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Research funds for Scotland's tree health scientists

The Scottish Forestry Trust has launched the Tree Health Scotland Bursary Award Scheme to support postgraduate research on tree health issues in Scotland. It is supported by a contribution from FC Scotland and it will offer 50 per cent support for research addressing tree pest and pathogen issues of current or future concern. It is expected to support five doctorates completing over the next four or five years.

Observatree to bring people power to reporting disease

Citizen science and new technology are being combined as part of Observatree, a new project funded by the EU’s Life programme aiming to help protect the UK’s trees, woods and forests from existing or new pests and diseases.

Over the past 12 months, more than 200 volunteers across the UK have been trained as part of the collaboration between Forest Research, the Forestry Commission, Defra and Natural Resources Wales, FERA, the Animal and Plant Health Agency, the National Trust and the Woodland Trust.

The volunteers will, among other tasks, verify cases of tree disease recorded via the Forestry Commission’s Tree Alert online reporting tool which anyone can access to report trees showing signs of ill health.

Reporting through Tree Alert is the fastest way to get tree health concerns to scientists so we encourage members to use it.

FIRST WORD

I am greatly honoured to have become President of the Institute, and I look forward to building on the work of my predecessor, Professor Julian Evans, who has done a superb job.

The Institute is in a good place. For the first time ever, we now have over 1,500 members. Our finances are healthy. And, increasingly, we are seen as the “voice” of professional forestry and arboriculture in the UK. Much credit for all this is of course due to our Chief Executive, Shireen Chambers, and her team.

Collectively, our members have unparalleled expertise in forestry and arboriculture, and it is this unique strength which allows us, for example, to maintain high professional standards, to provide timely advice to government and to work with educational bodies on meeting the profession’s future needs.

Meanwhile, our national conferences and study tours, regional events and publications continue to play a key role in disseminating best practice.

I have benefited tremendously from the opportunities that these have given me to pick up new ideas and share experience with colleagues from all parts of the profession.

I am delighted that David Edwards has been elected as Vice President, and greatly look forward to working with him and the rest of the Council: our first task is to review the Institute’s 3 year Strategic Plan, which currently runs from 2013 to 2015.

As we move forward, I think our aim should be to continue to grow the Institute, in terms of both its membership and its reputation.

Finally, I should like to say a big thank you to all those members who help and support the Institute, such as organising regional events and representing the Institute on advisory bodies!

Over the coming months I will try to attend a good number of regional events – as well as the autumn study tour in Northern Ireland – so that I can meet as many of you as possible.

David Henderson-Howatt FICFor, ICF President
ICF new President focused on growth

David Henderson-Howat FICFor was elected President of the Institute at ICF’s Annual General Meeting in Cardiff on 22 April after two years as Vice President. He succeeds Professor Julian Evans OBE FICFor.

David has spent most of his working life with the Forestry Commission, largely in Scotland where, for the years prior to his retirement, he was FCS Deputy Director and headed the Scottish Government’s Agricultural and Rural Development Division.

In his earlier career, he managed pine and eucalyptus forests in Swaziland and, more recently, has undertaken consultancy work for the United Nations Forum on Forestry and for the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.

David aims to continue to build on the Institute’s record level of more than 1,500 members and further strengthen ICF’s reputation, recognising members’ unique strength in their “unparalleled expertise in UK forestry and arboriculture”.

During the AGM, David Edwards FICFor, District Manager in Wales and Marches for UPM Tilhill, was announced as Vice-President, following a vote by professional members. He has served ICF as an examiner, a member of Council and its Professional and Educational Standards Committee, Finance Officer and Regional Group Chairman in Wales.

The elections results also confirmed Chris Piper MICFor, Principal at CJ Piper & Co, and Andrew Sheridan MICFor, Woodland Officer at FC Scotland, as new Council members. ICF welcomes everyone into their new roles and thanks Julian for his tireless commitment to ICF over the past two years.
In brief

- Liz Truss continues as Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, while Greg Clark, a former Shadow Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, has been appointed as Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in the Prime Minister’s post-election changes.

- The FC’s latest National Forest Inventory report, Evaluation of alternative harvesting and afforestation scenarios on British softwood timber availability, is available. It explores and illustrates the impacts of alternative afforestation and harvesting scenarios on the softwood timber availability profile, and provides estimates of long-term softwood timber availability under these scenarios. http://bit.do/timberstats

- The FC also reports that felling of softwood trees in the UK under plant health legislation accounted for 7 per cent of all softwood felling last year. http://bit.do/fellingstats

- Confor’s Woodland Show is on 10-11 September at the Longleat Estate. See the leaflet in this issue.

- APF 2016, the international forestry exhibition is on 15-17 September, Ragley Estate, Alcester, Warwickshire. www.apfexhibition.co.uk

- The Arboricultural Association’s new Tree Work Operatives register, R2, was launched during the Arb Show 2015 at the National Arboretum, Westonbirt, Gloucestershire, in June.

- The Sylva Foundation has launched Version 3.0 of myForest, making the tool more streamlined, easier to use and with new features. www.myforest.org.uk

- Austrian researchers have claimed that arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi can help street trees cope with the stress of de-icing salt in their rootzones. http://bit.do/treeroots

- Clinton Devon Estates has been recognised for its work in Sustainable Development with its third consecutive Queen’s Award for Enterprise. ICF professional member John Wilding MBE is the estate’s Head of Forestry.

- A 1.4ha area on the national forest estate within the 2,500ha Millbuie Forest on the Black Isle will be treated with copper fungicide to see if the technique could potentially mitigate the impact of Dothistroma needle blight.

- Treeconomics has launched a dedicated canopy cover website, where information and statistics on the Urban Forest can be found for different towns and cities across the UK. www.urbanbioneighbours.org

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BSI and bats

Policy and Development Officer Alex McAuley, who compiled ICF’s response to the consultation on British Standard 8596, Surveying for bats in trees and woodland, said members were genuinely concerned that it:

- will become a job creation scheme, and may not improve bat surveys or bat conservation
- has the potential to slip into planning application guidelines and become compulsory
- is likely to burden the sector and could lead to more neglected woodlands, with negative connotations for biodiversity.

ICF encourages all members to consult with specialists should they feel that they are not best placed to undertake surveys, and to become familiar with the important existing guidance from the Forestry Commission and the Bat Conservation Trust.

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Trust’s pledge boosts home-grown trees

The Woodland Trust will invest £4.5 million to ensure the 4.5 million trees it plants and supplies over the next three years are grown in the UK from fully traceable seed stock to minimising the risk of pest and disease spread. The stock will be sourced in the UK and Ireland. It is the largest contract of its kind that the charity has entered into. Native seeds will be sourced by Shropshire-based seed collector and supplier Forestart from more than 1,000 locations across the UK, selected for quality and known provenance. These are being grown primarily by three nurseries – Alba Trees of East Lothian, Crowders Nurseries in Lincolnshire and Thorpe Trees in Yorkshire. The Trust is also in the process of finalising agreements with suppliers in Wales and Ireland.

Some 500,000 trees have been provided to schools and communities during the current planting season as part of an initiative to mark the centenary of World War One.
Milestone urban tree papers published

The proceedings from Trees, People and the Built Environment II (TPBEII), the 2014 ICF hosted urban trees research conference, have been published.

They include papers from the leading international academics in urban forestry, greenspace design and sustainability, who addressed the conference in Birmingham.

Dr Mark Johnston MBE FICFor, Conference Steering Group Chair, said: “These proceedings represent a milestone in research on urban trees and green infrastructure. “Importantly, this research will soon have an impact where it really matters – making a genuine difference to people’s lives on the ground in our towns and cities.”

Download the TPBEII proceedings at: www.charteredforesters.org/tpbei-proceedings/ or visit http://bit.ly/1BJmsDY

Chalara hits sheltered area of NW Scotland

Environment Minister Dr Aileen McLeod has called for continued effort to adapt to the presence of Chalara dieback of ash in Scotland as FC Scotland confirmed its presence at three locations in the ‘sheltered area’ in Scotland.

The ‘sheltered area’ was established in 2013 as part of the FC’s Chalara Action Plan as it offered some prospect of delaying the arrival of the disease in mature woodlands in north west Scotland.

Two of the locations where the disease has been found are in Morvern, while the third is in Glen Nant, a Site of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserve south east of Oban.

The infections at the three sheltered area locations are the first to be confirmed in the wider environment.

Green light for important changes at ICF AGM

Changes have been made to the Institute’s Regulations following the ICF Annual General Meeting in April. The most important is a change of name from the Code of Ethics, which is now a Code of Conduct.
Working together is bringing results

Successful collaboration has been a common theme in the development of new guides and standards for our forests

Trees & Design Action Group

The Trees & Design Action Group (TDAG) continues to provide a forum for cross-sector working. Driven by its membership, its regular meetings seek to address current and relevant issues which will then determine the future initiatives and projects that the group will pursue.

A significant development, since my last report, was the publication of the long-awaited Trees in Hard Landscapes, the latest TDAG best practice guide, last September. It explores the practical challenges and solutions to integrating trees in 21st century streets, civic spaces and surface carparks, detailing process, design and technical options.

Since then, TDAG members have been actively involved in the dissemination of this document, through conference presentations, seminars and media publications, to a broad audience from a variety of disciplines. In particular, there has been a drive to reach and influence the key disciplines responsible for design, construction and management of the built environment.

Working with other organisations and professional bodies has been essential to this, and these include the Construction Industry Research and Information Association, Arboricultural Association, London Tree Officers Association, Greater London Authority and others.

The earlier publication of the (then) new British Standard, BS 8545 Trees from nursery to independence in the landscape – Recommendations (February 2014), meant that the two documents could be promoted on the back of each other, with seminars and workshops designed to demonstrate how these practical working documents complement each other and how they can assist those working in the field to deliver robust and sustainable green infrastructure in urban environments.

