

Edition 5 / Spring 2017

The Full

CIRCLE

The journal of The Association of Scottish Hardwood Sawmillers

Comann Sabhadairean Fiodha Chruaidh

£5

Featuring...

THE STORY OF THE
FIRST COMMUNITY
WOODLAND IN MULL

Written by Malcolm Ward

YARD VISIT TO CORMAC
SEEKINGS AT STRATHCONON

THE STORY OF THE SCOTTISH
FURNITURE MAKERS ASSOCIATION

Written by Ross Samson



Forestry Commission Scotland
Coimisean na Coilltearachd Alba



Scottish
Furniture
Makers
Association

The Full CIRCLE

The journal of The Association of Scottish Hardwood Sawmillers

The 5th edition of the Full Circle is a cracker! With a focus on Community Woodlands and Woodland crofts, we explore the stories of 4 Communities across Scotland, who have taken on the land & woodlands that surround their communities. Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust, Knoydart Forest Trust, North West Mull Community Woodland and The Roots of Arran Community Woodland. Each story showing their own unique situation, but all showing the same tenacity and determination to take control and breathe life into their communities. Both inspiring and reassuring, they show us how with good management, previously underutilized and undermanaged land can be transformed, providing employment for locals and encouraging young families back to the area. The need for housing in these rural areas is also touched upon in the article by Jamie McIntyre on woodland crofts, possibly a template for future Community woodland buy outs to follow. Jon Hollingdale, the CEO of The Community Woodland Association gives us the background and history of the movement, showing an extraordinary rise from 40 in 1983 to over 200 today, covering 100,000 ha. Hopefully just the beginning as Land reform facilitates more communities across Scotland take control of the land around them and their future.

In our regular yard visit spot I finally talked Cormac Seeking into writing his story which is both informing and entertaining. I am sure it is a familiar story as many of us work towards that ideal in our heads, they do say however that it's all about the journey and not the final destination! It's also good to hear how Fraser Dodds (The Baldy Carpenter) has been getting on after his workshop fire featured in FC edition 2. The Forestry Commission devolution debate continues with an extract from a parliamentary speech by The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity (Fergus Ewing): The Primrose bay Douglas Fir extraction is covered by Douglas Halliday along with other useful news points of interest. For all woodland owners out there Pol Orsi talks us through, how to use his free MyForest software which is designed to map your woodland and can also be used to produce felling licences which could prove to be very useful. Jonathan Rose has news on the After the Storm Exhibition, while the founder of the Scottish Furniture Makers Association, Ross Samson writes a fascinating and entertaining account of how it came to be. All this combined with the usual news and dates for your diary makes this a must read Industry journal.



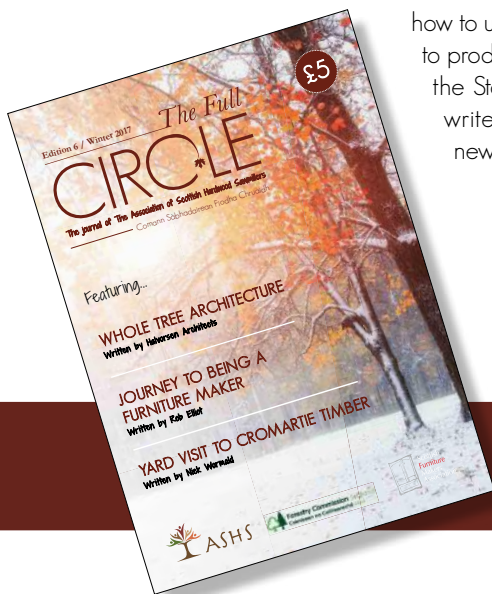
CHAIRMAN
& EDITOR
Steve McLean



COORDINATOR
& EDITOR
Nick Marshall



DESIGNER
Stephanie Christie



All the best, Steve McLean

ASHS Chairman

DEADLINE DATE FOR EDITION 6

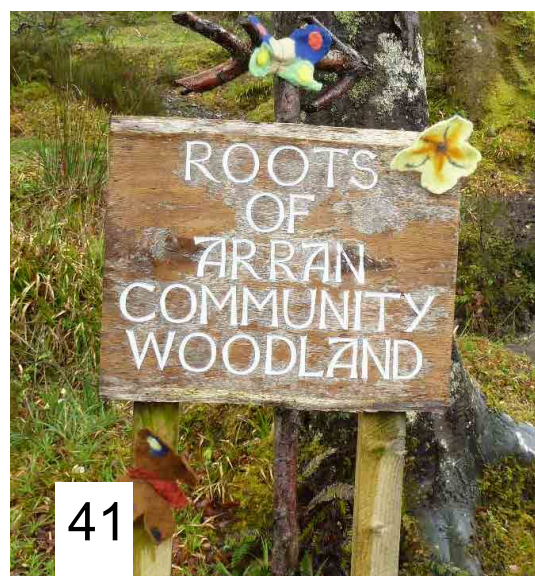
Friday 8th September

www.ashs.co.uk



Contents

- 4 ASHS NEWS & MEETINGS
- 7 SCOTTISH WORKING WOODS NEWS
- 8 SFMA - 15 YEARS JOINED TOGETHER (WITH BISCUITS)
- 11 HISTORY OF COMMUNITY WOODLANDS IN SCOTLAND
- 14 AFTER THE FIRE
- 18 ISLE OF EIGG HERITAGE TRUST
- 21 PETER GOODWIN OBITUARY
- 22 AFTER THE STORM EXHIBITION
- 24 NORTH WEST MULL COMMUNITY WOODLAND
- 26 DEVELOPING FORESTRY IN SCOTLAND DEBATE
- 28 NICHE MARKET NEWS
- 30 KNOYDART TOREST TRUST
- 34 THE SYLVA FOUNDATION - MAPPING SOFTWARE
- 38 WOODLAND CROFTS
- 40 ROOTS OF ARRAN COMMUNITY WOODLAND
- 41 YARD VISIT TO CORMAC SEEKING



CONTACT US...

Email - editor@ashs.uk
Phone - 01360 860572
Mobile - 07748 047736

PRINTERS - J Thomson Colour Printers (Glasgow)
Printed on Evolve FSC 100% Recycled paper
DESIGNER - Trilogy Designs Scotland



ASHS NEWS & MEETINGS *April 2017 – October 2017*

Meetings

ASH annual general meeting was held at Moyne sawmills at Neilston, North Ayrshire on the 7th October, hosted by John Ferguson. Although a small turn out John gave an interesting tour of his yard and workshops, interspersed with some fascinating historical anecdotes of the surrounding area. A hot plate of soup and strong coffee went a long way to combating the cold prior to dealing with ASHS business of the day. John was invited to join the board and after a few weeks of deliberation, agreed. His position was ratified at the February meeting. On Friday 24th February ASHS last meeting of the financial year took place at Falkland Estate, Fife. This time we were hosted by Ninian Stuart who, gave us an informative talk about the Falkland Centre for Stewardship initiative and plans and hopes for their future. After this we were given a tour of the new workshops, currently under construction at the site of the old sawmill. This was followed by a visit to see the new woodmizer sawmill and forestry equipment. The ASHS sawmilling and seasoning booklets were left for the operators to read over at their leisure. We then had some excellent homemade soup and bread at the Stables after which we dealt with the ASHS business of the day. The next ASHS meeting will be hosted by Malcolm Mack at his workshop in Coulsland, Midlothian on Friday 19th May. An itinerary and agenda will be sent out soon, so put a note in your diary and come along.



- William & Charlotte Dobby talking to James McKeen of Falkland Furniture

Membership

As most of you will know the current committee have been working hard towards changing the old format of direct debits and yearly payments across to the new 'Go Cardless' system. The reason for making these changes are threefold, firstly to simplify the administration and secondly to align all the membership fees to the same date 4th April. By doing this it is possible to see if anyone has left the Association and immediately check to see what the problem might be and rectify it. Thirdly, it helps with the banking and therefore future planning as the bank balance is replenished at the beginning of each financial year. 2017 will be the first year that everyone will pay through the GC system and direct debits will no longer be accepted. It is only fair to say that these changes did not suit everyone and we have lost a couple of members along the way. Despite this the ASHS membership is showing steady growth, now standing at 32 Full, 45 associate and 3 retired members as well as 6 subscribers to the Full Circle. From April 2017 onwards all members will receive a membership certificate, so print it off and hang it on the wall for all your customers to see. Sadly, during the last 6 months, Altyre sawmill, Forres have closed down. With Norbuild also close by, downscaling their operations, this would suggest that there is an opening for a new sawmill in the area. 'As one door closes another opens'.



Work program 2016 - 17

The ASHS work program for 2016-17 is well under way with a further 2 booklets now complete. 'The ASHS Guide to Secondary Processing' and 'The ASHS Guide to Standard Products and Specifications', these are now on the website and will be mailed to all members. Thanks to Patrick Baxter and Nick for all their hard work pulling these together. They will also be accompanied by training events in 2017/18. The first will be hosted by Willie & Charlotte Dobby at Abbey Timber in Abbey St Bathans, Duns. This will include a demonstration of various secondary processing machines. This will be held in September 2017, the final date will be confirmed shortly. A second course on sawmilling will be held sometime in April 2018 at Novar Estates, near Evanton, just North of Inverness. The details for this are also in the final stages and will be emailed and posted on our facebook page shortly.





- Ninnian Stuart at Falkland Estate

Solar Kiln Project

The solar kiln project has moved up a gear, with support from FCS enabling us to carry out a broad review of the scientific and technical literature on the subject of solar kilns and intermittent drying (a key effect of solar kilning, which produces less-stressed timber). This has informed design modifications so that we can expect the first kiln to work effectively. Malcolm Mack has applied for SRDP funding to set up this first prototype solar kiln in Scotland at his yard in Cousland, Midlothian. The ASHS board approved a £2000 contribution to the project in return for future training events for those interested in setting up their own solar kiln. This will happen after the initial setting up and 18 month monitoring period. The detailed information collected during this time, along with the review of the technical and scientific literature with then be published in another booklet which will be freely available to all members.

The Full Circle

You are now reading the 5th edition of The Full Circle and what a cracker, where else would you be able to find such a diversity of articles. Feedback has been positive and it has not been too difficult persuading people to write articles. Indeed as more people try their hand, many for the first time, a quiet confidence is growing within the membership groups. The Full Circle is the perfect platform to try your hand at writing. Thanks to all contributors to date and please keep the stories coming.



Facebook page

As most of you will know social media is a key element in any business development and ASHS is no different. As a business organisation it is important that we maintain as active a presence within the social media world as we can. Generating interest in the group, attracting new members and reaching new customers for our members. It was therefore agreed by the board to employ Stephanie Christie on a £30 per month retainer to keep our facebook page regularly active. Patrick and Keith also add to this from time to time and of course if any of our members would like to put something up there please get in touch and we will be happy to arrange it. We now have five journals under our belt, all designed and put together by Stephanie. This gives us a large amount of individual stories that we can post. Angus Ross's recent story about his apprentice is the first to be posted and you can expect at least one a month over the foreseeable future. So if you wrote an article or advertised to date you will get a second chance at publicity.

TV advertising

Some of you may remember a recent email about the possibility of joining forces with the SFMA and the Forestry Commission to access TV advertising. The general response across both memberships, was that they were not convinced it would return their £150 proposed investment, and that it would be too difficult to manage the finances across the breadth of memberships. The idea has subsequently been shelved. However on the back of this we are now looking at a documentary on the Scottish Timber Industry and its contribution to the Scottish Economy, possibly introducing the Italian project as a suggestion of a possible future improvement. This would include both ASHS and the SFMA groups, raising their profile and hopefully increasing respective memberships. A detailed brief is being prepared and will be sent to independent makers for assessment on its viability in the coming months.

Forest Policy group

The "Getting Value for Local Woods" conference in November 2016 was a milestone, which demonstrated the breadth and number of businesses and voluntary organisations working and providing employment and economic value in the small-scale woodland and timber sector. We look to significant developments from this, in which ASHS can play a useful role. We are heartened by the Scottish Government's recognition of the importance of forestry to the Scottish economy, and we are keen to promote the importance of the small-scale and high-quality timber end of the industry in delivering employment to a thriving rural economy across Scotland. To this end we have arranged a meeting with Fergus Ewing, Secretary for rural affairs, at Scottish Wood sawmill to discuss ASHS ideas to help develop the industry.



- Photograph courtesy of Falkland Estate

Membership survey results

The ASH membership survey is an important instrument to gauge how our sector of the industry is doing on a year to year basis. It shows a business level view on employment, turnover, investment strategies, quantities of timber bought and sold, general strengths and weaknesses and perceived barriers to development. A summary of this year's survey results below, shows the aggregate figures compared with 2015, across 34 businesses:

1. Turnover has increased from £4.5m - £5.4m
2. Investment has risen £800,000 - £1.3M
3. Employment has risen from 64 Full Time - 68FT & 32Part time - 68PT
4. Hardwood & softwood logs bought down from 8,900cm to 7,600cm
5. Hardwood & softwood sold, down from 5,600 cubic metres - 4,100cm

A prize draw was held at the end of the last meeting, with all the names of those who contributed to the survey put into a hat and the winner pulled out by Ulrich. Norbuild won the bottle of Whiskey, which was delivered by Jim Birley who happened to be in the area.

Committee

As mentioned above John Ferguson has now joined the board and is now actively contributing wherever he can. Pol Bergius joined the board in November 2010 and acted as treasurer from 2013-16. Pol has now officially stepped down to focus on his own business and make way for some new blood. I am sure I can speak for everyone in thanking Pol for all his time and effort over the past six years. The minutes of the last two meeting have indicated that Steve McLean, stepped down as chairman. This however did not turn out to be the case and he will remain as chairman until the next AGM sometime in October 2017. This is because ASHS cannot legally function without a chairman and as there was no one to commit to the position, Steve agreed to stay on. This has now been resolved and Jim Birley will become chairman from October 2017-2018. This situation has sparked of a discussion about the structure and responsibilities of the committee. Much work has been done over the last three years to reduce the basic work load of committee members. ASHS now have online banking which will reduce the work for the treasurer for instance. The Go Cardless system means that Nick Marshal, ASHS coordinator is able to deal with memberships easily. There is a suggestion on the table that the chairs position should be for one year only on a rotation basis across the board and members take a more active role in organising training events etc. These discussions will, I've no doubt continue, so if you have any ideas come along to a meeting and make your point.



Written by,

Steve McLean

ASHS Chairmain

www.dovetailscotland.com

Members / Directors;

STEVE MCLEAN

*Dovetail Scotland
(Chairman & acting
treasurer)*

JIM BIRLEY

*Scottish Wood (Vice
Chairman)*

PATRICK BAXTER

The Wood Place

MALCOLM MACK

Angus & Mack

KEITH THREADGALL

*Keith Threadgall mobile
sawmilling*

GRAEME MURRY

Real Wood Studios

JOHN FERGUSON

Moyne Sawmill

This year has seen major developments with the Scottish Working Woods label. Readers will remember that the label was set up by ASHS and SFMA with FCS support some years ago to provide a guarantee of woodland products made in Scotland, by Scottish businesses, with local materials sourced from sustainably-managed woodlands.

Now, in addition to ASHS and SFMA we now have two other organisations joining, The Scottish Wild Harvests Association and The Scottish Basketmakers Circle.



Local. Ethical. Sustainable.

We are also looking to other associations representing small woodland-product based businesses in Scotland to join the label. 22 businesses around Scotland are licensed to use the label and more are in the pipeline. The website has been updated and procedures improved.

The "Getting Value for Local Woods" conference highlighted the need for a label for Scottish woodland products and gave renewed impetus to the project. The Scottish Working Woods label is a guarantee that a woodland product contains at least 90% Scottish grown raw material and that the raw material has been harvested sustainably or is from a sustainable source. The label can be used for any raw materials and products that derive from the woodland, these include: Timber, Furniture, Crafts, Food and Drink made from wild harvested ingredients, Plant Extracts and Seeds.

