

Slasher

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New code to clean up forest carbon projects

People who want to plant trees in the UK to reduce their impact on climate change will soon be sure their contributions actually deliver the claims made by tree planting projects.

The UK forestry sector, led by the Forestry Commission, is developing a code of practice for these projects and is asking people for their views on a draft code of good practice. The consultation was launched at the end of June and will run until 14 September.

The aim of the new code, *Code of good practice for forestry carbon projects*, is to build confidence in forestry carbon projects – often sold as carbon offsetting schemes – and ensure people that projects in the UK will actually deliver new areas of forest and woodland.

As people and businesses have become more “carbon conscious” the popularity of reducing carbon footprints in this way has led to them wanting to plant trees. But the market for such projects has been undermined by claims that they do not deliver permanent benefits and that there may be double-selling of carbon credits. This has made people unsure of the claimed benefits as there are no standards against which planting projects can be measured.

The code of practice will change this by developing guidelines and checks that will offer quality assurance for UK projects and clearly state to prospective customers what their contributions will achieve.

Launching the consultation, Tim Rollinson, director general, said: “Forests and woodlands have a hugely important role to play in the fight against climate



‘This is a vital piece of work in the development of forest carbon projects, and the more views we have the better.’

change because trees capture carbon.

“Many businesses and consumers recognise this as well and want to play their part, but there are no uniform standards for forestry carbon projects to reassure them their contributions are achieving real change.

“This new code will help by establishing robust requirements for forestry carbon projects in the UK. It will provide the clarity and quality assurance people are looking for.”

It is hoped the new code will make a clear distinction between independently-certified, well-managed projects and other tree planting projects.

The initial focus of the code will be on woodland creation projects, but it is hoped similar guidelines can be developed for wood products, particularly where they can be used as substitutes for other materials such as brick, concrete and steel.

The key features of the code will be to:

- ensure clarity and accountability;
- demonstrate that the carbon benefits provided are additional;
- maintain sustainable forest management practices;
- minimise the bureaucracy for participants;
- align itself with international offsetting standards; and
- complement wider government policies on emissions reductions and carbon trading.

The code will link with the UK Forestry Standard, which sets out the UK approach to sustainable woodland management.

A consultation on a revision of the UK Forestry Standard and

Guidelines was also announced on 6 July. This revision includes – for the first time – a section on how the Standard can help forest managers achieve sustainable carbon benefits through forest management practices. A new guidelines publication – *Forests and climate change* – will provide advice on managing woodlands in a changing climate.

The development of the new code of practice has been supported by the Carbon Advisory Group – an expert group from environmental and forestry organisations – who see the code as an important step in developing and maintaining professional standards in this new aspect of forestry.

The consultation document can be found in the climate change section of www.forestry.gov.uk and Commission staff are being urged to put forward their views.

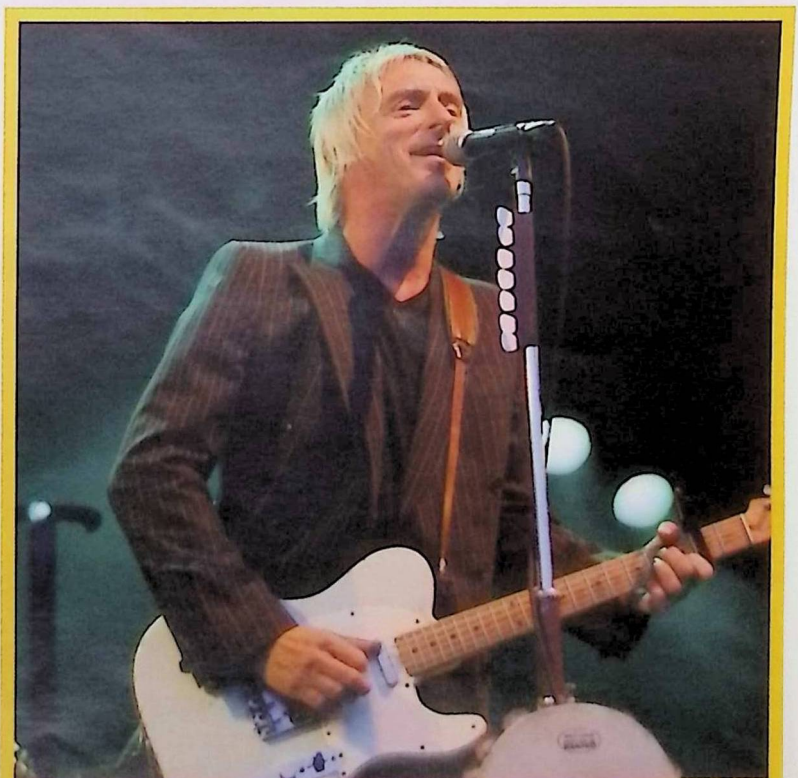
Tim Rollinson said: “This is a vital piece of work in the development of forest carbon projects, and the more views we have the better.

“Forestry on its own isn’t the answer to the problems of climate change, and we’re not trying to plant our way out of trouble.

However, woodland creation can make a valuable contribution as one of a full range of carbon reduction actions we all need to take, and we need to get the code fit for purpose and trusted by the public.”

STOP PRESS...

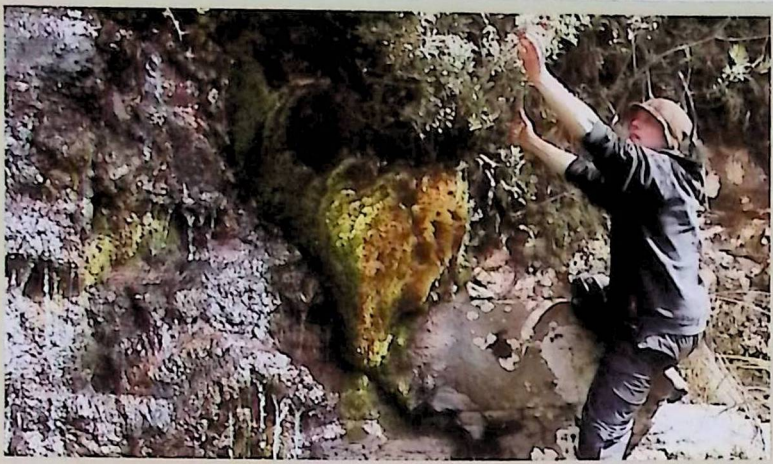
Government announces plans to create 150,000 hectares of new woodland in England over next 15 years as part of its UK Low Carbon Transition Plan. See Open Canopy page 7.



