



£5

Edition 4 / Winter 2016

The Full

CIRCLE

The journal of The Association of Scottish Hardwood Sawmillers

Comann Sàbhadairean Fiodha Chruaidh

Featuring...

NEW APPRENTICESHIP IN FINE FURNITURE MAKING

Written by Lorna Ross

YARD VISIT TO MOYNE SAWMILL IN EAST RENFREWSHIRE

Written by John Ferguson

SOLAR KILN DEVELOPMENT

Written by Ulrich Leoning

The Full CIRCLE

The journal of The Association of Scottish Hardwood Sawmillers

WELCOME TO ASHS FOURTH JOURNAL...

The 4th edition of the Full Circle looks to be a great read. We have the now usual news and dates for your diary pages for ASHS, SFMA, FCS and SWWL and in this edition the Argyll Small Woods Cooperative, keeping you up to date with up and coming events within the industry. Another regular feature continues with a yard visit to Moyne Sawmills in East Renfrewshire written by John Ferguson, who will also be hosting our AGM this year. Our focus in this edition is on apprenticeships, with three great articles coming from slightly different perspectives. Neil Sutherland of Makar discusses a new direction for Highland trade apprenticeships, taking a proactive role helping to shape the future for young apprentices. Lorna & Angus Ross also take the bull by the horns and create a new furniture making SVQ level 3 qualification in fine furniture making, the first of its kind, for their young apprentice Mike Storey. Paul Cruise of Living Solutions continues to offer hope to disadvantaged young people, giving them not only paid work but a chance to obtain a SVQ level 2 in trees and timber among other qualifications.

The redevelopment of the Big Tree Trail at Dunkeld House Hotel, mainly funded by Woodland Heritage, offers an interesting photo opportunity. The furniture makers Association lay out their stall with profiles of the 12 makers who will be displaying their work at the Royal Botanics show in December. Some excellent work on show, so put a note in your diary. As ASHS various projects advance Malcolm Mack lays out the direction for the Italy / Scotland project. Ulrich Leoning also brings us up to date on the Solar Kiln prototype development which is gaining some real interest and support and should be up and running soon. We also have an interesting look at the workings of a traditional post and beam framing company in Edinburgh by Jacob Mooney for those interested in this unique style of building. Finally, for those new members, or if you missed the original emails, The Full Circle story is set out in detail, with the view to answer any questions you may have. And don't forget if you're reading this and think you would like to get involved and share your experiences or stories, get in touch and help us make the Industry better for everyone.



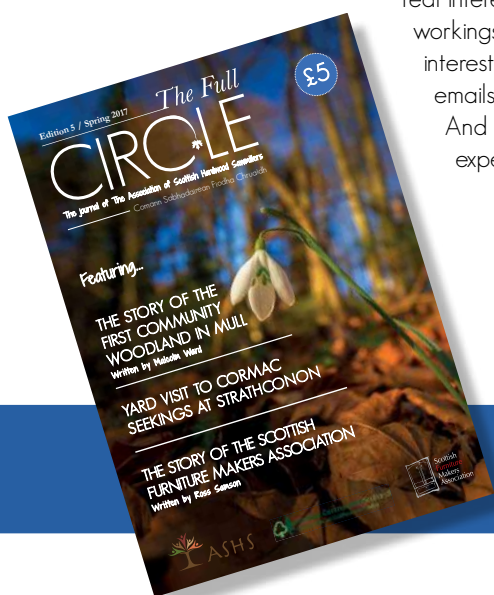
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Steve McLean



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& EDITOR
Nick Marshall



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Stephanie Christie



All the best, Steve McLean

ASHS Chairman

DEADLINE DATE FOR EDITION 5:
Monday 13th March 2017

www.ashs.co.uk



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ASHS NEWS & MEETINGS October 2016 - April 2017

ASHS membership continues to increase - it stands currently at 82. There is still a great potential for further expansion as the quality of the Journal and the services offered to members becomes more widely known.

Development of the website continues with clearer membership application pages and now the ability to buy publications through the website as well as to read them online. All members are listed on the website, providing a useful resource for potential customers looking for timber and timber products.

Having completed the first two of our technical booklets - on Sawmilling and Seasoning/ Kilning - we are now working on two more this year to cover Secondary processing/ machining and a Standardised Products Code of Practice. We're planning training events on these subjects once the booklets have been produced. The first two Journals have sold out and we're looking at bigger print runs for future editions.

We are negotiating with Forestry Commission Scotland for funding towards our work programme for the current (2016-17) financial year, which includes two more issues of the Journal, developing a solar kiln for the Scottish climate as well as the Technical Booklets. We are very grateful to FCS for funding which has enabled us to develop the organisation over the past 17 years.

The Solar Kiln project is well underway with materials being sourced for a prototype to be built and trialled at Airfield Workshops near Cousland, Midlothian - see article in this issue. The Italy Project, based on the experiences of the Italian Chair District in the Piedmont region, is developing plans to produce a series of specially-labelled products and a collaborative marketing strategy.

The AGM this year will be at Moyne Sawmill, Neilston, south of Glasgow, where we'll have a look at John Ferguson's mill and discuss the development of ASHS. This year's two Board meetings have been at Steve Mclean's yard near Fintry, where we've seen his newly planted 20 acres of productive broadleaf woodland (introduced in Steve's article in Issue 3) as well as recent additions to his yard.

We are participating in a major conference in November organised by the Forest Policy Group - on "Getting Value for Local Woods" which is exactly what ASHS members have been doing for years. This is an exciting time for ASHS with increasing numbers of busy sawmills and a recognition by the Scottish Government of the importance of home-grown timber and the hardwood sawmilling industry and manufacturing to the country's economy.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 14th October 2016

An introduction to the assessment and valuation of homegrown oak and other hardwoods. 10.30am at Luss Estate Office, Tel 01583 441373 and book your place

.....

14th October ~ 6th November

Aberdeen arts fair ~ Rooms for improvement exhibition

.....

Friday 11th November 2016

Getting Value from Local Woods Conference, Birnam Institute. More information from www.forestpolicygroup.org

.....

3rd December ~ 26th May 2017

Botanics exhibition
At the John Hope Gateway Gallery, Edinburgh

.....

Friday 27th January 2017

ASHS yard visit and meeting Venue TBC

.....

! *Monday 13th March 2017*

Article deadline for the spring 2017 edition of The Full Circle

.....

