

Woodlands' View

SCOTTISH WOODLANDS NEWSLETTER | Summer 2022



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Woodland
Carbon Code

Scottish Woodlands Photography
competition - WINNER

Also In This Edition

- Scottish Woodlands 'changing attitudes' award
- Màiri McAllan, MSP visits site near Dunning
- Scottish Woodlands trains mental health first-aiders
- SWL plays key role in tackling forestry pest
- Timber Market Update

Growing a Sustainable Future

INTRODUCTION

What a difference a new year can bring. With face-to-face meetings back in the diary and preparations being made to attend shows and other events this summer it's easy to forget what we've all come through recently.

While covid restrictions may be removed, we are still suffering the after-effects with supply chains disrupted by shortage of labour and raw materials across the economy. Conflict in Ukraine and storm Arwen have also had significant impacts for many of us.

While the impacts of the storm have been devastating for those woodlands caught in its path, the volume of timber is well within a normal year's appetite for our timber processing customers. The devil is in the detail though with a large quantity of non-spruce material and a surplus of uncertified timber coming to the market now. These are circumstances that demand effective collaboration between timber growers and processors who must tailor their production to meet the needs of the marketplace. Scottish Woodlands' long-standing relationship with timber processors is helping

our clients to navigate these marketing challenges.

The task of sustaining and growing the forestry workforce has never been greater as we harvest more timber and plant more trees than any time in recent years. We have been working closely with hauliers and machine operators impacted by the recent spike in diesel prices. We only have to look at other industry sectors to recognise the importance of sustaining the skills and livelihood of those who plant our trees and harvest the timber.

Our graduate development programme speaks to this agenda and has become an essential part of Scottish Woodlands' approach to growing a sustainable future.

As the world manoeuvres to replace Russian fossil fuels with more sustainable energy sources and to mitigate the effects of a changing climate, the forest industry is increasingly seen as an important part of the solution, fixing carbon in our growing trees and producing low-carbon, sustainable raw materials for a growing population. We look forward to working with you to help develop these solutions.



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SWL PLAYS KEY ROLE IN TACKLING FORESTRY PEST

Scottish Woodlands is playing a central role in a conference designed to identify a sustainable way of controlling one of the UK's most damaging forestry pests.

Hylobius abietis, the large pine weevil, is a major problem for the industry, particularly to the restocking of felled areas with conifers. Estimates suggest large pine weevil attacks cost UK forestry at least £7 million each year.

The weevil has a voracious appetite for young conifer trees but can also kill young broadleaves. Just one weevil can kill an unprotected tree by stripping the bark around the stem.

For the last five years, the industry has been working together to find a sustainable pest management system which does not rely on pesticides.

The conference - at Birnam Arts Centre, near Dunkeld, Perthshire, updated delegates on all aspects of the *Hylobius* Industry Research Programme (HIRP).

Stuart Wilkie, Scottish Woodlands Environment and Certification Manager,

introduced the conference and spoke about the FSC (Forestry Stewardship Council) Pesticide Policy.

Other speakers included Josh Roberts of Forestry & Land Scotland, Katy Dainton and Dr Roger Moore from Forest Research, Cat Kent from Tilhill Forestry and Confor's Pesticides Adviser Colin Palmer.

Amanda Bryan of the Scottish Forestry Trust updated on the Trust's work to raise funds to continue research in this area.

Stuart Wilkie said: *"It's really important that the forestry industry continues to work together closely to identify a sustainable solution to tackle this damaging pest. This was a significant event, discussing an issue that has bedevilled the industry, and Scottish Woodlands is committed to playing a central part in making further progress."*



GRADUATE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Scottish Woodlands Graduate Development Programme provides recent Graduates of Forestry and related subjects, with a stimulating and challenging career as a Forest Manager. The Scottish Woodlands Graduate Development Programme is an opportunity for Graduates to advance their level of experience and develop their understanding within one of the UK's leading Forestry companies.