THE MODFATHER... Paul Weller on stage at High Lodge, Thetford in June as part of his sell-out Live Music tour. High Lodge FM, a dedicated radio station for the Thetford concerts, took to air this year broadcasting concert news, music from artists appearing at Thetford and information about other events in the forest.

An average family of four, living in a three-bed semi detached house and running two cars could produce more than 16 tonnes of CO₂ per year. (based on Act on CO₂ figures)





INDIANA LUSCOMBE... Nothing stops Dan collecting new species.

Roving commission!

A career in forestry often comes with a roving commission.

Intrepid plant hunter Dan Luscombe is just back from Tasmania, where he spent three weeks with colleagues from the Millennium Seedbank, the National Botanic Garden of Wales and Adelaide Botanic Gardens.

Dan – who's assistant curator of the Bedgebury National Pinetum – braved extreme conditions, from 30-degree-plus heat to blizzards and the worst storm to hit Tasmania in 60 years.

But his team's persistence paid off, with more than 100 different species collected from the island.

"As well as forging even stronger links with other botanic collections, I collected some excellent material for the Pinetum and our new conifer conservation project," explained Dan.

"As autumn is the optimum time for seed collecting, I always miss seeing things flower in their natural habitat.

"But now some of the species I collected on previous trips are flowering in the Pinetum for the first time."

Meanwhile, woodland officer Rachel Sparks is following in the footsteps of Charles Darwin during an expedition to the Equator.

Rachel, who is based in Teesdale, Weardale and the Tees Valley, will spend eight weeks in the Galapagos, helping to restore the islands' precious native woods.

Alien shrubs and trees are curbing habitats for the Galapagos' indigenous flora and fauna, and Rachel will help to create a native plant corridor linking lowland and upland wooded areas.

"It's the trip of a lifetime," said Rachel, who has nearly 20 years' Forestry Commission experience under her belt.

"It's a unique opportunity to broaden my horizons and contribute to preserving wildlife.

"One of the key parts of my job is encouraging native woodland restoration so, while the tree species may be different, the principles are the same."

The recreational use of forests was the focus of a journey made by an East Anglian forestry expert.

Giles Brockman, a district forester based at Santon Downham, was invited to Croatia to speak on the subject.

The session was organised by Europarc Consulting – specialists in the management of protected areas. And, while Giles was happy to pass his expertise and experience on to the professional forest managers attending the event, he stressed that the trip would also be a learning experience for him.

Speaking before setting out to Croatia, he said: "I'm hoping to come back with as many good ideas as I give to them."

"This training is all part of Croatia's reconstruction programme so it promises to be really interesting."

Royal stamp of approval...

Rubbing shoulders with royalty and leading politicians has helped the East of England's regional director raise the profile of the Commission's important work.

Steve Scott was one of the honoured guests who joined HRH The Duke of Edinburgh at the formal opening of the University of Cambridge's 800 Wood at Madingley in April.

The wood was created as an extension to existing woodlands as part of the ancient seat of learning's 800th anniversary celebrations.

Prince Philip planted an oak tree to inaugurate the new wood, which was supported by grant aid from the Forestry Commission.

Describing the project as a prestigious 'Rolls-Royce scheme', Steve Scott explained: "It's a really good example of the work we're doing on a wider scale to extend ancient woodlands in the region."

Steve also helped host a visit from Huw Irranca-Davies, the Minister for Marine and Natural Environment, at Thetford Forest in the East of England.

The Minister met a group of senior environmental stakeholders from the area before enjoying further talks with Steve and forest management director Jim Lyon during a guided tour of Thetford's High Lodge forest centre.

Subjects discussed ranged from the state of the timber market and public access to the potential impact of the national house-building growth agenda, and the management of forests to restore open habitats.

"We covered a lot of ground. He's a very astute man, who was obviously well briefed and understands a lot of the issues around forest management and the uses of wood," added Steve.



ENJOYING THE SIGHTS... Steve Scott (right), Jim Lyon (left) and colleagues with Huw Irranca-Davies at Thetford.

...While Danes go ape

Scandinavians on a forestry fact-finding mission were treated to a hair-raising experience at Haldon Forest Park. Visitors from the Danish Forest and Nature Agency wanted to learn new ways to put more play and recreation into their forests.

And they were soon enjoying a daredevil challenge as they tried out the Go Ape high-wire adventure course based at the Devon forest.

The Haldon team shared the knowledge gleaned from a range of projects including nature play

opportunities, outreach work with local communities and off-road cycling. And the Danes also learned about climate change and funding options for their own work.

"We are extremely proud of the development that has happened at Haldon Forest Park," said Tim Powles, outreach ranger at Haldon Forest Park. "It's great to have the opportunity to give advice to forestry staff from overseas who are looking to diversify their woodlands."

Some things never change...

4

AGRICULTURE

THE

Forestry and farming can be complementary

There is enormous potential for a massive expansion

By DAVID MERCER

Commission and the remainder from private woodland. By 1980 the figure will have reached

What do you remember about 1976?

It was the year that the Sex Pistols swore on TV, Concorde made its first commercial flight and Steve Jobs set up a new computer company – Apple.

There was a heatwave that led to the winter of discontent and international banks bailing out a bankrupt Britain. And our Olympic squad performed miserably at the Montreal Olympics. Now those sound familiar.

23 years later Richard Williamson, from HR, was rummaging through boxes when he came across a

cutting from the Scotsman dated 16 July 1976.

The article announced a new Chairman for the Commission – John Mackie, a former Labour MP.

The title of the main part of the article was "Forestry and farming can be complementary". A familiar note there as well then.