In other TDAG news, the confirmation of award-winning architect and master planner Sir Terry Farrell as a trustee of the TDAG Trust has been welcomed by members, who recognise the benefit of his approach in helping us to achieve TDAG’s aims.

Elsewhere, TDAG’s Midlands Group has appointed Sue Griffiths as co-ordinator. Sue’s professional background is in town planning and she was recently involved with environmental volunteer work.

Sue James’ role as co-ordinator of TDAG London has proved invaluable in taking the group’s initiatives forward since its inception, so Sue’s appointment to TDAG Midlands will be an additional asset and resource.

Finally, TDAG’s work with the Construction Industry Council has progressed since I last reported that we had been invited to collaborate on its Green Construction Panel. The Panel has held two meetings, mainly to establish its scoping in terms of delivery.

As Chair of the Green Panel, George Adams is also on the Government’s Green Construction Board and this is an important opportunity for cross-disciplinary working and, hopefully, the potential to influence policy.
The Group met for the second time on 30 March at the Forestry Commission HQ in Edinburgh.

The Group provides a mechanism for the various government agencies and devolved administrations to exchange information on the current status of individual pests and diseases, current and planned programmes, including Observatree – the new early warning system for tree health, research programmes and the ongoing review of the EU plant health regime.

The absence at the meeting of any significant representative from the landscape industry responsible for, or at least involved in, the import of semi-mature trees has been noted as a weakness of the current set-up and steps are being taken to improve this liaison.

The Group recognises that the risks posed by such import trade, by individuals and/or organisations who have little or no understanding of the potential impacts on forests, must be taken more seriously.

Jon Heuch MICFor

UK Woodland Assurance Standard

It seems like little time has passed since the last revision of the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) was published, but already the UKWAS Steering Group is working on version four.

The clear message, from the initial round of consultations, is that UKWAS needs to be made simpler to understand and implement, while remaining credible and capable of carrying the endorsement of both FSC and PEFC.

With that in mind, those drafting UKWAS 4 have embarked on the most radical revision since the original 1999 version. Here are some of the proposed changes:

In UKWAS there are ‘Requirements’, ‘Means of Verification’ and ‘Guidance’.

Previous versions of the standard have relied upon all three to meet FSC and PEFC international standards and this has led to confusion over what exactly is required to comply. It is intended that in UKWAS 4 the ‘Requirements’ will be just that: what is required!

The Means of Verification and Guidance will be there to help owners or managers achieve compliance, but they will not be regarded as some sort of checklist to be ticked off at audit. The intention is to give owners or managers much more freedom to manage their woodlands in the way they see fit and be less prescriptive. This approach is echoed with substantial rewrites of some of the more complex requirements being undertaken with a view to being less prescriptive.

There is likely be a reordering of UKWAS, with the eight-section format being reduced to five, which might loosely be seen as:

- legal
- planning
- implementation
- conservation
- people.

The aim is to make the standard easier to use. For example, in previous versions planning requirements were scattered through the standard. By bringing them together under one section, writing the plan should be more straightforward.

Doubtless there will be some tricky negotiations ahead, but it has been encouraging to see foresters, NGOs and the certification schemes working together.

The first draft of the revised standard will be available for consultation later this year and I encourage all members to get involved in the consultation process.

Stuart Wilkie FICFor

Great Britain & Northern Ireland Tree Health Advisory Group
In his final weeks as President, there was no slowing Professor Julian Evans OBE FICFor. He gave presentations on three consecutive evenings on Trees in the Bible, based on his book *God's Trees*, and promoted ICF at each.

Executive Director Shireen Chambers FICFor met fellow partners of the Forestry Learning Network in March to look at the project's progress (see page 20 for an update) then, in April, joined ICF's Northern Ireland Regional Group meeting at Belfast's Belvoir Park Forest (see page 34), one of October's Study Tour locations.

In May, Shireen met Ruth Jenkins, Head of Natural Resources at Natural Resources Wales, for an update on its activities, then Jo O'Hara, Head of FC Scotland, for a similar briefing. Representationally, she attended the Scottish Land and Estates conference in Edinburgh on land reform – Delivering Public Benefits from Private Land; a Future Trees Trust meeting in Dunkeld, Perthshire, and its Big Tree Country visit; and a meeting of Edinburgh Napier University's new Industry Liaison Panel.

The ICF team (pictured) met many members at April’s National Conference in Cardiff, where ICF’s stand attracted many non-members wanting to know how to become chartered. On day two, Deputy Director Russell Horsey organised ICF’s second Student Breakfast, for existing and prospective student members, where he was joined by Julian, David Henderson-Howat FICFor and David Edwards FICFor. A week later, he was at a Professional Associations Research Network conference in London to hear how other professional institutions inspire young professionals.

Russell attended a Wales Woodland Advisory Panel meeting, and also a Welsh Rural Development Business meeting (with Policy and Development Officer Alex McAuley) on grants under the new rural development plan. Building on the UKFS and woodland management workshops, run in partnership with FC England last year, Russell agreed further joint workshops in November this year.

Alex attended FC policy meetings in Bristol, including one with Russell and Dr Bianca Ambrose-Oji, Social Scientist, Social and Economic Research Group, to discuss the Scottish Skills Action Plan for the Forest and Timber Technologies Sector 2013-14. He also represented ICF at the RE:LEAF London Tree and Woodland Awards (see page 12).

Membership Manager Stuart Glen co-ordinated and presented at ICF’s three spring PME workshops in March, and in April took part in a WWF-chaired virtual round-table discussion on making the business and economic case for sustainable timber (http://bit.do/roundtable).

Finally, Stuart and Cheryl Simon, ICF’s Finance Manager, enjoyed regional group meetings in South Scotland and South East England respectively.

New Commissioner for Scotland

Congratulations to George McRobbie FICFor on his appointment as Forestry Commissioner for Scotland and the timber trade for a three-year term of office from 1 April 2015.

George, who is Managing Director of UPM Tilhill, is well known for his broad knowledge of the forestry industry. He is an active ICF member, previously serving as Finance Officer, Vice President, President (1998-2000) and as an Exam Assessor.

George said: “I am honoured to be appointed to this important position during what I expect to be a very challenging period for the Forestry Commission (FC) as the devolution of forestry continues. “An important part of my role will be to ensure that the timber trades’ views from both Scotland and England are represented and taken into account.”

Congratulations also to Scottish Commissioner Amanda Bryan, reappointed for a further three-year term from August, and Head of FC Scotland, Jo O’Hara, approved as an Executive Commissioner for Scotland.
CONGRATULATIONS AND WELCOME

ASSOCIATES

Sonia Gomez  Northern Ireland
Stephen Adlard  South Scotland
Paolo Bavaresco  Wales
Donald James Alexander Beaton  North Scotland
Jonathan Callis  South Scotland
Dylan Cammack  North England
Richard James Carrick  Wales
Leo Dawson  South West England
Alvaro Fuego Gallego  South East England
Tristan Galletly  Midlands
Kasten Harris  South East England
Reuben Hayes  Midlands
Christopher Jones  Midlands
Garin Paul Linnington  South West England
Andrew MacLachlan  South Scotland
Ed Midmore  Wales
James Mingay  Midlands

Michael Ndeze  South East England
Sam Negus  South West England
Penelope Oliver  North England
Richard Parmee  East England
Iain Pettifor  North Scotland
Jonathan Rau  South East England
Christopher Reynolds  Midlands
Caroline Riches  Wales
Darren Sharpe  East England
Thomas Simmons  South East England
Aleksi Tuomi  South Scotland
Damian Edward Ward  Wales
William Wood  South West England
James Young  South Scotland
Michelle Van-Velzen  Wales

STUDENTS

Thomas Adamson  Midlands
Lorraine Armour  North Scotland

Adam Armstrong  South East England
Jouke Arponen  Wales
Max Bell  Midlands
Dean Bell  South East England
Alasdair Brann  North Scotland
Nicholas Hill  Wales
Augustas Juskevicius  North Scotland
Catriona Kent  Midlands
Thomas Mann  South East England
Liam McLeish  Midlands
James Potts  Midlands
Peter Reynolds  North Scotland
Samuel Riley  North Scotland
Jack Smith  South East England
Jacob Stevens  South East England
Euan Stewart  North Scotland
Iain Stirling  North Scotland
Jonathan Thompson  Wales
Alexander Wilkinson  North Scotland

Meet and greet at the Royal Welsh Show

ICF staff members Shireen Chambers FICFor, Russell Horsey, Alex McAuley, Julie Adamson and new President David Henderson-Howat FICFor, will be hosting ICF’s careers marquee (stand FOR78/forestry area) at the Royal Welsh Show, which runs from 20-23 July at the Royal Welsh Showground, Powys.

ICF will promote careers within the industry, assisted by some of the UK’s Higher Education Institutes. Shireen and marketing officer Julie will only be there on Tuesday/Wednesday and David on the forestry day (Tuesday).

If you can help on the stand and talk to visitors about your own career, please email: russell.horsey@charteredforesters.org

Margo hands admin baton to Adrienne

ICF staff were sad to say goodbye to administrator Margo Morrison, who left at the end of May to return to the financial sector. Margo handed over the role to Adrienne Walker, whose wealth of administrative experience includes working for the Scotland offices of the Institute of Fundraising and the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy.

We wish Margo good luck and welcome Adrienne.

Adrienne Walker
Condolences

ICF sadly relays the news that former professional member Mike Voip died in May, aged 61, after a long illness.

Mike, who was a Tree Protection Officer for Norwich City Council and a member of the National Tree Officers Organisation, will be remembered for his significant contribution to arboriculture both in his work in Norwich and through NATO.

ICF extends its condolences to Mike’s wife, Pat, and family. A tribute to Mike will be published in the next issue.

