December and planting operations are underway on some of the 12 Scottish Woodlands sites managed by assistant forest manager Peter West. Looking out of the office window, Peter sees blue skies over Fochabers, north-east Scotland. This cloudless sky is good news, offering respite from the rains complicating ground conditions on a 20 ha felling site of spruce and larch in south Aberdeenshire that he co-manages with a harvesting colleague based in Perth.

Peter said: "The harvesting site is a steep sloping field with a burn running along the bottom. I have worked since last January to get the site operational." A lot of the time was spent organising badger surveys. "Access on to the site is poor and water could pour into the burn, which we don't want. We can put measures in place to make sure the ground stays in good condition, but you can't really plan for the weather."

Scottish Woodlands is one of the UK's leading forest management companies, employing 195 staff in 20 offices throughout Scotland. Covering every stage of the forestry cycle, it manages over 200,000 ha of land across Scotland, Ireland and the Welsh Marches, harvesting 1.2 million tonnes of timber per annum.

Working within Scottish Woodlands' management and services division, Peter manages 17 woodland estates for clients, ranging from investment forests and farms with a significant woodland component (putting in schemes on poor-quality ground or woods in fields, shelterbelts or confined to field boundaries) to small hobby woods. Double-checking on the company ARC GIS system, he manages a total area of 13,924 ha.

It can be difficult discussing your working life within hearing distance of colleagues. The timing could have been better if the conversation had taken place last week when he was out of the office finishing off beat-up assessments to finalise plant number orders (placed with Christies of Fochabers) for this winter. "One 150 ha site took a couple of days to mark out the plots. Smaller sites can be done in a couple of hours."

He then met with planting contractors to finalise work plans and hand over site maps detailing which species go where and the site hazards (compiled from client woodland attributes data stored in GIS shape files) of jobs about to begin.

"This winter, there is more restocking than woodland creation;



about 200 ha across the 12 sites, including beat-ups from last year. A small job might be a 3 ha restock; a larger job a 40 ha restock. It's mostly Sitka with some Scots pine, which grows well in the north-east. The amount of work that goes into organising each job is not hugely different; the main difference is the amount of ground you have to walk."

Last week closed with an electrical awareness training course run by Scottish Forestry and Scottish Power. It was, "a good reminder of the dangers of overhead power lines and electrical strikes, and the procedures to follow when planning worksites and jobs, making sure everything is in place if there is an issue. For a thinning job starting imminently, I need to get the line heights and put up goalposts to make sure that haulage can get in and out of the site. The course was good; everyone seemed keen to share experiences and to improve the situation."

With Peter preferring not to dwell on this morning's paperwork, the conversation turns to how he got here. In 2017, Scottish Woodlands launched their two-year graduate development



Peter West, left and pictured above at a recently mounded and restocked site.

Right top: Peter meeting with a planting contractor on site in Moray.

Right: working on GIS in Scottish Woodlands' office in Fochabers.





**"I WAS GOING DOWN
THE ROUTE OF DATA
MANAGEMENT. IT DOESN'T
SOUND INTERESTING, SO
IT PROBABLY ISN'T."**

programme, a recruitment drive to attract committed graduates needed to service the work secured through the expansion of Scottish Woodlands and the industry. Peter was invited to join the inaugural programme, which he completed three months ago.

At 31, Peter is older than your typical graduate. Earning a BSc Hons in geology from Aberdeen University, he worked first in oil and gas, monitoring wireline cabling information and analysing seismic data.

"I was going down the route of data management. It doesn't sound interesting, so it probably isn't."

Returning to Aberdeen University to study an MSc in land economy (rural surveying), the forestry module captured his interest. "I am fairly outdoorsy and in forestry there is an element of science involved, which suits me better than the subjective element of rural valuations. It was just very interesting."

Beginning his MSc final project while at the same time looking for work, he discovered Scottish Woodlands' graduate development programme in an online advertisement.

"I had no sector experience. The programme offered enough overlaps (utilising transferable skills such as project management and GIS mapping) and new





challenges that I felt positive about applying.”

Peter applied and secured a place on the graduate development programme, tweaking his final project to make it forestry-specific.

“In 2015, heavy rains washed away many of the roads in Aberdeenshire. Using simple hydrological models, I looked at whether new woodland creation could alleviate flood pressures in Deeside: planting trees to increase water uptake in the upper catchment to reduce loads downstream during peak events. I found that new planting does help reduce the amount of water in the river, but it can’t protect against peak events – rains of biblical proportions coming down for a month. There can never be enough planting to address that. Natural flood management works as a part of a whole-system approach.”