Friday 14th April 2017

Publication of Spring edition of The Full Circle



Written by,

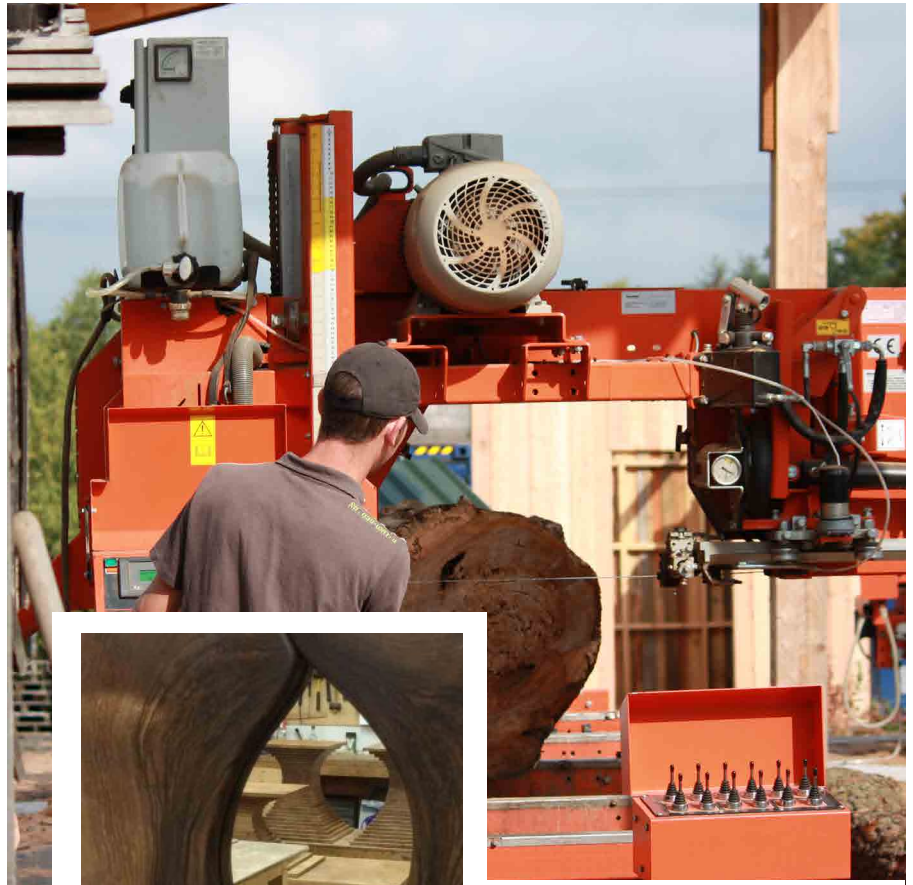
Nick Marshall
ASHS Coordinator

coordinator@ashs.uk





Local. Ethical. Sustainable.



SCOTTISH WORKING WOODS NEWS

The Scottish Working Woods label is available for Scotland-based users and suppliers of wood, wood products and produce from Scottish woodlands, to enhance your products with the confidence the label can bring to your customers. It promotes and stands for sustainability, local value added, short transport distances and small craft based businesses and can act as a chain of custody certificate system for raw material to finished product. Details on how to apply for a licence to

use it are on the newly revamped website www.scottishworkingwoods.org.uk along with a full explanation of SWW and for the time being joining and belonging is still entirely free!

We are still working on simplifying the application process, already improved and more happening soon. New certificates have recently been designed incorporating the new SWW logo and will be sent out to licensees past & present over the course of the remainder of this year.



Written by,

Patrick Baxter
SWW Chairman

AFTER THE STORM

Regeneration and New Life in the Aftermath of Cyclone Andrea Exhibition pieces by SFMA members

The After the Storm journey for the furniture makers is nearing its destination with the exhibition opening on 2nd December at the John Hope Gateway gallery at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh (RBGE). It is a celebration of renewal, using RBGE timber windblown during Cyclone Andrea in 2012. It highlights the beauty of RBGE-grown timber and craftsmanship amongst our Scottish Furniture Makers and the exhibition focuses on the restorative and rejuvenating effects of storms and trauma upon the natural and human environment.

It is a tribute to the commitment of the makers to volunteering and making furniture with no certainty of financial reward.

12 members of SFMA have been selected by an external panel to make speculative pieces for the exhibition, from their interpretations of the exhibition theme. Many pieces will be available for sale.

In addition there will be a Christmas sale over the weekend 3rd and 4th December in the gallery of work from 8 members made from pieces in Botanic timber.

The MS Society have sponsored a bench for the community garden which will be installed as part of the After the Storm project sometime during the period of the exhibition.

Here is a selection of the designs and makers you will see between 2nd December 2016 and Friday 26th May 2017 in the John Hope Gateway gallery, Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh.



Scottish Furniture Makers Association



Written by,

Jonathan Rose

www.scottishfurnituremakers.org.uk



Stephen Finch

Stephen is an independent maker based in Dalkeith. He is addicted to wood and finds it difficult to allow any particularly characterful piece go to waste, a trait you see throughout his portfolio.

Material led design is what characterises his work and that approach speaks loudly in his writing desk. This desk is a response to the traumatic event of losing both parents within 18 months. It has given

Stephen reassurance that his passion for making has not been lost and he can express himself with the materials he loves.

Stephen considers dovetails as the King of joints - simple, powerful and requiring skill to make. The desk top and side run waterfall style, linked by a dovetail and showing the response of the tree to the life it has lived. It is made from sycamore, oak and chestnut.

Stephen's renewal includes a donation to a cancer charity when this piece is sold.

www.stephenfinch.co.uk





Gavin Robertson

Gavin is based near Inverness and his company Gavin Robertson Furniture enjoys prominence as one of Scotland's leading bespoke businesses specialising in the design and production of furniture and interiors of superlative quality.

This project is an opportunity for Gavin to extend his design skills with a brief not constrained by a client's needs.

Gavin has chosen the Phoenix as his design theme. The Phoenix is a long lived bird from Greek mythology, that is cyclically reborn from the ashes of its predecessor.

The base of the cabinet will be produced from oak that will have a burnt oak finish to represent the devastation of fire.

New life will be represented by the highly figured and lighter top section made from holm oak.