Ralland Browne (MD) with Andrew Herron, Mairi McAllan MSP, Corinne Deal, Pippa Paterson and Ian Robinson (Forestry Director) at the Graduate Presentation.

The UK government has committed to a target of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, resulting in an increased interest in both existing and new woodland creations, this is an exciting time to join the forestry industry with numerous opportunities to gain experience in managing new, existing forests, and harvesting the timber crop. Today, a Forest Manager can embrace many recent technological advances such as digital mapping and remote sensing with mobile devices and apps. Our graduates are at the heart of this.

The core programme lasts for two years during which our Graduates gain experience and an understanding of all aspects of the business through a blend of work experience, shadowing colleagues, on the job training, internal and external training events, mentoring, coaching and support from Senior Managers and Colleagues. Our Graduates will build upon their technical abilities and leadership skills, collaborate with new people and will get the opportunity to live and work in new places.

Graduates are allocated a dedicated mentor who will provide general support and guidance over the 2-years. Throughout the programme, Graduates will have the opportunity to apply their technical learning and further develop their skills and competencies within an exciting, fast paced and customer focused forestry business.

Pippa Paterson, who joined the Graduate development programme in September 2020 and is based in Perth, said: "I've loved all the different elements of the programme. I'm a very practically minded person, so the idea of learning as you go really appealed to me."

The future for Scottish Woodlands over the next decade will comprise of harnessing the challenges of climate change, energy requirements and delivering for the needs of industry, amongst other initiatives. Scottish Woodlands were the first national commercial enterprise to establish and run a group certification scheme ratified to UKWAS principles for our clients so that we can deliver timber to the market with a credible eco-label and a secure chain of custody. Scottish Woodlands aim to be at the forefront of the renewable-energy revolution. It is also a great time to be involved in the forestry industry as the many benefits for planting more trees becomes better understood and advocated by Scottish Government, e.g., target to increase planting to 18,000 hectares per year by 2025.

"I can't believe how much I have packed into the first year and a bit - I've worked on a lot of forest plans across Perthshire and Angus, as well as new woodland creation schemes and operational work. I'm really passionate about getting more trees into the ground in the right places and it's been great to work with such a wide range of clients - from small farm woodlands to large productive planting schemes."

Pippa, who has also worked as a rural surveyor, said she had been surprised by the depth and detail of forestry work.

"In my previous job, forestry was one aspect of my work. It's been amazing to get into everything in more depth and the team at Scottish Woodlands are so keen to teach, to pass on their skills and knowledge. I'd massively recommend the programme to anyone."

George Smith, who joined the programme in 2021, said: "I knew from researching Scottish Woodlands as a student that the variety of work would keep me on my toes and allow constant learning on the job. I also hoped the training opportunities provided would be a great benefit to expanding my knowledge."

George, who is based at SWL's Lochgilphead office in Argyll, said the programme had lived up to his expectations.

"Working with Scottish Woodlands has propelled me forward in my career goals and has given me new and valuable skills from day one. My long-term ambition is to keep learning and working hard to become a forest manager - and I'd 100% recommend the scheme to others."



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WOODLAND CARBON CODE CHANGES TO RULES

On 6th May 2022 the Woodland Carbon Code (WCC), managed by a team within Scottish Forestry, announced new eligibility rules that will come into effect on 1st October 2022 for all new UK woodland creation projects wishing to secure carbon credits.

The WCC is the quality assurance standard for woodland creation projects in the UK and generates independently verified carbon units. Eligible projects must comply with the law, conform to UK Forestry Standard and pass a financial additionality test.

The financial additionality test must demonstrate that **the woodland creation project would not have gone ahead without the income from selling carbon**, thus showing carbon sequestration is over and above that which would have happened anyway. This test must be passed even if the landowner wishes to offset carbon units against UK based emissions and not sell any carbon units. A new additionality test will come into effect **1st October 2022**.