All Scottish Woodland graduate development programme participants, in management and services or harvesting, receive key pieces of equipment: a company car, a phone and a computer. All receive a two-year development matrix outlining key topics, on-the-job skills training (internal) and training events (external), specific tasks to complete, and checkpoints. Starting salaries increase incrementally as more responsibilities are taken on.

The initial weeks were full of staff inductions and shadowing. Peter’s mentor and line manager, Neil Crookston, drove him around the north-east of Scotland looking at live sites, probing what knowledge Peter had and whether he asked the right questions.

Peter’s skills training in forest management operations – new planting and restocking, ground preparation, drainage and weeding – began in earnest when he took on a 30 ha new woodland creation scheme, enhancing an already significant broadleaf resource for an arable farm

Looking at the thinning potential of client woodlands.

client in south Aberdeenshire. “The scheme’s purpose was to increase the commerciality of the forest for the future. I was involved from the start, planning the site and flagging out an empty (and accessible) roadside field, ex-grazing land, suitable for ploughing or excavator mounding (ground preparations) in the rougher areas. The scheme was grant-funded, so for species diversity we included native broadleaf along the riparian and roadside areas.”

Peter learned about organisation, people management and weather pressures.

“You are trying to orchestrate everything, on time and in budget, and then work with the contractors that are physically doing the job. Meeting the ground preparation, fencing and planting contractors for the first time was surreal. From the start, you have to build good relationships with people that have worked in the industry a long time. I continue to learn a lot from talking with them. February 2018’s Beast from the East did not shift on some sites and a lot of my work was moved to the end of last winter [planting season 2018/2019].”

External courses included first aid and, at the end of the year, FISA works supervisor training, which coincided with meeting a client on his own for the first time.

“We discussed forestry in general, the potential for new woodland creation and amending their forest plan to facilitate extra harvesting earlier. I put an amendment to their woodland plan in to Scottish Forestry, making sure everything tallied up in our ARC GIS system, and it got through.”

Peter’s second year began with writing long-term forest plans for an investment client with a publicly accessible commercial forest on the edge of a town, and for a traditional sporting estate. “The clients have completely different objectives, but both want good



forestry. While guidance is out there for writing plans, it was a case of working with the clients, surveying their sites, and consulting public and statutory bodies. The plan consultation sits on Scottish Forestry's website for a month and then the woodland officer tells you when the scoping has been done. From there, you write/amend the plan. From start to finish, it can take six months to get approval and all the while you are doing a billion other things."

In addition to forest plans, Peter worked on a 150 ha woodland creation scheme, designed to join up bits of forestry across bare and heathery hill ground for a traditional shooting estate client in Donside. "The keeper identified the best place to plant the woodland. Schemes rely on different people at so many levels and a good relationship with a keeper ensures that the scheme survives because they control the deer. By the end, I was a lot more confident of what goes into a plan."

The second year's development matrix contains management training, external trainers teaching assertiveness and how to hold difficult conversations, for when questions such as 'Why have you done this in the wrong place?' or 'Why have you not paid us?' need to be asked. Peter veers towards nipping issues in the bud: demonstrating examples of good work and letting people come to their own conclusions. A new excavator contractor was shown sites where ground preparation mounding met Scottish Woodlands best practice standards, ensuring that subsequent works were ideal.

Throughout the two years, Peter felt that he was managing himself. "In hindsight, there was probably much more direction than I had thought. Generally, it has been a gradual offloading of responsibility onto graduates over the course of the two years, and you are helped to grow along the way. We graduates meet at various

Peter on site, assessing stocking density.

training events, learn what is happening in different parts of Scotland and foster our own relationships with people that will hopefully be in the company for years to come. The company put me through modules on harvesting and woodland creation and establishment at the University of the Highlands and Islands. I have learned so much on the job, but it is good to have that academic background." In addition, he attends regional Confor meetings and reads Scottish Forestry best practise guides to stay up to date.

Finishing his second year, Peter wrote end-of-year reports and budgets for investment clients, including in them a summary of operations (past year), updated maps and compartment information, budget reconciliation (the estimated spend and actual spend) and the financial forecasts for next year's works programme.

"You plan operational costs up to three years in advance, what to fell and restocking costs. Scottish Woodlands has levels of financial authority, so what I send out is still checked beforehand."