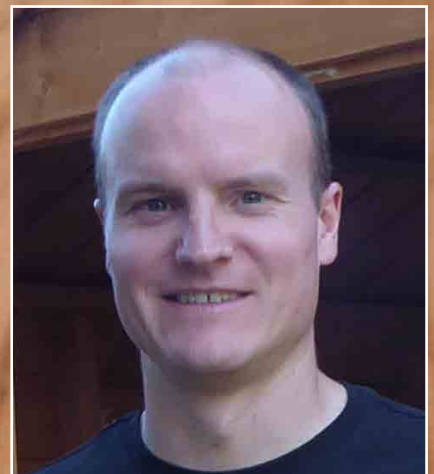
www.grfurniture.com



Daniel Lacey

Langholm based cabinetmaker Daniel Lacey found the 'After the Storm' Project exciting and out of the ordinary. It is rare that furniture makers are invited to an exhibition entirely dedicated to their craft. Daniel's design "Still Water" is based on the floods experienced in the Borders and further afield during the winter of 2015/16. The ripples show the peace of the water ground flooded structures after the deluge, hiding the destruction of the storm. It has given Daniel a chance to carve and laminate, processes he likes to practise. Daniel is an award-winning maker and it is good to see pieces unconstrained by a client's brief coming from his workshop. He has chosen to work in chestnut, a timber not often available to furniture makers. It is oak-like in its colouring, light weight and very stable. Although not usually characterful in its presentation the pieces here show some delightful tiger stripes.

www.daniellacey.com



Graham Murdoch

Graham is based at Jedburgh and has a workshop in the Real Wood studios. This project offers him the opportunity to make a piece of ambition and presence, something which he has wanted to do for a long time.

His theme is renewal and the new growth inlay on the front doors contrast with the age of the oak from which the sideboard is made.

The demands of this design are for drawers and doors to fit well in varying climate conditions and to meet this challenge, Graham is making veneer from the oak. This enables him to use book matching and reflective techniques to make the most of characterful material.

www.gmfurnituredesign.co.uk





Digby Morrow

Digby is a decorative box maker based near Linlithgow, with a workshop overlooking the Forth.

Working at the scale he does, his keen eye for details also requires a steady hand. The outside of his exhibition piece is intentionally stark in appearance to depict the terrible damage inflicted on the trees during the storm. Wood grain is used to convey the force of the strong winds. In contrast the inside of the piece uses colour, decorative inlays and shaping to suggest the process of re-birth in the natural order of things.

The creation of the piece itself represents one example of how recovery from disaster has been achieved - namely by reforming wood from the damaged trees into a jewellery box in this particular case.

Digby has worked with a scalpel and veneer in a traditional way for many years and continues to do so, but has started working recently with a digital laser cutter, which provides new avenues for exploration. His ambitions in design have grown as he has become more familiar with the tool. To work in the digital world means also learning to translate pencil sketches into vector files. Digby views the laser as a means of expanding the scope of what is possible but the technology brings its own demands and difficulties and there are times when conventional approaches can be a better option.

To fulfil his ambition of top quality finishes he has built a spray booth, another commitment to learning and development.

www.mannerstonboxes.co.uk

SCOTTISH FURNITURE THAT'S PART OF YOUR ENVIRONMENT



Simon Whatley

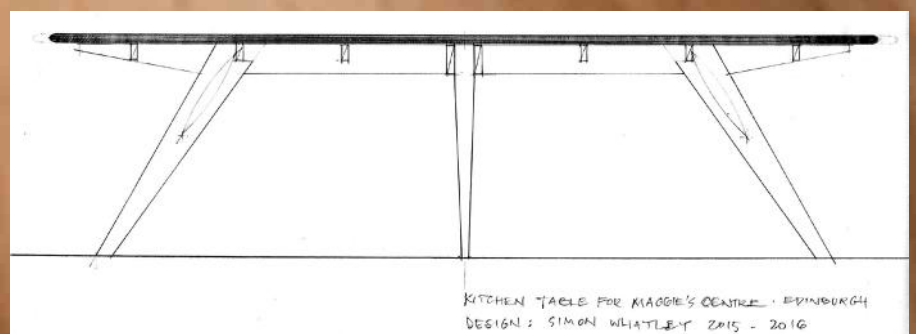
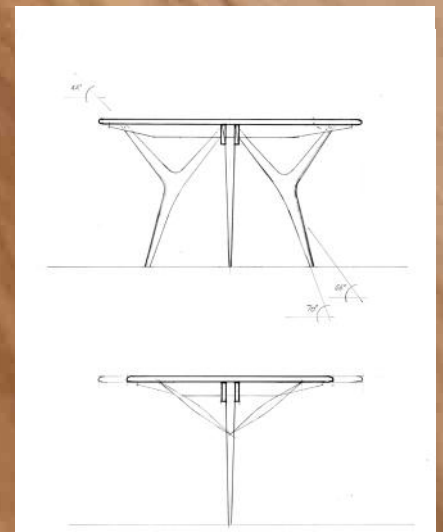
Simon Whatley is an Edinburgh based designer with a commission for a kitchen table and chairs for the Maggie's Centre in Edinburgh. The kitchen is the social hub of every centre and the kitchen table is the focal point for social interaction; a place for people to sit, drink tea, eat biscuits and converse - fulfilling fundamental human needs for conversation, mutual support and friendship.

This table and 12 chairs are funded by Creative Scotland under the Open project funding programme which is aimed to develop skills, create something new and of high quality and encourage more people to get involved in creative activity.

The table is being made at the Process Studios and the chairs at Albion Business Centre, both in Edinburgh in a contracting relationship. This represents a different way of working for the furniture maker/designer, where communication skills and trust are critical in realising the outcome.

The table top is made from distinctly characterful botanics oak and will clearly be a place of community.

www.scottishfurnituremakers.org.uk/



Jonathan Rose / Gavin Robertson

Jonathan is an Aberdeenshire based designer and maker and is experiencing a creative life reinvention for health reasons. For him it means adapting from largely workshop based activities, to more two dimensional and seated pursuits. This requires more storage for paper materials and the After the Storm project provides an opportunity for collaboration with a top quality maker on a challenging brief.

The 2004 tsunami is an example of a life changing event. With support from strangers around the world, lives that were not destroyed had to be reinvented.

Collaboration requires trust, respect of each others' abilities and a common goal. Gavin and Jonathan have not worked together before, which makes this is a learning experience for them both.

This chart cabinet is made from cedar with contrasting fumed oak and yew in the drawer fronts. Cedar is an unusual timber for furniture owing to its softness and vulnerability, so copper stringing is used on the top of this cabinet to minimise casual damage.



www.jonathanrose.co.uk



Joachim King

Joachim is based in Glasgow and comes from a Finnish boat building family. He runs a workshop with a small team and takes on a diverse range of projects. His clean style, design led aesthetic and willingness to embrace new technology have given him the confidence to tackle many projects.

After the storm is one of these projects and he has chosen to base this design around the theme of rest and recuperation. The piece is a home for a record player and cherished vinyl collection to listen to in times of reflection. It has an asymmetrical 'lean' reminiscent of windblown trees, tested, but not beaten by the prevailing winds. The chestnut used is beautifully straight and clean and will be fumed to develop a deeper colour and age to the piece, reflecting the mature tree from which it is made.

www.joachimking.com





Tom Cooper

Tom has a workshop in Dalkeith and draws his inspiration from the story that a brief can create. A maker with an arts background, there is always something different about his work. He was once heard to say that if it can be drawn it can be made, which shows the level of his ambition.