The current test allows **realistic, reliable, and accurate** costs of woodland establishment, maintenance and management along with any forecast income based on today's prices for the new woodland project to be accounted for. This cash flow represents a review of the proposed transfer of money specific to that new woodland project. In today's rule investors can account for the price they paid for planting land and farmers/ existing landowners can compare the financial position of

the current land use, based on actual agricultural income, to the woodland scenario.

However, the new additionality test will include standardised figures for all woodland establishment, maintenance, management costs, use limited timber income models and investors will not be allowed to include the land purchase price in the cashflow. Instead, all projects will have to choose whether the proposed woodland creation site falls within one of three farm type categories: Cattle and Sheep (Less Favoured Area), Cattle and Sheep (Lowland) or Arable. A standardised foregone income figure will then be applied to that project. This methodology will not account for any agricultural, geographical or topographical variation therefore the foregone income may not be representative of the current land use.

The standardised approach will result in **the eligibility rules becoming harder to achieve for productive woodlands on poorer quality ground**. However, productive woodlands may pass on better quality general cropping land. The new rules will therefore shift the forestry focus to encourage planting on better land for carbon eligibility as the new additionality cashflow favours a higher foregone income figure.

The main driver for a change in the WCC rules has been the so-called forestry land 'gold rush' due to the inclusion of land purchase price into additionality calculations. I note NFUS has been raising concerns with Scottish Government about the impact of non-agricultural investment in land for planting to secure carbon credits. However, it appears that the strict standardisation route within the new WCC rules may indirectly force forestry down the hill. A place most foresters do not wish to be. It therefore seems the Scottish Government are contradicting their own land use policies by implementing a new WCC scheme that favours planting on better land, which may be better suited to food production. Therefore, actively encouraging the wrong tree in the wrong place.

Furthermore, the new rules disincentivise the creation of productive woodlands and forces the landowner to choose either timber or carbon as the main objective for planting trees. The UK is the second largest net importer of timber products behind China in the world, therefore discouraging timber production will continue to exacerbate this position.

At Scottish Woodlands we agree a change to the existing rules was required to uphold the robust nature of the WCC but feel the new rules significantly oversimplify matters and will lead to many false negatives, where projects should genuinely be additional.





Faster growing commercial species provide the optimal rate of carbon sequestration, and in combination with broadleaved species in a well-designed woodland they can provide both early and fast sequestration along with longer term carbon sequestration/retention of timber products, but there must be a balance.

Additionality Test



This woodland design could provide a win-win-win for timber supply, carbon sequestration, biodiversity, provide local high value jobs in the supply chain along with allowing farmers/existing landowners to inset their UK based business emissions as early as possible. We therefore continue to lobby for a further review of these rules to make the system more fit for purpose to meet the needs of the landowners, investors and timber processors alike.



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SCOTTISH WOODLANDS SHARES 'HOME-GROWN' FORESTRY VISION WITH MINISTER

Scottish Woodlands shared its home-grown vision for the future of forestry with Scotland's Environment Minister when she attended the company's training day. Màiri McAllan MSP met young people who are part of Scottish Woodlands' pioneering graduate development programme at the Dakota Hotel, South Queensferry.

This year, Scottish Woodlands Ltd celebrated the 5th anniversary of the programme by recruiting 10 more future industry leaders, taking the total number of graduate recruits to 43.

The firm addressed the industry skills challenge head-on by launching its graduate programme in 2017.

"We believe more trees - and more future managers and leaders - should be home-grown," said Ralland Browne,

Managing Director of Scottish Woodlands Ltd. "Forestry is a rapidly-growing profession and we need more skilled people in all areas of our business.

"To find these people, we've reached out into the broader land-based network, and found some excellent individuals who will go on to lead this business and the wider industry. We were delighted to be able to share their success, and our success, with the Minister."



Ralland Browne (MD) with Màiri McAllan at the recent Training Day visit at the Dakota Hotel, South Queensferry



Màiri McAllan MSP answers questions at the Training Day, accompanied with Doug Howieson from Scottish Forestry and her assistant Amy Liddell.