Use of the label will benefit both the environment and local Scottish people and communities in the following ways:

- Raising the profile and understanding the value of Scottish Working Woods products will help to finance and encourage good management of Scottish woodlands.
- The label supports local growing, harvesting, processing and production which in turn mitigates climate change and supports local economy and employment.
- The label endorses the value of local biodiversity, character and identity in the woodland resource.
- The 'chain of custody' from raw material to finished product brings producers, customers and communities into a meaningful relationship with each other and with Scottish woodlands.
- The label supports and promotes the value of traditions in the areas of woodland management, craftsmanship and use of resources, encouraging the development and retention of the skills associated with SWW products.

If you would like to apply for a licence to use the Scottish Working Woods label and are already a member of either the ASHS, SFMA, Scottish Wild Harvests or Scottish Basketmakers Association, please find the application form at www.scottishworkingwoods.org.uk

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 12th May

ASHS yard visit and meeting at Angus & Mack, Coulsland, Midlothian. EH22 2PE

Friday 8th September

Article deadline for Winter edition of The Full Circle

Friday 29th September

Secondary processing Course at Abbey Timber, Abbey St Bathans, Duns, Berwickshire, TD11 3TX

Friday 6th October

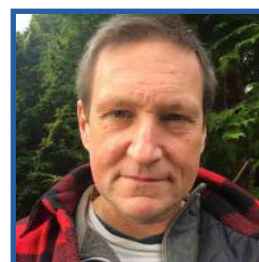
ASHS Annual General Meeting Venue TBC

Monday 16th October

Publication of Winter edition of The Full Circle



- Burr Elm coffee tables for RBG made by Dovetail Scotland, commissioned by Peter Goodwin / Woodland Heritage



Written by,

Nick Marshall

ASHS Coordinator

coordinator@ashs.uk



SFMA: 15 YEARS JOINED TOGETHER (WITH BISCUITS)

I can remember the exact moment that the SFMA came into being. I had a tiny stand at a show at the SECC and had just sold a narrow oak bookcase for £400 (probably labelled "crazy bargain" as my antiques often were). An old seadog watched the transaction and engaged me in conversation when I pocketed the cash. Tony Gill, an impecunious skipper living on his little boat in Ardfern told me that he was about to embark on a new career of furniture making. That was my queue to unleash a torrent of ideas about my dream of a cabinetmakers' association.

He listened patiently while I expounded all the advantages it would confer on its members, particularly the ability to defray the huge costs of exhibiting alone. Only a forceful few can stop me in full flow, but Tony managed to stop me in my tracks by simply agreeing that it sounded like the association of skippers that he belonged to which also shared joint exhibition costs (in prestigious London venues no less). As the Captain said his farewells, I realised that I would have to stop talking and actually launch the Scottish Furniture Makers Association.

It officially came into being at the first Scottish Woodfair held in Perth in May 2002. It was a wonderfully eccentric leap into the unknown. Literally unknown, for only four of us turned up, the skipper, myself, Toby Vint, whom I had never met, and Ronnie Morlan, whom not only had I never met, but who delivered his furniture and collected it after the show without ever making his presence known to the rest of us! The outrageousness of the enterprise was clear, for the SFMA stand was overshadowed by two others, those of Angus Ross and Peter Toaig. I encouraged Peter to join the association. He prophetically announced that he tended not to join things but was inclined to run them.

In those first few years the executive committee and the membership were effectively one and the same. The camaraderie was, not unsurprisingly, strong. Members were almost press ganged into hosting SFMA exhibitions in their home villages. I remember a group of us deciding that Dave Samuels would be the organiser of an exhibition at Kilbarchan. As chair, I bravely took responsibility for breaking the news to Dave that he had volunteered.

Tony had already genuinely volunteered to organise our exhibition in Ardfern and even put up some of the members in his workshop. I slept one night in my van and found it so bitterly cold that I hit upon the idea of sleeping in Rowland Ziervogel's exhibition bed. In the end, I had to confide in Graham Stewart who agreed not to tell if he got the other half. We remade the bed in the morning so carefully that I had to stifle a laugh when Rowland commented on how unusual it was to not find his bed wrinkled from visitors "testing" the mattress.

In these early days, our exhibitions were local and run by local members. I began at Hillhead Library in Glasgow's Westend. Brian Swankie organised one in St Andrews at the townhall. But none rival Rob Elliot for his organisation of numerous SFMA appearances in the Borders and at Leith, where we took over huge swathes of Ocean Terminal many times.

The association's homespun look and feel evolved into something more professional looking when Peter took over from me. His view of SFMA shows looking like an art gallery stemmed partly from his successful organisation of the One Tree Exhibition. He was supported by Alan Dalgety and Chris Scotland and I'll be damned if they still aren't the powerhouse behind our annual exhibitions well over a decade later! The show at St John's church at the junction of Lothian Road and Princes Street in Edinburgh has been officially designated our first "annual exhibition". It was underwritten by the finances of several of our members, such was their belief in the SFMA. Today the association is in far better financial condition. Our annual exhibitions are distinguished by being organised by ourselves. Mostly they have been held in the capital, including Greyfriar's Church, Dovecot and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, and a few times in Glasgow at Princes Square and the Lighthouse. With complete control over the layout and lighting, it is no exaggeration to say that the shows look stunning. I can say this because I have had no part to play in their layout and because I have twice taken part in the UK's most prestigious furniture exhibition, Celebration of



Craftsmanship and Design, in Cheltenham. Our shows are smaller and in less impressive spaces, but they compare well to CCD, which is to say that our lighting, backdrop and dressing (in so very many different spaces) is nothing short of first class. The furniture looks quite good too, as you might expect given that members have been shortlisted and won prizes at Visual Arts Scotland, TRADA and the Ketel One Modern Craft Project.

The itinerant nature of our annual exhibitions may have worked against us in terms of sales, as visitors are sometimes amazed to find us years later in a different place and a different time. But we have also taken stands at exhibitions run by others, such as the Scottish Woodfair (I believe we attended all of them), the Aberdeen Art Fair, many home show events at the SECC (Habitat once even provided us with an entire show space for a room set so impressed with us were they), and the Inverness Housing Expo (this was covered by Reporting Scotland and the then First Minister, Alex Salmond, was interviewed while sitting on one of our pieces of furniture). By moving about, there is no doubt that the association has become more widely recognised throughout Scotland.

There is, of course, much more to the association than furniture shows. There is our website. Who, today, is without a website? We also have a "social media" presence, but that means as much to me as saying that we employ the services of a "medium". We regularly advertise in print as well. I am unashamedly pleased to say that includes the Art Mag. Perhaps it is the being penniless that makes me think of cabinetmakers as sharing more in common with artists than designers. We also print our own directory. This little catalogue, so often funded by the Forestry Commission Scotland, is exceptionally useful. I received a commission from deepest Aberdeenshire from someone who found me in the directory which they had picked up at the Aberdeen Art Fair. Getting such a client is unimaginable without the SFMA.

I am being purposefully brief on the topic of advertising. In no small part this is because I am dubious about its efficacy. It is all too easy to spend lots of money on marketing. It looks good and feels "grown up". It is what businesses do. Its purpose is simple:

to bring in work, to sell our furniture. But it is no easy task to evaluate how well it works. Or if it works. Interestingly, the very question of how well advertising in magazines works was something that I envisaged members of the SFMA sharing with each other in paragraph one of "the aims of the association" on our very first application form. That first aim was "to provide members with information". That paragraph went on to promise several newsletters a year and, indeed, that is precisely what members got in the early years. I used to be a publisher and am overly fond of a good rant. So firing off two or three newsletters a year was no onerous task. Fifteen years later and I still believe that the SFMA's ability to share information on our experiences of the efficacy of advertising or social media is invaluable. I have never heard a cabinetmaker say that they placed an ad and now can't keep up with orders. I have, however, heard many say that they placed an ad and never heard a cheep.

The second aim of the association listed on that original application form was to facilitate cooperation among the members. I had envisaged the sale of excess machinery, the passing on of commissions, the renting of bench space and the possibility of shared transportation costs. I would later optimistically include the running of workshops for members on topics that were of widespread interest. All of this to be eased by the consumption of beer and curry. You might call it "networking", probably the most underrated benefit that the association offers its members. The majority of the woodworking machinery in my own workshop, for instance, comes from other SFMA members. My workshop has made a front door for another member's house. And I have subcontracted quite a lot of work to other members. Many SFMA members have worked in joint workshops or rented bench space to others, who sometimes go on to become further members of the association. All of this and the related savings are often overlooked when disgruntled, impoverished members suggest



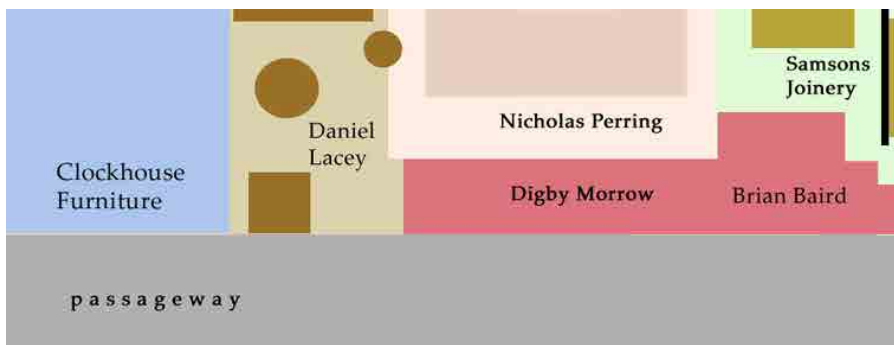
that membership fees are expensive and ask what do they get for their money. This low-level financial exchange between members is probably most important in terms of timber (not something that appears on that first application form). My workshop happily consumes vast quantities of American oak. I am not a man who loves the "woodiness of wood" as I often parody a cabinetmaker's mission statement. I want my furniture designs to be seen distinctly from the timber of the trees. So it comes as something of a surprise to me just how much Scottish wood has gone through my workshop. Not just beloved oak, but ash, elm and yew. And the latter two species in no small quantity either. I have bought timber from no fewer than seven different members of ASHS or SFMA and I think of myself as someone who rarely uses Scottish timber. I cannot begin to guess how much indigenous wood has traded hands between other members.

The SFMA has not only fostered strong connections with ASHS but has also undertaken timber conversion from trees felled by Glasgow City Council, Edinburgh City Council and the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh. This timber has been sold on to members and the products created from it featured in exhibitions. This has extended "networking" far further

than I had ever envisaged in 2002 at the first Scottish Woodfair. Pieces have been made for the two councils and for charities and city councillors have opened many of our shows. This has probably done our profession some good. It has certainly done those members who landed the commissioned pieces some financial good!

My tongue is not in my cheek. The very core reason for the existence of the SFMA has always been tangible benefits to its members. And that effectively means cash. A ten per cent discount on sandpaper may amount to no more than a tenner of savings. But it is real. A sliding table saw was once offered by a retiring SFMA member at nearly a grand under a comparable second-hand price at The Saw Centre. That saved someone a bundle. I don't think I have failed to sell a piece of furniture or take a commission at any of the seven annual exhibitions I have showed at, so how can I grudge an annual membership fee that has yet to reach a hundred quid? (It was only £12 on that first application form!)

Although this point may seem self-evident, it is not always so obvious to some. Quite a few years ago there was a move to create a UK-wide association of cabinetmakers. I was appalled, for the draft aims of the new association were completely airy-fairy and promised no concrete benefits for its members.



There was nothing about selling; there was nothing about exhibiting. There was, on the other hand, a great deal about lobbying the powers that be and educating the general public. Those proposing the new association wrote to me that it would not replace "regional" associations such as ours but that, as a British association, it would be more powerful and have a louder voice. I can truthfully say that calling the SFMA a regional organisation set me on my first steps to becoming a Nat! There are many regions of England with better

claims to long and honourable traditions of woodworking than Scotland. But the SFMA is easily the largest, best-organised, most-active association of cabinetmakers in the whole UK. By a long shot. And the reason is not hard to find. We are active. And we work for our own mutual good. Woe betide any future SFMA executive member who plans to spend my membership fees on educating the public about the role of woodworking in third-millennium Britain! And the notion of lobbying Westminster is just nonsense. We have had furniture exhibited in our parliament at Holyrood (Alex Salmond is reputed to have favoured Michel Huber's rocking chair). An SFMA member has made a bookcase for Holyrood's Presiding Officer, Ken Macintosh. MSPs have officially opened some of our annual exhibitions. As an amateur photographer I have taken pictures of Linda Fabiani, MSP for East Kilbride, receiving a carved wooden map of Scotland. Our ability to lobby politicians comes from us being active; they can see what we do, they can see us, they can talk to us. But what does lobbying amount to? I don't know. But I'm pretty sure it is pointless. To help Scottish cabinet makers, turning to Craft Scotland rather than the Culture Minister makes more sense. But having received so much support from the Forestry Commission Scotland over the years, it seems almost churlish to feel any further entitlement. Mostly the SFMA just gets on with it. That's why it has even more members now and the proposed UK-wide association, with its planned sermonising, never got off the ground.



It is a truism that our members make the association. This is literally the case. The association is its members. It is run by its members. And, as is often the case, so much is owed to so few. In addition to those whom I have name-checked already, I would like to add the names of John Johnston, Dave Powell, Tom Cooper, Jonathan Rose, Anna Nichols and the sadly missed Chris Holmes as having given more to the SFMA than they surely ever received.



Written by,

Ross Samson

I remember visiting the second annual exhibition at St John's church when my wife said to me "You must be quite proud." I didn't understand, since I had no furniture in the show. "Your baby has grown up", she added. And so it had. The SFMA was up and running without me. My baby is now a grown-up institution. I just wish it would send me a father's day card.



OVERVIEW AND HISTORY OF COMMUNITY WOODLANDS IN SCOTLAND

The Community Woodlands Association (CWA) was established in 2003: from 40 or so founding groups we've grown steadily over the years and new groups continue to arise, enthused by the woodlands they love and inspired by what they seek to achieve in them. There are about 200 community woodland groups across Scotland - the vast majority are CWA members - collectively they own, lease or are involved in the management of around 100,000ha of land, just under half of which is wooded.

Community woodlands have a long history in Scotland: the first community land buyout took place at Wooplaw in 1987, whilst the woods around Stornoway castle have been in community ownership since 1923. They can be found across the rest of the UK too, but the scale and scope of activity in Scotland far exceeds that in England, Wales or Northern Ireland.

This reflects our unique circumstances, and two strands of our recent history in particular: the ongoing Land Reform agenda, with its focus on increasing opportunities for community acquisition as a mechanism to address the inequalities and development failures arising from Scotland's extraordinarily concentrated patterns of land ownership; and the evolution of forest policy since the 1980s, notably the recognition that forestry needed to deliver greater social and environmental benefits and be more responsive to the needs of local communities

The community woodland movement also owes much to The Millennium Forest for Scotland Trust (MFST) and Reforesting Scotland (RS). MFST supported around 80 projects nationwide, a significant proportion of which were community woodland groups, whilst RS organised the inaugural community woodland conference at Laggan in November 2000. This event, the first opportunity to meet for many pioneering community woodlanders, was a great success and led, a couple of years later, to the establishment of the CWA.

Each community woodland group has its own story of how it came into being: very often this is a variation of one (or both) of two narratives: "Our woodland was threatened / neglected, and we needed to save it" and "Our community was in decline, and we needed to use the woodland to save it". The common theme of woodlands as a vehicle for collective community action and development is a key strength of the community woodland network, and of CWA, although within this big picture the individual groups display an extraordinary diversity: of communities, of woodlands and especially of activity.

Community woodland groups are found all across Scotland, from the outer islands and the highland glens to small towns and villages and the centres of our largest cities. Likewise the woods with which they engage encompass commercial conifer plantations, Victorian policies, ancient semi-natural pine forests and secondary woodland on abandoned industrial sites.



**Community
Woodlands
Association**



The balance of objectives for any community woodland, and thus the activities they carry out are driven by the needs and nature of the specific community and the woods they are engaged with, as well as the particular skills that groups members possess. Naturally these objectives are likely to evolve and develop over time as groups gain the confidence and capacity to take on new projects, or new community needs arise.

Almost all groups have been committed to environmental enhancement and to improving public access to ensure that as many of their community as possible can enjoy the benefits and get involved, but a number are now operating as broad-based woodland social enterprises driving rural development earning income and increasing employment from their woods, managing forests commercially and reinvesting surpluses locally for public benefit.