The After the Storm brief created the idea of renewal; realised by using scorched wood, through clean timber to a seed pod holding the start of life. Tom's console table is rich with colour, challenging to make, and full of imagination.

www.tcfinefurniture.co.uk



Alasdair Wallace

With his furniture making business entering its fifth year, Alasdair saw this exhibition as a new creative opportunity to experiment with design ideas and raise the profile of his work with a new audience. His piece, a pair of tall side tables, reflects a cyclone bringing fresh growth to the world. The laminated sycamore legs spiral upwards like the strong winds at the eye of a storm. The piece also reflects some of the challenges a designer/maker experiences when realising an idea; for example wood quality, materials availability, collaboration with people who work in different materials.



A desire to further broaden his skills brought him to Real Wood Studios, a collective workshop with a cooperative ethos, where he gains the support and knowledge of other makers and shares in the running of their sawmill. Working with the wood right through from tree to finished piece of furniture has helped him develop a much greater understanding of the material and how best to use it in his furniture. It's never easy to make a living in furniture making but Alasdair finds that sharing resources and working collectively gives a better chance of success.

Projects like After the Storm encourage him to stretch his designing and making skills and make him visible on a wider stage.

www.alasdairwallacefurniture.co.uk



Colin Semple

Colin is based in the Borders, at Stobo near Peebles. Colin has always worked in wood on a part time basis while pursuing a career in engineering and IT. An opportunity arose and he went to the Chippendale International furniture school and is now a full time furniture maker.

Colin took the opportunity of After the Storm with the experience of the Edinburgh Elms project of 2010 fresh in his mind. Here the client was particularly interested in the provenance of the timber, even down to the exact location of the tree. In the case of the 'botanics timber', it had the added attraction of a tree with a known history. This was enough encouragement for Colin to embark on a speculative piece.

'Wind Blown Console' is made from chestnut and sycamore. The chestnut has almost perfect grain but imperfections crept in requiring some modifications to the original design. In this case Colin has had to deal with tannin in the chestnut and slight greying from long stacked sycamore. The rosewood inlay provides a boundary to accentuate the colour contrast between the two native species. 'Wind Blown Console' is visibly resisting the force of the wind which blew the trees down that provided the timber, showing what can happen after the storm.

www.colinsemple.com



SHARED HIGHLAND APPRENTICESHIPS IN CONSTRUCTION

In 2010 there was a dramatic drop-off in the number of apprenticeship starts in the Highland area. Trades such as joinery, plumbing, electricians, painting and decorating, suffered a 70% reduction as large and small companies halted their traditional employment of young people of four year structured apprenticeship training programs.

Of course the age-old mentored training represented by the apprenticeship has been under pressure for a number of decades in the UK. The dual pressures of industrial depletion and the importance for our young to attend higher education have eroded the once solid profile of "learning by doing" with experienced craftspeople. Manufacturing and production industries, so far as many in our society are concerned, should be a thing of the past.

House-building has suffered its own deskilling brought on by the dominance in the UK of a small number of large speculative house providers with business models which rather favour land speculation over the delivery of well made houses and places. Is the television image of construction - muddy sites, wheelbarrows, cement mixers and brick monotony, an attractive one to many?

The assumption that herding our brightest young people into universities and college institutions will do them general good is far from new. But how often do we consider if cramming large numbers of similarly aged inexperienced young adults together is really what many of them need? To paraphrase Peter Drucker, the grandfather of management practice: in 1930's Germany, attendance at university appeared to comprise of two parts beer and one part sex. He decided he would get plenty of both by apprenticing himself to a law firm while attending evening classes of his own choosing. He ended up making a very tangible contribution to the world.

And where does one find a skilled tradesman these days?

Many trades 'have now gone beyond crisis point' in relation to available skilled individuals. With an ageing base and few younger people being trained what do we expect. In a recent conversation with a Perth based Quantity Surveyor, and between the almost continuous shaking of his head, he described so called slaters requiring drawings and descriptions of a slated roof. Concern amongst construction industry professionals about the lack of skilled craftsmen has reached a level of despair. In such circumstances how can we possibly tackle the ongoing housing crisis, which is undermining our the country's economic productivity and the general living standards of so many?

Around 2013 a group of senior managers from public and private organizations in Highland Region got together to take a serious look at what could be done. They were aware that non-traditional apprenticeship initiatives had been running for a number of years in some areas of England and Wales.

Could this Shared apprenticeship model function in rural Highland?

Research revealed that the basis of this approach relied on a number of host companies taking on a young person for a period of time, say, three months, and for the trainee to then move on to another



host company between periods at college. The apprentice was not an employee of the host company offering the work and experience, but was employed by a not-for-profit shared apprenticeship company backed by a board of directors drawn from supportive organizations. The benefits to the host companies, which were generally not recruiting apprentices on a traditional model, were many:

- They didn't need to commit to a four-year apprenticeship arrangement but could benefit from an extra employee when required.
- Many SME's had stopped employing apprentices so this was a way to support the principle of training the young workforce.
- They paid the trainee only when with their company, not during block release to college (normally during the first two apprentice training years), or during the trainees holiday periods.



Companies from out with the region undertaking public procurement contracts could be encouraged to take on trainees from the area under community benefit requirements built into contracts.

But the idea was not universally supported, how would such an initiative influence traditional ways of doing things. Surely if the sector waited long enough the bust would turn to boom again?

A number of challenging meetings were held with Skills Development Scotland and The Scottish Builders Federation. Construction is a traditionally conservative sector so resistance was anticipated. However, the dual purpose of bringing skilled people into the sector and offering opportunities to young people won over many and enthused a few.



During the winter of 2014 / 15 a steering group was set up comprising representatives from the Highland Council, Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), Inverness College UHI, and a number of large and small construction companies. A Business Plan was prepared with an integral financial plan. The new company, Highland Shared Apprenticeships in Construction (SHAC) was launched in June 2015. With £35,000 start up funding, largely from Highland Council, and the prospect of regular financial support from CITB relating to trainee numbers, 11 SHAC apprentices were recruited in August 2015. Host companies pay 125% of a standard apprentice hourly rate to SHAC with the premium contribution- above the standard rate -contributing to the funding of the scheme's management.

A management company was put in place to coordinate, along with the CITB, the day-to-day requirements of the trainees. Financial, marketing and recruitment of host companies were also the responsibility of the management organization. The Board of Directors drawn from the far-flung areas of Highlands have met on a monthly basis and the organization has now moved into its second year with a fresh intake of apprentices now anticipated.