It went on to say there was enormous potential for expansion of forestry in Scotland. It talked about experimenting with different tree species, increased production, new planting and felling techniques and "machines which can chip wood in the actual forest". Spooky.

OBITUARY

Sally Thomas 16 April 1965 – 28 April 2009

Sally Thomas, office manager at North York Moors, passed away on 28 April.

Sally joined the Commission in 1985 at Forest Research at Wykeham, North Yorkshire, before transferring in 1987 to the estates team in the former York Regional Office.

Sally then transferred to North York Moors in 1995 as an admin officer, and had been office manager since 2005.

Sally was hospitalised in October 2008 and had completed two courses of chemotherapy by the end of February 2009. She had been recovering well and had been given permission by her doctor to return to work part time. Sally spent a few days back in the office and was looking forward to a full-time return.

Unfortunately Sally subsequently suffered with pneumonia and further complications and was hospitalised again in mid-March.

News of her death came as a devastating shock to everyone in North York Moors. Sally was a wonderful, warm and caring person and will be sadly missed.

Sally is survived by her husband Ian, daughter Hayley (17) and son William (7).



FIRST IN LINE... Alan leads the way on part of the new course.

World-class course draws biking greats

All trails will lead to Yorkshire in 2010 when the World Mountain Bike Championships roll into Dalby Forest...

But only after Alan Eves, local forest management director and keen mountain biker, had checked the championship course for himself.

Alan was hot on the heels of trail builders Hugh Clixby and Martin O'Vastar, the Commission's mountain bike civil engineering guru, to test the trail's four miles of punishing climbs, fast descents and technically demanding features after it was completed earlier this year.

"You can't beat riding new trails," he said.

"Getting the heads-up from Martin meant that I was amongst the first to experience sections of the trail within hours of them being signed off."

Now hundreds of the world's elite bikers will be put through their paces over the course in an event that will attract thousands of spectators and international media interest.

"The tension has been unbelievable, but now we can celebrate," said Alan, speaking just after cycling's governing body UCI announced Dalby would host the opening stage of the competition.

"We are absolutely delighted that the £90,000 trail has lived up to its billing as one fit for champions. There's no doubt we were up against some tough international competition."

The Forestry Commission joined forces with British Cycling, Yorkshire Forward and UK Sport to bid for the prestigious event, which will also be contested at locations

including Germany, Italy and the USA.

And this triumph for North Yorkshire put the icing on the cake for the £4.1 million Dalby Project, which since 2004 has seen the creation of 55km of single-track bike routes, the opening of an award-winning, eco-friendly visitor centre and an impressive courtyard development.

The visitor centre has been earmarked as the media centre for the event.

More than 2000 tonnes of locally sourced stone went into surfacing the trail and sustainable techniques were used to make it more durable and suitable for year-round competition.

Environmental assessments also made sure bikers were steered clear of sensitive wildlife habitats and archaeological sites.

Hannah's TV triumph!

A Welsh education officer took on TV's red terror Anne Robinson – and finished first!

Llandovery-based Hannah Mitchell applied to appear on The Weakest Link after her grandmother insisted she'd do well on the winner-takes-all quiz.

And granny was proved right when Hannah walked away with the £2,440 purse for being the strongest link at the end of a gruelling grilling.

Commission colleagues, family and friends all tuned in to BBC1 on 20 April to see Hannah face Robinson's wrath, as the presenter is not known for her diplomacy in Anglo-Welsh relations.



"I think I got off lightly but Anne Robinson is really clever, and very quick," said Hannah, who bought her third horse with part of her winnings.

Hannah admits being on TV has given her a taste for quiz show challenges: "I have my application form for the National Lottery's In It to Win It."

Who needs friends?

Everyone needs friends – and woodlands are no different. Volunteers make a huge contribution to the work of the Forestry Commission, as one group of enthusiasts in the north east of England is demonstrating.

The Friends of Chopwell Wood not only help to look after this popular wood near Gateshead, they also open up the forest experience to new user groups.

A good case in point is the local Deaf community, which now plays a very active role in the Friends' work.

Friends member Carole Fountain, who uses British Sign Language, paved the way for the involvement of the first Deaf volunteers three years ago.

She explained: "We now have Deaf people on many of our events, and a few have joined the Friends."

"They put in a great deal of work, and it doesn't take a lot of effort to provide better access."

Deaf volunteer Terry Wilson said: "I love working in Chopwell. The access for Deaf people offered by Carole translating, has allowed me to take part in many things."

Terry has volunteered for a range of conservation tasks, from restoring pathways to clearing weeds, and attending a three-day bushcraft event with Carole, learning skills such as survival shelter building and spring foraging.

This training allows him to pass on his skills to other Deaf people.

Terry added: "I have led a Sculpture Walk with a group of Deaf and hearing people, translating into English for the hearing people."

"Having a Deaf leader makes a big difference to how Deaf people feel about accessing the wood."

Leanne Shipley, Chopwell's recreation and community ranger, said the Friends are an energetic band of volunteers, who raise vital funds and work hard to protect and promote the woodland.

"I think they're really exceptional," said Leanne. "We try to give them the correct training and knowledge to do the work they want to do, then give them the trust and responsibility to get on with the job."

Schools plant seeds of the future

Schoolchildren throughout the UK are helping plant one million trees through Seeds for Schools, a campaign run by the News of the World and supported by the Forestry Commission.

In April, every school in the UK – more than 30,000 – received from us a Seeds for Schools seed pack containing alder, silver birch and Scots pine seeds and a copy of our *Forests and climate change: a convenient truth?* DVD. These were delivered, free of charge, along with a newsletter from Royal Mail, the campaign's delivery

partner.

Politicians, TV and sports stars and musicians have all given their support to the campaign. Hilary Benn, Environment Secretary, said it was "a great chance for children in every school...to learn how important trees are to us all".

Pop stars McFly not only backed the campaign – they gave away more than 100 tickets to schools for their Live Music forest concerts. Lead singer Tom Fletcher said: "We want all our fans to be aware of the world around them. If everyone does a little bit to help it can make a

huge difference."