At Tighnabruaich in Argyll, Kilfinan Community Forest Company (KCFC) acquired 125 ha from Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) in 2010 and a further 434 ha in 2015. KCFC currently employs 8 staff (5 FTE), combining commercial forest management with the delivery of a wide range of projects, including a sawmill & firewood processing facility, a 75kW hydro scheme, allotments, community composting, a youth skills development programme, forest schools and a range of community engagement activities. Future projects include a woodland burial ground and the development of an events space. Most ambitiously, KCFC is seeking to address the local need for affordable housing: following the development of a master housing plan, the first phase of housing is in building control, with further phases to include more affordable homes and woodland crofts.

Some of the most striking successes of community woods have come in the delivery of social objectives. Abriachan Forest Trust acquired 534ha of forest and hill land above Loch Ness from FC in 1998 and now employs 9 staff (6FTE). The Trust has carried out extensive forest management, built 40km of paths and tracks and established a successful woodfuel business but is best known for pioneering a range of forest education and inclusion initiatives: running Forest School and Branching Out programmes and specialising in working with hard to reach individuals and groups of young people with poor mental health and other life issues.

Like Abriachan, Dunnet Forestry Trust, on the north Caithness coast, has developed a profitable woodfuel business from a previously uneconomic forest and has used a range of innovative installations, from bears and sculptures to totem poles and a 6m long xylophone, to encourage community engagement. As many groups have found, a building in the forest can become a focal point for activity; the Dunnet log cabin has proved very popular and is used for weddings, children's parties and Santa's grotto.

Some types of activity are dependent on access to large conifer plantations, but many groups with much smaller woods have taken forward innovative projects: Findhorn Hinterland Trust, on the Moray Firth, has established a green burial ground in their 12ha woodland, whilst the Vat Run in South Queensferry has worked with local mountain bikers

to develop a skills and trails area in 7ha of secondary broadleaf woods, right under the Forth Road Bridge.

The Children's Wood on North Kelvin Meadow is even smaller, occupying a city block no more than 150m square, but it comprises the last wild space in the west-end of Glasgow and is vitally important to the community, who organise a range of events designed to connect children to nature, raise aspirations and bring people together. A registered outdoor playgroup runs on Wednesday and Friday no matter what the weather, there's an Outdoor Learning Club every Saturday and regular Forest School Clubs for schools and the community.

Whilst the larger groups may employ staff, many community woodlands and their activities are run and delivered entirely by volunteers. Some groups are developing partnerships with the private sector and most if not all of the larger forest owners have relationships with private sector forest management companies. Community ownership is not inimical to private enterprise, indeed it can increase opportunities for local entrepreneurship, either directly through subcontracting or leasing, or indirectly through increased recreation facilities supporting local tourism businesses.

Community woodlands can also become a focus for collective action by a wider community. The Burn O'Fochabers woods, which lie alongside a tributary of the River Spey, suffered extensive damage from a flash flood in the autumn of 2009; the following spring a team from the Scottish Arboricultural Association, with invaluable support from a number of local businesses, helped restore the woodlands and the riverside walks. Other groups are developing relationships with local businesses through their Corporate Social Responsibility programmes.

Nationally, the operations of all these groups add up to a very significant level of activity and economic output, which CWA will be working to quantify in more detail in the coming year. This is all the more remarkable given that the woodlands that become available to communities are very often the "market failures": the scraps of urban woodland or the previously undermanaged plantations



in remote exposed locations, on poorer soils, with little diversity and limited opportunities for silvicultural intervention, written off as having little or no economic or environmental value. Across Scotland, community management has transformed some of our poorest, least regarded forests, and delivered an extraordinary range of projects in woods which their previous owners literally had no use for.

CWA's mission is twofold: to help community woodland groups achieve their aspirations and potential, and to represent and promote the community woodland movement. Our identity and agenda has evolved considerably since 2003, reflecting the great diversity and dynamism of woods and communities within our membership.

One of the great pleasures of working for CWA is the sheer variety of enquiries from members, from butterfly habitats and rhododendron control to footpaths and food growing to hydro schemes and woodland crofts, as well as all the governance and communication issues that go with running a community body. Naturally, we can't all be expert in all of these, so we've developed and delivered a training programme which has been responsible for over 100 events, whilst our annual conference remains a key learning, networking and ceilidh dancing opportunity. Wherever possible the training is delivered from within the community woodland network, unlocking the store of knowledge and expertise that has been accumulated by our members. These events help maintain the sense of collective endeavour which is crucial to the movement.

We're very pleased to be a partner in the UK wide, Lottery-funded Making Local Woods Work project which seeks to support around 50 woodland social enterprises (including ten in Scotland) to develop their business proposals. With austerity set to continue for the foreseeable future, it is vital that community groups develop sustainable income streams to support their activities.

The second element of our mission - representing and promoting community woodlands - is less visible but has never been more important, as we are facing unprecedented changes and challenges.

On the positive side, community ownership is high on the political agenda, with the Scottish government's very welcome commitment to the Scottish Land Fund, the ambitious target of 1 million acres in community ownership by 2020 and the implementation of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016. We have been heavily engaged in the legislative process, seeking to ensure that it succeeds in delivering its promises of greater opportunities and more power to communities.

The impact of Brexit is less clear. On the face of it, our exit from the Common Agricultural Policy should be an opportunity for a clean slate, the chance to fundamentally restructure the support mechanisms for land management in Scotland and develop a system whereby public money buys genuine public benefits. Unfortunately, the reverse appears more likely, as corporate capture of the process by industrial farming and food processing interests ensures that future support is focussed even more strongly on subsidising agribusiness.

There is also widespread concern about the impact of the proposed changes to Forestry Commission Scotland on future support for the delivery of social and environmental benefits.

FCS has been a strong supporter of community woodlands, but if, as suggested, the policy, grants and regulatory functions are absorbed into a division of the Scottish Government, it may not have the freedom or mechanisms to allow it to continue to promote such a broad and inclusive vision of Scottish forestry.

So there is still much to do, not least because whilst Scottish forest policy has changed, many of our nation's forests still suffer from chronic underinvestment and under-management. Moreover, in some quarters the perception remains that the underlying objective of "efficient" forest management is "how can we get wood to sawmills as cheaply as possible?" rather than "how can we get the most public benefit from our forests?" and "how can we make best use of every scrap of land and every stick of wood?"



In contrast, the desire to optimise public benefit and make best use of the land drive Scotland's community woodlands. They are careful to conserve what's precious to them: whether that is access and amenity, or biodiversity, or skills and crafts, but they are also innovative and inspirational, to unlock the creativity and imagination of their people to deliver more productive, sustainable woodlands and stronger, healthier communities.



Written by,

Jon Hollingdale
www.communitywoods.org



AFTER THE FIRE

My last article for The Full Circle was in the winter 2016 edition. I spent most of that article describing how I had become a furniture maker, the various stages of the business and ending with the events of November 2014, the great fire. As we move into 2017 what has happened at Baldy HQ and how has the previous life changes affected it? A tough question to answer as in some ways so much has changed but in others we are still here producing furniture for the same market.

I have spent a fair amount of time wondering just how big do I want the business to be? Not too big to become a mass production facility but big enough to allow me the time to enjoy running the business rather than chasing your tail for new orders every day. Back in January 2016 I began to wonder if employing somebody would help the business grow. I was receiving more and more enquiries which if placed would need at least two people to work on. Now I did have resources that I could call upon to assist but



they were always friends who were busy themselves so getting them to fit into the business calendar was difficult. I also had in mind the result of the fire. If someone had told you to walk out of your workshop and start again by investing a lump sum how would it affect your business? In my case I did this with the insurance claim. I started again with a lump sum. While it was devastating at the time it has actually allowed me to restart the business with the knowledge behind me of the previous years. The business went back together completely differently and in many ways better. So if investing a lump of money in your workshop can help, could the same be true of investing in a person? Maybe so but then you have to pay them!

We all talk about networking, blue sky thinking and looking outside of the box but what do these all mean? Well for me it means chatting and trusting as many varied people as possible to allow you to make a fully informed choice. I sat for ages reading online articles about employing staff. I asked other business owners what they thought. My father had his own business prior to retirement what was his experience. Everything came back to the same. If you employ the right person you will win, the wrong person and you will kill your business. For me this was the clincher for I had the right person. Graeme had previously asked to work for me and with us both doing scouting in the town the subject of him wanting to work at Baldy HQ was never far away. One thing led to another and Graeme started on May 1st 2016. Graeme has been involved in timber product production all of his working life. His knowledge base would, and is, a great asset to the business.



If you remember from my last article I started my working life in the rail industry. I have never worked in a woodworking facility and as such I don't have experience of machines and methods which exist out there. Graeme has been able to provide the link to that missing information.

An example of this is that I never had a spindle moulder in the workshop. My view is that they take fingers off. We were offered a spindle moulder for free but it had a bent shaft and the bearings were broken down. Not willing to be beat we asked the local engineer to turn us a new shaft and we discovered the bearings were off the shelf parts available from a local bearing supplies company. Marry this up to Graeme's knowledge and we now have a spindle moulder. Three weeks later and I wondered how I managed without it.

On a similar vein it was always in my grand plan to change the dimension saw. Graeme's experience yet again came to the fore and after a fair amount of searching by both of us a second hand Altendorf F45 made its new home in the workshop. Again it didn't take me long to acknowledge the business benefits in having this machine with its 3.2M sliding bed. For me it was about increasing production and lowering overheads. Yet again an investment made which enhances the business.

Since rebuilding the business my biggest new skill has been the understanding that whatever you do there must be a positive outcome to it. I continue to question my advertisers to establish what they are doing for me. How are you spending my money and what benefit does it bring. How can I lower my overheads and hence increase my profit? If I join an association what am I getting from it? These are all questions that crop up on a weekly basis for me. Yes I have plans but I will only implement these when I realize the positive outcome of them.

So what does the future hold at Baldy HQ? Well with the addition of the Altendorf a workshop rejig is necessary. Currently my timber stock is kept inside the workshop. This will move outside to an insulated container and hence free up floor space. We upgraded the dust extraction unit to a three bag unit so this will now eventually make its way outside with a fully ducted system inside. A local business in the industrial estate has been removing walk in freezers from large supermarkets. These are extremely difficult and costly to recycle but for us it can provide a fabulous walk in Kiln. We can use the panels and doors of the freezer to create a new kiln hence replacing the structure of our Suano kiln. New markets are always of interest to me and new methods of getting the business out there in the public eye will always be at the forefront of my mind. In regards to challenges I will have a good few more to overcome. Becoming Vat registered will be the next one. Any advice out there?

So to quote Susane Colasanti

“And I just think that if you believe in something and you want it so much and you're not hurting anyone else, you have to go for it. Which sometimes means taking a risk, even if it's scary. But the thing you want most to happen doesn't stand a chance unless you give it one.”

Now as I finish this article I urge everyone reading this to stop and think about your business and ask yourself just what if? You might be surprised at your answer.

Written by

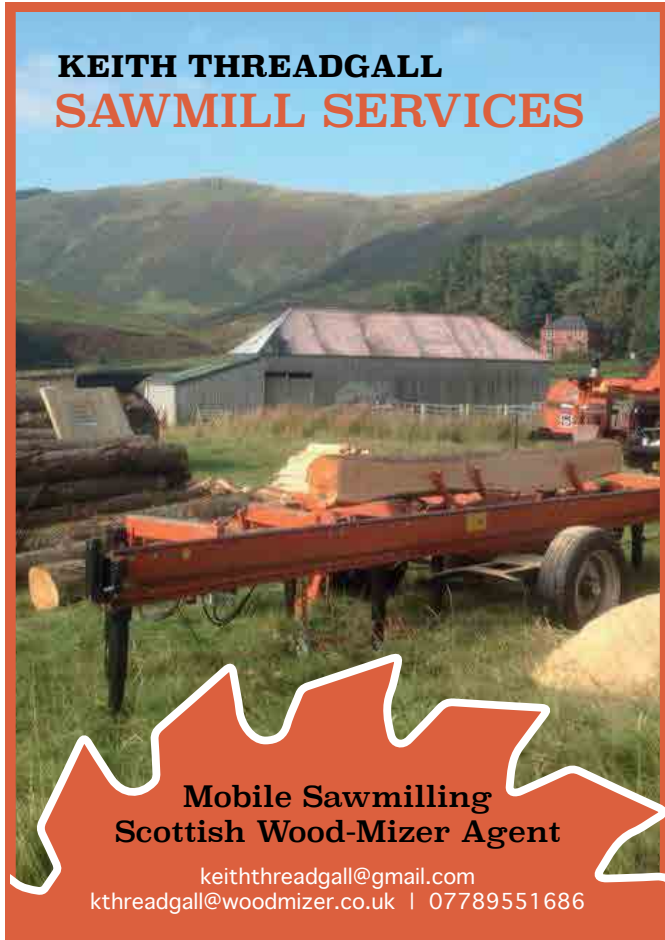
Fraser and Graeme

www.thebaldycarpenter.co.uk



- Elm chest of drawers





**KEITH THREADGALL
SAWMILL SERVICES**

**Mobile Sawmilling
Scottish Wood-Mizer Agent**

keiththreadgall@gmail.com
kthreadgall@woodmizer.co.uk | 07789551686



**RF Brown
CONTAINERS**

R.F Brown LTD
Leckie Drive,
Allanshaw Industrial Estate,
Hamilton, ML3 9FN

For all storage container enquires call us on
01698 537747

 Find us on facebook www.rfbrown.co.uk



MAKAR

**Design and delivery of bright,
warm and healthy homes**

We offer a full design and delivery service from initial discussions with customers through site appraisal, concept and all stages of design, submission of planning and warrant applications, house manufacture, site assembly, finishing and handover - all from our Inverness-based offices and workshops.

www.makar.co.uk 01463 709 993

Saw & Tooling Services (Est 1987)



**QUALITY • SERVICE • SALES
MANUFACTURE • REPAIR**



Wadkin BER 3



Wadkin 12 BAOS



CSE Woodburner

ALL machines shown are currently available stock machines

- Extensive 6500 ft² Showroom and Grinding facilities.
- Over 500 Trend products available ex stock.
- Over 100 industrial and Craft saw blades always ex stock.
- Large display of reconditioned woodworking machinery
- Quality German Power Tool stockists Festool, Mafele, Fein ,and Metabo.
- CNC Regrinding facilities using Vollmer and Walter grinding centres
- Bespoke profile grinder services using CNC and CAD Technology.
- Trend, Whitehill and Omas spindle tooling stockists
- Huge selection of Joinery consumables.
- Dust Extraction, Woodburning Stoves and briquetters.



Wadkin 350 BRA



Wadkin MF Chain & Chisel Mortiser



Wadkin DM Mortiser



Wadkin C7 Bandsaw



Brookman Dovetailer



Wadkin s400 Surfacer

Unit 4, 48 Dryden Terrace, Loanhead, Midlothian, EH20 9JL

Telephone: 0131 448 0207

www.sawandtooling.co.uk

THE ISLE OF EIGG HERITAGE TRUST

The Isle of Eigg has had a colourful and often turbulent past but what has happened in more recent years will undoubtedly be recorded as a major landmark in its history.

Twenty years of one owner who although his time started out well, descended into disagreements, threatened evictions, redundancies, lack of security and a general air of despondency. He was followed by another who spent a total of 4 days on the island in his 2 years of ownership, was investigated for fraud, failed to pay remaining estate workers and didn't honour any of his promises. Both experiences eventually convinced everyone that community ownership was the only way forward.

In the years leading up to the buyout, the Isle of Eigg Residents Association (which represents every adult member of the community) conducted many workshops covering every aspect of life on the island and recording what residents regarded as most important and how they saw the future. Also during that time, the Highland Council and Scottish Wildlife Trust (who had had a presence on the island for a number of years) expressed an interest in being involved and islanders welcomed their input.



The opportunity finally arrived in July 95 when it was announced that the island was "Up for Sale" - with a price tag of £2 million!

Because most of the groundwork had already been done, we were able to move swiftly. On August 17th 1996, with journalists from every major newspaper and TV channel in Britain in attendance, we launched our public appeal. That's when the hard work really started! We set up a database with as many names and addresses we could think of and started to send out leaflets. Likewise the Highland Council distributed the leaflets through libraries and other public buildings, and the SWT produced a separate leaflet (with the emphasis more on conservation) that was sent out to members of all of the 47 wildlife trusts nationwide.