So with one full year under our belt, how have things gone? Well there have been a number of challenges and successes, some unexpected. One of SHAC's aims was to address the under representation of females and ethnic minorities in Highland construction. One young woman apprentice joiner was part of the initial intake and she is doing very well.

Cooperation between construction companies is something unfamiliar to many, but as a group of host organizations there has been a tangible feeling of mutual support amongst those involved. It was an objective of the shared approach to effectively offer an enhanced training experience to the trainees, and time will tell for all those involved if this has been achieved.





We have experienced management teething problems and a restructuring was necessary after the initial year of trading.

There is currently a feeling of optimism combined with a clearer path to alternative apprenticeship options for Highland school leavers. We recognize there is a job to do to popularize this approach amongst young people, their school careers advisors and parents, and we intend doing just this in the coming year. There is now a similar shared apprentice scheme underway in the Angus Council area, and the CITB have appointed a dedicated officer to oversee and support the Highland and Angus initiatives.

Could this old idea with a new form and approach be replicated in other sectors – Forestry, Agriculture, Furniture, and Manufacturing more widely?

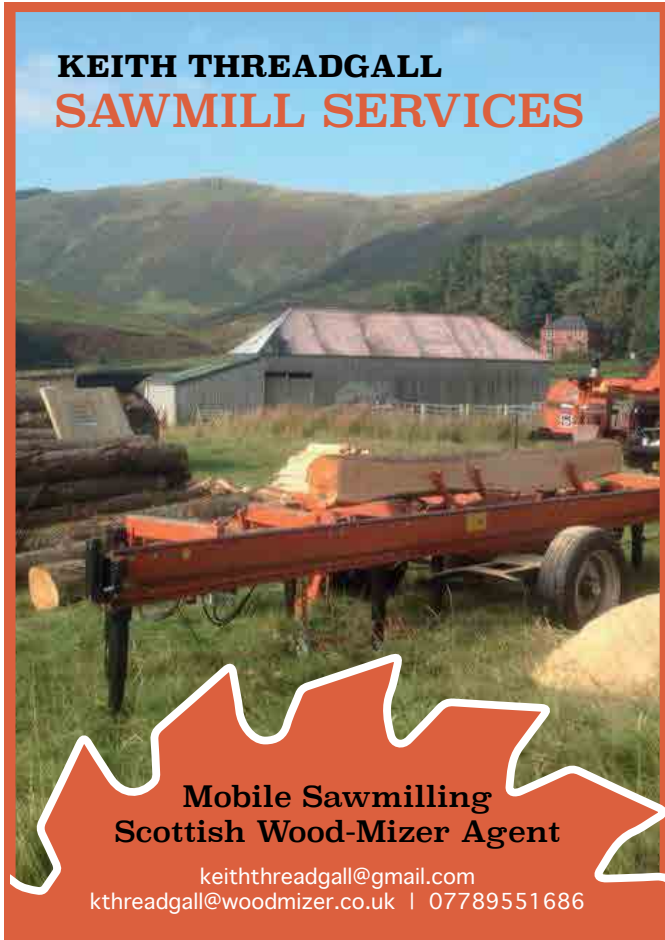


Written by,

Neil Sutherland

Owner and Managing Director MAKAR

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THE FULL CIRCLE EXPLAINED

Since its birth on the 12th June 2014 I have frequently been asked for the idea behind The Full Circle.

The original idea was to produce a publication that represents the Scottish hardwood and quality softwood industry in the whole. To offer a regular form of communication, and to be an education forum for the many different aspects and angles within the industry. To do this, articles come from...

- Small scale saw millers and timber processors

Profiles of different ASHS members and their businesses, including angles on how their businesses have grown and developed, along with success stories, ideas, and mistakes! Regular features on overseas and cross border visits offering supplements on original business ideas - the Italy project being a typical example.

And with ASHS now open to a wider associate membership, we have a broader readership: architects, designers, bio fuel suppliers, farmers, boat builders, fencers, wood workers... All these can now have their space and share their views and knowledge,

- The Scottish Furniture Makers Association (SFMA) play a prominent role producing visually beautiful products which photograph well. They have their own section covering news and events as well as regular features on makers work and the challenges they face. Profiles of makers also being a regular feature.
- The Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS); Scotland's largest land owner and timber seller. They too have their own section, with articles on Scottish silviculture and forestry, national parks, and a myriad of cross connected topics. Furthermore they are able to access potential buyers directly through this readership, keeping interested parties in touch with up and coming timber sales and general industry news.
- Heavy Timber framers. Companies such as Carpenter Oak and Woodland, along with other similar operations, are always welcome to submit articles and represent their sector.
- Large & Small Estate owners and staff discuss the challenges they face on a regular basis; including profiles of various Scottish estates.
- The Scottish Working Woods Label (SWWL) has a regular page showing the benefits of being a member, thereby increasing public awareness and helping to develop its visual presence and membership.
- Woodland Heritage. This link broadens interest to a wider UK perspective and develops useful business links. The BIHIP; or as it is now known; the Development of Future Trees Trust is also a contributor.
- And the more letters we get from the general readership the better. Ask questions; tell us your stories... It all leads to a good read!

Of course there are other journals out there covering related topics, however, we were after something more informal, and written by the people actually involved in the "doing" of the industry - warts and all!

This can mean unpolished articles and sub standard grammar; but great content!



Edition 1



Edition 2



Edition 3



Edition 4



NEXT EDITION - Spring 2017

Want to be part of it? Contact coordinator@ashs.uk

One of the most positive feedbacks for The Full Circle has been in the exchange of knowledge and views between like-minded people across an industry which, outwith this platform, has little opportunity for connecting. In time, we gain a better understanding of how each element of the industry works, leading to better business relations and connections, and ultimately, to industry turnover.

With the 4th Journal now complete and the 5th under way, positive feedback has clearly indicated an appetite for more. Many stories are still to be told and more links to be made. So if you're reading this now and would like to have a go, drop me an email, share your story, and get published in the next Journal.

Happy Writing Steve McLean (ASHS Chair & Full Circle Editor)

The Full CIRCLE

The journal of The Association of Scottish Hardwood Sawmillers

If you would like to contribute, here's a checklist that the editor will thank you for...

1. Ensure there are no personal attacks on an individual or business
2. Ensure no company has preference over another
3. Check spelling
4. Check grammar
5. Check for typos

Photography also plays a big part, and a picture tells a thousand words. However, this requires a high print quality, and in this digital age, where so much is now read on phones and computers, the question becomes... do we need this printed version?