News of the World also set up a special website to help schools sow and grow their seeds. The website also gave children the chance to register their school was taking part, and Tesco joined the campaign by offering £10,000 of school equipment to be split between five of the schools registering their participation.

As schools prepared for the



summer break, the paper also took time to remind pupils they should take care of their flourishing seedlings while schools were closed.

When the schools go back for the new term, it is hoped the next stage of the campaign will be for people to register possible planting sites for all these new seedlings. Dragon's Den star Peter Jones has already turned over a part of his garden to the project.

No-one knows how successful the project will be but

if the seedlings grow as well for schoolchildren as they are for FC people involved in the project, the signs are good.

John Morgan, head of plant and seed supply, not only arranged for the delivery of the 12 million seeds sent out to schoolkids, he planted some himself. John said: "I have some very nice trees including an alder that's almost a foot high, and I know other FC people involved are growing birch and pine seedlings."

We'll hopefully bring you news of the campaign in the December issue of Slasher. Meantime, turn to page 4 to find out more about people working in our nurseries.

An incredible 12 million Scots pine, alder and silver birch seeds were sent out in April as part of Seeds for Schools and, if nurtured properly, as many as five million could grow to trees – equal to 10,000 acres of forest.

The campaign cultivated little green fingers across the UK, and was made possible by the help of the Commission's extensive seed store at Alice Holt.

Given the project put growing trees in the spotlight, we thought it fitting we give some well-deserved recognition to the people who grow some 26 million trees a year. We spoke to four colleagues at the largest of our three nurseries and asked them "What do you do?".

Looking after the littl'uns

Delamere Nursery in Cheshire grows up to 14 million seedlings each year and supports planting throughout all of England and Wales, some of southern Scotland and, occasionally, the north of Scotland.

With a diverse workforce of 45 permanent staff and around 40 seasonal workers, it is a large and unusual nursery, growing many native broadleaves and conifers, including Sitka spruce, Norway spruce, larches, Douglas fir, pines, oaks, ash, birches, alder and rowan.

It's also a home-from-home for its permanent team.

Judith Vickers, Mark Gerrard, Janet Davidson and Jadwiga Gwizdek are part of that team and love their work.

"It's a very close-knit unit," explained Judith, who returned to the site two years ago after a career break to concentrate on her young family.

She's been a nursery operative at Delamere for more than 17 years and couldn't imagine working anywhere else.

It was a summer job at Stapeley Water Gardens that sparked her enduring interest in horticulture and she went on to complete a City and Guilds certificate in Horticulture before applying for a job at the nursery when she was 19.

And plants aren't the only things that have bloomed for Judith at Delamere. It's where she met her husband, Matt, who also works in the nursery industry.

The couple have two daughters, Lauren, 6, and Holly, 3, who now take up all of Judith's spare time.

Since returning from maternity leave on part-time

hours, Judith's responsibilities as a nursery operative have become more diverse.

Her usual duties revolve around the growing of nursery stock. However, Judith has recently taken on administration duties, which focus on health and safety and include compiling risk assessments, completing operational checklists and issuing safety guides to staff.

Judith is also responsible for mapping bare-root crops. A similar system is used at all three Commission nurseries to pinpoint the exact location of all growing stock.

She added: "The sites are mapped in detail for each individual crop at Delamere's five different nursery locations."

"It's quite a physical task involving measuring the area under crop so that an estimate of viable stock numbers can be made. This information is then fed into nursery spreadsheets and the database. It's essential that it's 100 per cent accurate because the collated data is used extensively for nursery production forecasting purposes."

Judith explained: "A stocktake of nursery crops is required twice a year. The July assessment is a count of all seedlings that have successfully germinated. The September stocktake is a count and quality assessment of all plants to be despatched to the forest during the coming winter."

Colleague Mark Gerrard is another one whose time is filled away from work but for very different reasons.

A full-time nursery operative since 2002, Mark often finds trees and forests occupy his days off too.

A mountain bike enthusiast,



PROUD PARENTS... Clockwise from top left, Jadwiga Gwizdek, Mark Gerrard, Judith Vickers, and Janet Davidson.

'Weeks just fly by here because it's so busy and enjoyable,'

he saddles up at least once a week to explore the surrounding woodlands with friends from the nursery.

He also cycles in Wales once in a while and, when he gets a breather, he follows motor racing from the more sedate comfort of his armchair.

Born on a local farm just two miles from Delamere, Mark has never had to venture very far to pursue his chosen vocation.

When he left home, he became an agricultural contractor, working mainly on dairy farms.

But he soon found that being self-employed wasn't everything that it was cracked up to be, with the workflow dependant on the changing seasons.

To bridge the gap, he took on seasonal work in the nursery at Delamere and, like many of his colleagues, he soon found that the nursery suited him down to the ground and the rest, as they say, is history!



Now one of the nursery's main tractor drivers, Mark is happy spending at least 80 per cent of his working life at the wheel of his John Deere tractor.

Most of his time is taken up with ground preparation for seed sowing in the spring and the transplanting of seedlings in the summer. Other skilled tractor duties include irrigation, undercutting, side cutting, wrenching, inter-row spraying and the application of fertilisers and chemicals. Precise planning and timing of all operations is critical to ensure that crops are not adversely affected.

He said: "I just love being outside and all the members of the team are excellent to work with. It's such an interesting and varied job where you never experience the same day twice."

The highlights of Mark's career, however, have been two trips abroad – one to Germany in 2007 and another to Denmark earlier this year – as part of an FC fact-finding mission.

Visiting various nursery sites and machinery manufacturers gave Mark an insight into the workings of like-minded European sites, and his research will benefit the nursery network.



Delamere grows about 50 per cent of the total seedlings produced annually by the Commission's nurseries, with Newton and Wykeham nurseries supplying the balance.

Someone with an extensive understanding of what goes on out in the nursery is administration officer Janet Davidson, who meticulously updates all the paperwork, including the nursery database.

She undertakes the mammoth task of updating the shared database, through which all despatches are carried out, by inputting master data from the entire nursery network.