New jobs at FCS

Forestry Commission Scotland has appointed Dr Sallie Bailey MICFor as the new Forest District Manager for the Dumfries & Borders region which includes its National Forest Estate. Sallie had previously provided policy advice and as a Conservator covering the south of Scotland. She is charged with ensuring that the forests and woodlands contribute towards the local and national economy, including the challenges of various tree diseases affecting the area.

FC Scotland also confirmed Steve Morgan as Tree Health Officer for the Scottish Borders to specifically focus on tackling Chalara.

New CEO for Canadian Institute

The Canadian Institute of Forestry (CIF) has appointment of Dana Collins as its new Executive Director, effective 1 July, 2015.

Dana, a graduate of the Masters of Forest Conservation programme from the University of Toronto’s Faculty of Forestry, has been working with the CIF for nearly three years and has been the acting CIF-IFC Executive Director for the past six months. Her skills, credentials, and passion for Canada’s forest sector and forest practitioners, will be critical in guiding the development of this growing Institute.

Welcome back

It is good to see Living Woods editor Nick Gibbs back at the helm of the magazine’s May issue, after his horrific cycling accident last year.

Members celebrate success

ICF Policy and Development Officer Alex McAuley joined tree professionals at the RE:LEAF London Tree and Woodland Awards in City Hall, on 27 May. The awards celebrate the work of individuals, community groups and professionals, who improve and expand the city’s woodland cover, and encourage the management of its urban forests.

ICF congratulates all the winners and, in particular, members Jim Smith MICFor, National Urban Forestry Adviser, Forest Services, Forestry Commission England, who was awarded The London Tree Officers Association Individual Commitment Award, and Andy Tipping MICFor, Principal Arboricultural Officer for the London Borough of Barnet, who picked up the Street Tree 2008-2015 Award for its A5 Edgware Road Tree Planting Project.

ICF appoints two new Fellows

ICF Council has granted Fellowship of the Institute to professional members Glyn Thomas and Steve McCartney.

Glyn is Director and Senior Arboricultural Consultant at Cheshire Woodlands. His extensive arboricultural experience includes the public sector. He has been an ICF chartered member since 2010 and has committed significant time and energy to the PME process as an Exam Assessor.

Steve, who is the Outdoor Recreation Manager at Coleraine Borough Council (CBC) in Northern Ireland (NI), has been an ICF member for 31 years and chartered for 25. He spent eleven years with the NI Department of Agriculture & Rural Development prior to joining CBC in 2011. Like Glyn, he firmly supports ICF’s PME process, sitting on the Institute’s Examination Board and acting as an Exam Assessor since 2005.

Our new chairman’s vision for ICF

After election as President in April, David Henderson-Howat FICFor said: “For the first time ever, we now have over 1,500 members and our aim should be to continue to grow, in terms of both membership and reputation.”

In the autumn issue of Chartered Forester, David and Vice President David Edwards FICFor will talk about the agreed strategies and goals that will drive ICF’s development for the next three years.
All practicing Chartered Members are required to undertake and record a minimum of 100 hours’ CPD in every three-year period. Given that CPD is continuous, this should equate to around 33 hours each year. While members may choose their preferred method to maintain their CPD records, the recording tool in the Members’ Area of the ICF website is favoured by many, who find it straightforward, easy to use, and enjoy the fact that it allows you to check that your contact details are current.

It’s more than an obligation
Beyond ICF’s mandatory requirements, meaningful CPD should serve as an outlet for improving professional competence. That includes being adaptive to industry and prepared not just to survive, but to thrive in modern forestry and arboriculture. ICF firmly believes that the outcome of the learning is every bit as important as the number of hours spent on CPD itself. It’s not about just ticking boxes.

Hilary Lindsay, Vice President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, and an Affiliated Researcher at the Open University, recently published a book in conjunction with the Professional Associations Research Network, Adaptability: The secret to lifelong learning. In it, she reports on a 2011 study where more than 500 Chartered Accountants were asked what learning activities were most relevant in their current role. The top five responses were:
1. Accessing the internet for information
2. Doing your job on a regular basis
3. Reading technical material
4. Reading magazines, newspapers and journals
5. Attending courses, conferences and seminars.

However, when the same group were asked to describe which learning activities constituted CPD, the top five responses were:
1. Attending courses, conferences and seminars
2. Reading technical material
3. Reading magazines, newspapers and journals
4. Studying online learning modules
5. Accessing the internet for information.

It would appear that many professionals still equate formal learning activities as their main source of CPD. As an Institute, ICF has an obligation to communicate and reinforce the importance of informal or practical learning and reflection as acceptable – indeed desirable – components of CPD.

In essence, there are three dimensions of learning as shown in the Professional Learning Tree (pictured above), which I have adapted from a model in Hilary’s book.

It effectively illustrates a modern, professional and meaningful model for lifelong learning activities.

Without a strong, healthy and vibrant root system the tree will not flourish. Likewise, embracing interpersonal and intrapersonal learning (those learning styles beneath the soil surface) will help to develop a more vibrant professional. While it’s natural to lean towards cognitive learning, be open to embracing more informal opportunities to learn. Hilary concluded: “The model recognises that, while one element of lifelong learning is about maintaining and developing professional competence, there is also a second aspect to learning. Today, and in the future, members of professions not only need to respond to all challenges provided by their working environment, but they must also seek to enjoy rewarding careers and balance those careers against other demands on their time.”

Dr Stuart Glen, Membership Manager, ICF

Find out more...
Email stuart.glen@charteredforesters.org for a further reading list.
While not surprised to be the only speaker from the private forestry sector at the Institute of Fisheries Management Specialist Conference, Forestry and Fisheries – Where Next?, I was surprised that Confor was the only commercial private sector representative at all. The ICF National Conference date-clash was, no doubt, a factor. However, forestry was ably supported by Forestry Commission England, Natural Resources Wales, Forest Research (experts included Tom Nisbet and Nadeem Shah), and forestry consultant Dr Scott McG Wilson MICFor.

The 60-strong audience was offered an excellent mix of theory, science, policy and some pragmatic ‘on the ground’ practice on river restoration, and it was not the anti-conifer’ fight I had initially feared.

The key issues connecting forestry and fisheries are acidification and diffuse pollution. It is worth considering that the former is connected to the afforestation practices of the 1970s and 1980s and the latter often with harvesting the same.

The main ‘take home’ message was that almost every stream in every catchment is different, and how that stream reacts to afforestation, deforestation or liming is highly dependent on a number of factors, including the width of buffer strips, depth of peat and underlying geology. The worse possible case of blanket afforestation, on deep peat with no riparian buffer, was resulting in pH as low as 4.3, but there was also a report on research of new planting, near Halladale in the Flow Country in the early 1990s, that had no measurable impact on local fish populations. It is known that a pH level lower than 5.5 will result in permanent damage to salmon roe, even if only at that level for a few hours.

The other key factor in considering forestry and acidification issues is the steep decline in sulphur emissions from UK industry as a result of regulation and improved technology – levels have reduced by 73 per cent to almost zero.

Maximum catchment afforestation levels of 20-30 per cent were mentioned several times, with examples given of highly afforested catchments resulting in high levels of acidification. Several delegates compared this with much of Europe where there are much higher levels of forest cover.

The Forestry Commission has a sensitivity matrix which sets out which parts of the country are vulnerable, and shows that silvicultural practice (particularly buffer strips) is arguably just as important as simple measures of tree cover.

The UK Forestry Standard Guidelines, Forest and water, were referred to repeatedly and delegates agreed that forestry policy – and practice – is greatly improved, with forestry concerns being specific to a particular stream or catchment.

My own paper, The Role of Productive Woodlands in Water Management, jointly produced by Confor and Forest Research and compiling existing research, demonstrated how productive woodland can reduce flood risk and protect our waterways.

This conference highlighted that, as foresters, we need to take time to understand any criticism, which is often related to insensitive management of conifers at a specific site, and showed how our industry needs to present its research and practices to potentially critical audiences.

Forestry policy and practice has improved hugely over the past 30 years. We have a strong sustainability case which, in around 70 per cent of our forests, is supported by credible independent third-party verification, unlike any other UK land use. We have a great story, so let’s tell it.

Andrew Heald MICFor, Technical Director, Confor
Concerns were raised in the forest industry earlier this year following the release of The guide to cross compliance in England 2015 – the ‘cross compliance handbook’. It introduced a ban on tree felling and trimming for the period from 1 March to 31 August (inclusive) for certain trees, including those in woodland.

To clarify, all woodlands supported under Pillar II schemes (under the Common Agricultural Policy and other related schemes) are subject to the Cross Compliance rules, but only to the Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) – in particular the two that relate to Birds and Habitats, SMR 2 and 3 respectively. However, the basis of these SMRs is enshrined in the UK Forest Standard (UKFS).

If your work complies with the UKFS by default, you will meet the requirements of these two SMRs.

The Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) 7c rules (the ones which introduced the tree felling and trimming ban) only apply to non ‘forest’ trees. They do not apply to areas of woodland which meet the definition of ‘forest’ as identified by the EU regulation, provided that these areas are not also being used to claim financial aid, for example, under the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS). The definition of ‘forest’ is that the area is 0.5ha and above and:

■ must be at least 20 metres wide
■ is comprised of tree species that are capable of growing to at least five metres tall
■ where there is an overall canopy cover of at least 20 per cent.

There are two circumstances where woodland owners may be claiming BPS on woodland areas. These will be where they have either:
■ planted new woodland areas since 2008, where that land was used to activate their 2008 entitlement to Single Farm Payment (SPS – and the predecessor to BPS), and where they are now claiming farm woodland payments and BPS, or

■ where the woodland has sufficient ground vegetation, and the owner is claiming the area as grazing land for BPS purposes.