Aerial photo of Banchory Business Centre

SCOTTISH WOODLANDS EXPANDS NORTH EAST PRESENCE WITH NEW BANCHORY BASE

Leading UK forestry management company Scottish Woodlands Ltd is expanding its presence in the north east of Scotland with a new office in Banchory, Aberdeenshire.

Peter West, Senior Forest Manager, will be heading up the new office, located in Banchory Business Centre. Peter will be working closely with Neil Crookston, Scottish Woodlands Regional Manager North, who is based at Fochabers.

Initially, three managers will work at the Banchory office with plans for an additional manager to be added through graduate recruitment. Scottish Woodlands Ltd has a very active Graduate recruitment programme, with plans to take on ten new Graduates this year.

Ralland Browne, Managing Director of Scottish Woodlands, said:

"With a historic presence in both Tarland and Brechin, it is excellent to open a new office in Banchory to re-establish a more localised service in the north east of Scotland. This allows us to continue to expand our footprint across the UK."

Neil Crookston, Regional Manager North for Scottish Woodlands, added:

"Forestry is a Scottish success story, and we are seeing steady growth in interest in all aspects of forestry management and planting across the country. Opening this new office will bring Scottish Woodlands closer to a growing client base within the East Aberdeenshire and Deeside area."

Peter West, Manager of the new Banchory office added:

"As well as our existing client base in the area, an ever-greater number of farmers and existing and new landowners are now seeing the benefits of forest ownership, afforestation and peatland restoration and it became clear we needed a dedicated base on Deeside to service this increased interest in these fields."

"I am excited to be starting up the office, where we will have a team of three managers to start with, with another to be recruited locally once the new office is up and running, and we have plenty of space for future expansion!"

Anyone interested in forestry management, new woodland creation or woodland and peatland carbon in the area can contact Peter via email enquiries@scottishwoodlands.co.uk or telephone 0131 451 5154.



SCOTTISH WOODLANDS LTD

Tracing its heritage back over 70 years, Scottish Woodlands Ltd, with its headquarters in Edinburgh, is unique in the forestry sector, being 80% owned by its employees. It specialises in forestry management, timber harvesting and associated services within the UK with 20 offices across Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland. With 220 employees managing over 300,000 hectares of land the company is currently carrying out over 30% of all new afforestation in Scotland and harvesting over 1.2 million tonnes of sustainable timber per annum.

The address of the
Banchory Business Centre is Burn
O'Bennie Road,
Banchory AB31 5ZU.



Scottish Woodlands MD Ralland Brown (left) with Peter West outside the new Banchory Office.





Scottish Woodlands site manager Jillian Kennedy talks to Màiri McAllan about Knowes & Keltie before the visit.



SCOTTISH WOODLANDS SHOW MULTIPLE BENEFITS OF MODERN FORESTRY TO MINISTER

A Scottish Government minister has seen first hand the multiple benefits of large-scale tree planting for the country's economy and environment.

Màiri McAllan, Minister for Environment and Land Reform, visited a site managed by Scottish Woodlands Ltd near Dunning, Perthshire, where 450 hectares of trees have been planted over the last two years.

The planting at Knowes and Keltie, in the Ochils, has made a significant contribution to helping Scotland create around 11,000 hectares of new woodland in each of the last two years - on its way to a target of 18,000 hectares annually by 2025.

From spring 2019 to autumn 2021, almost one million trees have been planted at Knowes & Keltie - a mosaic of different species, including conifers and broadleaves, as well as open ground.

Màiri McAllan, whose brief covers forestry, was accompanied on the visit by Ralland Browne, Managing Director of Scottish Woodlands Ltd, site managers Maaïke Felstead and Jillian Kennedy, and Forestry Director Ian Robinson.