She explained: "When I first started in the nursery, learning the terms for all the growing regimes was a daunting task. But now that I've been dealing with the despatch of plants for 17 years and built up a wealth of on-the-job experience, I now find myself in a specialised role controlling this data."

"It's quite a unique position to be in but, given the need for complete accuracy and consistency, it's essential that only one person performs the task."

Janet began as an attendant at Delamere visitor centre in 1987 but, as a keen gardener, jumped at the chance to work at the nursery as soon as a position came up.

Despite no formal horticultural training, she took to the job like a duck to water.

Over the years, she has seen the database grow from a small tool into an essential part of the nursery's daily activities, essential for holding and producing all short and long-term records.

Like her colleagues, Janet reflects on her career at Delamere with great fondness.

"Weeks just fly by here because it's so busy and enjoyable," she said.

Janet also gets a great deal of enjoyment from walking her dog, Todd, whom she found abandoned in the forest and now describes as her "shadow". The 10-year-old fox hound and border collie cross is her "walkies" companion and, together, they make the most of their local forest now that Janet's children, Helen and Andy, have grown up and flown the nest.

With Helen newly-married and Andy, who is a keen musician, studying sound engineering at Southampton, Janet also has plenty of time on her hands to champion the FC's Greenerways initiative.

She's recently taken on the extra challenge of filtering the nursery's green message through to her colleagues by raising awareness of carbon reduction initiatives on the site.

She'll be closely monitoring the nursery's energy outputs, taking into account costs such as electrical use and waste management.

But this isn't the only green project on the go at Delamere.

The nursery is working in partnership with Forest Research on a number of trials which, in 10 or 20 years time, could really benefit the future.

The team is looking more closely at short rotation forestry, in which fast-growing trees are cultivated and harvested at around 15 years old.

It's thought that the quick turnaround could provide a steady source of renewable fuel to supply heat and power within the UK.

Head of Production Richard Parsons, who's based at Delamere, explained: "We're trying to look ahead and establish what will grow well and hold significant benefits for the future."

"Our research is already having an impact on the trees being planted in specific areas and we are introducing non-native species such as eucalyptus, red alder and Italian alder for the first time."

Ground-breaking

This is a ground-breaking move for Delamere, whose regular remit is to supply restock sites with plants that are specified by forest districts.

Some of this production is overseen by Nursery Supervisor Jadwiga Gwizdek.

Jadwiga, who hails from Poland but has lived in the UK since 1973, looks after five full-time staff and up to 25 short-term, temporary staff working at Delamere's Old Pale Polyhouse Units.

Such is her commitment, she travels 30 miles to work each day from her home in Manchester.

She first developed a taste for the great outdoors and growing all things organic when she helped at her parent's small-holding in Krakow, growing vegetables and trees.

However, before starting at the nursery in 1992, her previous occupations couldn't have been more different – plastic welder and hairdresser.

Now, she supervises a highly-skilled team caring for a multitude of plants in some 54 polytunnels – ensuring each of them is nurtured accordingly.

In fact, Jadwiga was hard pushed to think of anything she didn't enjoy about her job.

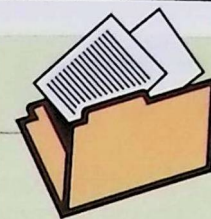
"I wouldn't swap it - even with the long drive to get here," she said. "I really enjoy the manual challenge of my work."

"The only problem is coping with this heatwave we're having at the moment!"

With two grown sons having completed college and her husband Henry at home, Jadwiga enjoys now having spare time to focus on her own garden.

Like her colleagues, her knack for nurturing plants is something that's obviously deep-rooted.

Fact file



Delamere Nursery

Location: Cheshire

Staff: Nursery manager Peter Everitt, who also oversees Wykeham Nursery, is supported by Richard Parsons, production manager, operations managers Lynn O'Connor and Colin Gregory, and nursery supervisors Graham Ball, Ian Garner and Jadwiga Gwizdek.

They are further supported by administration officer Janet Davidson, with back-up from Michelle Watson and Rachel Richards. There are around 45 permanent front-line staff, as well as up to 40 seasonal workers in any given year.

Credentials: The nursery has a large area of polyhouses producing cell-grown stock and cuttings, as well as field-grown material, so needs people with a wide range of agricultural and horticultural skills. It grows up to 14 million seedlings a year to supply England, Wales and some of Scotland. Many of Delamere's workers are Polish nationals and the nursery is very pleased that they have chosen to stay in Cheshire and to work for the Forestry Commission.

Wykeham Nursery

Location: North Yorkshire Moors

Staff: Operations manager Graham Hunter is supported by 10 highly-skilled front-line staff with extensive experience in operating tractors and other agricultural machinery. It grows up to eight million seedlings a year to supply the north of England and south of Scotland.

The nursery employs the services of a labour contractor to supply its seasonal workers instead of recruiting them directly.

Credentials: The team does its own repair and maintenance work and has taken the lead in developing machinery used to lift trees to reduce the amount of manual handling.

Newton Nursery

Location: Moray, Scotland

Staff: Nursery manager Alan Duncan and operations manager Peter Forsyth are supported by 18 experienced, permanent front-line staff and up to 10 seasonal workers each year.

Credentials: Newton is the only Forestry Commission nursery in Scotland and the team takes pride in the fact that the nursery has been successfully producing trees for more than 75 years. It grows up to six million seedlings a year to supply to the north of Scotland. The majority of staff live locally and have a long and loyal record of working for the organisation.

Seed Store and Seed Extractory

Location: Alice Holt

Staff: Seed officer Corinne Baker is supported by two seed technicians, David Payne and Naledi Nickerson.

Credentials: David was heavily involved in preparing the seed stock to supply to the News of the World *Seeds for Schools* project, while Naledi has taken time out to work at a children's summer camp in the US before returning when seed processing begins again in autumn.

Head of Plant and Seed Supply

Location: Edinburgh

Staff: John Morgan is head of plant and seed supply, reporting to Stirling-based Michael Ansell, who is director of the four Forestry Commission business units, comprising mechanical engineers, civil engineers, plant and seed supply and renewable energy.

Credentials: John oversees the entire business unit and is responsible for the service to the Forestry Commission in the three countries.