The simple moral to this story is that if you own woodland and don’t want to be caught by the GAEC cross compliance rules, then don’t claim BPS.

Unfortunately, this means that for all owners of land who do claim BPS on woodland areas, or claim BPS on their agricultural land and whose woodland areas do not meet the definition of ‘forest’, then the ban on felling and trimming, along with all the other cross compliance rules, must be adhered to.

There are some exceptions to the tree cutting and trimming rules. They do not apply where the tree:
■ overhangs a highway, or any other road or footpath, endangering or obstructing vehicles, pedestrians or horse-riders
■ obstructs or interferes with the view of drivers of vehicles or the light from a public lamp
■ is dead, diseased, damaged or insecurely rooted, and is a risk to human safety
■ is a fruit tree in an orchard
■ is cut or trimmed by a statutory authority acting under its statutory powers.

If you rely on these exemptions you will have to provide clear evidence why it was necessary to undertake the work during the ban period if requested. Owners may also seek derogation from the rules from the Rural Payments Agency.

A felling licence must still be in place where required, but the existence of a licence does not make you exempt from the need to comply with the cross compliance requirements.

Steve Hunt is a Regulations Manager for Forestry Commission England. steve.hunt@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
The global importance of confronting the growing threats to tree health, resilience and sustainability was underlined at the ICF National Conference in April.

More than 250 attendees gathered for this year’s ICF Conference at the Angel Hotel in Cardiff, on 22-23 April. The focus was Tree Health, Resilience and Sustainability, a topic on which Conference Chairman David Henderson-Howat FICFor, then Vice President, developed a programme that attracted this considerable audience, not just in size but also seniority.

International organisations, government departments, the Forestry Commission and Forest Research, were all represented along with leading commercial players in forestry and arboriculture.

The conference opened with a welcome from Professor Julian Evans, in one of his final duties as the Institute’s President, and a video address from Carl Sergeant, Welsh Government Minister for Natural Resources, in which he stressed the importance of resilience and referred to the upcoming Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill in Wales.

Here, we present a flavour of the two days.

**Chairman’s Overview**
An aim of the conference was to ask whether the tree health challenges that we now face require us to make fundamental changes in our approach to forestry and arboriculture in the UK.

**Day one: Facing the Problems**
With this in mind, many of the presentations on day one left us in no doubt about the continuing, and increasing, seriousness of the tree health threats we face. On a more positive note, we were also reminded that it is easy to become so focused on the problems that we forget about past successes (such as the global importance of confronting the growing threats to tree health, resilience and sustainability).
biological control of *Dendroctonus micans* – which was poised to become a major threat to our spruce resource).

The serious erosion of our science skills base was a recurring theme over the two days; there now being an alarmingly small number of plant pathologists and entomologists in the UK.

One of our overseas keynote speakers, Professor Mike Wingfield, President of IUFRO (the International Union of Forest Research Organisations), indicated that this shortage was also a world-wide phenomenon.

Meanwhile, increased international trade, people movements and climate change continue to ramp up the dangers of new and unwelcome pest and disease outbreaks, as well as potentially altering the dynamics of those already present.

Another manifestation of this skills shortage, highlighted by Professor Simon R Leather, Professor of Entomology at Harper Adams College, is the lack of capacity for teaching basic field skills of pest and disease identification; skills that are so important if new outbreaks are to be identified in time to take effective eradication or containment action.

There were useful discussions about different strategies for coping with risk and uncertainty, including those from an insurance perspective. The UK plant health risk register is an important tool in helping to identify and prioritise threats, but is only part of the solution. Contingency planning will also help in thinking through the implications of and reactions to different scenarios.

As sustainable land specialist Dr Neil Strong MICFor, from Network Rail Infrastructures, reminded us, in his presentation about keeping the railways safe from dangerous trees, we often face pressing practical (and costly) decisions about what to do in the here and now.

**Day two: Searching for Solutions**

Day two offered fascinating insights into technologies from the agricultural sector which could offer real hope for dealing with some of the seemingly intractable pest/disease management issues in forestry.

The use of entomopathogenic fungi and nematodes, and the deployment of “stress and kill” or “lure and kill” methodologies, can also help to address current concerns about chemical usage in the environment. In addition, Dr Joan Webber, Forest Research’s Principal Pathologist, stressed the importance of precautionary measures, including a forceful message that simple biosecurity actions, such as a “clean kit” culture, really does make a difference and ought to be one of the key signatures of professionalism.

During the same session, Dr Bill Mason, Forest Research’s Senior Silviculturist (Emeritus), advocated the need for innovative approaches to silviculture and wider species diversity if greater resilience in forestry is to be developed.

The final session was on messages for government and the profession. As one speaker said, there is the danger of oscillating between “panic and indifference”. To avoid this, we need long-term, sustained commitment to action by the Government (post-conference, ICF has met with the Defra Chief Plant Health Officer to reinforce this point).

Meanwhile, as these threats to the health of our trees, woods and forests are certainly not going away, our professional response should be neither panic nor indifference, but continued serious effort to develop responses that draw upon the best available evidence and advice from scientists and other experts.

We are extremely grateful to the organising committee, our session chairs – Sir Harry Studholme FICFor (Hons), FC GB; Ceri Davies, NRW; Professor James Pendlebury MICFor, FR; Professor Julian Evans OBE FICFor; Graham Taylor MICFor, Pryor & Rickett Silviculture; Professor John Healey MICFor, Bangor University – and all our speakers for setting the scene, sharing their experience, bringing us up to date with current knowledge and existing (and evolving) research, and who helped define the actions and message that we now have to deliver.

To quote a delegate on Twitter: “Big thanks to @TheICF for impeccable organisation and to the speakers who were all excellent. #feetupnow”.

David Henderson-Howat FICFor, Conference Chair
DAY 1: FACING UP TO THE PROBLEMS

Session 1: Setting the Scene
Experience in the UK
Dr John Gibbs OBE
On the UK Dutch elm disease outbreak, tackling tree health problems past and present.
Wisdom: Be armed with a range of expertise; act swiftly; build public trust and co-operation.

Experience from crop diseases
James KM Brown, John Innes Centre
On the Tree Health and Plant Biosecurity Initiative and its drive to up the number of UK tree health experts.
Wisdom: Dangers of monocultures facilitating disease spread; learn from agricultural sciences; increase political will and public appreciation of science.

Tree Health and Plant Biosecurity Expert (THPBE) Taskforce
Dr David Humphreys FICFor (Hon), The Open University
On the important work of the Taskforce and progress.
Wisdom: The importance of UK’s first Chief Plant Health Officer and value of the UK Plant Health Risk Register.

Session 2: Overseas Experience
Global lessons
Prof Mike Wingfield, IUFRO/University of Pretoria, SA
On being prepared: new pathogens, pests and challenges will emerge. Essentials: fungal diversity, specialists’ collaborating, information sharing, vital tree health investment.
Wisdom: Dangers of growing pure stands, including tailor-made genetically modified species, in short rotations. The importance of international collaboration on pest genomes.

Emerald ash borer (EAB)
Jim Zwack, The Davey Tree Expert Company
On the devastating effect of EAB since 2002, the lack of a national strategy, and the need for well-prepared plans (with costs) and swift responses.
Wisdom: Consider a benefit-based ecosystem service approach, framed in economics and biology.

Canada’s mountain pine beetle outbreak in 2002
Catherine Ste-Marie, Natural Resources Canada
On the government’s actions and investments, the effect of forestry and other industries, and current Canadian Forest Service work to contain the spread.
Wisdom: Adaptation informed by integrated assessments alongside a programme of species diversification is needed.

Session 3: Perspectives on Risk
Decisions on uncertain and potentially big risks
Professor David Ball, Middlesex University
On risk types (individual, societal and societal concern), risk management tools and risk mitigation philosophies.
Wisdom: Quantify all quantifiable effects and costs; consider qualitative factors where appropriate.

An insurer’s view
Phil Cottle, Pardus Underwriting
On the risks associated with forest investments and the availability of insurance.
Wisdom: Data is a prerequisite for effective insurance products. Be proactive about putting risk mitigation strategies in place.

Standardised pest and disease risk assessment of UK forests
Susan Davies, Edinburgh University
On the Woodland Carbon Code, the value of the Forest Finance Risk Network, and emerging projections (ash has a 90 per cent risk factor).
Wisdom: Carbon risks are very different to timber risks, e.g. because of longer time-scales.

The nursery perspective
Matt Hommel MICFor, Christie-Elite Nurseries
On the commercial impact of the 2012 Chalara outbreak movement ban and the need for appropriate control measures, and the biosecurity value of using UK-grown stock.
Wisdom: Market stability is key to strengthening the UK nursery sector, with benefits for biosecurity and sustainability.

DAY 2: SEARCHING FOR SOLUTIONS

Session 4: Searching for Resilience and Sustainability
Is UK forestry resilient?
Jo O’Hara, Head of FC Scotland
On a “school report” critique of what foresters are doing right, where they are hampered (e.g. lack of available expertise) and remedial action such as improved public communications.
Wisdom: UK forestry sector has demonstrated adaptability and resilience in the past, but organisations like ICF must provide leadership to address future challenges.

Here’s a review of the presentations to whet your appetite and encourage you to download them.
Novel technological solutions
Prof Tariq Butt, Swansea University
On advantages of fungal control agents over conventional chemical treatments; e.g. specific to particular insect pests, environmentally friendly, safer for humans.
Wisdom: They have great potential for tackling insect pests when combined with nematode treatments, very low-level chemical treatments or repellents/attractants.

Improving global plant health arrangements
Martin Ward, EPPO
On how policy makers face limited resources, barriers to collaboration, technical challenges and a reluctance to report diseases, and on the need to recognise and quantify value of past successes.
Wisdom: Increase collaboration and take a precautionary approach to keeping pests out.