The response was totally overwhelming - letters of support and donations began to flood in from all over the world and the phones rang constantly. Not only was there total commitment from the people of Eigg but also from politicians who brought the matter up in Parliament. Friends hosted fund raising events and musicians organised benefit ceilidhs all over Scotland and as far away as Detroit!

But fundraising and donations were not going to be enough on their own to meet the purchase price. We had applied to the Heritage Lottery Fund too and our campaign suffered a serious blow our funding application to them was turned down, just days before we were due to put our bid in. But as the closing date for bids approached, salvation came in the form of an anonymous donor who wished to pledge £750,000!!

On the 28th November Mark Cherry, chairman of our residents association was followed by television cameras as he made his way to the office of Knight Frank in Edinburgh to hand in our bid of £1.2 million (well below the asking price but based on a professional valuation). Two days later we learnt that our bid had not been accepted, as it failed to reach the highly inflated asking price of £2 million. Although obviously disappointed we were by no means dispirited - the fund raising continued - helped enormously by the continuing interest and support of the world's media.



By the beginning of March 1997, the Appeal had reached £1.5 million and we felt ready to put a second bid on the table. Weeks went by with no response and then the break we were needing finally happened. Due to the current owner defaulting on a loan, creditors



had obtained the legal right to take over the sale of the island. The island had to be re-advertised but the sale would be concluded within one month.

The moment we had worked towards for so long finally came at 4pm on Friday 4th April 1997 with the phone call to say our bid had been accepted! Within minutes everyone on Eigg had heard the news, a few minutes more so had the rest of the world!

The minute the celebrations were over it was back to work, we had until the official hand over date of 12th June 1997 to write to everyone who had made a pledge asking them to send the money as soon as possible. We needn't have worried - the pledges flooded in and much more besides and the deal was concluded.

The official hand over ceremony took place on 12th June 1997 and was certainly the biggest celebration Eigg had ever witnessed. Approximately 400 people

from all over Britain braved the wind and rain to be with us as the commemorative plaque was unveiled by the island's two oldest residents. Politicians, councilors, conservationists and members of the community made emotional speeches, the primary schoolchildren sang a Gaelic song and some of Scotland's best musicians entertained us well into the early hours. A day to remember!

As we look to the 20th anniversary, it seems timely to take stock and to consider just how much has been achieved.

During the first year, much thought was given to security of tenure with long term leases agreed with all existing Trust tenants and tenants of the 3 farms. Because of community consultation, it was apparent that a new shop and tearoom were high of the list of priorities, as both businesses were currently operating in sub-standard buildings.

The first subsidiary, Eigg Trading Ltd was created and with assistance from Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE). Its first major project, An Laimhrig, was built containing 3 business units ~ shop/PO, tearoom and craft shop, each of which is leased to local residents. The building also included toilets and showers available for use by visiting campers and yachts.

An Laimhrig was completed within budget and was opened on our first anniversary ~ a great sense of pride and achievement.

The second subsidiary is Eigg Construction which was created to undertake renovation work on Trust properties. Over the years, a total of 7 renovations have been completed, with all labour being provided by local residents. This is a good example of the benefits of community ownership i.e. improving our assets and living conditions for tenants whilst also creating employment.





By far the most ambitious and costly project has been the creation of our own renewable energy scheme ~ Eigg Electric Ltd. Previously there was no mains grid with most households relying on individual diesel generators. Several years in the planning and fundraising, a unique system was established combining wind, water and solar with underground cable providing 24 hour power to every house on the island. A huge amount of effort went into the project and it's continuing success can be attributed to the contractors and residents who worked tirelessly to make it happen. The system was switched on in November 2006, has gone on to win several awards and continues to attract visits from interested parties worldwide.

There is now a team of 6 (1fte) who check on the system twice daily and are now trained sufficiently to be able to identify and remedy any problems.

The island also has approx 380 ha of forest land consisting of a mixture of maturing commercial forestry plantation, mature policy woodland and native woodland. Initially, many miles of fencing were erected around existing woodland to exclude stock and encourage natural regeneration. A programme of felling was initiated to re-instate an area of SSSI bog and the trees chipped to create paths throughout the woodland, with hardwoods being planted to replace plantation conifers.

More recently felling has been used to supply local firewood requirements but this is an area we hope to develop further with a more robust wood-fuel business. We are currently working on a plan to manage the woodland for the next 20 years.

In 2007, we entered Nesta's "Big Green Challenge" ~ a competition designed to challenge communities to look at ways of innovative and replicable ways of reducing carbon emissions. From 350 applicants, we were chosen as one of 10 communities given a year and some funding to put their ideas into practice. The community totally engaged in the process which led to a flurry of activities ranging from running a green festival, purchase of bicycles to installation of solar water heating tubes and polytunnels to extend the growing season. Much to our delight, we became one of the three joint winners with a prize of £300,000. To date the money has mainly gone towards extending our electricity system with an additional 40kWh of photovoltaic panels.

IEHT has also made house plots available under a shared ownership scheme which has enabled 6 new houses to be built and we are hoping to build 4 new houses for rent under the Scottish Government's Rural Housing Scheme

There are many more smaller projects e.g. renovation of our community hall, creation of our own broadband system, to name but a few.

Make no mistake, it isn't a decision to be taken lightly ~ there's a huge amount of work involved and Eigg's success is undoubtedly due in part to the many hours put in by volunteers. Has it been worth it? Most definitely ~ to see the islands infrastructure improve, to see the population rise steadily from 64 in 97 to 100 today including some of our young people returning to the island and starting families of their own and to see an atmosphere of security which has encouraged the creation of many small, independent businesses is the difference between night and day.



The Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust is a partnership between Isle of Eigg Residents Association, The Highland Council and the Scottish Wildlife Trust.

It is a company limited by guarantee and is a recognised Scottish Charity



Written by,

Maggie Fyffe
www.isleofeigg.org



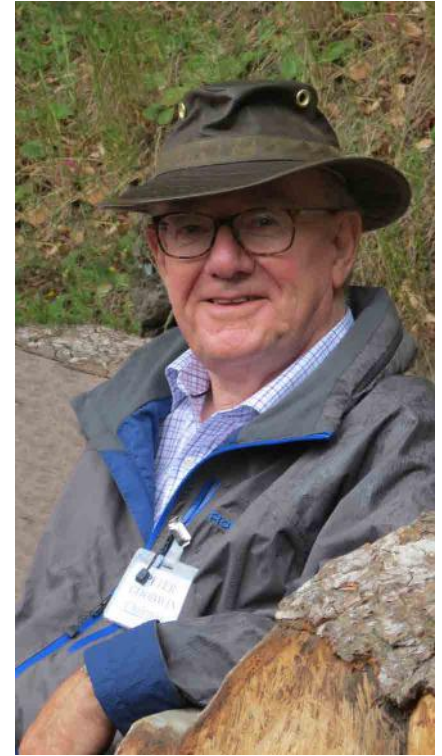
PETER GOODWIN

It is with much sadness we report that Peter Goodwin passed away on 18 March.

Peter was the charismatic Chairman of Woodland Heritage, the ex-Director of long standing and highly respected family firm of cabinet furniture makers Titchmarsh and Goodwin, and a champion of British timber and Forestry.

In 1994, Peter felt it was time to “give something back to the forestry sector”, to try and help safeguard British woodlands for future generations and future furniture makers. To further his vision he co-founded Woodland Heritage - a charity that works to revive and embrace our woodland culture. As Chairman of Woodland Heritage, Peter worked tirelessly for over 23 years, securing its founding, the patronage of HRH The Prince of Wales and inspired its numerous activities. Through Peter’s endless personal enthusiasm and passion, the charity developed its highly successful ‘Woodland to Workshop’ courses, communicated the importance of woodland management at numerous field visits and raised awareness across the sector and within Government of the threats to British woodlands. Peter was able, combining his charm and diplomacy with his business acumen, to secure over £2 million for research into Acute Oak Decline. In 2010 he was awarded the Royal Forestry Society’s (RFS) most prestigious award, the RFS Gold Medal for Distinguished Services to Forestry.

Peter was enthusiastic and thrived on getting things done - the embodiment - and originator of - Woodland Heritage’s mantra of ‘Action not Words’. He was outspoken in his views and was never afraid to highlight what he felt needed doing - and what did not - and revelled in being direct in his views. There are many people who will recall Peter’s jocular yet



challenging chairing of Woodland Heritage’s field meetings - and when Peter was holding the microphone there was always going to be a series of interesting asides, challenges to conventional thought as well as encyclopaedic attention to detail and knowledge. Peter was always willing to say what many others thought, but were not confident in doing so, but Peter always spoke with great conviction, fairness and a steely glint in his eye. He was also great company, a passionate communicator and time spent in his company was always richly rewarding. He was great fun to be with.



Peter was also keen to broaden and deepen the charity’s Scottish links and was proud to have had an association with ASHS through its innovative sawyers and fine Scottish makers. The two fine tables made of Scottish Elm by Dovetail Scotland, which stand in the entrance of the Royal Botanical Gardens Edinburgh, will be an enduring memory of his legacy.

Peter was an inspiration to all that met him and he will be sorely missed by all who knew him. Our sincerest condolences go to Peter’s wife, Sally, and his family.

Written by,

Lewis J Scott
Co founder of Woodland Heritage



AFTER THE STORM EXHIBITION

After the Storm opened on 2nd December 2016 at the John Hope Gateway gallery. About 100 guests attended the preview on 1st December, including members of ASHS, Woodland Heritage, Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS), Creative Scotland (CS), Craft Scotland, V&A Dundee, RBGE and SFMA.

Jo O'Hara, Director of FCS, Janet Archer Director of Creative Scotland and Guy Corbett Marshall Development Director of Woodland Heritage addressed the guests.

Jo O'Hara left a clear message that storms create much damage, even on the scale of commercial forests, but it is something we know about and need to plan for. It is important to accept the events as an opportunity for learning and change. She said this exhibition shows that within the trees there is wood from which skilled makers can produce very useful and beautiful things.

- Simon Whatley (kitchen table for Maggie's Centre)



- Colin Semple (Windblown, console table - chestnut, Norway maple)



Digby Morrow - Jewellery box - chestnut



- Joachim King (record player - fumed chestnut)



Tom Cooper - Console table - oak



- Stephen Finch (Writing Desk - sycamore, oak, chestnut)

Janet Archer celebrated the creativity that is present in Scotland. She spoke powerfully about the regenerative power of creativity and in particular how Creative Scotland prioritizes partnerships. In this exhibition Creative Scotland supported the commission of the kitchen table for the Maggie's Centre.

Woodland Heritage is a charity which aims to conserve the woodland of the nation by widening the skills and knowledge base of people working with trees. The flagship Woodland to Workshop course is offered in May to deepen the understanding of what it takes to make fine and useful wood for furniture. For those interested this is the link website: www.woodlandheritage.org.

As well as furniture, is a collection of drawings by Jane Hyslop and aerial photographs by Patricia McDonald. The drawings are a delicate portrayal examining flora in the forest after storm damage while the photographs show the visible effects on the landscape of storm in Glen Feshie.

A small book, supported by Woodland Heritage, is being published with photographs and words addressing the theme of renewal and recovery which will be available in March from the John Hope Gateway shop.

The exhibition of furniture, photographs and drawings is in the John Hope Gateway, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh until 26th May 2017. The majority of the furniture pieces in the exhibition will be available for sale throughout the run of the show.

Here are pictures of the pieces photographed on the site of each tree from which they are made. All photographs were taken by Pavel Tamm of www.paveltamm.co.uk



- Daniel Lacey (Still Water, console table - chestnut)



Alasdair Wallace - Revival tables - sycamore



Gavin Robertson - Phoenix Cabinet - oak



- Jonathan Rose & Gavin Robertson (Tsunami, chest cabinet - atlas cedar, oak)



- Angus Ross (Revival bench - oak)



Scottish
Furniture
Makers
Association



Written by,

Jonathan Rose

www.scottishfurnituremakers.org.uk



NORTH WEST MULL COMMUNITY WOODLANDS

The 699 Ha that make up North West Mull Community Woodlands are unusual in many ways - perhaps the most significant is that they were the first to be sold to a community body under the National Forest Land Scheme in 2006 by Forestry Commission Scotland. Also of major significance is the distinctive view taken of the use and management of the woodlands. Although primarily conifer plantations with little amenity or production infrastructure when purchased, the Community's objectives were to develop the amenity value whilst maximising the commercial return and diversifying the land use. Overall open space and broad leaf planting will be doubled.

In order to achieve this the business plan was designed so that each element was free standing with priority given to creating links to the A road network for what were isolated woodlands. Working with the Local Authority, FES, SSTTS and Harvesting Partners Tilhill Forestry more than 16 Km of haul route have been constructed and 3 km of public road reinforced - which will allow more than 600,000 tonnes of landlocked timber to be brought to market from various forest owners in North West Mull over the next 17 years.

Historically, virtually all of Mull's timber has been exported via Caledonian MacBrayne ferries but the community decided that, to enhance the value of the product and to save a significant number of road miles (168,000 to date), all product would be exported via either a floating pier or the new FES fixed pier when it was completed. This was some 2 years after production commenced.



Value is also being added to the Community's timber by the use of a Woodmizer that was purchased in partnership with 4 other land owners and is managed by NWMCW. We have a small but not insignificant local market for raised beds, shed cladding, gate and fence timber and we've also supplied timber for more interesting projects like Douglas Fir for a kitchen and Noble Fir for a boat's mast. Species choice for restructuring the woodlands is important. Rather than replicate the monoculture of Sitka plantations, a higher proportion of mixed conifer will create significant landscape benefits as well as providing premium softwoods for high quality use - these will include Caledonian pine, Western Red Cedar, Douglas and Noble Fir.

Significant areas of woodland were planted with Lodgepole Pine including some 80 Ha of Blanket Bog. To add value to the product from these areas and to maximise the value of small round wood and other fuel wood the company purchased the business of the Island's only wood chip producer, which complements the existing cut and split log operation. Future planting and harvesting policy is being reviewed in the light of both the potential margin benefits and carbon savings that can be realised by retaining biomass on the island and processing as an alternative to shipping inferior timber for slim or almost nil margins. A processing facility for the woodchip operation to replace the unit currently leased from the previous owner of the business is to be built within the woodlands, again utilising a non-planted area alongside the haul route.



Management of 32 Ha of clear fell woodland has been undertaken by creating 9 forest crafts all of which have the potential to provide bases and affordable house sites for families that wish to develop their own small businesses. Overall responsibility for compliance with the Long Term Forest Design Plan remains with the Community Company.



To that end any use of the forest crofts will have to ensure that at least 80% of each croft is retained as woodland and that the management is compliant with UKWAS but many uses are proposed from tree nursery to orchards and market gardening to performance spaces and small scale pig breeding. All of our crofts are now let and the tenants have begun the difficult task of creating some structure in what was plantation.

To fulfil the community's other objectives detailed examination of existing open spaces and land adjacent to fence lines etc. was undertaken. This has resulted in creation of a Forest Schools area, the creation of an orchard and raised bed



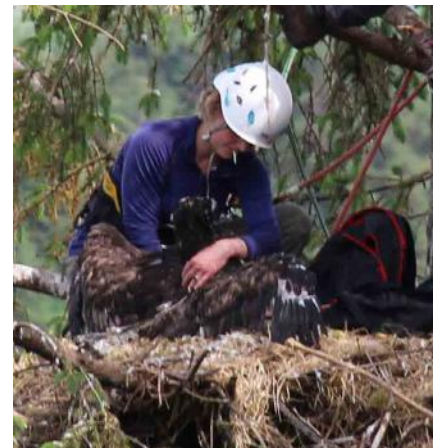
gardens for the local Primary school.

Initial discussions with the Local Authority during the purchase process identified an area of 4.2 Ha (more than 1/2 of which is open space) which was included in the Local Plan and is soon scheduled for development of affordable housing which is urgently required in the area.

Continuing the process of diversification the community has identified a Micro Hydro generation site which is in the process of



development and will underpin the overhead cost of running the enterprise as well as a site for Woodland Burials to meet a significant local demand.



A full access and amenity feasibility study was undertaken in 2011 which forms the basis for the future development of additional walks, increased excavation and interpretation of known Archaeological sites.