FCTU Diary



Many times, I have been asked the following questions: -

- What exactly is the FCTU?
- What is the purpose of the FCTU?
- Who exactly is the FCTU?

My answers are as follows: -

- The FCTU comprises of five unions GMB, UNITE, PCS, Prospect and the FDA
- The FCTU collectively represents all union members in the FC
- The FCTU is you and every other union member

Let me explain...

The five unions are independent and provide individual representation for their members, collect subscriptions and provide specific information about their union and its activities.

The FCTU is a democratic partnership, formed by these unions, to represent the interests of all union members in the FC on the many issues that affect us all. At a GB level, we work through the FCTU Departmental Committee, which is made up of the FCTU Chairperson, the FCTU Secretary and one representative from each of the unions and it is through here that the individual unions are responsible for overseeing the FCTU's work.

We also operate through a number of Area Committees; one each for Scotland, England, Wales, Silvan House, Forest Research and FC Business Units. They are comprised of locally-elected union members and their role is to identify issues that affect members at a country or unit level, and to ensure that action is taken to resolve them. They also provide the essential co-ordination between each other and instruct the various FCTU Staff Council teams and it is through the Staff Councils that union representatives get to discuss face to face with FC Managers the issues and concerns affecting their areas. The Departmental Staff Council provides the opportunity for senior union representatives to meet with the Directors who form the Executive Board of the Forestry Commission.

I hope that that gives you a flavour of what the FCTU is about and how it works but our committees cannot work in isolation. They need you, union members, to provide information, feedback and local knowledge about many of the issues being faced. In return, Committees should be seeking the views of members and keeping them informed about what they are doing. Many times, we forget to communicate effectively and complacency can occur as a result but we are trying hard to make sure that our methods of communication are efficient, and work.

Much of the information about us and what we are doing is contained on the FCTU website, but we need to look beyond this as sometimes the most telling piece of information occurs in a conversation, or on a short note and we need to remember these are equally important.

I hope that I have managed to answer the questions posed and if you feel that you need more information about the Forestry Commission Trade Unions please contact the FCTU Office or a local union representative.

In the next edition, I will be talking about the Facility Time Agreement and what it means for union members.

Allan MacKenzie
FCTU Secretary

A bridge going far?



Cyclists cross the new Lewisburn bridge at Kielder Water, which has been nominated for at least three of this year's British Construction Industry Awards. Forestry Civil Engineering, who designed the bridge, has also just tested and opened a spectacular 7 metre cantilever bridge at Plodda Falls – the first of its kind.

Word spreads like wildfire...

New Forest staff did their bit to stamp out the threat of wildfire when they played a key role in the recent Wildfire 2009 conference.

The event, held at the Lyndhurst Park Hotel in the heart of the New Forest, explored the latest developments in the field and included a wide variety of conference sessions, workshops and demonstrations all promoting the theme of partnership working.

Delegates included foresters, countryside managers and fire service personnel. Community ranger Sandy Phillips led a special session on arson and wildfire.

Sandy – the first community ranger to serve the New Forest's Waterside community – has reached out to youngsters in a bid to address the perennial problems of damage and arson in local woods and heaths.

She said: "It's been fantastically rewarding to get to

know, and become accepted by, young people from the area.

"Many of them are now taking an active part in helping to look after their corner of the forest. Incidents of arson have dramatically decreased over the past few years."

Sandy has now teamed up with a local film producer to help youth groups make a short video on the dangers posed by wildfire and its effects on wildlife and habitats.

...as Wales fights to stop the spread

Staff in south Wales are handing over the dangerous task of fire-fighting to the experts.

Traditionally, forest staff worked alongside firefighters to try to put out the fires, most of which are started deliberately and place a huge strain on FC Wales resources. But it was felt that leaving the job to the Fire and

Rescue Service will be a more efficient approach to tackling the flames, which are a particular problem in south Wales.

Forest staff will continue to liaise closely with firefighters by providing in-depth briefings on the make-up of the forest and the forest roads network, as well as identifying potential risk areas.

Dai Jones, district manager in south Wales, said, "Each year, deliberately started forest fires cost the taxpayer tens of thousands of pounds and put the lives of our staff and other forest users at risk. They also do untold damage to the beauty of the south Wales landscape, which we work so hard to preserve."



Bra-ving the elements

Put your hands together for the Edinbra Lunatits, The Turbo Tarts, Pamela Brown and Libby Jones, who all took part in this year's Edinburgh Moonwalk to raise money for Cancer Research. Between them they have raised almost £5,000.

The Lunatits, from FC Scotland, apart from Brent who is FDM Scottish Lowlands, are: Sally York, Brent Meakin, Carol Finlayson, Sheila Leckie, Susan Finlayson (Carol's sister-in-law).

The Turbo Tarts from Cowal and Trossachs (pictured l-r) are: Morag McGeachy, Cassie (not FC), Mairi McGeachy, Jacquie Edwards (not FC) Sandra Corcoran (not FC), Katy Freeman, Trish Roberts. Mairi was at pains to point out the team name was chosen by recently-retired Jim Ferrall for no apparent reason!

Libby, from International Policy took part with eight friends and Pamela, from Internal Audit, took part with her sister and friend.

If you want to take part in next year's event, log on to <http://www.walkthewalk.org/Challenges/TheMoonWalkEdinburgh>

OPEN CANOPY

By Tim Rollinson, Director-General

The future's bright – the future's green



Apologies to a certain phone company and also to whoever said this before, but we live in exciting times.

It wasn't that long ago people were bemoaning the lack of woodland growth in Britain. But some hard work and clear focus on our part over the past 18 months is about to change all that.

The media might not have noticed it, but a vital part of the Government's Low Carbon Transition Plan, launched in July, is to plant 150,000 hectares of NEW woodland in England in the next 15 years.

That's a big change of direction for the Government and one we've convinced them to make.

And what finally made it possible were our plans to produce a code to ensure forest carbon projects deliver the benefits they claim. Ministers now know that not only can they safely say the new planting can take 50 million tonnes of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere but they'll also be able to prove it. That's important to them when there's been so much debate about the worth of some so-called "offsetting" programmes.