Session 5: Practical Response in the Field
Detection and precautionary measures – responsibility for all
Dr Joan Webber, Forest Research
On how genetics have revolutionised detection of diseases, how simpler detection measures are needed as well as adherence to biosecurity practice
Wisdom: Consider a wider range of silvicultural systems and tree species, with less dependency on single species.

Managing our forests and what to plant?
Dr Bill Mason MICFor, Forest Research
On how foresters need more knowledge of when, where and with what to diversify and how to make complex decisions (e.g. about use of thinning).
Wisdom: Creating resilient forests requires good knowledge of silviculture, and of potential disturbances – plus imagination.

Session 6: Messages for Government and the Profession
Understanding public tree health risk concerns
Dr Clive Potter, Imperial College London and THPBE Taskforce
On social aspects of tree health issues and the need for an informed public – they may pay a premium for “clean” UK-grown plants, hold policy-makers to account and drive political change.
Wisdom: Research can improve our communications to the public by helping us to understand their responses.

Implications for certification
Ben Ganneberg MICFor, PEFC
On how forest certification is providing robust performance standards (nationally appropriate, scientific and holistic) and communicating these.
Wisdom: Meeting international requirements and allowing local adaptation can help improve decision-making.

What are the needs for professional education?
Prof Simon Leather, Harper Adams University
On the lack of forest pathology and entomology expertise and education; foresters must make informed decisions, understand basic insect and fungal taxonomy, and be able to recognise symptoms.
Wisdom: Put more emphasis on forest protection in the degree curriculum. Also, forestry professionals must set aside “forest health” CPD days.

Improving public awareness and communications
Steve Connor, Creative Concern
On meeting communication challenges in a world where the average person is exposed to 3,000 adverts daily, using creativity, common not Latin names, YouTube and social media, and framing issues around intrinsic values.
Wisdom: The media hype about ash dieback gave the public little information on how to help. Rationalise messages to make a positive contribution.

Compiled with assistance from:
Louise Hill, Department of Plant Sciences, University of Oxford, and Chris Mackenzie-Smith, forestry student, Bangor University

References:
1. @Placeyplacey

Managing trees for a safe and sustainable railway
Dr Neil Strong MICFor, Network Rail Infrastructure (NRI)
On the challenges of managing tree health and safety in NRI’s 360km² estate, with over 2.5 million trees over15cm+ diameter which could potentially derail a train. The importance of identifying hazards and risk assessment, investment in new technologies.
Wisdom: Need to balance health, safety and biodiversity; track-side views are the rail industry’s “shop window”.

Dr Neil Strong on managing trees for a safe railway.

James Astill, Shireen Chambers, and David Henderson-Howat

Simon Leather
@EntoProf
Joan Webber – important message – what arrives is not the same as what establishes – mutation, introgression, hybridization #Treehealth

Simon Leather
@EntoProf
James Brown @TheICF now talking about Chalara project #Treehealth – suspects under-reporting & more widespread than thought

Woodland Stewardship
@woodlandsteward
I’m here in the US following all the proceedings from the @TheICF #TreeHealth conference. Keep on tweetin #forestersuk

Simon Place
@Placeyplacey
Good talk by Matt showing the difficult but significant position the growers are in as regards future-proofing our trees. #TreeHealth

Christie Elite Scot
@Christie_Elite
Grass roots education is key @TheICF valid point raised for the future of #treehealth. @WoodlandTrust @fcscotland

Angelika K. @Angelika_K
@TheICF Many thanks for a really informative conference on #TreeHealth Diversity, species & structure is the answer!

Download...
Speaker presentations and a report of the conference2 from the ICF website: www.charteredforesters.org/tree-health-resources
THE Forestry Learning Network (FLN) is the innovative, industry-led professional training project which will deliver £350,000 of workforce development to the forestry sector across England until March 2017.

Over the past few months, the project has gathered momentum and there is now a clear brand and identity, which many members will have seen on flyers distributed at the ICF’s National Conference in April.

While subsidised training schemes for technical and silvicultural topics have been around in various guises, the FLN represents the first method of support to obtain professional development.

Despite professional development being recognised as an ongoing process – indeed, ingrained in our working lives – we’ve found that discussions on training and learning never fail to produce questions about what training can qualify for funding. Part of the FLN’s role is to encourage more people to think about their training needs and what skills or business opportunities they would like to develop as the first step, before they think about how the costs will be covered. So, we suggest participants first consider the following questions:

Where are you now and what are your aspirations? Reflect on what you have achieved so far and also your aims for the future. This may involve focusing on promotion opportunities in your current organisation or, if self-employed, perhaps developing a new service or product to offer your customers.

What’s the reality? While it’s easy to see our own strengths and skills, it is much harder to identify any obstacles or knowledge gaps. Peer review is a good method of receiving constructive feedback on your working methods and professional interactions and can be obtained via anonymous reviews.

Do you need to develop new skills or gain experience in a specific area? Thinking about what skills you need for the future requires serious consideration so make sure you speak with colleagues and family about your plans.

How will you get there? Build a realistic plan focusing on your strengths and closing any gaps in your experience or skills. Learning while working is challenging, so discussions with your line manager are necessary to assess the relevance and reasons for undertaking training and arrangements for time off.

Funding arrangements

Funding from the Department of Business Innovation and Skills is delivered through the Employer Opportunity Pilot scheme. It places the emphasis on forestry and arboricultural businesses actively engaging with the FLN, so that the funding can be directed to subject areas required by the industry.

Most importantly, it is practical, adaptable and affordable. There is no predefined course list or prescriptive topics, and training can be accessed at £6 per hour, based on the completion of an individual Personal Development Plan which identifies training requirements.

Emily Maclean, Project Manager, Forestry Learning Network

The Forestry Learning Network project is delivered by Rural Development Initiatives on behalf of the project steering group members: Abbey Forestry, The Duchy of Cornwall, Institute of Chartered Foresters, Lockhart & Garrett, Lowther Estate, UPM Tilhill, and the Woodland Trust.
The FLN Factsheet

What does the FLN do?
It provides access to subsidised professional training to develop the competitiveness of forestry businesses and enhance an individual’s career prospects.

Who’s eligible?
Rural forestry businesses or employers meeting the criteria:
- Participant(s) must be employed in England and aged 19 or over
- They must be self-employed/a sole trader/employed by a limited company, charity, social enterprise or local authority*
- Training must be at an equivalent Level 2, 3 or higher.

*Funding is not applicable to Higher Education qualifications, apprenticeships or traineeship programmes.

What training is covered?
Eligible training is likely to develop the business and/or its employees, enhancing the career prospects of those individuals taking part.
Topics can include:
- Leadership
- Business management
- Adoption of IT solutions
- Contract management
- Cross-supply chain collaboration
- Financial management
- People skills
- Communications and marketing.

How does it work?
Subsidised training will be offered upon payment of a joining fee and successful completion of a Personal Development Plan which will identify training requirements.

Is the scheme open ended?
Sadly, no. At this stage it is limited to 250 places, so get in touch as soon as possible to discuss your training requirements.

Find out more...
Read more about the project at: www.forestrylearning.org.uk To discuss individual circumstances, please contact Emily Maclean on 07786 265 409 or email: info@forestrylearning.org.uk

For the latest updates follow @forestrylan

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ICF members in Scotland face the biggest shake-up to the land tenure system for 500 years, with the introduction of a new Land Reform Act

Diverse opinions were aired on the Scottish Government’s proposals for a Land Reform Bill, during a meeting held by ICF’s Scotland Regional Groups in March, in Perthshire. Ben Clinch MICFor summarises the main points made by the speakers in his report of the meeting (see page 33).

Post-meeting, speaker Raymond Henderson FICFor, Forestry Consultant at Bidwells, highlighted that, in his view, scale is a real issue: “While there is a place for the small-scale niche markets, they are not going to keep the large timber processors of the world, such as James Jones & Sons, supplied with timber on the scale that they need it. The fact is that you do need big areas of productive forestry. Therefore, land reform can’t afford to be based on a happy, romantic image of these niche markets.”

His is one of many views.
I believe that the proposals for Land Reform that the Scottish Government is advancing are very welcome and long overdue. In any other part of the world a discussion about land ownership is the crucial first step in the development of any rational land use policy.

There has been a lot of over reaction to the essentially modest Scottish Government Land Reform proposals. It is worth noting that we are talking about land reform, not revolution.

The significant proposals in the consultation focus on: long-term commitment to land reform, improving the transparency and accountability of land ownership, commitment to effectively manage land and rights in land for the Common Good, and addressing specific aspects of land ownership and rights.

These reforms are aimed at modifying existing social arrangements rather than the destruction and replacement of them. A key element is the creation of a Scottish Land Reform Commission. The significance is that the land reform process is viewed here by Government as an ongoing and evolving process, and this offers the opportunity to fine-tune, adapt, extend or rescind legislation in a proactive way.

Talk of total land redistribution has never been on the agenda, and any adjustments in land distribution, forced or otherwise, are bound to be modest due to funding issues. Rather, I would see land reform as a mechanism to promote responsible land management and to increase the diversity of land ownership and use in Scotland. Who could possibly object to that? Responsible land managers in Scotland, of whom there are many, have nothing to fear from the proposals. As a progressive country, Scotland needs diverse land ownership, and existing responsible landowners are an essential part of this diversity. The very existence of the legislation may help to nudge landowners towards a greater awareness of the social consequences of their actions, which may provide a cost-effective solution to a range of problems and engender co-operation rather than confrontation.

The UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) and certification schemes already impose a whole range of binding conditions on forest owners to behave in socially and environmentally

continued overleaf>
sound ways. Similarly, most foresters find the UKFS enables them to carry out a high standard of professional management for a diverse range of clients. It could easily be a model for wider land reform and, potentially, be adapted to a Scottish Land Management Standard applicable to other land uses.