Completing the development programme only three months ago, Peter has already proved his worth as assistant forest manager for his own clients by identifying additional opportunities. "The thinning job with power lines is for an estate where not much was happening. The woods are middle-aged and some areas were thinned five years ago. During an inspection, I identified a parcel to be brought forward: 2,500 tonnes of first thinnings of mixed conifer (lodgepole pine and spruce). The client agreed when they saw the return. It was good to bring it on."

Peter's forest management operation planning is now coming to fruition. "In summer, more time is spent in the office planning. Coming into this winter's planting season, I have orchestrated the whole works programme and lined up all works through to the end result."

He travels 2,000 business miles a month visiting operationally active sites, including planting sites once or twice a week. "As well as the Beast from the East, we have had prolonged periods of frost and the planters unable to get spades in the ground. On one site, snow tends to sit for an extra month, possibly causing time pressures and we may just have to wait until it has gone. The start of this season was very wet and there was a worry that the nurseries could not lift plants fast enough to send out to us. You can't plan around the weather, but you have to have a stab at it."

Tomorrow Peter will check on the harvesting site co-managed with his colleague from Perth (also a development programme graduate) to make sure there are no water issues. "We have an excavator up there upgrading the tracks and we can put in groundworks to improve drainage and move water off site if needed." He will then double-check a restock site planted up two weeks ago and then stop by a 5 ha site felled early this year currently being restocked with spruce.

For Peter, the Scottish Woodlands graduate development scheme was the best way that he could have entered the sector.

"You are always learning on the job and the courses have helped me grow as a manager. I see people skills as one of the main focuses of my role. I have to be approachable, open and interested in what others are doing – contractors, colleagues, clients and Scottish Forestry. We all want to see a good job and for forestry to do well. I work harder than when I was in oil and gas and it is more rewarding; enjoying work makes a nice change. Forestry is a good and active industry to be involved in."

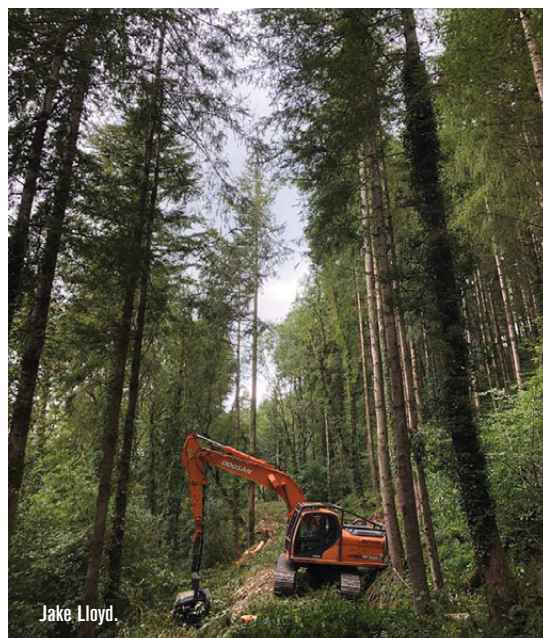
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RAIN, RAIN, GAWAY

WE may well be entering spring, but no one seems to have told the weather. The country has been battered by consecutive storms in recent weeks, with flooding, torrential rain, gales, hail and snow all becoming a daily sight. It's times like this when you just want to hunker down, stick the kettle on, throw a few logs on the fire and wait it out.

But not so fast. The BBC recently reported that owners of wood burners, stoves and open fires will no longer be able to buy wet wood to burn in them, under a ban to be rolled out from 2021.

Wood-burning stoves and coal fires are the largest source of fine particulate matter (PM2.5), small particles of air pollution which find their way into the body's lungs and blood, the Government said, and will be phased out in England to help cut air pollution.

This was a big talking point on the Forest Machine Operators Blog, with one forester saying it should have "little impact on genuine, traditional suppliers".

One response: "Who sells unseasoned firewood in net bags? Air-dried or kiln-dried but never unseasoned. Seems like the article is poorly researched."