Preparation of the code was the final piece in a jigsaw we began to put together in November 2007 when we held our climate change conference at BAFTA in London. We set out a six-point action plan that raised awareness with our key stakeholders about the role of trees in fighting climate change.

Since then we've developed a framework for making this happen. The code is one part of that. We've also commissioned a major independent UK report on how trees and forests can help tackle climate change. And, as part of the review of the UK Forestry Standard, we're saying for the first time that achieving sustainable carbon benefits will be a key factor in forest

management. We've prepared a Guideline on Climate Change to accompany the new Standard. We've taken the lead in putting together a forests and climate change network and re-structured Forest Research to set up a new Forests and Climate Change Centre.

While all this has been going on, similar efforts have been made in each of the countries with new climate change related programmes being developed that will be supported by this framework. It's been a lot of effort, but ministers in all three countries now realise the positive impact our trees and forests can make. They now have the confidence in what we do to back that with new forestry programmes.

None of what we have done may seem to be earth-shattering to those of us in the business, but each piece of the jigsaw has strengthened our position and reputation in government.

The fact that our DVD *A Convenient Truth?* has been taken up by the UN and translated into a dozen or so languages, and people keep lifting footage from it, confirms that our reputation abroad is equally strong.

And, whatever you think of the News of the World, I don't think the biggest-selling newspaper in Britain would think of working with us on the *Seeds for Schools* project if it wasn't sure of our credentials.

A few years ago I decided I would make climate change the single over-arching focus of work for the Forestry Commission. I make no apologies for keeping banging that drum. As the communications team keeps telling me, it's only when you get tired of saying the same thing over and over again that people begin to take notice.

Now, have I told you the one about trees and climate change?

Glimpse into the past



Archive footage of forestry more than forty years ago has been brought back onto the screen.

Long-serving Welsh Forestry Commission worker Brian Jones appeared in the film *Down in the Forest* as a young student in the early 1960s. But Brian – who enjoyed a 45-year career before retiring six years ago – never saw the eight-minute newsreel when it was shown to cinema audiences across the country in the 1960s.

But now, thanks to a little detective work by Brian's son Michael, the long-lost documentary, which was part of the Rank Organisation's *Look at Life* series, has been unearthed.

Brian explained: "I'd always wondered what became of the film and could hardly believe it when my son told me he'd traced the newsreel to an old film archive somewhere in the south of England."

Michael even managed to have the 35mm original converted to DVD, and Brian is keen to let others enjoy this fascinating glimpse of some of the people and practices that helped shape the Welsh countryside.

He said: "I'd be happy to show anybody who wants to see the film, but mine is the only copy of the original newsreel in existence and I'm not letting it out of my sight!"

Down in the Forest features a young Brian fencing out sheep from a newly planted area, and was shot in Cardiff, Aberystwyth, Corris and Gwydyr. Foresters are seen hand felling trees with axes and using a 'tree bicycle' to climb into the canopy of larch trees, and there's footage of one of the forest villages created by the Commission for its employees.

Anyone keen to see the film, or find out more about it, is welcome to call Brian on 01874 625351.

Beavers are back

One of nature's best tree-fellers is back in Scotland – with the help of the Forestry Commission.

After four centuries' absence, the beaver has been brought back to the Scottish countryside.

The trial project marks the first formal reintroduction of a native mammal in the UK, and has been masterminded by the Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT), the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS), and the Forestry Commission.

Beaver families taken from the wild in Norway were released into carefully selected lochs in Knapdale Forest, Mid-Argyll at the end of May.

And, according to Alan Stevenson – the Forestry Commission's head of communities, recreation and tourism – it's the ideal location.

"Knapdale Forest covers a range of important habitats and biodiversity," said Alan.

"Very importantly, the area is also in the heart of a forest producing timber and providing recreational facilities for people.

"It will be a good testing ground for the trial.

"The project is running for a number of years. In time, when the beavers have settled in, we should see positive spin-offs for the local community in terms of green tourism."

Experts will keep a close eye on Knapdale's new residents over the next five years, assessing the long-term prospects for beavers in Scotland.

"The release of the beavers means we are one step closer to rebuilding the natural biodiversity of Scotland," said Allan Bantick, Chairman of SWT and Chair of the Scottish Beaver Trial partnership.

"Their presence is known to bring a vast number of benefits to other native Scottish wildlife, as well as wetland and waterside habitats.

"Our reintroduction follows in the footsteps of 24 other European countries who have already reintroduced beavers to more than 150 different sites."

Find out more about the Scottish Beaver Trial at www.scottishbeavers.org.uk

The 60 second interview...

Pamela Ness

Analyst programmer, information systems, talks about her mobility problems



You have mobility problems due to spina bifida. How does that affect you on a day to day basis?

I was actually born with spina bifida occulta, which is a mild form of spina bifida. It damaged some nerves in my spinal cord and affected my legs, which means getting about is difficult. I can't walk very far and my balance isn't very good.

So some form of transport is vital?

Yes – I use my car to get around rather than public transport, which usually involves walking some distance as well. Being able to use a disabled parking bay usually means I can get very close to where I need to be. I can then manage okay indoors as the distances aren't that long. Stairs are okay if there are handrails.

Parking at Silvan House should be okay then?

On the whole yes, but the disabled parking spaces are well used and it's not unusual for them to be full. Perhaps some people might need allocated spaces. Also some of the spaces are on slopes, and for some people, this can prove very difficult. It will be even worse in winter even though our building services team try to keep the ground free of ice.

Are you saying the spaces aren't suitable?

Well, yes and no. Having spaces close to the door and on the flat helps, and it's just a case that people need to think a bit more carefully about where they site disabled parking spaces.

You said you feel more comfortable once you're in the office. Is it well kitted out for you?

Again, mostly yes. Silvan House has a ramp, wheelchair-accessible lift and handrails, so I can get to most areas. It's small things, such as having handrails on both sides of stairs, that can make a difference. I'm very much right-handed, so going one way on a set of stairs may be fine, but if there's only one handrail, I'm less at ease going the other way, if that makes sense!