In 2016, NWMWCW began operating a White Tailed Eagle viewing facility within the woodlands as part of the successful Mull Eaglewatch partnership. Partnering with RSPB, FCS, SNH, Police Scotland and Mull and Iona Community Trust both of the island's community forests brought visitors in to the woodlands to enjoy Ranger led activities. The project was successful in winning both the Highlands and Islands tourism award for Innovation in Tourism and also RSPB's Nature of Scotland award for Nature Tourism.

This project will continue throughout 2017.

Since 2006, the Board of Directors, made up of members of the community, balance the environmental and commercial requirements of running two woodlands



Written by,

Malcolm Ward
Developmenty Manager
www.nwmullwoodland.co.uk



DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT ON DEVELOPING FORESTRY IN SCOTLAND:

24th January 2017



Forestry Commission Scotland
Coimisean na Coilltearachd Alba

The debate covered the Scottish Government's ambitious approach to deliver the full potential of forestry in Scotland. In doing so it reflected on the wide contribution that forests and woodlands already make and on progress with new woodland creation and the means by which more can be delivered from forestry in Scotland.

Motion for debate

That the Parliament acknowledges the contribution that woods and forests make to Scotland's people, communities, economy and environment; notes Ministers' intention to complete the devolution of forestry so that the management of forestry in Scotland is fully accountable to Ministers and to the Scottish Parliament; welcomes the future increase in the Scottish Government's annual target to create 15,000 hectares of woodland per year; recognises that forestry has an important role to play in achieving Scotland's climate targets; and calls on the Scottish Government to take effective action in order to deliver the target and maintain the National Forest Estate as an asset for the nation.

The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity (Fergus Ewing): [with some minor editing]

"Trees cover 18 per cent of the land area of Scotland. Our forestry resources represent 45 per cent of the United Kingdom total and 60 per cent of UK softwood production. Forestry contributes almost £1,000 million a year to the Scottish economy and it supports 25,000 full-time equivalent jobs. Private plantings cover more than 965,000 hectares, and the national forest estate covers 640,000 hectares—some 8.2 per cent of Scotland.

Those impressive statistics emphasise the enormous importance of woods and forests to Scotland's people, communities, economy and environment, and they explain this Government's unequivocal commitment to forestry and to maintaining the national forest estate. That commitment is backed by ambition, which we now want to extend. Having considered the progress that has been made towards meeting the annual planting target of 10,000 hectares, we have extended our ambition. The draft climate change plan that was published last week by my colleague Roseanna Cunningham proposes to increase that target so that, by 2024-25, we are creating 15,000 hectares of woodland a year.

As one of very few economic activities that absorb more carbon than they produce, and one that supplies low-carbon materials for building, forestry is crucial to our environmental objectives. Trees remove about 10 million tonnes of CO₂ each year, and are home to more than 200 plant, bird and animal species, including some that are unique to Scotland.

Some will rightly question that increased target, given that, as I fully acknowledge, we have not yet managed to meet the previous annual target, but I hope to be able to reassure them today about why I consider the new target to be achievable.

We are putting in place all the necessary components for success: funding, appetite, process, innovation, land, skills and political will. We intend to increase the financial support that is available for tree planting and management from £36 million to £40 million in the current year and I will seek to take every opportunity, resources and future budgetary pressures allowing, to seek to invest more funding in planting, and to be an advocate there anent.

Although our target has been challenging, a lot of tree planting has been happening in Scotland. Between 2007 and 2015, this Government supported the creation of more than

54,000 hectares of new woodland with investment of more than £230 million.

Our globally renowned processing sector has also made significant, welcome investments in recent years, which is a sure sign of confidence in and by the industry. That includes firms such as James Jones & Sons, and inward investors such as Norbord. In 2015, the timber harvest was nearly 7 million tonnes—seven times the size of the 1976 harvest. Interest in investment in forestry in Scotland is growing steadily. In 2015-16, Scotland created 83 per cent of all new woodland in the UK. Timber production in Scotland has grown by 23 per cent since 2007 and timber availability is projected to expand further to 11.9 million cubic metres by 2025.

The streamlining of processes is enabling that trend. The new forestry grant scheme has been well received. Since the scheme opened in October 2015, Forestry Commission Scotland has approved more than 7,400 hectares of new planting; 71 per cent of that approved planting is productive, while 29 per cent focuses on other benefits, such as biodiversity or flood alleviation.

We can streamline the approval process further and create more certainty for investors.

The availability of land is also key. Currently, Scotland has only 18 per cent forest cover, compared with 37 per cent for the European Union as a whole—twice as much—and 31 per cent worldwide. A study has shown that 30 per cent of our land is suitable for growing trees, without using prime agricultural land or planting on important conservation sites. There is clearly room for growth.

I believe that the case for increased woodland creation is compelling, but I know that others remain to be convinced. Some are particularly concerned about the prospect of a return to 1980s practices when a monoculture approach to conifer plantation was implemented.

Let me be clear. The Government will not oversee any return to the bad old days of blanket forest planting. Ours is a modern vision, in which woodland expansion must respect modern standards of sustainable management, such as the UK forestry standard. We will work closely with local authorities and communities to tackle the issue of the availability of land.

We also want sustainable, mixed land use, which is why I am pleased to support the work on sheep and trees that is being led by the National Sheep Association to promote the benefits of tree planting for sheep farming. That does not mean sacrificing one land use for another. Farming and forestry can work well together when managed in an integrated way. Scotland has plenty of land that is not prime agricultural land or valuable habitats for wildlife and where planting trees is absolutely the right thing to do. That will be our focus.

To meet our tree-planting ambitions, we must keep skilled professionals working across all sectors. We need more young people to take up careers and opportunities in forestry and to join the many forestry apprentices who are now working in the sector. The work of organisations such as the Scottish Forest and Timber Technologies industry leadership group, Outdoor and Woodland Learning Scotland and Lantra is crucial in that regard. We should use all available powers and levers to establish modern statutory and operational arrangements to support this valuable and growing sector.

That is why I intend to introduce a bill in this parliamentary session to complete the devolution of forestry and provide a new legislative framework. Although we have consulted on our draft proposals and are currently considering responses, I want to reach out across Parliament to offer to work with members to get that framework and those arrangements right.

Our aim is to preserve the knowledge, skills and expertise that we have in place and to ensure that those are deployed to best effect in localities and communities. However, we want to build on the success of Forest Enterprise Scotland to create an enhanced development and management body that will allow us to maintain and, indeed, grow the national forest estate as an asset for the nation.

Forest Enterprise Scotland is already a partner with the private sector and communities in the management of land, supporting 11,000 jobs, many in rural areas. That work involves spending over £50 million with predominantly small and medium-sized enterprises working on the estate. The estate also supports over 100 projects with rural and urban communities on work including urban regeneration, renewable energy, affordable housing, leisure, recreation, mountain biking and opportunities for community businesses. I hope and am sure that I will receive many examples of those good works from members across the chamber during the debate.

To date, managing the estate has involved small, discrete purchases and disposals of appropriate land and forests, and that careful approach will continue. We should also, however, consider how to make best use of the resources that are realised from such sales.

If we are to develop fully the potential of trees, woods and forests for Scotland, and if we are to increase their contribution to our communities, our economy and our environment, we need to work together. I hope that we can do so in this Parliament. However, there is a greater role for people and communities to play. Currently, over 200 community groups all over Scotland are involved in managing woodlands and forests. I intend to ensure that many more are involved and included in the future. I want to add to the success of the 31 communities that already own over 10,000 acres transferred under the national forest land scheme.

The largest forest owner in Scotland is in fact the Government. The Government wants to see ownership increasingly devolved to communities. Today, I can advise that Forest Enterprise Scotland is developing a new community asset transfer scheme—a digital resource to provide more information and support to communities that are seeking to buy or lease parts of the national forest estate.

To conclude, modern Scottish forestry is indeed a rare thing. It is a win for communities, a win for the economy and a win for the environment. Our forests come in all shapes and sizes: the productive spruce forests of Galloway, the iconic native pinewoods in my constituency and treasured small pockets of well-used local woodlands and glens scattered throughout our villages, towns and cities.

A study by WWF that was published in 2016 highlights the challenges. Unless we produce more of our own timber and reduce dependency on imports, the current ratio of domestic to imported supply can be supported only until 2030. If we do not plant more trees, the UK will by 2050 be importing nearly 80 per cent of the timber to meet its demand. Surely we should all work together to tackle that.

That is why, in moving the motion in my name, I seek the support of everyone in the Parliament in a shared national endeavour to develop fully the enormous potential offered by planting more forestry and woodland.

I move.”

ASHS & SFMA members play their part in this—in processing and using hardwood and niche softwood timbers they create jobs and economic benefits. A challenge to the sector is to capture the related numbers to help promote just what it does for Scotland plc.



Written by,
Derek Nelson
FCS Policy Advisor
www.scotland.forestry.gov.uk

NICHE MARKET NEWS

As mentioned in the Winter 2016 edition of the Full Circle, Forest Enterprise Scotland are developing a dedicated specialist timber sale event which will take place every November and allow a broad range of customers to view and purchase timber. In recent months, I have been seeking sales information from the ten Forest Districts in Scotland and building a sale portfolio composed of hardwood and large diameter softwood logs. Once confirmation of the overall sale is made, I will be proactive in advertising the sale and to how customers can make purchases which will be by a new and improved electronic sales platform. The main emphasis of the new sales system is to make the process user friendly by being detailed about the timber on offer and giving a simple means of undertaking transactions. With the advance of electronic sales platforms, we may in the future also submit more random sales of small timber parcels by uploading details straight onto a forum which will increase access to specialist timber.

Aberfoyle oak plank project

Situated behind Cowal & Trossachs Forest District office is an ancient Oak woodland which has historical connections spanning as far back as AD884. Currently this remnant woodland is being carefully managed to encourage regeneration through fencing and undertaking periodic small scale thinning to develop tree canopies and increase light levels on the woodland floor.

During the last thinning which took place some six years ago, a mature windblown oak was recovered and taken to the nearby Forest Office depot. The log sat until November 2016 the services of a local mobile band saw operator were engaged and thirteen 2 inch boards were cut from the 4.5 meter log. As with any sawmilling where speculative dimensions are involved, there is an element of risk in securing customers however with some concerted marketing locally and further afield, boards have been steadily sold. Selling air dried boards is limiting in terms of furniture makers who require a moisture content of 12 percent or lower, the Aberfoyle boards have a moisture content of 18 percent which makes them suitable for outside joinery without further drying. In marketing the boards, each board was labelled and sold according to its particular dimensions with a fixed price put against it. Over the past couple of months purchases have been made by builders, an architect and members of the public and to date over £900,000 pounds has been made from this single characterful log. For Forest Enterprise Scotland, this type of adding value approach is more a project than a bold new marketing approach but the exercise does prove that by adding value to timber and effectively marketing the product, a good return can be achieved.



- Sawn oak boards at Aberfoyle

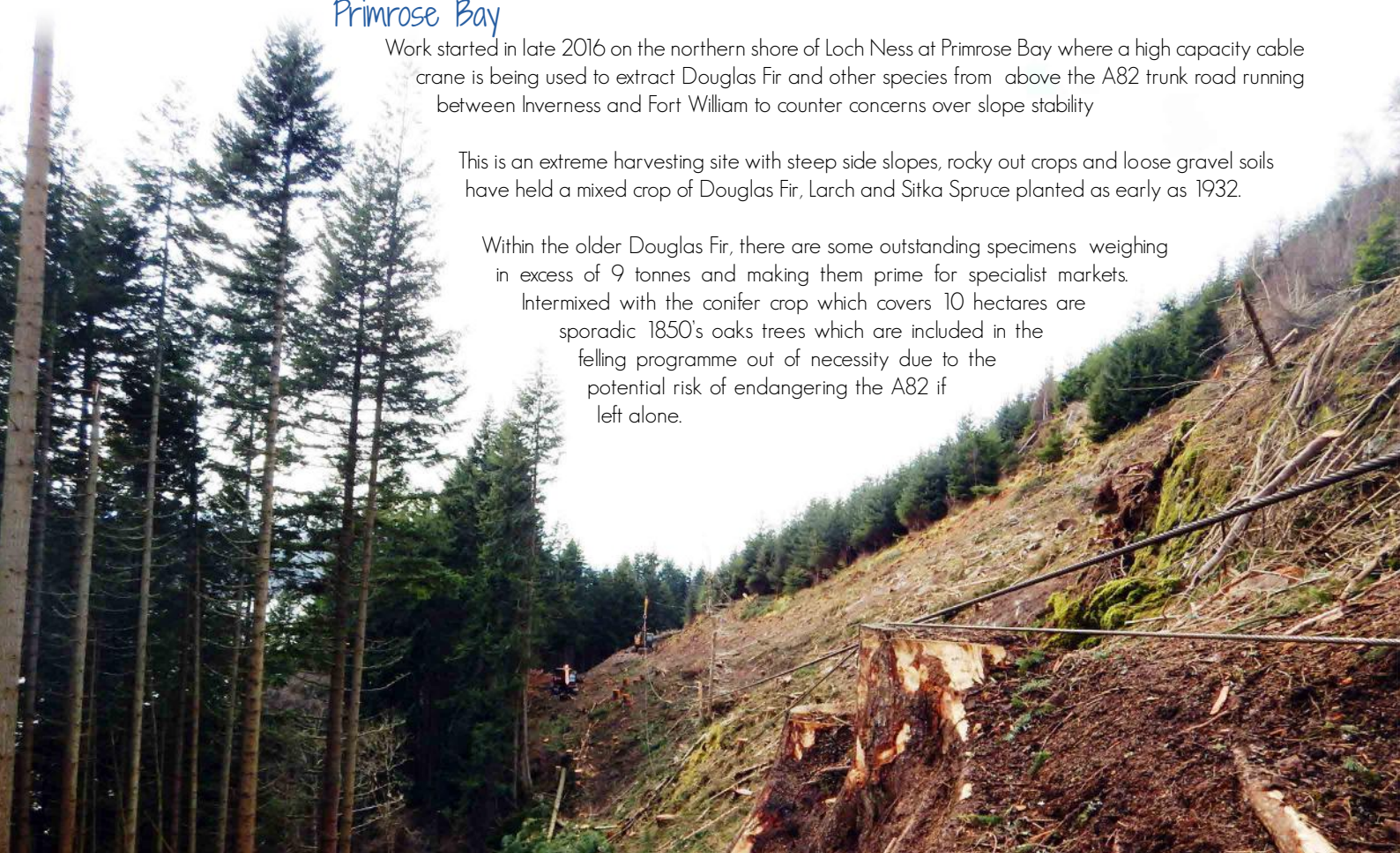
Primrose Bay

Work started in late 2016 on the northern shore of Loch Ness at Primrose Bay where a high capacity cable crane is being used to extract Douglas Fir and other species from above the A82 trunk road running between Inverness and Fort William to counter concerns over slope stability

This is an extreme harvesting site with steep side slopes, rocky outcrops and loose gravel soils have held a mixed crop of Douglas Fir, Larch and Sitka Spruce planted as early as 1932.

Within the older Douglas Fir, there are some outstanding specimens weighing in excess of 9 tonnes and making them prime for specialist markets.

Intermixed with the conifer crop which covers 10 hectares are sporadic 1850's oak trees which are included in the felling programme out of necessity due to the potential risk of endangering the A82 if left alone.





- Recovered 8.1 meter logs waiting for dispatch

conservation gain. In terms of PAWS areas, it has been common for invasive conifers to be felled to recycle which is good for creating deadwood however there is perhaps a missed commercial opportunity. At the present time, a number of sites from around Scotland are being considered and once established, the detail of these parcels can be advertised on the open market. This project has the potential to be expanded and bring a new dimension to managing broadleaves through considering harvesting traditional and alternative forest products that could suit a diverse range of business models.



- A stand of naturally regenerated birch which has been respaced to 2 meters to 2 meters which has subsequently been thinned



Written by,

Douglas Halliday

FCS Forest Enterprise Scotland Niche Marketing Officer

During the initial phase of work, the crop size was generally small which was useful for the harvesting team headed by Mull based harvesting contractor Callum Duffy to adjust to the dynamics of Primrose Bay. With the presence of A82 and general difficult working conditions on the site, safety is paramount and is reflected in every process undertaken by all involved in the harvesting operation. An example of this are the measures required to control some of the larger trees as they are felled which is done by tethering the base of trunks to prevent any trees from sliding downhill and potentially endangering the road users below.