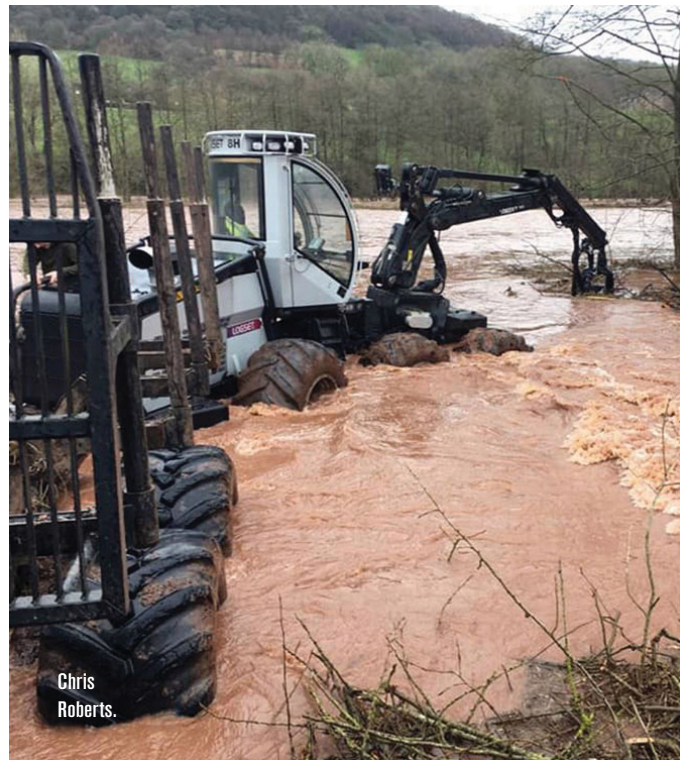


Allan Dickie.

Nauris Cazars.



Will Aherne.



Chris Roberts.

"Unseasoned wood does produce higher particulates due to a less efficient burning process. If anything, there needs to be better regulation on what qualifies as 'seasoned' or 'kiln-dried'. I've had kiln-dried logs that when split in half and moisture tested are >35%."

Another said: "Emissions can be improved everywhere but our firewood in the UK can be a genuinely sustainable industry and should be supported not made more difficult."

A member living in a remote area also chimed in: "I live in the middle of nowhere, no gas to be seen so I have a multi-fuel stove to cook, heat water and run the central

heating. If I can't buy coal, how do I go on? I'm buggered if I'm putting logs on it every two hours."

Another member's response questioned whether the policy could be properly regulated: "So what about all the biomass chip plants?! They going to make sure and dry all that timber they're feeding into the furnaces? I highly bloody doubt it. I struggle to see how that policy will ever be policed."

Well, hopefully by next month we'll have seen the last of the stormy weather. Until then, take to the Blog with your thoughts on the matter. And enjoy that wood-burning fire while you can.



Ladanyi Arpad Andrei.

Sensible approach

With its latest pickup, Korean car manufacturer SsangYong is finally getting it right, writes Mark Stone.

It has a name that some still find difficult to pronounce and, at times, some of SsangYong's models have been just as daunting. Let's face it, once you've seen the automotive carbuncle that is the Rodius, it's almost impossible to forget. Whoever signed this visual nightmare off should, as the saying goes, 'have gone to Specsavers'. But like other Korean manufacturers, SsangYong has finally learned that to sell cars in Europe it must design models that appeal to the European eye. No, this isn't a plug for the EU. It's just that, in the main, Brits and Europeans tend to like the same basic designs.

Enter the new Musso pickup, which not only looks immeasurably better than the preceding version but ticks all the right boxes multiple times. It looks right, it drives

right (contrary to certain comments) and it hauls vast amounts. It's even priced right. From the single chrome bar grille and swept-back front lights, SsangYong has been able to build its distinctive trademark tapers, high waist and curvaceous light lines into the bonnet, deep sides, load bed and vast tailgate, all seated on a time-honoured ladder chassis.

Badged the Rebel, this means the Musso as tested sits on 18" alloys, 1" larger than the EX and 1" smaller than the Saracen and Rhino models. I mention these varying sizes due to the fact that, given the size of the Musso, even with 255/60 rubber fitted, they do at times look undersized. It doesn't, however, have any detrimental effect on the 20.20, 220, 200 approach, departure and ramp-over angles, 215 mm ground clearance, reasonably short overhangs or relatively traditional suspension system.

Cargo-wise, the impressively cavernous cargo bed can accommodate one tonne, either loose or strapped to a full-sized Euro pallet. Add in the fact you can hook 3.5 tonnes to the towing hitch and you have a pickup that, when combined, can haul five passengers and a genuinely impressive load. It's also because of this that the Musso has become a serious favourite among the caravan fraternity.

Inside the cabin, SsangYong has opted to go down the SUV route. Trimmed in what's described as TPU faux leather, the cabin is spacious, comfortable and well laid out. Seating is sizeable with hot and cold settings built

More conventional looks, great ability and a sensible price give the new Musso a definite edge.