Personally I think there is room for both, but I guess time will determine that.

It's only right that I mention Stephanie Christie of Trilogy Designs. She has been a great help in guiding us through the processes and checks required to pull each edition together. Her design skills are key to its professional look and style, something which has always exceeded our expectations.

Financially speaking the journal is now almost self-funding. We have 500 copies printed per edition at a cost of £3,000 (including the design work). FCS and SFMA take 100 copies each at the cover price, and we sell four pages of ads charged at a flat rate of £400 per page. Copies for ASHS members are covered by subscriptions - putting another £500 towards costs. This leaves 200 copies which are currently used to develop the membership and raise awareness of the industry at various shows and outlets across the country. When these copies are taken up by new members or subscribers the journal will move into profit.



Written by,

Steve McLean
ASHS Chairmain

www.dovetailscotland.com

The new signage for

Woodland Heritage were major sponsors of the

The Dunkeld House Estate Tree Trail has been created through



Royal Botanic Edinburgh

Thanks to:



Rust Associates



The seeds of Business

Dunkeld is synonymous with larch trees. The amazing story began in the 1730s when a few larch saplings from the Swiss Tyrol were given to the Duke of Atholl. While the Duke's gardeners initially kept these 'strange trees' in a greenhouse, they soon outgrew their pots and a group of five were planted by the Cathedral in 1738.

Promiscuous Trees
The five European larches grew well outside. And fast! Soon they were producing many seeds, which the Duke's foresters planted en masse on the hills around Dunkeld. Their work created a forested landscape that endures to this day.

In 1887 saplings of the newly introduced Japanese larch were planted by the Duke. Soon the Duke's enterprising foresters discovered that the new arrivals from the East had hybridised with their European cousins. The 'new' tree became known as the 'Dunkeld Larch' - the long line of larch around you - the long line of hybrid larch trees on this path are descendants of this event!

Did you Know?
The hybrid larch grows so well that it became a very important and valuable tree. It is still widely used in commercial forestry.

Naturally Man-made

Walk down the path between the side of the Cathedral and the open field and you enter one of the most important and magnificent tree collections in Scotland. It is an 'Arboretum', which is technically a 'Botanical Collection devoted to trees', but it is much more interesting than that.

18"
19"
21"

Did you Know?
This shrub is native to most of southern Europe and western Asia. It is also naturalised on the chalk downs of the south of England.

Biggest of the Big... Giant Redwood

Massive Giant Redwoods (the world's heaviest trees) were first introduced to the UK by Perthshire landowner Patrick Mathews. He wrote to his son (who had travelled to California to join the Gold Rush in 1852), instructing him to **buy** his golden ambitions and obtain seeds of the recently discovered 'Big Trees' growing in California's Sierra Nevada mountains.

The surprisingly small seeds were duly sent. Mathews senior raised them plus distributed them amongst fellow landowners in the Carse of Gowrie and Perthshire. Original trees can still be seen at Inchture (between Perth and Dundee) and at Cluny House Gardens near Aberfeldy. The Cluny tree is the biggest example in the UK and Ireland.

DID YOU KNOW... you can see a spectacular avenue of Giant Redwoods at Bannore Botanic Garden in Argyll?

Old-Garden-Fashioned... Common Box

This shrub is native to most of southern Europe and western Asia. It is also naturalised on the chalk downs of the south of England.

It was very fashionable in the 17th and 18th centuries, when there was a wish for landscapes to look natural and not over-planned. There are several examples of large Box plants here and on the riverside walk. Both are areas that are still dominated by 18th and early 19th century plantings that pre-date the introduction of the exotic Cathedral Grove. Box also remains very popular in gardens for small hedges and topiary.

DID YOU KNOW... for hundreds of years, I have been a popular choice for making formal, clipped hedges?

the Dunkeld Tree Trail

signage according to the wishes of Sydney Draper

generous money and time donations from the following organisations:



Amongst Giants

...red metres from the high Cathedral, are smaller structures. It will take minutes to go and see them.

Dunkeld House Estate and a wide choice of spectacular views, through groves of towering trees and tall gardens.

This Tree Trail highlights areas of the most important and you'll find out more about the history of Dunkeld's Architecture, and your own surroundings. The walking is easy and all good paths and back.

Tree Trail highlights information routes and other points of interest. It has to be included in the Tree Trail Guide.

Stand in history

Known as Cathedral Grove, this area is one of the most historic within Dunkeld Estate. The Cathedral, which dates from the early 14th century, has witnessed many changes. The first Dunkeld House stood in what is now the open field to the north of the Cathedral. A 'Bishop's Palace' once stood between the Cathedral and the river, and not far away there is a lost bowling green!

Grandiose Gardening

The 18th century gardens around the first Dunkeld House were formal, with knot gardens, walks, vistas and avenues. But fashions change and by the early 19th century, many of these features were swept away in favour of a more natural appearance.

That, in turn, didn't last for long. 19th century plant hunters brought new species back to Britain and the likes of 'American Giants' started a conifer craze in the middle of the century. Most of the tall conifers you see here date from this period.

Did you Know?

Old maps are a wonderful way to uncover the secrets of landscapes like this. You can access old maps of Scotland online via the National Library of Scotland.



Under small woolly threat... Fraser Fir

Although this tree is cultivated as one of the most popular Christmas trees in the UK and in North America, in its wild forests the species is threatened by an Aphid-like pest called Woolly Adelgid that can kill a tree within 4 to 10 years.

Its natural home is the high mountains of Virginia, North Carolina and Tennessee, where it grows from 4,000 feet upwards.

The tree is named after John Fraser, the Scot who introduced it in 1811. These days it is one of the most popular species to use for Christmas trees, both in North America and in Europe too.

DID YOU KNOW... my resin has lots of applications in medicine?

Prehistoric Remnant... Chilean Plum Yew

Don't be fooled, this rare conifer is a member of the Podocarp family, which grows in the southern hemisphere. (Podocarp is derived from Greek - podos means "foot" and karpos means "fruit"). They are a genetically ancient family that can trace their ancestry back over 150 million years.

Chilean Plum Yew grows wild in the Andean valleys of central Chile where they are threatened with extinction caused by over-grazing and habitat loss due to hydro-electric dam construction and intensive, monoculture forestry.

This young tree was grown from seed collected in the Chilean Andes by scientists from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

DID YOU KNOW... people in Chile make delicious jam from my fleshy female cones?

www.woodlandheritage.org.uk

Photo montage supplied by Woodland Heritage

FORESTRY COMMISSION

Key Developments in The Future Of Forestry in Scotland



On 31 August the Scottish Government published its consultation on the Future of Forestry in Scotland (<https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/forestry/future-of-forestry>). The consultation clearly states Scottish Ministers' commitment to forestry, recognising its importance to the rural economy and social and environmental outcomes. Forestry has a bright future in Scotland, so this consultation provides a great opportunity to consider how to build on its previous successes.