View looking towards the 35 tonne cable crane operated by Duffy harvesting used to haul logs and whole trees off the hillside above Primrose Bay for processing and initial transportation to roadside for haulier uplift.

In order to secure customers for the large diameter Douglas Fir logs being produced at Primrose Bay, a broad marketing approach was taken which started in 2015 with an advertisement placed in the Trade Trade Journal, a sales flyer was also dispatched to a



- Felled trees and logs awaiting to be choked and extracted by the cable crane

range of potential customers through searching the internet and using known contacts. This course of action attracted some interest including from merchants as far away as southern England as well as closer to home but momentum was lost the same year on account of technical issues preventing harvesting. During 2016, the green light was eventually given for work to start and in advance of this, a revised sales information flyer was sent to those businesses who had previously expressed interest.

Given the complexities of the Primrose Bay site, a degree of caution was taken for the first sale of large diameter logs by putting a low timber volume to market. In January 2017, three log parcels amounting to 200 tonnes were put on offer and split into lots of 25 tonnes, 50 tonnes and 125 tonnes for interested businesses. The intention of this approach being to give a range of customers the opportunity to bid for some stunning timber in accordance with their business models. As hoped, all three timber parcels were sold to a diverse range of customers with Forest Enterprise Scotland receiving a satisfactory income to reflect the tree quality and great effort taken to harvest from this difficult site. Depending on progress over the coming months, a further large diameter Douglas Fir log sale will take place in May 2017 before a lay-off for the summer comes into effect. Buyers however need not worry as work is scheduled to restart at Primrose Bay in the autumn and over all the project will have another 2 years of working before the harvesting is finished.

Productive broadleaves and woodland restoration Project

A trial project is being developed to look at undesignated native woodland and conifer regeneration on Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) on the National Forest Estate. The main aim of the project is to explore means of increasing levels of management to generate income through a range of timber product sales, improve stand quality and increase



SECURING THE FUTURE OF KNOYDART'S WOODLAND & PEOPLE

Rooted in the Community

1999 was a meaningful year for the remote peninsula of Knoydart on the North West coast with a sea change in land ownership and management. Not only did the, then 60 strong, community become the owner of 17,200 acres of land but they also set up the Knoydart Forest Trust to manage the woodlands on the Knoydart Estate to increase the resilience of the fragile natural and human resource resulting from a very checkered history of land ownership. The land, woodlands and community have been thriving ever since.

Knoydart Forest Trust (KFT) is a community led social enterprise business that manages 919 hectares of community owned (and some private) woodland. We employ 3 people and take on local subcontractors as required. Our work is based on 20 year woodland management and forest plans that are environmentally, economically and culturally appropriate to the area. As custodians of the woodlands through woodland management agreements we work in partnership with the Knoydart Foundation, the community landowner, and other landowners.

In managing the woodland our objectives are:

- To manage the forest by expanding and enhancing the native woodland and to restructure and diversify the non-native woodland
- To enhance biodiversity, habitat resilience and mitigate against climate change through woodland creation and appropriate management
- To promote, develop and sustain local employment and economic activity
- To create a locally useful timber resource
- To encourage public access and enjoyment of the woodlands

We use the woodland resource to enhance habitat and support community and economic regeneration on Knoydart. By responding to the needs of the woodland and the community we have developed a varied portfolio of achievements over the years that covers all aspects of woodland management from getting trees in the ground to felling and processing and adding value to the timber to hosting environmental arts performances.

Adding value

In the ever changing economic climate it is crucial that to continue to do the woodland management and other work our community want to do that we develop our capacity to generate income. Furthermore due to lack of road access to Knoydart all timber sold to conventional markets has to be harvested and shipped in lots of at least 4,000 tons in order to be financially viable. Further development of local products and markets will allow us to harvest timber on a smaller scale, this will optimise returns to the local community and economy and allow the woodland to be managed at a scale appropriate to its importance within the Knoydart National Scenic Area. This smaller scale management will also benefit public access and biodiversity, which are key elements that underpin the local tourist economy.



Following a design feasibility study in 2010 for the development of a forest workshop complex we developed the first phase resulting in the construction of a woodfuel storage shed in 2013 and development of our woodfuel enterprise. This year we have processed and sold over 150m³ of woodfuel to the community and over the loch to Mallaig. A by-product of the shed construction was a small workshop space that facilitated the development of our "Wood Knoydart" small wood products range and brand which is now in its third year with sales increasing year on year. We also do a range of contract work via our trading subsidiary Wood Knoydart which brings in valuable income.

Through our woodfuel and small wood products enterprise we have proved the concept of using local timber to support upstream woodland management activities. We are now looking at how to develop our milled timber business with support from the Making Local Woods Work a pilot project working to help support and grow woodland-based social enterprises across the UK. The project is led by the Plunkett Foundation and involves a range of partners including the Community Woodland Association.



Milled Timber

Our story of milling timber dates back to when we started out. With the land the community also acquired the old estate Yankee sawmill, driven by single cylinder 1937 Crossley engine. The mill was in working order and in the early days was used to produce timber for bridges and sheds. Although the old mill was, and still is, a beauty we recognised that to make the business work a more efficient system was needed. We were very fortunate in 2002 to receive a very generous donation of £10,000 to purchase a Woodmizer (LT40HDD) from a local benefactor who shared our vision for maximising the use of local timber. To capitalise on this investment we secured match funding from Lochaber Enterprise to buy a Logosol PH260 four sided planer/moulder and an Arrowsmith Senior dehumidifier.



This marked a significant increase in our capacity to use the timber on our doorstep. In 2002/3 we built an A-Frame building using timber felled and milled on site giving not only a showcase for using local timber but also much needed accommodation for workers. In the intervening years a steady amount of timber has been milled and we have established a good stock of wood but timber sales fluctuate depending on the market. However, despite having most of the bits of the jigsaw we have not quite cracked the nut of the milled timber business.

A Look at What We've Got

Of the 919 hectares of woodland that we manage about half of that is mixed conifer plantation and about half of that is Lodgepole pine so our timber resource is about 200 hectares of mixed conifer, mainly Sitka spruce.

As part of our objective to diversify the conifer plantation, we completed the second of five phase of harvesting in 2015. Where access and soils are good we are replanting with productive mixtures, e.g. Western red cedar and oak that can be managed for timber on a continuous cover basis in the future. On poorer sites with poor access we are re-planting with native broadleaves. The first 2 phases of harvesting resulted in 11,500 tonnes of timber being exported by boat but also provided roadside stock piles of timber, mainly Sitka and Larch, for local firewood and milling.



Hardwoods are less available. The policy woods of around 20 hectares of mixed Victorian planting provide occasional hardwood through windblow and we opportunistically bought a load of hardwood about to be chipped on the Arisaig road improvements several years ago. Our current milled timber stock is around 25m³.

We have various bits of kit - a woodmizer, planer moulder, dehumidifier and round timber handling equipment. We have some storage space but not enough and have limited flat ground to create more storage. We have one skilled woodmizer operator with 18 years experience.

There is a local timber market. This includes one medium scale construction company who uses timber in house construction and internal detailing, a small building and maintenance company both engaged in small scale building, renovation and repair work and Wood Knoydart our trading subsidiary who uses local timber for small wood products and timber buildings. The making community is thriving with several people making things with wood including furniture and sheds. With the successful regeneration of the community which now stands at around 110, there is a shortage of affordable housing on Knoydart. There is a local interest in self build and we know through our woodfuel business that there is a local need for more and bigger wood sheds.

The Challenge is how we use the resources that we currently have to improve our capacity to drive the market and meet demand.

Our Take on the Future

We have learned from our woodfuel and small wood products enterprises that if you provide high quality products that you can drive the market. We want to develop further off-saw and finished goods but as you may have noticed we are short on people and places for new people to live.



we will need to move our milled timber business forward. Having learned from this process the next stage will be to develop phase 2 of our forest workshop and look at improving timber storage, options for drying timber and develop more workshop space.

Increasing our ability to process timber and products will help to complete the cycle of using local wood and local labour to produce products for the local market which feeds back into looking after our standing timber resource, planting trees for the future and increasing the resilience of our woodland and community - a closed dynamic system.



Written by,

Lorna Schofield

Knoydart Forest Trust Manager
www.knoydartforesttrust.org



With support from the Making Local Woods Work initiative we aim to design a timber house (possibly incorporating an new office and display space) using the resources that we have and to identify the components of the construction that are best suited to using local timber. With design, planning and funding in place we hope to build in 2018. This will serve the multipurpose of product development, linking products with housing design, showcasing use of local timber and providing accommodation for the additional workers that

Advertise

HERE!

FULL PAGE DIMENSIONS:
 182mm x 255mm - £400

HALF PAGE DIMENSIONS:
 182mm x 124mm - £200

QUARTER PAGE DIMENSIONS:
 88mm x 124mm - £100

DESIGN CHARGED AT FLAT RATE OF £50
 Email coordinator@ashs.uk if you are interested in advertising in our Winter edition.

PLANER/MOULDER PH360 - AN EASY-TO-USE HEAVYWEIGHT



SEE PRODUCT VIDEO
WWW.LOGOSOL.CO.UK

MAKE MONEY THE FIRST DAY!

4-SIDED PLANER LOGOSOL PH360 (3-phase only)
£10900*
(£11336)
+ VAT & Shipping

APPRECIATED PLANER/MOULDER FOR CONTINUOUS PRODUCTION AND BIGGER PROJECTS.

SAVE £436

*Price valid until the 15th of May 2017

SOME ADVANTAGES: PH360

- Max. planing width: 510 mm
- Max. dimensions, 4-sided machining: 360x150 mm
- Examples of production: flooring, worktops, material for making furniture

BAND SAWMILL HD36 - A POWERFUL TOOL



The sawmill in the picture is equipped with optional attachments

LARGEST BAND WHEELS IN ITS CLASS!

HD36 23 HP PETROL MOTOR
£7260
+ VAT & Shipping

6 pcs of sawblades are included in the price!

SOME ADVANTAGES: HD36

- 5,1m cutting length standard. Easy to extend sawmill
- Auto Locking height adjustment
- Log house moulder can be fitted
- Largest band wheels in this class
- Hydraulics, trailerkit etc available to add on as you go

LOGOSOL

Contact us now!
www.logosol.co.uk • info@logosol.co.uk • 01844 238930 • 07468 511524



Specialised tooling for woodworkers

- Router cutters
- Spindle tooling
- CNC tooling/collets/toolholders
- Bandsaw blades, jigsaw blades
- Circular saw blades

WEALDEN TOOL CO. LTD.
2 Clinton Business Centre
Lodge Road, Staplehurst, Kent TN12 0QF
www.wealdentool.com








Your soil is your most important asset



Everything on your farm depends on healthy balanced soil. Therefore understanding your soil allows you to reach your soil's potential.

Our advanced Cation Exchange Rebalancing soil survey will enable you to better understand your best asset and achieve a healthy balanced soil - maximising productivity and profit.

If you have any fields that you feel are not performing to their full potential, we can help with our expert knowledge of soil fertility Call us on 07977 139242
david@franklinsoilfertility.com www.franklinsoilfertility.com

MYFOREST – ONLINE TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR WOODLAND MANAGEMENT

The myForest service has been developed by forestry and tree charity Sylva Foundation, as an online platform for woodland owners and managers to support sustainable forest management. It is known that the majority (72%) of woodlands in Britain are in private hands and many of these are thought to be under- or un-managed, leading to the loss of both economic and environmental benefits.



myForest provides three applications for woodland owners and managers aimed at raising the understanding of good woodland stewardship and providing tools and resources for woodland management:

- Woodland Manager - a simple Geographical Information System that allows the production of maps, storing of information and production of a management plan for a woodland.
- Business Directory - a free directory for forestry and wood-based businesses allowing woodland owners to link easily to businesses in the forest based economy.
- Woodland Star Rating - an easy to use self-evaluation tool to measure how woodland management activities match up to the UK Forestry Standard (the government's approach to sustainable forest management).

Woodland Manager

The Woodland Manager is the main tool of myForest. Some 3,500 woodland owners and managers use myForest to support their woodland management covering an area of some 55,000ha across Britain.

The basis of good woodland stewardship is a management plan. Woodlands are one of the most complex resources to manage as they have an impact on landscape, wildlife, environment, history, recreation and the economy. Only by developing and implementing a clear management plan can opportunities and constraints be seen with any clarity and the wise decisions made.

The myForest Woodland Manager provides you with the tools needed to create a management plan. Woodland owners can create single property 'Owner' accounts and woodland managers and agents can create 'Agent' accounts allowing multiple clients under the same account. These accounts are private and the information added to them cannot be viewed by other people using the myForest system.

When you have created your account you can start using the Woodland Manager to map your woodland. This is done by building up your woodland area in small blocks known as compartments and sub-compartments. Each block or sub-compartment will vary slightly from the other and will help you to manage your woodland. The map background uses Google Maps allowing you to see easily your woodland areas and the changes in your woodland structure. You can also map other features in or around your woodland, such as access points, woodland rides, rivers, ponds etc.



Figure 1 - sub-compartment mapping on myForest

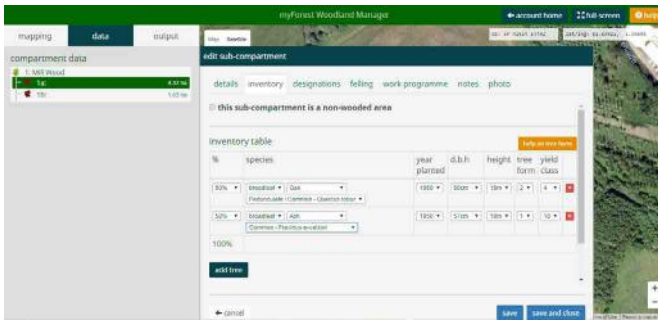


Figure 2 - input and storage of inventory data

The management plan template used by myForest follows exactly the one provided by Forestry Commission Scotland thereby making it easier to gain management plan approval. myForest can also be used to generate felling licence applications helping owners through the burden of regulation and stay on the right side of the law. Finally within the Woodland Manager you can create maps that can be downloaded and shared or printed. Maps are an important visual part of any woodland management plan and having the ability to create good maps is often a stumbling block for many woodland owners. These maps can be used to support your management plan and felling licence application.

Maps that are useful to associate with your management plan could be:

- Woodland property maps - boundaries of your woodland showing compartment and sub-compartments and access points;
- Operations maps - showing what work you plan to do in your woodland over the period of the plan e.g. thinning, coppicing, replanting;
- Survey maps - species, habitats, age classes;
- Protection maps - deer management, fire plan, water and soil protection.

All of the outputs that you create using myForest are generated in PDF file format. These can be printed out or sent by email to your Forestry Commission Scotland Woodland Officer for comment and approval. Your data is safely stored on our servers and you can go back at any point to update or vary your maps and woodland data.

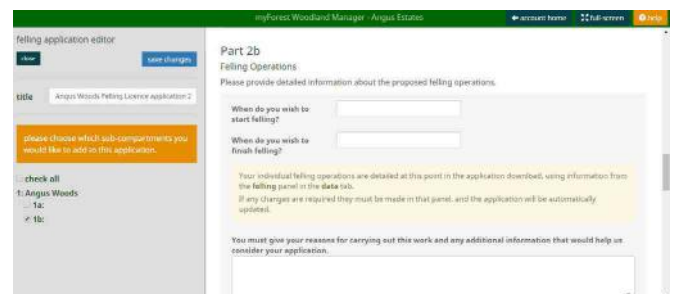


Figure 4 - example of a property map using myForest mapping composer

This is a slimmed-down version of a Woodland Owner account and is aimed at enabling any educator, or young person, to generate straightforward woodland management plans, maps and ecological impact assessments for woodland sites and school grounds. The hope is the system will create a bridge between the worlds of forestry and education, and increase engagement of educators and young people in real life sustainable forest management. Over 850 educators are using myForest for Education.

At any stage, you can start to add information about your woodland. This can include an inventory of the trees in your woodland, any special habitats or designations, a work programme, and photos. It is not mandatory to fill out all of these sections as the system is designed to be used in a way that is most useful to each user. When you are ready you can use the information that you have entered to help you create a management plan for your woodland.