As ecosystem managers, we instinctively recognise that diversity can be strength. In difficult times, the specialist dies and the generalist thrives. We are in difficult times, and the diversity that land reform can bring will increase resilience by diversifying ownership, outputs, scale of production and greater social stability/utility. Of course, we need big mills and large productive areas, but we also need to bring back the healthy diversity of small-scale businesses that used to thrive in forestry. Risking having all our sawmilling eggs in one small basket is a gamble for the whole forest industry.

The most complex consideration for land reform may be balancing the national interest against local and individual interests. The Community Empowerment Act may complicate this process, and as community land ownership increases in scale, the impact on national policy objectives, such as timber supply and woodland creation, will increase.

So, reform it is. Put down your pitchforks; it’s not the revolution yet.

ANDREW MIDGELY
HEAD OF POLICY, SCOTTISH LAND & ESTATES

Land reform undoubtedly has a strong ideological element to it. Some people simply object to relatively few people owning large areas of land, and to the apparent disparities of wealth and power that go with it. They therefore want to change the current ownership structure out of principle. But there is also a strong practical element which focuses more on improving land use.

At the Scottish Land & Estates conference in May, Dr Aileen McLeod, Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, set out the Scottish Government’s vision for land reform, emphasising that the government wants to ensure that Scotland’s land delivers the greatest benefit to all the people of Scotland. She said that she fully recognises the expertise and role of land owners in managing land, but wants to see greater collaboration between communities and landowners, with agreement over how priorities and benefits should be delivered from land. Consequently, it is clear that we are moving into a new era where owners of land will be expected to get better at working with a wide range of other parties that have an interest in their land management.

Many owners do already engage with neighbours, communities and other interests – indeed, it is part of our Landowners Commitment that members should do so – but it is clear that everyone will have to enhance their engagement with those around them to discuss land use at a regional scale. This will potentially require new skills.

It will be time consuming and it will require people to make themselves more visible to others as the owners of the land. But, if facilitated by government, and approached by all parties and, in the right way, this could be constructive and enhance the public benefits that are already delivered from the land. Ultimately, if the owners of land want to maintain their land-based businesses, then they will have to embrace this agenda.

FENNING WELSTEAD FIC
PARTNER, JOHN CLEGG & CO

Plantation forestry can supply a high percentage of the world’s timber needs. That allows us to leave larger tracts of land for habitat and biodiversity. Surely a good objective?

Land reform in Scotland is as much about the urban/peri-urban areas as it is about heather and hills. It is too easy to focus on some extensive land ownership patterns when, in fact, a small piece of land close to a village might be the key thing to make everything work better.

We need a definition of activities that “benefit society”.

Given the difficulty found in securing approval for new forestry planting, which is required if we are to meet agreed government targets, can we see further...
problems ahead? If there is to be endless discussion about specific pieces of land and what should be done with them, that creates ongoing uncertainty which does not help people (wealthy or community) make investment decisions.

Do we wish to encourage smaller-scale local, rural industries? Since the 1980s, we have seen the almost complete demise of the local sawmill. While it might be attractive to reinstate some of this industry, how does a small, local operator compete on cost and selling price with the economies of scale that larger businesses can work with?

I am of the view that we have yet to work out what everyone is going to do in the post-industrial world. Great leaps forward in productivity in primary and secondary industries have left large numbers of people unemployed. What do all of these people do?

We now have multiple tiers of government demanding consultation and discussion about proposed activities. This makes it increasingly difficult to move things forward at the practical end of life, where most foresters work. If we are going to help the small person, the small woodland and have a more broadly based economy, I suspect we need to be prepared to step back and allow people to get on with doing things rather than telling them how they should not do them.

JAKE WILLIS MA MSc
WOODLAND SMALLHOLDER, SAWMILLER AND FORESTER, WEST HIGHLANDS

While I applaud the Birnam meeting focusing on this debate, I was deeply disappointed that there was a lack of vision as to what reform could mean for the sector.

As a young, independent forester am I really seeing a whole generation of bright young foresters blithely accepting the strict diet of neoliberal forestry? Do you really not know anyone who would like to manage neglected woodland, or join with others to do so co-operatively, build or renovate a rural house, retreat to a hut at the weekend or let their children enjoy forest schools?

As I see it, we have a Nationalist government in Scotland, recently strengthened by its Westminster success, putting forward ideas for land reform that would bring our mediaeval land concentration and taxation (or lack of it) into the 21st century. The Government’s tone appears measured, sensible and unobjectionable to anyone except a tiny minority of landowners who cry foul and remind us glibly that “the world isn’t fair”.

So, what are professional forest managers doing? Are they engaging in debate and looking for opportunities to strengthen the forest sector? Or are they recoiling from this populist agenda, rewriting the history books to portray the glens as uninhabitable and caricaturing the land reformers (including the Government itself) as urban radicals, agitators and activists with sinister agendas. Indeed, what exactly is the agenda?

Let’s start seeing this as an opportunity to have a grown-up conversation about the options.
Mike Townsend OBE FICFor urges us to broaden our thinking to social-ecological systems and ditch ecosystems.

Resilience of trees and forest systems can be seen as their ability to absorb natural and human pressures and to recover and sustain ecological and social functions. This includes both maintaining a diverse array of species and providing the goods and services we need – timber, water management, recreation and so on.

Implicit is recognition that humans are part of the ecology with a significant and often dominant impact. We therefore need to think of social-ecological systems rather than ecosystems or social systems in isolation.

In natural resource management in particular, economic and social resilience are predicated on ecological resilience and, equally, economic activity and social behaviour affect the functioning of the ecosystem.

Pressures and threats
Both the pressures facing the natural systems and their capacity to absorb and respond to them can be seen to be moving in the wrong direction. For instance:

- Climate change is altering species ranges and phenology
- There has been a rise in pests, pathogens and invasive species affecting woodland and other ecosystems
- An increase in deer numbers has had an impact on habitats and species
- Pollution from transport and agriculture has led to deposition, which has affected the nutrient balance of soils.

Strategies for adaptation to change
Organisms including trees have three possible adaptive strategies for dealing with change or external pressures:

- Genetic adaptation requires sufficient genetic diversity to allow selection of suitable traits for a changed environment. Genetically diverse populations with high generational turnover create more opportunities for adaptive selection.
- Plasticity, or the ability of an organism to change its phenotype in response to environmental change. Generally speaking, immobile organisms, particularly those that are long-lived such as trees, have greater plasticity.
- Migration, or changes to species ranges in response to changing environmental conditions. This can be changes in latitude or altitude to find a climate space which match the species' requirements.

Two characteristics important for resilience and supporting these strategies emerge strongly from the literature – diversity and connectivity.

Woods in the UK are of limited tree species diversity – 88 per cent of conifer woodland in Britain is represented by just five species and even within broadleaved woodland just five species represent 72 per cent of canopy. However, northern temperate forests have inherently low tree species diversity, although centuries of selection are likely to have increased the proportion represented by particular species.

On the other hand, genetic diversity within native tree species (intra-specific diversity) is relatively high and for most native tree species there is potential for adaptive change.1 Trees generally produce large quantities of seed on a regular basis and each new crop of seeds is an opportunity for generational turnover and adaptive change.

However, a cessation in active management in most broadleaved woodland, combined with rising deer numbers, means there are limited opportunities for generational turnover. The issue for native tree species may be more about the opportunities for adaptation, rather than species diversity per se.

As Dr Anna Lawrence MICFor showed in the last issue of Chartered Forester, for productive forestry and for conifer woodland in particular, there may be good collaborative action to tackle pests and pathogens, manage deer and get more woodland into management, key to improving resilience.
reasons for wanting to widen species choice, but also some problems which need to be overcome – including acceptability by markets, uncertainties about long-term suitability to UK conditions, and the risk of introducing pest and pathogen threats to existing productive and native tree species.

In addition to widening species choice, Joan Cottrell notes in *Forestry* that there should be further research to look at the role of intraspecific genetic diversity for creating resilience within existing species in productive use.

**Approaching resilience**

While there has been considerable – and valuable – discussion in the forestry press and social media about species and provenance choice, it is also worth thinking about the other issues which may need to come before, or at least alongside, those decisions. Although some measures for increasing resilience may be applicable at a site scale, and can be taken by individual forest managers, many need to happen collaboratively across landscapes and across woodland types.

- Pest, pathogens and invasive species pose a significant threat to native wildlife and to productive forestry. A strong policy response (for instance in terms of plant importation) pushing for proper funding for forestry research seems critical.
- Deer control can be a difficult issue because of public sensitivities in some parts of the UK, but through their impact on regeneration, deer affect generational turnover and adaptive change in all woodland. Effective deer control requires proper funding support and collaboration across landscapes and across sectoral interests.
- More woodland and trees in the wider landscape must be in management plans to ensure there are chances for generational turnover and succession of trees through opportunities for regeneration. It is also part of effective deer control and the monitoring and control of pests and pathogens.
- Creation of woodland habitat networks, including woods, trees in the wider landscape and other semi-natural habitat, would support species movement and gene flow and the adaptation of woodland species.

**The need for collaborative action**

These are hardly new ideas, but it seems the need to act on them is growing stronger.

Any measures individual woodland owners or managers take to increase the resilience and adaptive capacity of woodland in their care will come to nothing if the majority of the woodland and trees in the landscape are receiving no consideration. These perennial and persistent problems of low levels of management, high numbers of deer and a growing level of threat from pests and pathogens require, above all, collaboration across forestry and across land management more generally.