SPECIFICATION

Model: SsangYong Musso

Price: From £23,933

Engine: 2,157cc 4-cyl turbo diesel

Transmission: 6-speed automatic

PERFORMANCE

Top speed: 121 mph

CO2 emissions – g/km: 226

Economy – combined mpg: 26.7 as tested



Below: The 2.2-litre diesel develops more than sufficient power.

THE MUSSO PICKUP STARTS AT AROUND £23,933 FOR THE ENTRY-LEVEL EX.

into the front seats. A thick sports steering wheel sits just in front of a large, easy-to-understand instrument binnacle. The basic controls are simple and quick to deploy, the 8" central screen taking care of Bluetooth and entertainment. What you don't get is satnav, although, with the plentiful number of 12 V and USB outlets, using your mobile device isn't much of a problem. Nor is stowage. Sizeable door bins, along with a large glovebox and central cubby take care of quite substantial items.

Under the bonnet, there's just one engine irrespective of the chosen trim spec. Delivering 181 hp and 400 Nm of torque, the noticeably smooth and quiet Euro6 2,157 cc 4-cylinder turbo diesel remains relaxed irrespective of what's being asked of it. Mated to either a six-speed manual or automatic transmission with 2WD or rear-wheel drive, 4-High or 4-Low transfer settings, it was the auto on test. Auto also provides Eco, Power and Sports modes along with an unusual form of sequential. Shift the selector sideways and the up and down shift is controlled using a small rocker switch on the side of the main shift lever. Returning an acceptable 26.7 mpg, most users can expect around 300 miles or potentially more from each 75-litre tank of fuel.

Fitted with a full-sized cargo bed canopy adding sufficient weight to keep the rear wheels more planted, driving the Musso feels exactly like driving the SUV it's meant to emulate. Comfortable and undemanding to drive, the on-road ride is relatively smooth, general handling passable, although feedback through the steering wheel can at times seem excessive. The 3.2 turns lock-to-lock and 5.91 m turning circle mated to the light power steering and wide-angle-lens reversing camera means manoeuvring the Musso is a straightforward exercise. The all-round view for a pickup is good, the sidesteps mean getting in and out is no longer a chore, while using the Musso as everyday transport is no more arduous than living with your average family car.

Switch into 4x4 and the Musso is again easy to pilot off road. The vehicle's ability to absorb the effects of rough tracks and uneven fields before they transfer into the cabin is as good as the rest. Like all 4x4s of this ilk, take your time and the Musso will get you to where you and your cargo need to be, even on the road-orientated rubber the test vehicle was fitted with. Fit more aggressive tyres and the Musso's abilities will expand exponentially. The



one overriding sensation is that SsangYong has been able to dial out the agricultural feel that besets many similar double cabs whilst retaining the agricultural practicality.

Price-wise, the Musso pickup starts at around £23,933 for the entry-level EX, climbing to just short of £30,000 for the limited edition, fully specified Rhino model with the Rebel as tested and Saracen versions falling somewhere in between. But it's worth remembering that, apart from road wheel and tyre size, the variations are nothing more than trim levels, so an EX or Rebel with personal variations could well prove to be the more sensible options.

An SUV-style interior makes the Musso's cabin a comfortable place to be.

DO you remember those early days at school when your teacher asked you what you wanted to do when you achieved adulthood? Astronauts and train drivers were usually the most common ambitions among the boys, while with the girls looking after sick animals always seemed very popular. Moving on (to avoid getting drawn into gender stereotype arguments), I happened to bump into an old acquaintance earlier in the week. He was driving a huge wagon, an ambition he had held since he was in shorts. Names like Mack and Volvo were festooned across his haversack and it was obvious where he was headed. There he was in the cab, admittedly a good deal plumper, but I thought to myself, "Good luck to him." What better way to spend your life than doing something you really want?

This encounter brought to mind others from the past whom I'd bumped into over the years. One in particular's sole ambition was to get rich quick and thereby have access to all its trappings – fast cars, a huge house, beautiful women... Alas, it all came to nought!

In my own case, it was slightly different as I started cutting sticks to earn some money to put food on the table. Out of this grew a passion for working with wood. Whether it's a saw bench, a chainsaw or even a big commercial mill, I still get a buzz out of it. Hence the empathy I felt for the old acquaintance I met last week as he grinned down at me from the cab of his Scania 620.

Like him, I never really expected to have great riches in a material way, but by slowly building the business over the years I'm doing OK and am probably a lot better off than some of those whose sole aim was to get rich quick. I've lost count of those people who have either ended up bankrupt or spent some time at Her Majesty's pleasure. Can you imagine, therefore, when, for a few crazy hours last week, everything I had worked a lifetime for appeared to be about to disappear before my very eyes?