Figure 3 - Using the Woodland Manager to generate a Felling Licence application

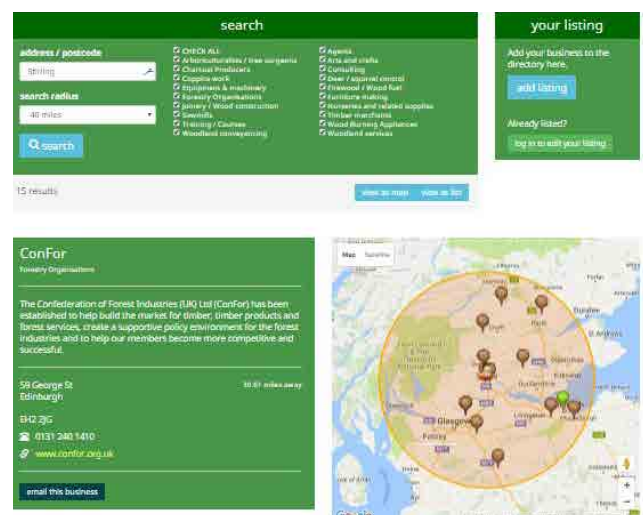


Future Developments

We are currently working on a new 'paid for' service that will complement our free core service, to be called myForest Prime. We have been working closely with Ordnance Survey (OS) and hope to be able to offer OS Mapping as part of the myForest Prime offer. We expect this to be launched in autumn 2017.

As well as providing accounts for woodland owners and agents myForest also provides an account aimed specially at those providing education in woodland settings (e.g. Forest Schools).

Figure 5 - myForest Business Directory



Business Directory

The myForest Directory is a free service which can be accessed by anyone in the forest-based economy. Across Britain there are currently 750 businesses that have listed themselves on the myForest Directory. The Directory allows any forestry or wood based business to advertise their services for free. Woodland owners and others in the supply chain can then search for businesses in their area.

The Woodland Star Rating

Woodland management planning can be a slow process and some owners don't immediately recognise why it is needed for their woodland. To help tackle this the Woodland Star Rating has been developed as a light touch approach that enables woodland owners to get a feel for what the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) involves. The UKFS can be a daunting read at 105 pages. In developing the Woodland Star Rating we have distilled this into 30 questions each relating to a section of the UKFS.

The Woodland Star rating provides a simple checklist and the ability to measure how their woodland management activities match up to the UKFS. Not only does this encourage woodland owners to improve the stewardship of their woodland by identifying what further actions they can take, it can also be used as a communication tool to help others understand the level of stewardship being undertaken in your woodland.

As you work your way through the questions you will see the thermometer on the right of the screen moving up. Once you reach certain set levels you will achieve a bronze, silver finally a gold star. You can only achieve a gold star if you have a UKFS compliant management plan.

Based on the information you provide an automatically generated report will guide on ways to improve the stewardship of your woodland. At any point you can come back re-assess the stewardship of your woodland. It is important to note that the Woodland Star Rating is for your own purposes only and for the advancement of your knowledge and understanding of sustainable forest management. It is not an auditing tool and the results are not made public on myForest.

Figure 6 - Woodland Star Rating self-assessment questions



property	My Wood
owner	Paul

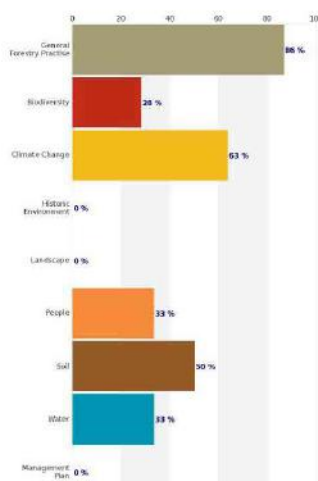
Woodland Star Rating Report

Below is the Woodland Star Rating report for your woodland. This document has been automatically generated from the answers you provided during your Woodland Star Rating Assessment. The report consists of two sections.

The first section shows a graph of your current activities measured against selected elements from each section of the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS). You will be able to see at a glance where your stewardship activities meet UKFS requirements and also where you can implement additional practices.

The second section provides a response based on the answers you provided to each of the questions. This provides you with suggestions and links to help you implement new practices into your woodland management.

This report should act only as guidance and is designed as a first step to introduce the UKFS. An important part of good woodland stewardship is producing a UKFS compliant management plan that can be signed off by the relevant forest authority. The mapping tools and planning templates in your myForest account enable you to create such a plan.



myForest is a **free service** to woodland owners, managers and educators provided by Sylva Foundation; a charity aiming to help trees and people grow together. All donations to help maintain and fund development of the site are welcomed.



Written by,
Paul Orsi
www.sylva.org.uk

Figure 7 - Woodland Star Rating report



Eamonn Wall & Co.

Woodland design & Tree management

- Tree & hedge planting
- Creation of ponds & conservation schemes
- Planning & planting new woodlands
- Hardwood & softwood timber harvesting
- Computer GIS mapping & database services
- Woodland surveys & management plans
- Tree surveys, inspections & condition reports
- Forest valuations & investment appraisals
- Development site tree issues & BS5837 survey expertise
- SRDP grant applications & administration
- Nationwide service
- Arboretum design

www.aemonnwall.co.uk
 Tel: 01259 743212 | Fax: 01259 743073
 15 West Burnside, Dollar, Clackmannanshire FK14 7DP

Reforesting Scotland



Restoring the land and the people

We work for progress on sustainable forestry, land issues, rewilding, huts and hutting, foraging and much more.

Join us to be part of our work and receive our renowned magazine. You'll also be invited to our Annual Gathering: two days of talks and walks with a host of like-minded woodlanders.

Reforesting Scotland
 39 Corstorphine Hill Avenue,
 Edinburgh EH12 6LF, Scotland
 +44 (0)131 334 1220
 heartwood@reforestingscotland.org



www.reforestingscotland.org



SUPER SALE!
15% OFF!*

LT40 HYDRAULIC SAWMILLS

GET HANDS-ON!

Cumbria Open House

See the WB2000 wideband sawmill for the first time in the UK!

June 23-24

NEW Sawmill!
LX100
 introductory price! **£5,000****



FOR MORE INFO, VISIT WWW.WOODMIZER.CO.UK
 Other discounts now available on sawmills & resaws. *Valid until June 30, 2017. **Valid until May 31, 2017.

Wood-Mizer®

WOODLAND CROFTS – A WIN-WIN FOR COMMUNITY WOODLAND OWNERS?

The past 30 years have seen many positive developments in forestry in Scotland. Woodland area has continued to expand; the value of native woodlands, including for timber, has been recognised; management standards generally have been vastly improved, not least following the introduction of the UK Forestry Standard in 1998 and the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme a year later. There is still much to be done, but at least the discussion is now about how we should do forestry; on its central role as a cornerstone of the rural economy the debate is now, as they say, settled.

One change amongst all these stands out, however - the growth of community woodlands. From the establishment of the first, in Wooplaw in 1987, the sector has grown steadily with around 200 community woodland groups now spread across the country. Their representative voice, the Community Woodlands Association (CWA), was established in 2003 and is a widely respected organisation both in 'official' circles and amongst its community sector peers (interestingly, Community Land Scotland - also very highly regarded - was not established until several years later in 2010, and has a membership around half that of the CWA's).

During that period, the nature of community woodlands has also changed significantly. From being mainly smaller woodlands, often predominantly native, acquired with a focus on access and recreation, there has been a trend over the last 10 to 15 years of larger 'commercial' woodlands being acquired by community owners. For example, there are now over a dozen community woodlands bigger than 100ha, with five of these over 500ha. Many, but not all, have been acquired via Forestry Commission Scotland disposals arising from their Repositioning Programme.



Such larger woodlands can pose a challenge to community owners: how to manage them, for the greatest benefit? At this scale the skills, equipment and indeed time required to manage them is beyond the scope of most community volunteers - realistically management requires to be contracted in. Most community woodland owners have therefore established relationships with the larger forestry companies, often very successfully, and this is particularly helpful at times of major change, for example initial harvesting.

If the community's main interest in the woodland is as a source of income to fund other community priorities, this can be an ideal solution as it stands. However, many have acquired woodlands with a view to managing them differently, for greater local benefit. Only managing woodlands using outside contractors and exporting the timber to remote markets misses an opportunity for local rural development.

What if the community were also to make parts of their woodland available to local families to manage for themselves, in return for an agreed annual rental? Further, what if those families were able to build homes there, and businesses based on the woodland? What would be the local impact of that economic activity, on other businesses in the community? And wouldn't those families help sustain the local shop, and school? How great might the benefits generally be from such an approach?

Potentially significant, was the view of the original steering group tasked with looking into 'The Potential & Practicalities of Forest Crofts' back in 2006 - as what I have just described is the essence of a forest croft. Whilst the focus of their review was the National

Forest Estate, the benefits of woodland crofts - as they preferred to call them - were argued more generally, and they concluded by recommending "The Scottish Executive should support the establishment of woodland crofts".

Though published over 10 years ago, the steering group report still remains one of the best-argued cases for woodland crofts there is. Its strength lies in its hard-headed focus on public benefits: woodland crofts are worth having, because they can deliver more.

These potential benefits - too many to list here, but I would encourage readers to study the report in full - were grouped under the usual economic, environmental and social headings. One in particular is worth quoting here in respect of my earlier remarks. Woodland crofts, the report considered, had the potential to:

“Derive economic benefits from local intensive management of areas of forest that may be difficult to achieve with remote management on an extensive basis” (my emphasis).

Though economic benefits were highlighted in that statement, environmental and social ones could just as easily have been explicitly included too, as highlighted elsewhere in the report. The key point is the recognition that local intensive management can bring additional benefits, which may be difficult to achieve under conventional management models.

Furthermore, due to the scale and nature of a woodland crofter's management, 'difficult' areas of the woodland can be turned to opportunities. The most obvious of these relates to access: not having lorry access to a woodland parcel is not a problem if you intend to use a tractor & trailer. Mixed species, variable growth, conservation sensitivities etc are all complications for industrial harvesting operations - but much less so for the woodland crofter.





So as alluded to above, the two models can sit alongside one another: the conventional approach providing volume & scale for those larger operations, particularly as a community converts the woodland they have inherited to something more suited to their own needs; and woodland crofters providing more local rural development and other benefits, through a smaller-scale and more sensitive approach.

There is another strand to the woodland crofts approach which should resonate with the ASHS readership - adding value. The woodland crofter will build up an intimate knowledge of his wood through day-to-day activities on site. This enhanced knowledge allows an attention to detail which maximises the opportunity to add value.

Potential final crop trees are identified early and tended over the years to maximise their quality. When trees are finally felled, any defects which would otherwise consign timber to woodfuel in conventional markets can be graded out for higher value uses, such as turnery or character flooring.

And this latter point hints at perhaps the ultimate opportunity for a woodland crofter - building your own home on the croft. The right to a house on the croft is enshrined in crofting law (albeit not in planning policy!), and living on the croft is central to the crofting tradition. Whilst ever more rigorous building standards make using the trees from the croft for this increasingly challenging, at the same time techniques such as visual strength grading coupled with post & beam construction mean that it remains a realistic prospect.

The houses illustrated in this article, including the background image, are not on woodland crofts - but could have been. Larch clad, woodfuel heated, and entirely sympathetic to their woodland surroundings, they provide a possible model for housing on woodland crofts. Most ASHS members could provide all the timber for houses similar to this, leading to the thought that whilst not every woodland crofter can be a sawmiller, perhaps every sawmiller should be a woodland crofter!

Of course there is a snag with such an aspiration - woodland crofts are currently only possible in the 'crofting counties' (broadly equivalent to the Highlands & Islands). However, crofting legislation does allow for the expansion of the area designated for crofting, as has already happened to a limited extent. So woodland crofts in Aberdeenshire or the Borders might someday be possible...

It's also worth reflecting at this point on progress to date. The development of new woodland crofts since 2008 (when crofting legislation was enacted allowing for new crofts generally to be created) has in all honesty been slow. There are various reasons for this, which in my opinion do not relate to the model itself but rather to wider issues relating to land, crofting & communities.

But they do now exist, with North West Mull Community Woodland Company (NWMWCWC) widely recognised for having created the first community-owned woodland crofts - 9 in total, all of which are currently tenanted. Interestingly, in light of earlier comments, NWMWCWC developed them alongside a more conventional approach to harvesting their woodlands by their partners Tilhill. Other community groups are at various stages in the development of woodland crofts, with the next ones likely to be at Kilfinan Community Forest. Meanwhile small numbers of private owners are ploughing a similar furrow, both for their own families and also for others.

These developments have provided useful insight into how theory translates into practice. In an ideal world, for example, a new woodland crofter would take on an area of woodland with a windfirm mix of species and ages, already suitable for some form of continuous cover management, and be able to hit the ground running. In reality, as was the case in Mull, woodland often becomes available after clearfell harvesting. This obviously provides little short-term opportunity for woodland management, beyond restocking - but this in itself offers a 'blank canvas' for the crofter in shaping their future. And timber for processing is likely to be available nearby, if not from their own croft.

Indeed, creating crofts post harvesting can provide considerable benefits for both community and private woodland owners. The responsibilities of both restocking and future management are then devolved to the croft tenants, and although overall financial returns may be somewhat reduced for the owner, the risks that might threaten them (pests, disease, windblow etc) also become someone else's responsibility. Meanwhile the income that does accrue from croft rents and any timber sales is annual, rather than being decades in the future (NB under a quirk of crofting law, trees existing on a croft when it is created still belong to the landlord; only restock or regeneration belongs to the crofter).

The discussion on the benefits of woodland crofts to the landowner and wider community has perhaps been less widespread and comprehensive than on the more obvious benefit to the tenants. However, it is an important one, as only landowners can create new crofts. At present, (known) demand for woodland crofts outstrips supply by around 10 to 1. New crofts that are created are allocated almost without the need for advertising. Encouraging people to take a holistic view of the benefits of woodland crofts - for crofters, landowners, and others - will help more to take forward projects. In many instances, it is not a case of either/or in relation to other management models and activities, but both: there is plenty of room for everyone.



Written by,
Jamie McIntyre
www.woodlandcrofts.org
Woodland Crofts Partnership



BACKGROUND TO ROOTS OF ARRAN COMMUNITY WOODLAND

In 2002 a group of locals approached the Forestry Commission for any spare land to adopt and adapt into a community woodland. They were only able to offer a 20 hectare area of recent clearfell behind the main port Brodick. This area was, prior to forestry plantation, farmland as evidenced by the broken stone walls running through the site. It's Gaelic name is Lag a' Bheith meaning valley of the birch which is apt since this species has once again come to dominate the space, naturally regenerating out of the bare soil. Also contained within the area is a small area of ancient beech, a small hilltop stand of mature Scots Pine and about 30-odd Forestry planted oak saplings which gave some variety to

the monotonous landscape. For the mainpart the ground was littered with clearfell debris of rotting stumps and logs with depleted soil not offering much hope of recreating a native woodland!

Undeterred the group decided that their main aims were to conserve an area of native woodland on island, to provide volunteers with conservation/woodland management opportunities and advance outdoor learning for children. Inevitably committees for time-consuming projects like this meet with delusion and exhaustion but the group has continued to progress maybe by keeping its ambitions quite small and realistic. Each year they organise a musical event to raise further funds and awareness but in the main, any funding has come from grants which have then sometimes been match-funded by the Arran Trust. The group has a facebook page, a website hosted by the Conservation Trust and organises a monthly mailchimp newsletter. For the most part the group has accomplished what it set out to achieve and is justifiably proud of creating a community woodland out



of an idea and determination to see it through.

Tree-planting remains forever an intrinsically rewarding activity which always attracts extra volunteers. The main outbreaks of tree-planting occurred at the beginning when grants were easily obtained from Scottish Natural Heritage for the purpose. Rowans, hazel, alder and a variety of fruit-bearing trees such as blackthorn and wild cherry were planted and this even stretched to a small apple orchard. The ground for the latter was cleared by digger and a large moat created around it to deter deer. The apple trees were in addition protected with individual cages made from rylock. The moat was then planted up with a row of quick-growing alder. The trees now produce a small

decent crop which is a triumph considering how poor the soil was to start with.