Mike Townsend OBE FICFor is Senior Advisor at the Woodland Trust

**References**

Over the past few years much has been written about i-Tree, the US-developed suite of software tools for assessing and managing community forests, and its growing potential for in the UK. Projects have already been completed in Torbay, Wrexham, Edinburgh and Glasgow. Smaller projects have also been either wholly, or partially, fulfilled including the Victoria Business District in London and the Sidmouth and Lewes Arboretum Towns. At present, the data from a Greater London project, carried out during last summer and autumn, is being processed and we await the results.

The success of these projects has stimulated demand and East Sussex-based social enterprise Treeconomics is now working alongside Forest Research to develop and modifying the i-Tree system to making it more “user friendly” in the UK.

Considerable support for the Greater London project has come from the US Forest Service and The Davey Tree Expert Company (Davey). Representatives from both visited London in the spring of 2014 to offer valuable advice and guidance to the project. In February this year, fellow Treeconomics manager Kenton Rogers MICFor and I travelled with Kevin Frediani, Head of Sustainable Land Use at Bicton College, and braved near-Siberian weather in Kent State, Ohio, to spend a week with Davey. We were there to see how the i-Tree tools are being developed further and how their application and uses over here could be expanded.

We learned that i-Tree Eco 6, due to be launched here later this year, has many useful modifications. Perhaps the most significant is the facility which will allow UK users to receive analysed data within hours of it being entered in its raw form. Previously this processing could take as long as six months. Forest Research deserves real credit for its behind-the-scenes work, alongside Davey and the US Forest Service, to collaborate and achieve such a significant development.

We also visited projects where the use of i-Tree has been paramount to the development of urban forest management. We saw how it had helped with community recognition that the urban forest is an asset which needs to be valued and managed into the future with adequate resources allocated to that end.

**i-Tree's growing reach**
The visit reiterated what we all believed; that i-Tree has become a significant discussion...
topic in mainland Europe, as confirmed when Kenton and I attended an international conference at the University of Agricultural Sciences in Alnarp, Sweden. There, Keiron Doick, from Forest Research, examined i-Tree and its potential for wider use, while keynote speaker Dr David Nowak, from the USDA Forest Service, who designed the models behind i-Tree, described its modifications and developments and how it promises to offer even more than its predecessors, including the ability to forecast how tree canopy and forest resilience can be affected under varying management regimes.

A case study from John McNeill, a senior urban forester from Oakville, Canada, was of interest for our development work in the UK. As a manager of urban greenspace in one of the first towns to use the system outside the US, McNeill introduced the i-Tree model in Oakville with the branded campaign ‘Our solution to our pollution’. He hadn’t looked back since.

Particularly impressive was the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis undertaken before and after i-Tree Eco was used. Before i-Tree was implemented, many of the strengths of the urban forest had not even been identified. However, after its use, John could not only to identify the benefits, but also quantify them and, with the data gathered, could convey key messages about the urban forest.

Hearing how i-Tree was used to develop a comprehensive management plan was particularly valuable, as this aspect of its usage has yet to fully materialise over here.

Keith Logie MICFor, from Edinburgh City Council, was among the UK speakers and he described using i-Tree and impact assessment tools to estimate the value of the City’s trees and greenspaces.

It really is an exciting time for all those managing urban forests to demonstrate that trees pay us back the investment that we make in them and to show the benefits they provide.

Keith Sacre MICFor is also Sales Director of Barcham Trees

Regular columnists Sharon and Tracy say members are vital if trees are to become integral to design development and construction.

Sharon: Involving a professional arboricultural consultant within the client design team after planning consent isn’t common practice, but it’s a very good start, the benefits are huge and it’s what BS 5837 (2012) advises.¹

Tracy: It’s tricky to get the client to see the value in this, but we’ve helped along the way by planning conditions which show the local authority how the roots, stems and branches of trees have been properly considered for operations on site during the demolition and construction phases of the process.

Sharon: I agree. Being part of the design team is essential. Trees take up space above and below the ground. How to work around them well relies on a combination of the design team looking to the professionals for technical expertise then working with them to achieve a successful outcome…

Tracy: …like the design of foundations or special roads/footpaths to accommodate tree roots. The specification’s led by an engineer but, to achieve a successful solution for trees, it can only be achieved by working with an arboricultural consultant advising the specialist needs of trees and an architect working in tandem to avoid excavations around tree roots.

Sharon: Their creative design solutions are really exciting to work with and even better when they overcome what seem like insurmountable construction problems around trees.

Tracy: And the great thing is that we’re educating other professionals during the work and showing how we can apply our learning on other projects in the future.

Sharon: The planning conditions imposed by the local authority in relation to trees can be discharged without delay to the client programme because we can provide robust information that has flowed from our input in this process. So, winners all round?

Tracy: That’s obvious to me. We just need to shout about it a bit more.

Sharon Hosegood FICFor is Director of Sharon Hosegood Associates Limited sharon@sharonhosegoodassociates.co.uk

Tracy Clarke MICFor is Director of Arboriculture at Tim Moya Associates tracy.clarke@tma-consultants.co.uk

Both are ICF Council members

¹ Recommendations for Trees in Relation to Design Demolition and Construction

Experts at the root of good planning

An example of the publicity material used on individual trees to show value
**Forest history**

**An Earthly Paradise - Memories of a Forester in the Bechuanaland Protectorate/Botswana 1963-68**

**Reviewer: Richard Claxon MICFor**

**REVIEW IN BRIEF**

**Memoirs of a tour of duty in an African forest reserve before and after independence.**

This book gives a fascinating insight into life as a forester in an African wildlife forest reserve during the final days of British rule and the early ones of the newly independent Botswana. The author not only describes some tropical tree species and their silviculture, but also paints a picture of how forestry fitted into the local and regional economy, and gives an anecdote-filled snapshot of the life of a British Colonial Civil Servant during some stirring times.

Of curiosity, or sentimental interest, to anyone who has lived and worked in Africa, this book can stir the heart and evoke memories long since buried (as I found). It describes well the social, demographic and historical context in which the author found himself in 1960s sub-Saharan Africa, with added technical detail of interest to anyone involved with, or hoping to be involved with, growing a number of tree species (see especially Chapter 4 and the Appendix) in Southern or Central Africa. In this regard, it may well be of interest to practising or student foresters in tropical/sub-tropical climates.

The author gives wise comment on recent (2009), possibly inappropriate, development of sugar cane plantations in part of the Kasane forest reserve which will, arguably, require too much water and attract elephant damage.

In his attempt to give a very full picture, the author has, possibly, not proofread thoroughly, so there are spelling, punctuation and other errors. Fewer second-hand tales and a reduced number of more detailed anecdotes would make better reading than a complete list of diary notes. Future volumes could benefit from such editing.

That said, it is an enjoyable read, worth the £8 for a paperback, which proves what I should have learned a long time ago: You can take the forester out of Africa, but you can’t take Africa out of the forester!

**Woodland management**

**Grow your own firewood - How to create a productive woodland**

**Reviewer: Chris Yarrow MICFor**

**REVIEW IN BRIEF**

**An introduction to establishing a small wood with multiple benefits, including firewood production.**

This book, written by a landscape architect who has specialised in close-to-nature solutions, attempts to provide a guide to small woodland establishment. It is lavishly illustrated with colour photos that take up a quarter of the space of a book with wide margins. The technical content is patchy, and foresters may be surprised to learn that holly is not included as shade-tolerant, or that rabbit netting should be buried to a depth of 60cms. Chemical control is considered expensive, and a Christmas tree grower will be horrified to discover that chemical weedkillers are unsuitable near conifers.

Species recommendations are limited to native broadleaves, and planting patterns of up to 11 trees and six shrubs in intimate mixtures are suggested.

Although the book’s objective is to provide guidance on planting and management for firewood, it ventures into high pruning and thinning for timber production. Only six short pages are devoted to managing existing woods, but there is some good advice on coppice and its yield.

Seasoning is well covered, but, surprisingly, the author suggests that conifers are slower than hardwoods to dry. No guidance is given on calorific values of different woods. The layman may find this book inspirational, but should discount its bias towards habitat creation. The student will, at its sale price, consider it very poor value. Both will need to read more widely to correct its technical errors and put its advice into context. The professional, on the other hand, will be reminded just how much guidance a novice needs.
Native woodlands

The Native Woodlands of Scotland – Ecology, Conservation and Management
Reviewer: Duncan Stone MICFor

REVIEW IN BRIEF
An ambitious description of every aspect of Scotland’s native woodlands, forming a valuable reference, particularly for students.

Scott has succeeded in writing a really comprehensive primer of native woodlands in Scotland, which stands out from older works through up-to-date references to the recent Native Woodland Survey and a discussion of the impacts of climate change, pests and pathogens.

While it can be frustrating to read, particularly in the editing – e.g. the same whimsical Tolkien quotation occurs in adjacent chapters and there are some woolly phrases that take up space without contributing much enlightenment – overall, my strongest impression is that this book is very much of its time.

In the sections on environmental change and the view to the future, it illustrates a challenge for our understanding of native woodlands in a rapidly changing world: to what extent should we change our woodlands in order to increase the chances of their future survival? Like our profession more widely, the book tries to marry the principles and knowledge of forest conservation developed over the past 60 years with our increasing recognition of the rate, scale and uncertainty of environmental change.

It achieves only partial success, arguing within the same chapter that we should be growing locally native trees ‘well adapted to current environmental conditions’, and that there is merit in choosing provenances from areas with environmental conditions’, and that there is merit in choosing provenances from areas with warmer climates.

In brief...

Trees, People and the Built Environment II Conference Proceedings

The collection of papers presented at the 2014 ICF-hosted urban tree research conference, at the University of Birmingham, are now available from the ICF website, www.charteredforesters.org

Multiaged Silviculture – Managing for complex forest stand structures

Renowned specialist Kevin O’Hara, Professor of Silviculture at the University of California-Berkeley, US, identifies that, today, many of the world’s forests need to be managed far less intensively and more flexibly in order to maintain their natural ecosystem functions, together with the values inherent in those processes.