It does. I suppose it can be even more pronounced in other places, especially if you have to travel about, as most people in the Commission seem to do?

Exactly – especially in busy places such as train or tube stations. Everyone seems to be in a permanent rush and it can be disorientating and, frankly, stressful. I can't take my car to London for example, but there's no problem with me taking taxis instead, and that really helps.

Is it that simple then – a disabled parking space and some flexibility in other areas?

For me at the moment, yes, but for others, no! It's too easy to say we have disabled spaces and a lift, but if people can't use them safely or confidently then there's a risk they will be excluded. Employers need to talk to people who may be unintentionally excluded because they have different requirements to most other people. In most cases it won't be a complex task to provide alternative access options that remove or lessen the restrictions that others don't have.

Who's next? Another 60 second interview December 09



Official Home of the Scottish Beaver Trial

<http://www.scottishbeavers.org.uk/>

Amazon Clip Art iPlayer iStock TV Guide Forestry FC Images Kikoo Yell Postcodes Streetmap FreeRunner BT Which? Maps Reuters

SCOTTISH BEAVER TRIAL

Beavers are back in Scotland!

The release of beavers in Scotland is a significant step towards restoring the natural biodiversity of the country.

Help support the Scottish Beaver Trial. Donate Now!

Official Home of the Scottish Beaver Trial

Welcome to the official website of the Scottish Beaver Trial – a five year trial reintroduction of beavers to Knapdale Forest, Mid-Argyll.

Official Beaver Blog

Get up to date news about the trial. Official Beaver Blog



Blast from the past!

Our latest blast takes us back to the mid-70s with this photograph of staff from south-west England pictured with Dame

Sylvia Crowe, the well-known landscape architect.

Our thanks go to Paul Tabbush of Forest Research (back row, six from left) who remembered the photograph being taken around October 1975 at Halsway Manor, west Somerset, and was able to put some names to faces. They are:

Back row: David Langford, far left; Mike Dunne, three from right; Alan Dunning, two from right.

Front row (l-r): Stan Forrester, Geoff Haywood, Jack Massey, Unknown, Tony Joslin, Bernard ?, Dame Sylvia Crowe, Les Troupe, John Aldous, Gordon Derrick, others unknown.

If you have a great picture for Slasher's 'Blast From the Past!' slot, get in touch with the editor (see panel below). Preference is given to pictures with at least some staff who are still working for the Commission.



Loyal service rewarded...

Veteran forest craftsmen John Durrant, Rodney Brock and Len Martin were special guests at the Devon County Show in May where they celebrated more than 130 years of service between them.

Each received Devon County Agricultural Association Long Service Awards, recognising their dedication to the area's forestry.

John Durrant, who's from Holsworthy, joined the Commission in 1962, and will have clocked up 49 years' service by the time he retires.

"I have seen so many changes in forestry," said John.

"When I first worked in the Halwill district there was a 'gang' of around 50 men working together, and it felt a bit like being in the army, with very strict discipline.

"Over the years, the introduction of machinery completely changed the way things were done, and there are now only two of us Forest Craftsmen in the area!"

Rodney Brock joined in 1965 while Len, who retired last year, signed up in 1964.

Martin Webb, Area Forester for west Devon, paid tribute to the long-serving foresters.

"They have all given years of loyal service and

hard work to the Forestry Commission and to the public," he said.

"Forests require careful management and our workforce are highly skilled individuals. We appreciate the contribution that all three have made."

Elsewhere in the show, the Commission picked up an award for its management of Lydford Forest in west Devon.



OLD HANDS...Rodney Brock (left), John Durrant (centre) and Len Martin with their Long Service Awards.



THE ART OF THE FOREST... Proof, if ever anyone doubted felling was an art form. Our thanks to Pulp Fiction, FC Scotland's staff magazine for the picture. If anyone knows anything about the picture, or has other examples of unusual art in the forest, contact the editor.

Have your say...

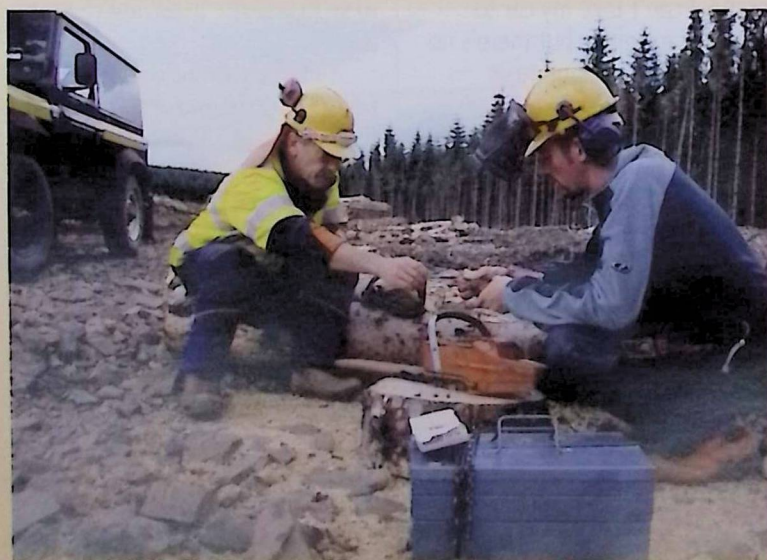
In 2005, 64 per cent of FC people said they rely on the grapevine for information. Will 2009 be a better vintage? Employee opinion survey, September 09.



COMPETITION TIME!

Congratulations to **Amanda Campbell** from Silvan house who correctly found all four slashers last time round and whose entry was picked out of the hat. A £25 store voucher is on its way. Please DO spend it all in one shop.

With the return of an old editor – Willie Cairns – comes the return of an old favourite – *Spot the Thermos*. Simply study the picture and mark 10 crosses on the picture where you think the Thermos is hidden. The person nearest the centre of the Thermos will win the prize.



Entries, one per person, should be returned to Slasher Competition, Corporate Communications, Silvan House, no later than **1 October 2009**.

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Slasher

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