Màiri McAllan walks around the site with Scottish Woodlands Forest Managers Maaïke Felstead (L) and Jillian Kennedy (R)

The Minister said: *"Scotland is planting around 80% of all the woodland being created in the UK, because we recognise that forests planted to produce wood can deliver a very significant range of benefits for our rural economies and for the future of our environment."*

"We are currently importing too much of our timber and we need to switch to using home-grown wood as much as possible. This is a more climate-friendly solution and will help us decarbonise in our efforts to meet net zero."

"These forests are also very important in helping communities grow stronger by creating numerous wealth-building opportunities, which is vital in rural areas."



Ralland Browne, Managing Director of Scottish Woodlands Ltd, said: *"Knowes & Keltie is a great example of modern forestry - a multi-purpose and mixed-species forest which delivers significant benefits for Scotland, and jobs and access for local people."*

In terms of climate change mitigation, Knowes & Keltie is expected to provide a 3,150-tonne annual benefit in terms of carbon dioxide capture and storage.

The scheme also promotes public access and enjoyment by linking forest roads and tracks to an existing network of core paths - particularly suitable for mountain bikers and walkers.

Further planting is now happening on a smaller adjacent site called Kippen. This will create a diverse woodland on an 85-hectare site, based around oak and Douglas fir.

Stuart Goodall, of forestry and wood trade body Confor, which organised the visit, said: *"The Scottish Government has been a strong supporter of forestry in recent years and it was a pleasure to be able to show the minister a modern, mixed-species, multi-purpose planting site. We need to keep planting productive forests to secure future timber supply - to support our domestic forestry and wood processing industry but also to take responsibility for growing more of our own wood."*

"With global timber demand rising rapidly and increasing demand at home for wood to build low-carbon, high-quality homes, we need to plant now to provide the wood we'll need in the coming decades. By doing that to the highest modern forest standards, we also make a massive contribution to Scotland's climate change ambitions, support biodiversity and offer great places for people to enjoy."



Scottish Woodlands Managing Director Ralland Browne (left) talks to Minister Màiri McAllan (2nd right) watched by Forest Manager Jillian Kennedy (2nd left) and Stuart Goodall, Chief Executive of forestry and wood trade body Confor (right)

TIMBER MARKET UPDATE

Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher, quoted “change is the only constant in life”, he obviously had a reliable information source regarding the global timber trade too, and for that I commend him! The enviable credential of timber continues as the ‘go-to’, renewable and decarbonising building product for construction within the UK, but there is no denying that the wider influences and effects are being felt within the UK from the wider, global ‘post pandemic’ market and the impact of the ongoing war in Ukraine.

In late February of this year all eyes turned to Ukraine and the Russian invasion. As the conflict continues to this day the issues surrounding global timber trade flow and timber security comes increasingly into sharp focus. One immediate impact of the invasion and sanctions imposed by Western countries has been the inevitable reduction in exports of forest products from Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine (BRU).

Almost half of BRU’s collective export value is from softwood exports, with a value of 17 billion USD in 2021, this represents almost 25% of the value of worldwide timber traded last year. It will therefore come as no surprise that the halt of forest product shipments to Europe and some countries in Asia has had the most significant impact, with BRU softwood exports delivering 9% of Europe’s total demand for softwood. The impact of the war in Ukraine on global timber trade flow should not be underestimated as China, the largest net importer of forest products (33.9 billion USD – 2019), accounts for 47% of the softwood exports from BRU, with a further 25% of BRU’s forest product exports going to Europe.

In addition to direct sanctions imposed, the Russian forestry industry will struggle to source parts, equipment, and finance it is expected this will force even non-sanctioning countries, such as China, to adopt changes in their trade flows to ensure timber supply and to meet demand.



Fig 1 Timber Development UK March 2022 Statement

BRU imports into the into the UK totalled 505,000m³ (See Fig 1.) against the backdrop of a record volume of total timber and panel products into the UK of 11.7 million m³ in the same year. Although BRU’s imports into the UK may be seen as insignificant, in percentage terms, it is another pressure point on the global timber trade flow which could impact the UK either directly or indirectly.