I've never claimed to be the brightest firework in the box, but I've always struggled with the supposed clarity of officials. They tend to see the world and its workings in black and white. Those of us at the sharp end know this isn't the case and that, in truth, there are many grey areas. It's one of these grey areas which has caused this recent distress.

Over the years, I've bought several second-hand machines, all driven by three-phase electric. Some of these purchases arrived disassembled and I've tried in vain to get electricians to wire them up. I can get an electrician to put in the cables, but struggle to get them to wire up a control panel or switches, relays and joysticks. One guy who came announced he was off to the local shop for some lunch, never to return! So, necessity being the mother of invention, I've learned



Far left: The tester is finally not showing red.

Left: This brand-new metal strip from the treatment tank shows evidence of electrolysis.

A voice from the woods

over time how the electric control panels work and have wired them up myself.

This is the grey area. I'm not an electrician and while it is illegal to work on domestic supplies, I can work on industrial supplies provided it's done to a competent standard. 'Competent standard' meaning that it's safe and no-one gets an electric shock. Understanding how it all works has probably resulted in a higher standard of safety throughout the yard and an ability on my part to spot a problem before it develops into something more serious. I carry out regular safety checks every month, which involves using a tester to check on electricity going to ground.

Against this backdrop I started to worry when faults began to show up, then disappear. The guys in the yard began to report mild intermittent electric shocks. The more I searched, the more puzzling it became, and then the brand-new diesel generator began to turn live, turning the anti-freeze into battery acid. I came to think I was the proud owner of two faulty generators. The problem came to a head in this recent stormy weather when the whole sawmill turned live. Touching any metal with bare hands was not recommended and so I took the decision to shut down the mill. I'm not connected to the grid, so with the generators off I'd be able to isolate the problem, which I assumed would be a broken wire touching an earth cable or

even water ingress.

I decided to start with the main control panel and, as I touched the metal doors, the force of the electric shock threw me backwards. I approached the panel much more cautiously with the tester and, to my amazement, it showed negative. I put the shock down to a build-up of static and decided to go through the electrics systematically.

The generator, despite being old, proved 100 per cent perfect. Each phase was the correct voltage, with no leakage to either the neutral or the earth. I then worked through the overload, the fuse box, trips and control panel, but when I got to the neutral it started to fizz. I had no idea how high the voltage was, as my tester only goes to 240 volts, but the neutral was so live I was convinced that it must be wired to a live cable. I checked, double-checked and treble-checked every wire, but still couldn't isolate the fault. I was at a complete loss as to the cause of the problem.

I don't usually get stressed, but my head was doing cartwheels. With the yard closed and quiet, the phone just seemed to keep ringing and ringing, adding to the pressure. Had I explosives, I would have certainly blown the damn thing to smithereens!

Just when I thought things couldn't get any worse, a fleet of vans came screaming into the yard from the electricity board. A

guy leaped from the lead van and walked up to me, announcing, "We'd like to test your electrics please."

For some time now, there have been major electrical problems in the hamlet next to the mill. Gates have turned live, water pipes have turned live and caused bursts, a farmer's cattle crush turned live and even bed frames have provided a tickle. I explained to the gentlemen that I was off grid, to which he quickly retorted that the problem could still be with me, as it could travel through the ground. The word 'scapegoat' suddenly began to flash in huge red letters in my already crowded brain. I knew for a fact that damages in the village due to the problem were already in excess of £100,000 and rising. What if I had caused the problem? Suddenly, everything I'd spent a lifetime working for started crumbling to dust. Apart from becoming 'public enemy number one', would my insurance cover any of this? A simple mistake with wiring would probably invalidate my insurance as I wasn't a qualified electrician. I felt physically sick and dark scenarios filled my mind.

Everything was testing perfectly, with no leakage from the ground. Realising there was nothing I could do, I decided to take

out the wagon and deliver some orders. This would provide a service for customers and give me some thinking time. It was 4pm and storm Dennis was in full flow. With about three hours of driving in front of me, I set out literally in the eye of the storm.

I have to say, I was completely unaware of storm Dennis or the journey as my mind was still trying to work out the problem and imagine any consequences. At one point, I almost pulled in to bang my head off the ground in frustration. About two hours into the journey, it came to me. I'd spent days now worrying. I shut down the mill. I'd spent every waking hour following the wiring tracks of earth cables going to ground and been unable to find the fault. That's because there wasn't one! It was coming up the earth rods out of the ground. Suddenly I couldn't get back to yard quick enough. I imagined the electricity board pinning the blame on me and erecting hazard notices and 'no entry' signs across the gates.