Dr Bill Mason MICFor, Forest Research Senior Silviculturist (Emeritus), said: “While primarily aimed at graduate-level students and researchers in the fields of forestry and silviculture, it will also be of relevance and use to professional foresters and silviculturists.”


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Volume 88, Issue 3 (July) includes:

- Synthetic herbicides were more effective than a bioherbicide based on Chondrostereum purpureum in reducing resprouting of Rhododendron ponticum, a host of Phytophthora ramorum in the UK
  - Ian H Willoughby, Marion K Seier, Victoria J Stokes, Sarah E Thomas, and Sonal Varia (Freely available)

- Global modelling to predict timber production and prices: the GPFM approach
  - Joseph Buongiorno (Freely available)

- Bayesian calibration and Bayesian model comparison of a stand level dynamic growth model for Sitka spruce and Scots pine
  - Lonsdale, F Minunno, M Mencuccini and M Perks (Freely available)

- Effect of thinning on wood density and tracheid properties of Scots pine on drained peatland stands
  - Harri Mäkinen, Jari Hynynen, and Timo Penttilä

- Bioenergy vs biodiversity: effects of intensive forest biomass removal on stream and riparian communities
  - Musa C Mlambo, Riku Paavola, Pauliina Louhi, Janne Soininen, Risto Virtanen and Timo Muotka

- Dynamics of dead tree degradation and shelf-life following natural disturbances: can salvaged trees from boreal forests ‘fuel’ the forestry and bioenergy sectors?
  - Julie Barrette, Evelyne Thiffault, François Saint-Pierre, Suzanne Wetzel, Isabelle Duchesne, and Sally Krigstin (Freely available)

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Banking on best management

On a lovely late March evening, ICF’s South Scotland Regional Group met at the Royal Hotel, Bridge of Allan, where members heard three very knowledgeable speakers discuss riparian management.

John Gorman, Senior Environment Protection Officer with the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), gave a fascinating talk: Reducing Diffuse Pollution from Forestry Related Activities. He clarified how SEPA uses training, workshops and site meetings, together with improved communications, to highlight best practices within forestry. John mentioned that the Regulatory Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 has given SEPA the powers to prosecute/fine cases of ‘non-compliance’ – 26 per cent of recent forest site inspections were non-compliant and in future these cases may be prosecuted.

Dr Julia Garritt, Policy Adviser – Species, Water & Soils, Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS), gave an educational presentation regarding FCS’s drive to promote Woodlands for Water (W4W). She discussed the three W4W types: riparian, flood plain and wider catchment. FCS is encouraging W4W by combining the provision of guidance, opportunity mapping and identifying target areas for higher SRDP payment. Also, it will publish guidance on how to design, plant and manage W4W shortly.

Dr Scott McG Wilson MICFor gave a presentation entitled The riparian zone and plantation forests. Scott reminded the audience of the perceived problems of conifer plantations adjacent to water courses, including shading, cooling, acidification and pollution events. Importantly, he questioned the conventional wisdom of the current water guidelines, making the point that the UK and Ireland’s approach to forestation – creating buffer zones between the forest edge and water courses – is unique.

Chris Simpson MICFor, Committee Member

Breathing new life into the Olympic Park in Stratford

ICF’s South East England Regional group’s visit to the impressive Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in Stratford, London, proved popular. Twenty-nine members and guests attended the April event, including Cheryl Symon, ICF’s Finance Manager.

Dr Phil Askew, Project Sponsor, Parklands and Public Realm, from the London Legacy Development Corporation, led the morning tour, and talked about its ten-year management plan, which is transforming the park following the Olympic Games in 2012. He highlighted the planning, with both temporary and permanent features being built into the initial construction phase. Within the plan there was attention to detail for tree establishment, a focus on soils and growing conditions below ground. Time was also spent looking at the wetlands and their surrounds, which were designed to help with flood management.

Sue Illman, Managing Director, Illman Young Landscape Design, followed with a presentation on retrofitting Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). She talked about how everyone can play a part in their own environment, from green roofs and rainwater harvesting to creating rain gardens and tree planting.

Sue highlighted the benefits of SuDS, including reduction of downstream flooding, sewer overflows, positive health and wellbeing and noted that they can also create wildlife habitat.

Richard Pearce MICFor, Secretary

Sue’s short video on the art of SuDS nibbling can be viewed at: http://bit.do/SueSuDS
Close to 100 ICF members and guests met at the Birnam Hotel, Perthshire, in March to discuss the proposed changes to taxation and land reform at a joint meeting of ICF’s North and South Scotland Regional Groups.

Since the early stages of the Scottish Referendum campaign in 2012/13, land reform has been moving up the political agenda and into mainstream media. Indeed, Scotland’s Forestry Minister, Alileen McLeod MSP, has ‘Land Reform’ in her official title.

Like Sitka spruce, the discourse around land reform is fast growing, sometimes prickly and all too often polarising. Three speakers were invited to give their views at the meeting before an open debate chaired by North Scotland Chair Dietrich Pannwitz MICFor.

Erika Luukas MICFor, from Green & Blue Futures, set the scene. She gave a thought-provoking snapshot of the key principles in the land reform debate: ownership, public benefit, stability and resilience, scale, and fairness. She also gave her impressions of the both the ‘Land Reform Movement’ and the ‘Land Use Sector’.

Andy Wightman, a writer, commentator and activist on issues of land and governance, followed with a historical look at land ownership in Scotland. Andy, an Aberdeen forestry graduate, began by looking at the reasons for the infamous afforestation of the Flow Country in the 1980s, as an example of questionable tax relief and land tenure and land use.

He highlighted that land reform issues focused not just on rural sectors, but very much marine and urban too. He touched on local taxation (including Land Value Tax and non-rateable land) and made comparisons with other countries in Europe, where land ownership is often more communal (rather than state owned) and private land is generally held in smaller parcels, with a greater use of co-operative processing.

Raymond Henderson MICFor, partner at Bidwells, then briefly described his impressions on the drivers for land reform. He honed the questions posed down to the forest sector and down further to the forest gate level. Looking at land capability and potential yields derived from forest land parcels, he asked what a fair distribution of forest land would look like. The potential for Land Value Tax was briefly covered, as was the misuse of the previously useful Schedule D Tax relief in the 1970-80s. Raymond then considered what a fair tax/forest grant system should look like to encourage more forest land and associated investment.

During the Q&A, it became clear that audience members held a wide range of views and the debate could have run for much longer, but this was a ‘scene setter’. The topics and implications for Scotland’s forestry sector are worthy of more discussion, including establishment of the political position. ICF’s challenge is to be prominent and to inform any debate surrounding forest land reform and emerging fiscal policy.

Ben Clinch MICFor CEnv, Committee Member (North Scotland)
ICF's Northern Ireland (NI) Regional Group met at Belvoir Park Forest on 17 April, with ICF Executive Director Shireen Chambers FICFor joining the meeting.

Following an introduction and welcome from Richard Schaible MICFor, the region’s outgoing Chair, and John Joe Cassidy, Forest Manager, NI Forest Service, 33 members and guests set off on a short tour of the forest, led by John Joe, with Georgina Thurgate, Bobbie Hamill and Debbie Brown from the NI Environment Agency. During their presentations, the group was introduced to a series of factors and issues that are highly relevant to a review of the forest plan.

Belvoir is a 93ha urban forest which has been recently transformed by the 2014 felling of Japanese larch plantations. The plantations, which formed a significant proportion of the forest, had become affected by Phytophthora ramorum, and were felled under a statutory notice. The forest is in the Lagan Valley Regional Park and attracts more than 200,000 visitors a year. Areas within the forest are included in the Northern Ireland Ancient Woodland Inventory, and a large part of the forest is included in a newly designated Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI), due to the high quality of its parkland and wood pasture habitat and associated species – Belvoir ASSI includes more than 100 veteran trees and 11 ancient trees.

Discussions included options for planted or natural regeneration; the evidence base for designation of parkland; management requirements to maintain features associated with such trees, in a forest setting and in proximity to recreational trails; and invasive plants, including laurel and snowberry. It was a valuable introduction to the area that will be part of this year’s ICF National Study Tour in October.

Dr Richard Schaible MICFor, outgoing Chair

Members learned about the forest plans and the challenges of a forest in a city
OLIVIER WR LUCAS
1948-2015
The Institute was sad to hear of the death of former member Oliver Lucas, who died in February.

Oliver Lucas was well known as the author of the seminal book *The Design of Forest Landscapes*, published in 1991. After a plant science degree at Nottingham – where he met his wife Liz – Oliver completed a forestry MSc at the University of Oxford before joining the Forestry Commission in Aberystwyth.

Following Dame Sylvia Crow’s development of forest landscape practice, Oliver, along with Duncan Campbell MICFor and Professor Simon Bell FICFor, was one of three forest officers to complete a further degree in landscape architecture.

Many older foresters will remember the multi-projector presentations at the heart of the courses that the trio organised to embed landscape principles into British forestry. Oliver took on the task of capturing all that had been learned in his book, which is still as fresh and relevant today as when it was published.

Oliver went on to become Forest District Manager for the FC’s Dorset district where, with Andy Frost, he developed the Moors Valley Play Trail.

In its first year, it shot Moors Valley Country Park into the top ten new visitor attractions with 800,000 visits and, 25 years later, it is still delighting thousands of children every year.

With the late Roger McKinley, Oliver also led the FC’s first heathland restoration programme. When the FC amalgamated the Dorset district with the New Forest, Oliver moved to the Devon and Cornwall peninsula as Head of Planning, where he led the ground-breaking Neroche and Haldon projects.

After retirement, Oliver turned his artistic talents to painting, but suffered severe depression in his last few years. He is survived by Liz and children Ralph and Kay and their families.

Roderick Leslie FICFor
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