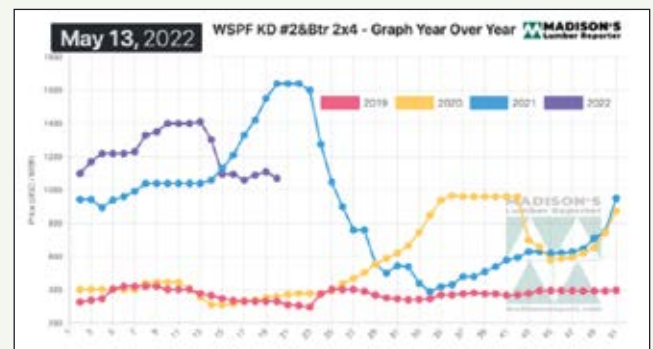


Fig 2. US Lumber prices - Madison’s Lumber Reporter

Looking to North America, the softwood lumber market has certainly been stuck in a cycle of extreme peaks and valleys for the past 2 years, where lumber prices reached a record high of 1640 USD per 1000bdf in May 2021, to rapidly fall back to 400 USD per 1000bdf by August before rebounding in a slower fashion for the balance of 2021 (See Fig 2). Although it is expected that this volatility will continue, current prices are topping-out lower and are bottoming-out higher. There remains volatility but it is not as severe as what was witnessed last year. While production was up in 2021, strong demand kept steady pressure on supply. Challenges across the North American economy would suggest volatility in the market may continue, with increasing interest rates and inflationary pressures, as well as an increasingly tight housing market. Although it is expected that rising interest rates could pull demand forward for housing, which could underpin short term building activity.

With the UK reliant on 80% of its timber requirement coming from imports and being the second largest net importer of forest products (8.4 billion USD – 2019), it will be no surprise that the UK remains sensitive to influences and effects of the global timber trade flow. Especially considering that many European countries, that the UK relies upon for timber imports, are revising down timber production forecasts due to climate induced damage, meaning potentially less timber available for export, in a global timber market where overall demand is increasing.

With the UK being heavily reliant on imported timber products can, and often does, lead to the inherent susceptibility of supply and demand imbalances, especially considering the volatility witnessed in the softwood import market in the last three years. The lead up to Brexit, post-Brexit and the inevitable impact on supply and demand due the Covid pandemic resulted in the widest growth and decline numbers in softwood imports in living memory.

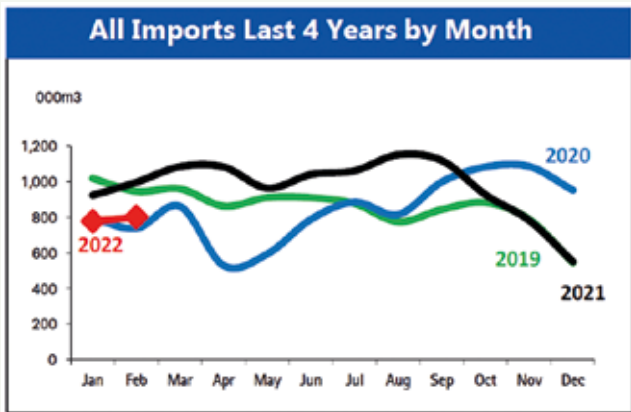


Fig 3 – Timber trade Federation Statistics May 2022

As mentioned previously, record levels of imports were reached in 2021, with 11.7 million m³ being imported, representing a 15% increase over 2020, but with growth rates varying in 2021 from +121% in April to -55% in December. All the growth in imports came in the first three quarters of the year, where volumes consistently exceeded 1 million m³ per month, only to drop significantly in the final quarter (See Fig 3)

February of this year is now the 5th consecutive month where volume imported have been lower than the corresponding months in 2021.

As we know, timber demand within the UK is intrinsically linked to the performance of the construction market, especially housing, both in new housing and the repair, maintenance, and improvement (RM&I) sector. Construction output grew by 12.7% in 2021, with the private RM&I market witnessing a 17% growth in 2021, with more people demanding improved outdoor and home working spaces.