The consultation is an important step in the process to fully devolve forestry and includes proposals for the delivery of forestry in Scotland.

"The Scottish forestry sector contributes substantially to our rural economy and a number of social and environmental outcomes, including climate change mitigation, biodiversity, natural flood management, recreation and people's health and wellbeing.

Scottish Ministers currently determine strategy and policy for forestry in Scotland but the management of forestry - including of the Scottish Ministers' National Forest Estate - has remained with the Forestry Commissioners (a UK Non-Ministerial Department and, since devolution, a cross-border public authority).

This consultation is primarily about completing the devolution of forestry to make the management of forestry directly accountable to Scottish Ministers."

The consultation is open until 9 November 2016.

Additionally, on 6 September the Scottish Government published its Programme for Government, which lays out its priorities and commitments for the coming year. You will find it at A Plan For Scotland: The Scottish Government's Programme For Scotland 2016-17 (<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/09/2860>, see pages 11 & 53).

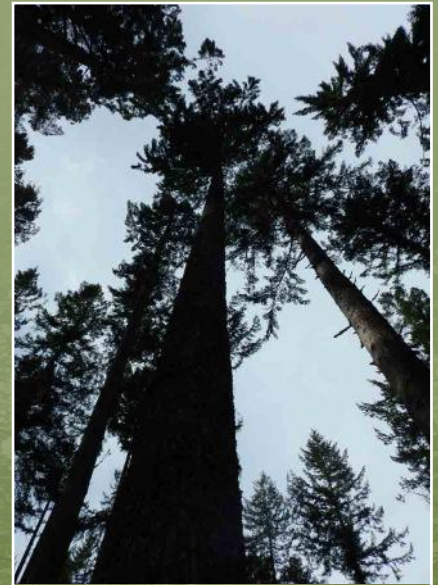
Following the launch of the consultation of the Future of Forestry in Scotland, the Programme for Government makes a commitment to introduce a Forestry Bill as part of the 2016-17 legislative programme. What this means is that the Government will make decisions on forestry devolution following the consultation, and the Bill will be drafted to allow those decisions to be enacted.

At this time of change it is important that you make your views known, individually and/or collectively. This can be done on-line at the website mentioned in the first paragraph above.



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PRIMROSE BAY

In terms of high profile tree felling, the 'A 82 Project' as it is referred to, has few equals in terms of steep slopes, high timber volume and the potential to impact on one of Scotland's most strategic road transport routes. No pressure then to fell and extract a swath of Douglas Fir at Primrose Bay which was planted in the early 1920's and contains some magnificent trees with top heights extending to 42 meters and individual volumes reaching 10 cubic meters. In recent years operations above the A82 have been successfully completed at Glen Righ and Loch Lochy near Fort William & Invergarry.

Focus on the tree cover running parallel with the A82 on the north side of Loch Ness was first made in 2010 when concerns started to be expressed about the stability of the trees and the steep sloping ground on which they were planted. The A82 Project was set up to manage the felling of the trees in a safe and controlled manner as the risk of them blowing down during storm events and causing unplanned road closures on the A82 will increase into the future. Recently a series of geo technical surveys has been undertaken which has advised of the need to install a temporary catch fence to provide additional rockfall protection to the A82 during timber extraction and pointed to the need for further slope stability work upon completion of felling. Owing to the intended scale of harvesting at Primrose Bay which covers 10 hectares and involves 9000 cubic meters of timber,

significant planning has been required to address a range of issues. It has taken years of consultation with the local communities, Transport Scotland, Scottish and Southern Energy, Bear Scotland and a raft of other stakeholders to secure working agreements and generally co-ordinate the project to the point of implementation.

Delivering the whole A82 Project will take upwards of 10 years with Primrose Bay expected to take three years to complete as the first phase of the operations above Loch Ness. To undertake this very technically challenging work is Mull based forestry contractor Callum Duffy who operates a 35 tonne skyline winch which is reputed to be one of the largest in Europe to contend with logs weighing up to 5 tonnes. Further logistical challenges exist onsite after the logs are recovered by the winch as access by vehicles is via narrow forest roads carved into the steep ground which offer little space to harbour significant volumes of timber. To meet this huge task, regular haulage off site will be required to enable the winch to continue working and meet the tight timelines which are associated with the project. From a marketing perspective, the Primrose Bay Project also offers a big challenge in securing an income which reflects the quality of the trees whilst at the same time having to tie in with necessary constraints placed by a very technical harvesting operation. As a rule in the specialist timber market, logs need to be as long as possible with a top diameter of 40cm or more to optimise end use or simply to meet the particular specifications for an order. In the case of Primrose Bay, this aspiration is difficult to meet but every effort will be made to safely remove large diameter logs in lengths that will be of interest to specialist customers. As part of the marketing initiative, a sales information sheet was sent to a wide range of potential customers across Scotland and England including ASHS members. Since the flyer was distributed, there has been positive feedback from customers and in reaction to this a more comprehensive and specific sales approach will be taken to tender lots of timber which it is intended will range from individual lorry loads to larger volume parcels subject to the log output generated by the winching operation. It is expected that work at Primrose Bay will get underway in October 2016 where smaller diameter trees will initially be the focus of harvesting operations and work in areas where larger trees are located will commence in February 2017 and with that hopefully the sale of some stunning logs!

FES A82 Webpages and Twitter feed also.

<http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/a82>
<http://twitter.com/A82operations>

BINN HILL

Planning is underway in Tay Forest District for thinning a 86 year old mixed stand of ash and sycamore at Binn Hill near Kinfauns a few miles east of Perth. The woodland presents some interesting challenges for the Tay harvesting team with steep ground working, utilities and high landscape sensitivities, the woodland is very visible from a number of key view points along the Tay valley. Despite the technical challenges of harvesting, there is a high level of anticipation in recovering some good quality hardwood logs from this 20 hectare woodland. The planned work is targeted for the winter of 2017 and in the run up to operations commencing, there will be a comprehensive marketing approach taken to ensure log specifications match market requirements. It is anticipated that sales information will be available in early 2017 with the actual sale taking place in September later that year to coincide with the Forest Enterprise Scotland's new hardwood and specialist sales event which is highlighted later in this article.



HARDWOOD MARKETING STRATEGY

For a large organisation like Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES) having a structured working practice is vital. For the sale of hardwood and specialist softwoods the need for structure is no less important and since starting in my marketing role it has become apparent that some modifications to existing approaches are required.