A network of paths and pond was then created using grants to fund a path contractor. The area is now currently loaned indefinitely to the group through a 'concordat' agreement with the Forestry Commission which is a simple written lease agreement. The group write a basic management plan once a year and submit this to the Forestry office for approval. The advantages of not owning the land is that there is some shared responsibility. So if, for example, a large tree comes down, the Forestry agree to making it safe. In addition the Forestry takes full responsibility for maintaining the main footpath through the site which includes two small wooden footbridges. It is the main route linking Brodick to the next village of Lamlash and gets a lot of wear from walkers and bikers. Further co-operation includes the Forestry donating



island-grown aspen, oak and silver birch to the project.

When retired art teacher approached the committee to become their resident artist it proved to be a great arrangement as Mike Bailey has spent a considerable amount of time in the wood clearing bracken overgrowth and putting in its place a maze in a 'spiral' design that you can walk round and out of. Planted with silver birch, it gives the woodland a living work of art which turns out to be quite an enjoyable contemplative experience. One overseas visitor messaged the group to say that discovering the spiral was the highlight of her holiday! Mike has also improved seating and signage in the woodland which were much needed by people unfamiliar with the layout.

Other beneficial projects include the delivery of a Forest School within the woodland. Two of the group's volunteers who were inspired to become Forest School Leaders and over the past four years, they have delivered FS sessions to all seven primary schools. The kids have enjoyed shelter-building, pond dipping and camp-fire cooking as well as learning to identify tree species and whittle sticks while finding out more about the woodland's wildlife which includes the red squirrel, barn owl, the common frog, green tiger beetles, dragonfly nymph and so on. It is a space for protecting this biodiversity and also the next generation's mental and physical health!

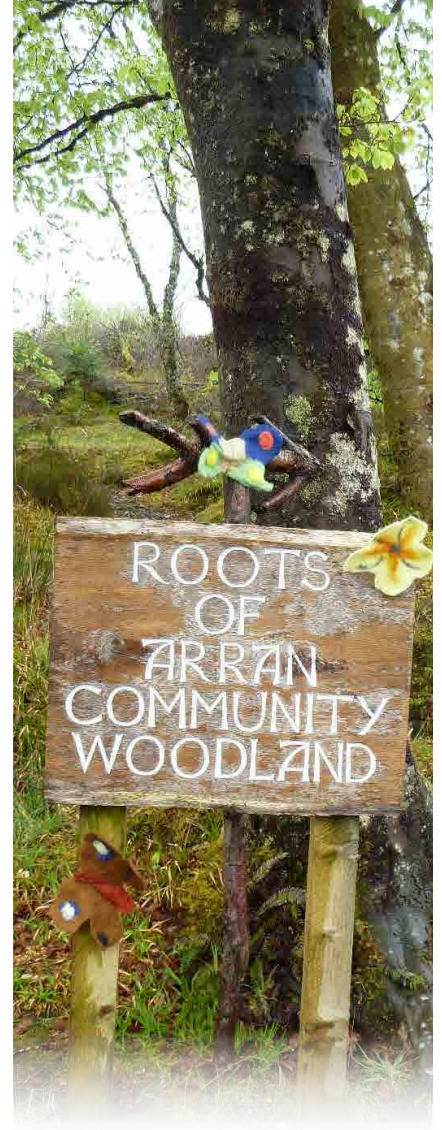
Currently the Roots of Arran volunteers meet on the second Sunday of the month come rain or shine and are currently constructing a wooden shelter again with grant money, this time raised by children at the High School, who valued their time spent learning through play in the woods and who, for the most part care deeply for Arran's natural environment.



Written by,

Juliette Walsh

www.rootsofarrancommunitywoodland.org.uk



STRATHCONON-ROUNDWOOD YARD

Roundwood may seem a strange term in an ASHS yard article. It has now become a relatively common term for timber structures where the cambial-wane surface is retained to a greater or lesser degree. Whether construction is a hybrid of vernaculars, a vernacular hybrid, or modern fusion, it usually draws from some mix of log-building, heavy timber-framing, and post and beam technique. Occasionally it involves no timber conversion, but more usually it can be described as being in a range from minimal to part-conversion. In this respect, the term has entered usage in the context of industrialised construction wherein structural timber came to exclusively refer to that which is fully converted and therefore wane and, depending on species, sap free. The more informal, particularly countryside traditions did not need to make such a distinction since timber conversion was not a separate value-adding operation applied to the resource, but was, rather, an integral part of the building process. Furthermore, being time-costly, sawing was only undertaken as and when appropriate.



Roundwood building today is similar in that the division and distinction between the roles of sawmill and carpenter, and between the creation of plane surfaces on timber elements and in or around the frame joinery, no longer apply. This fusion of low volume, project frame or timber element-specific conversion with the use and adaption of milling for what is more usually considered carpentry, is a growing scene which has always interested me. I intend to develop the theme further in a subsequent article.





Design and prefabrication of Craft/Timber structures

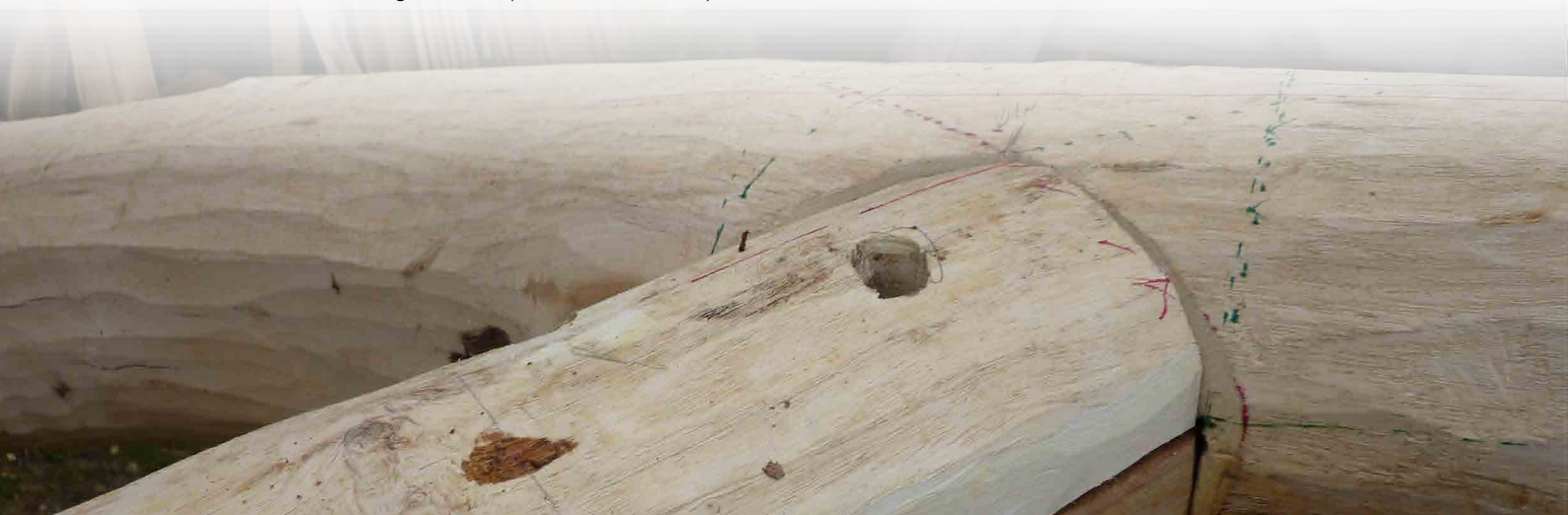
- Small scale from cabins down to benches makes things more manageable in terms of project time, number of people and costs, and helps keep all of the process in-house. Smallness also allows on spec construction and more scheduling flexibility.
- Design of structure and joinery based on one or several vernaculars, which hopefully combine to form a balanced whole and not a conceptual cherry-pick of features and references. The way I understand this is that firstly a new-vernacular structure is one whose design and construction follows a vernacular process rather than copies a style directly, and that secondly its consists of spaces and design elements which are themselves patterns (both archetypal and more mundane) reflecting either psychological needs for particular sheltered spaces, or specific lifestyles and functional activities. Thirdly, one might add, ostentatiousness is not a vernacular characteristic, spaces are only as large as they need to be to do the job. Any extra surplus productivity is selectively allocated to an additional element, detailing or decoration.

Obviously the most appropriate sources are those timber vernaculars of humid temperate and colder regions. Particularly inspiring to me, of the informal traditions, are the log and frame hybrids of Scandinavia, the Alps, Western Russia to central Europe, the Bohemia to Carpathian Slav/Germanic borderland, Korea and Japanese Minka. These cover a huge range of styles, constructional details, joinery, roof forms and pitches, and varied use of timber species especially softwoods. Particularly informative are the different approaches to creating useful part-sheltered and transitional spaces. Giving durability by design, detailing, and use of sacrificial elements is vital when using low to medium durability-class softwoods subject to frequent driving rain and snow. Without forgetting the small-dimension Black House frames we can also look to the somewhat more formal tradition of the Welsh medieval Cruck-Halls. Many of these vernaculars are suited to the timber available in Scotland today. Here lies a labour intensive opportunity to add value to low-value trees as part of forest restructuring, silvicultural improvement and rural-repopulation.



Formal traditions, based on Mortice and Tenon joinery (rather than clasped and lapped axework), such as the revived English Green-Oak framing are very relevant and are fun. However, the timber sourcing is expensive and, in Scotland is problematic, even nationally. More appropriate may be the American Douglas Fir heavy framing, already quite commonly produced in larger yards, and the lighter German Fachwerk which generally uses cheaper logs of pine and other needle sp.

- The loss of vernacular pattern language in many places is clearly culturally tragic. However, Highland, and indeed other Scottish, vernaculars were mostly stone, peat or rubble, with very small scrappy timbers such as hewn base crucks, purlins, and pole rafter, but hardly qualify as timber houses, and were much colder and damper as a consequence.
- A sign of our times is that the majority of the population have not procured or built buildings before. This contrast with the situation in traditional societies requires a schematic design process which adopts aspects of typical architectural procedure such as explicit guided discussion of options. However, where the design/construction is along vernacular process lines this discussion is involved enough to represent a very real client relationship. It starts with bringing parameters into the open and encouraging clients to think along systematic lines and can often feel more like a couple counselling than design process.
- Skill courses to enable self builders, both of recreational huts and other small structures, but also for example affordable low-impact houses on woodland crofts.
- On-site contractor roles such as training, conversion/processing/part-construction for self-builders, and self-project managers, tailored to the individual situation of budget, client input, and immediately available trees etc.



Personal, Community and Organisation

The yard has broader potential as a social enterprise to provide work and workspace in a largely workless glen, as well as not-for-profit activities in the community. Guest instructors, and network contacts who need temporary yard space in the Northern Highlands are examples of non-local community. Work Experience is an obvious opportunity for all parties. Hopefully we can find a way to offer apprenticeship despite the difficulty of fitting it with a project by project structure.

Particularly exciting is the prospect of partnerships, and cooperation on both organisational and project levels, firstly with a close neighbour who works to high quality, and secondly with the outfit Bedrock Builders run by the Balharry family in a glen nearby. They are on a similar craft trajectory of log and roundwood oriented timberwork, have youthful energy and motivation, and are rapidly developing professional engineering expertise.

I imagine the yard use and activity to be structured on an organisational model with a project-by-project basis whereby individual projects may be income-generating, self-build or non-profit, individual or team labour, and with their own allocation of job roles. As well as paying its own direct costs each project pays a rent for fixed facility and overhead dependant on duration, use of space, machinery etc. but set as low and attractive as possible.



plunging and swinging saw actions. In informal vernaculars this would be the job of axe, adze, chisel, slick and handplanes, whereas in industrial construction this is the field of CNC woodworking and Hundegger machines which de-skill and disempower the carpenter, and work best with uniform dimensioned timber. Our motivation, not new of course, is searching for a different balance of craft and productivity. Firstly the jigs give fast precise cuts, but each joint is unique to the circumstances and controlled by the carpenter and not the software. Secondly, the non-joinery, fine tuning and detail finishing work can be done by eye and with hand-tools. This gives task variety and peaceful periods for the carpenter. The combination of elements from tradition and industry can help achieve a hand crafted result at affordable cost.

A Bearsgreen thicknesser planes boards and log fitches, when desirable for appearance or water-shedding. An old hydraulic crane and various manual hoists handle logs. A pvc sheltered workspace. Tool storage, machine and bench room space is in mobile ex-military boxes. Additionally, the yard can function as an efficient space for miscellaneous projects such as vehicle mechanics, DIY fabrications, and community scale firewood processing.

The Reality

Steve asked me for a yard development article over a year ago and I put him off for several issues before agreeing to a deadline. Well, I must admit that rather than a story of achievement, I am describing a vision which is not quite in balance with my age or ridiculous slowness.

The yard hasn't generated income since the last garden bench/table project. Despite my fathers generous help, limited working capital hasn't allowed much outsourcing. At least the unplanned landscaping work to restore and create proper drainage is now complete, and it seems that we have escaped a repeat of last winter's damaging flood from the commercial forestry hill above.

My long suffering friend, Sarge, has played a key part in fabrication and mechanics, and as a result the donkey engine is close to being operational. After resolving a crane clutch issue, the boxes will move into their final positions allowing the work shelter to be raised this summer. Power lines are trenched in and will wait for later grid connection. The first priority will be milling timber with somewhat suspect sapwood!



Our Milling, other equipment and Yard

To rip we use a Trekkasaw bandsaw head which runs on a simple rails and end frames, and has manual progression and setworks. It is powered hydraulically by tractor PTO mechanical connection from a trailer-mounted donkey engine which also provides hydraulic, 24v and air outputs. A second gearbox pto drives a high-pressure water pump which variously cleans logs to extend sharpening intervals for the send-away wide band blades, and peels cleanly to cambium, without fibre damage, at least under favourable conditions. The saw is certainly not a production mill but has versatility. Various Logosol assemblies which are highly portable for small batches of structural logs, or individual elements such as cruck blades.

We have been developing a number of other chain saw based jigs which can deal with cuts such as rips and rebates which stop at returns, local mitre faces, and those involving plunging and swinging saw actions. In informal vernaculars this would be the job of axe, adze, chisel, slick and handplanes, whereas in industrial construction this is the field of CNC woodworking and Hundegger machines which de-skill and disempower the carpenter, and work best with uniform dimensioned timber. Our motivation, not new of course, is searching for a different balance of craft and productivity. Firstly the jigs give fast precise cuts, but each joint is unique to the circumstances and controlled by the carpenter and not the software. Secondly, the non-joinery, fine tuning and detail finishing work can be done by eye and with hand-tools. This gives task variety and peaceful periods for the carpenter. The combination of elements from tradition and industry can help achieve a hand crafted result at affordable cost.

A Bearsgreen thicknesser planes boards and log fitches, when desirable for appearance or water-shedding. An old hydraulic crane and various manual hoists handle logs. A pvc sheltered workspace. Tool storage, machine and bench room space is in mobile ex-military boxes. Additionally, the yard can function as an efficient space for miscellaneous projects such as vehicle mechanics, DIY fabrications, and community scale firewood processing.

The Reality

Steve asked me for a yard development article over a year ago and I put him off for several issues before agreeing to a deadline. Well, I must admit that rather than a story of achievement, I am describing a vision which is not quite in balance with my age or ridiculous slowness.

The yard hasn't generated income since the last garden bench/table project. Despite my fathers generous help, limited working capital hasn't allowed much outsourcing. At least the unplanned landscaping work to restore and create proper drainage is now complete, and it seems that we have escaped a repeat of last winter's damaging flood from the commercial forestry hill above.

My long suffering friend, Sarge, has played a key part in fabrication and mechanics, and as a result the donkey engine is close to being operational. After resolving a crane clutch issue, the boxes will move into their final positions allowing the work shelter to be raised this summer. Power lines are trenched in and will wait for later grid connection. The first priority will be milling timber with somewhat suspect sapwood!



Written by
Cormac Seekings
cormacseekings@gmail.com



The Full
CIRCLE

The journal of The Association of Scottish Hardwood Sawmillers
Comann Sabhadairean Fiodha Chruaidh



scottishhardwoodsawmillers | www.ashs.co.uk