The Construction Products Association (CPA) predicts that construction output will grow by 4.3% in 2022 with a further 2.5% increase in 2023. Breaking that down further, private housing starts are expected to rise by 5% in 2022 and 3% in 2023. Private RM&I is expected to grow by 0% in 2022, with a 2% increase in 2023.

All in all, it is positive outlook for demand for timber in the UK, although the very real and fast-moving inflationary pressures within the UK economy may impact consumer spending and confidence. It is estimated that UK households have accumulated £200 billion of savings over the pandemic, so the financial firepower is there to finance renovation projects and home purchases, but consumer confidence is key as to how timber demand plays out for the balance of this year.

The inevitable pressure on global timber production does further highlight the need for the UK to focus on increasing domestically produced softwood products from homegrown timber. It really is a 'good news story' for the domestic timber industry and the timber grower. The homegrown timber market is key to supporting the nation's green recovery, in decarbonising construction, providing energy, and increasing home-grown wood supply at a time when global prices and demand are increasing. These overarching drivers will continue keep domestically produced timber in strong demand from the timber processing sector and the UK economy.

However, every good story needs a good ending, we do need to see a substantial increase in the establishment of productive forestry schemes throughout the UK to increase our domestic timber availability, provide the much-needed carbon sequestration throughout the forest and wood products life cycle to assist in meeting the UK's commitment to net zero by 2050, and bring further jobs to the rural and timber processing sector.



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LAURA JERMY WINS SCOTTISH WOODLANDS 'CHANGING ATTITUDES' AWARD

A YOUNG timber buyer and harvesting manager who promotes forestry through social media and in schools has been named as the winner of a prestigious industry award sponsored by Scottish Woodlands Ltd.

Laura Jermy, a timber buyer and harvesting manager with TG and DS Norman, won the Changing Attitudes prize at the Forestry Awards Dinner 2022, organised by trade body Confor.

Based in Carlisle, Laura works with local schools to promote forestry careers, and constantly highlights opportunities for women in the industry - through social media platforms including Instagram and Tik Tok.

The judges said: *"Laura has shown her passion for the sector by not only learning the trade of a timber buyer and haulier, but also diversifying into forest management, dealing with harvesting and understanding the principles of woodland creation and sustainable forest management. As her understanding of forestry has grown, so has her passion to tackle misperceptions among the public she deals with."*

"We assessed passion, drive and enthusiasm to change attitudes, and also impact. In Laura's case, she ticks both boxes."

Laura received her Award from Scottish Woodlands' Director of Forestry Ian Robinson - one of the award judges - at the event at The Sheraton Hotel in Edinburgh. The Award was also sponsored by Scottish Woodlands Ltd in February 2020, the last time the dinner was held, when it was won by Mima Letts, Founder of Tree Sparks.

Mr Robinson said: *"Scottish Woodlands Ltd was delighted to once again sponsor the Changing Attitudes award - and to be able to present it to such a worthy winner as Laura, and to choose from such a strong shortlist. We consider it crucial that the benefits of modern forestry are presented in a positive way to a much wider audience."*

Laura received a beautiful wooden trophy by contemporary designer and wood sculptor Alice Blogg, who made the trophy with a piece of ash which came from less than a mile from her workshop in Dorset.

The three other shortlisted entrants for the Changing Attitudes award were:

Drew Easton, Learning & Development Manager, Jas P Wilson; Vicky West, Manager, Woodland Carbon Code, Scottish Forestry; and Tom Kemp and Nick Jarvis, Working Woodlands Cornwall CIC.



Laura Jermy receives award from Ian Robinson, Forestry Director

They were selected from a strong range of entries from across the sector and across the UK.

Other awards were presented for Innovation & Research, Future Leader and Dedicated Service to Forestry.