I needn't have worried. After battling through floods and gale-force winds, I pulled into the yard. It was with some trepidation I approached the group of guys from the electricity board. The fault was nothing to do with me. It had been traced to a small wind

generator about half a mile away. Installers had earthed it incorrectly, resulting in the current running through water pipes into my premises and, from there, it had continued through the machinery. The intermittent nature was down to the wind. Only when it blew did the problem occur. Fortunately, the electricity board had come out at the height of storm Dennis when the problem was at its worst.

So, while storm Dennis was good in the sense that it proved the problem and removed any sense of liability on my part, the surge of power caused wires in the control box and one of the starters for the main saw's head rigs to blow. You can imagine, after everything that had gone on, how nervous I was to tackle these repairs. I've become a little paranoid about touching anything metallic. Either by skill or luck, I've managed to get everything fixed and the mill is back up and running.

I was talking to a couple from the hamlet very recently who had experienced an unusual consequence of the wrongly earthed windmill. The electricity was travelling all the way up through their bed frame. "We wondered why we were tingling in bed," they said. But only when the wind blew!

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White-flowering trees that signpost spring

Act 1: Early Spring

The arrival of the new season is colourfully highlighted by a few blossoming tree species, as Dr Terry Mabbett reports.

SPRING in Britain is a poorly defined and demarcated event. Two official start dates are 1st March (the beginning of the traditionally recognised three-month spring period) and 21st March (spring or vernal equinox), but for me, spring is a sequential period starting early in the New Year and from then on signposted by a sequence of white flowering trees.

As January advances, everything is perceptibly brighter, with days becoming lighter and longer. This is the start of the laboured progression from winter into early spring, and a time of anticipation, with the 'threat' of spring as exciting as the season itself.

The start and sequence of spring is clearly subjective, but the blossoming of our common and mostly native white-flowering trees gives as good a guide as any. The benefit of using these as sentinels of spring is their generally ubiquitous occurrence and easy accessibility to rural dwellers and 'townies' alike. Most will grow and flower anywhere and everywhere, from parks and gardens to waste ground and railway embankments.

Their exact flowering time varies from year to year depending on weather conditions and local anomalies. Dates and times referred to in this article are based on casual observations made in London and the Home Counties over the last 50 years.

FIRST WHITE WEDDING OF THE YEAR

British springs are essentially white affairs,

with white blossom on trees, white flowers on the ground and white clouds in the sky.

*"Spring goeth all in white,
Crowned with milk-white may,
In fleecy flocks of light,
O'er heaven the white clouds stray."
April, 1885 by Robert Bridges (1844–1930)*

Most British native trees bearing white flowers belong to the family Rosaceae. And, together with a 500-year-old introduction called cherry plum (also in the Rosaceae) and common elder, there are sufficient white-flowered species blooming in sequence to define and demarcate a typical British spring.

The first white blossom to venture out in the woodland is the cherry plum or myrobalan plum (*Prunus cerasifera*), a 16th-century introduction from western Asia, now naturalised in hedgerows, scrub and woodland, especially in southern England. On cold, crisp days in February, when little else is moving, the delicate white flowers of the cherry plum (larger but more thinly spread than those on later-flowering blackthorn) appear clean and washday white against clear blue skies.

The appearance of the snow-white flowers on *P. cerasifera* traditionally coincides with the first white flowers (snowdrops – *Galanthus nivalis*) on the woodland floor. Pure white snowdrops are closely associated with Candlemas, the ancient pagan festival of light on 2nd February, the same date as Groundhog Day in the USA, similarly used as a marker for the progress of spring.



Prunus cerasifera is at home in thickets and neglected hedgerows and, when seen from a distance, brings early light relief to the dull, brown background of other woodland trees and shrubs, which are still in winter condition. Cherry plum is at its best whenever February has long periods of high pressure to give crisp, cold days with blue skies. Cherry plum shows remarkable resilience to night frosts, but this first white wedding of the year is rapidly blown to bits by strong south-westerly winds and driving rain, even if the temperature is much higher. The flowering period may extend over several weeks when calm and cold conditions prevail to leave the blossom almost stranded in time.

Confusion with blackthorn is common, with some texts failing to acknowledge the existence of cherry plum and erroneously claiming blackthorn blossoms in February. There is much genetic variation within the population, probably due to hybridisation between cherry plum and native blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), as well as other closely related *Prunus* introductions, mostly from Asia. In southern England there will be white blossom at the woodland margin, in the hedgerow, in parkland and on waste ground from late January through to mid-April, depending on the year, with pure-line cherry plum at the start and pure-line blackthorn at the end.

Two ornamental cherry plums with red leaves and pink flowers are popular for roadside planting in the suburbs. These are: *P. cerasifera* 'Pissardi', discovered by one Monsieur Pissard, French gardener to the Shah of Persia, who sent the tree to France in 1886; and *P. cerasifera* 'Nigra', with its



Left: Despite being the first wild *Prunus* species to flower, the blossom and foliage of cherry plum show at the same time.

Right above: Pink-flowered/red-leaved varieties of *Prunus cerasifera* of which there are many are highly valued as ornamental trees.

Right: Blackthorn forms huge thickets in high, uncut hedges and bursts into bloom during April.

Below: Lone native wild pear tree by the roadside in North Yorkshire, perhaps a remnant of an ancient hedgerow (picture courtesy of Dr Roderick Robinson).



with *P. cerasifera*. *Prunus spinosa* is intensely thorny compared to the occasional spines of *P. cerasifera* and bears smaller flowers on shorter pedicels (3 mm), later in appearance and considerably more crowded on the stems. Blackthorn blossom is pure white, borne on dark-coloured branches, giving the shrub its name. The blossom is profligate year after year and seemingly unaffected by previous late summer/early autumn conditions when the flower bud initials are formed (so much that the lichen-encrusted branches are almost completely hidden by dense clusters of white flowers).

Blackthorn rarely flowers with enthusiasm earlier than the end of March, but once in bloom it is more intense, albeit shorter-lived than cherry plum blossom, especially during warm spells. By the same token, it is much less resistant to late frosts, which reduce fine displays of blossom to a mass of brown, withered flowers literally overnight.

The essential difference between pure-line *P. cerasifera* and *P. spinosa* is that the distinctly toothed leaves of the former emerge at the same time as the flowers, whereas flowering in blackthorn will be done and dusted by the time the leaves emerge in the second half of April. There is a huge range of *Prunus* hybrids in the environment offering intermediate displays related to flower shape, size and timing, as well as density of thorns and appearance of leaves in relation to the time of flowering.

Blackthorn will sucker freely and, if left to its own devices, forms huge thickets to provide stunning displays of white blossom for a week or two in early April. Strong north-east winds in late March and

early April regularly coincide with the appearance of blackthorn blossom, settled like snow along the black branches. Country folk traditionally call this last spell of really cold weather the 'Blackthorn winter'.

"While yet we wait for spring, and from the dry

And blackening east that so embitters March,

Well-housed must watch grey fields and meadows parch,

And driven dust and withering snowflake fly."

Growth of Love by Robert Bridges (1844–1930)

Early April is boom-time for blackthorn and butterflies like the peacock, which will have just come out of winter hibernation to find blackthorn blossom a readily available food source. They will also nectar on flowers of the less well-known wild plums, including damson and bullace.

The final event which wraps up this first act of spring is the wild pear tree bursting into bloom in the first half of April. Increasingly rare in their true wild form, pear trees can still be found in almost every location from hedgerows to railway embankments, but many are adulterated with genes from domestic pears. That said, the canopy of a large pear tree in full bloom, on a sunny, early April day, whether truly wild or 'mule', is a sight that takes some beating. True wild pear trees can usually be distinguished by a preponderance of wicked-looking thorns. Wild pear in bloom tells me that spring has really arrived, with no turning back.

darker red leaves and rose-pink flowers. The trees often sucker and, if poorly managed, end up pink-blossomed surrounded by a white-blossomed shrub, growing from the wild-type rootstock. Suburban streets built from the 1930s onwards are still lined with mature cherry plum trees offering an early display of pink spring blossom, followed by dense red foliage throughout spring and summer. The dense canopy of branches, twigs and leaves has become an increasingly popular early-spring nesting site for birds like pigeons, ringed doves and the magpie following its relatively recent adaptation to the urban environment.

BLACKTHORN IN BLOOM

Next in line to flower is the true native *P. spinosa* (blackthorn or sloe), often confused

Forestry Journal

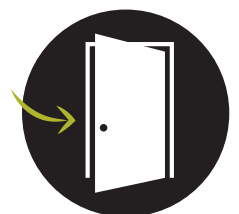
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