Confor's National Manager for Scotland Jamie Farquhar received a standing ovation at the event ahead of his retirement after almost 20 years in the industry.

Read about all the winners on the Confor website at: www.confor.org.uk/news/latest-news/confor-awards-dinner-2022-the-winners

Mairi McAllan, the Scottish Government's Minister for Environment and Land Reform, told guests: *"I am proud to be the Minister for forestry, and to be in partnership with such a flourishing and forward-looking sector."*

"I doubt there has been a more important time for forestry in a generation. This Government is clear on the vital role you all can play in helping to address the critical challenges facing us [particularly climate change and net zero] as we begin to look past the Covid pandemic."

The Minister joined via video link after testing positive for Covid-19 on the afternoon of the awards.



SCOTTISH WOODLANDS TRAINS MENTAL HEALTH FIRST-AIDERS

Scottish Woodlands Ltd has trained 12 employees as mental health first-aiders, recognising the crucial importance of well-being in the workplace.

The first-aiders are a totally confidential first point of contact for any of the company's 200-plus employees who might be facing mental health challenges of any kind. They are spread across the company's 20 UK offices to ensure that anyone who needs support can access it in their region - but any member of the team can be contacted.

Ralland Browne, Managing Director of Scottish Woodlands Ltd, said: "As a business 80% owned by its employees, Scottish Woodlands Ltd has always put people's safety, health and well-being at the top of its priority list.

"This is a very practical extension of that approach, to reflect the enhanced awareness of mental health and well-being difficulties, particularly as a result of the pandemic."

"Whether it's staff from a busy office struggling to find the right balance of home/office working, or someone feeling isolated when working in the woods, we are here to support everyone. We know that mental health issues are not always easily visible and we really encourage people to speak out, and to look out for each other."

As well as offering 1:1 support, the mental health first-aiders will guide staff to the company's Employee Assistance Programme, which includes access to telephone and in-person counselling as well as a phone-based app with tools

and guidance for managing stress, anxiety, depression, and other aspects of mental health.

They will also signpost employees to professional mental health organisations if required, while the company has created an e-learning package on recognising, managing and supporting colleagues with potential mental health challenges. This has been shared with all staff, along with details of all the mental health first-aiders.

Posters are up in all Scottish Woodlands' offices, and the company is committed to effective ongoing communication on the subject with all employees. Although headquartered in Edinburgh, the company has offices across Scotland and in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Mr Browne added: "This is a really important initiative which means a lot to the business, and to me personally. We're very proud of what we're doing as it's about supporting our people all year-round, from the moment they start work with us. It's also vital to help our people to support each other."

"This is just a beginning - we will train up more mental health first-aiders over the coming months and years."



ANCIENT WOODLAND TRAINING DAY

Ancient Woodlands make up only 1.5% of the land area of Scotland but are the very highest conservation value woodlands we have. They are a scarce resource and require careful management, so every year Scottish Woodlands holds a special training course for staff.



Caption

This year twelve Scottish Woodlands staff visited Cashel Forest on Loch Lomond to learn more about ancient woodland flora and their relationship with woodland site types. The course was led by botanical expert Carol Crawford (centre) who gave an informed and interesting tour of the various woodland types found at Cashel and introduced us to many of the flowers and plants that makes the biodiversity of these woodlands so special.

Management of ancient woodlands and the restoration of ancient woodland sites that historically have been planted with non-native trees is an important element of forest certification. Understanding the quality and diversity of the ground flora, regardless of previous management is a key step in developing appropriate management proposals.

As usual the attendees were fully engaged with the training continuing the reputation of the Ancient Woodland Course is one of the most popular and enjoyable training events in the calendar. Staff are pictured in front of the largest and possibly the oldest wild crab apple tree in Scotland.



MAP SHOWING CURRENT OFFICES

Departments / Services:

- Head Office
- Forest Management
- Investment
- Utilities
- Landscaping



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Many of the images used throughout this edition were taken by members of staff as part of the SWL Photo Competition.