In November 2015, I attended a Hardwood Auction run by estate agents Newlands Rennie which is held annually in Cirencester and I began to consider if this sales model could be applied in a Scottish context. I had already begun to draft a Hardwood Marketing Strategy for FES and was eager to explore alternatives to our current sales approach. My conclusion on the auction concept was no, or not at least for the foreseeable future. A more feasible approach however could be for FES to hold an annual hardwood & specialist sale event following similar lines to the organisation's already established large volume 'E Sale' events but tailored more for specialist customers who are looking for smaller amounts of timber.

As of now the Hardwood Marketing Strategy sits as a final draft and will hopefully gain approval from within FES in October this year. The proposed sale event is scheduled to take place in September 2017 and I hope to write on this subject confirming dates once the official "green light" has been given.

WAVERLEY

Since the Spring 2016 edition of "The Full Circle" the new masts commissioned by Mackay's Boat Builders of Arbroath for the Waverley paddle steamer have progressed with one completed mast now at the quay side at Gourrock where the ship will be tied up over the winter. The second mast is expected to be completed during the early winter and installation of both masts should occur around the same time and I hope to report further in the next edition of the "Full Circle" to conclude this story.

I continue to travel around Scotland making contact with ASHS members and other potential clients and I feel like I am building up a good understanding of what we need to do for the future and I really appreciate your feedback. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any queries or thoughts .



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PROGRESS ON THE SOLAR KILN

We now have the interest and help from members of the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Management and Napier University Centre for Wood Science and Technology. The first prototype kiln will be built on the site of Angus & Mack at Airfield Sawmill, a good sunny spot. The method of solar heat collection has become fairly standard in the USA, using black porous absorber material in several layers to get maximum heat collection and maximum air flow heat exchange. Woven black metal insect mesh is ideal but costly. A cheaper alternative is woven black fibreglass mesh. The whole of one side of the container, about 6m x 2m, is to be covered in this, in 3 or 4 layers, with air spaces, and topped with a polycarbonate triple layer sheet. All required components, including suitable container, fans, PV panels and absorber materials, have been identified and priced.

The first fibreglass roll has been ordered and will be used for a trial mock-up, on a ply sheet in place of the container, 2m high x 1m wide, i.e., 1/6th of the kiln face, with one fan and a small PV panel. I hope this will be up and running for a meeting of the above people on 22nd September, which will also plan what initial feasibility study and later monitoring will be needed.

It would be good to have a working kiln in place by winter, when the sun doesn't rise much above the horizon, and to monitor its performance as Spring finally returns.

We will need a load of sawn timber for this, more than 6m³, so that progress can be followed. I have found it surprising how much drying is achieved even in the duller months of the year. This is probably because the air being blown through is always at a much lower relative humidity than the incoming air from outside, having been warmed up, even just a little, by the solar absorber. The evaluation should also measure the quality of the dried timber, in terms of internal stresses, and compare it to the general experience of the usual kiln drying, which tends to leave stresses that show up on re-sawing. Maybe

it is just a matter of time, the solar taking longer; but past experience and reports from others have suggested that the unavoidable changes of temperature help to relieve timber tensions.

The case has been made that we should look into the needs for the softwood market. But drying softwoods is much easier, and we would only add some softwood to the initial load if someone asks for this.



Written by,

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Photography credit - James Millar

NEW APPRENTICESHIP IN FURNITURE MAKING

Why have an apprentice? In June this year our apprentice Mike Storey was the first person ever to achieve a new qualification in furniture making. During the ASHS AGM visit to our workshop around this time this was the hot topic of discussion. Here is the story of Mike's apprenticeship.

For the first time, early in 2012, a local school boy asked Angus ***“Would you consider taking me on as an apprentice?”***

At the time, like now, there was a lot in the press about the new Modern Apprenticeships solving youth unemployment and being an important alternative to full time undergraduate education. So we had been thinking about taking on an apprentice and the serendipity made us think this might be the time to do it.

We are often approached by graduates for full time work but what they are looking for (experience to develop their skills so they can move on to work as furniture designers first and makers second) and what we need (someone happy to work on Angus's designs who will stay long enough to justify the long experience required to be able to work effectively in our workshop) are not really compatible.

Angus, like many craftsman, likes teaching in an informal hands on way, and he is very committed to sharing his skills. He is currently a mentor for the Crafts Council on their Hothouse programme for recent graduates. From the moment he set-up as a designer-maker he was approached by students looking for work experience and he has worked with at least one student every year since setting up in 1992 (after a background in product design). He is generous with his time and regards sharing his skills as an integral part of being

a craftsman and unlike many designer/makers he doesn't consider teaching as an income. In fact, he finds working with students to be one of the most rewarding aspects of his work. Most students are fun, interesting and memorable and our lot have included an earnest farmer's son and ploughing champion from Ireland, hipsters from London, a journeyman from France and a World Skills winner from Australia. It can be an intense time as they often live with us (inevitable with our rural location and their lack of money) and it was very exciting for our daughters when they were younger. We now have various bits of furniture around our house made by students which were either not good enough to sell or they were a good opportunity for us to get something done in exchange for supporting practical learning. Students are very hungry for this and even more so since the move away from workshop time to computer based design in most colleges.

All of this has been done with no formal contract, but on an exchange basis and has lasted anything from a few weeks to a few months - at the end we give them what we can. Recently there has been lots

of discussion about unpaid internships and is it exploitation? In the early days of Angus's business he simply could not have afforded to pay interns as the costs in his time would not have been outweighed by the benefit in help. More recently we have been able to pay student interns the minimum wage for their time but it is easier with a bigger workshop, and we are now better at finding out what skills the student has that benefits us.

Back to Mike and his apprenticeship. He was travelling to school in Aberfeldy, for 5th and 6th year and Highers and had decided he would not apply for full-time further education. He had been actively looking for an apprenticeship and was planning to go to a designer-maker in Glasgow.

When this fell through and someone said to his mum

“Why isn't he approaching Angus Ross?”

It was a good reminder that many people who may be interested in you and your work have no idea you even exist, and your local networks generate unexpected benefits.

With no idea of how to run an apprenticeship but confident there must be support, Mike started with us for one afternoon a week while he was still at school.

By the time he had finished school it was apparent there was no ready made apprenticeship scheme he could step into. This would have been a very different story if we were registered with CITB and he was learning a wood trade for the construction industry. In this case training providers can receive anything from £2000 to £8,500 per year and the apprentice is on lower apprentice wages until 19. The only option for us was to take Mike on at the minimum wage and with no contribution towards our training. This is a big hurdle. As a micro-business, with three full-time staff, an extra full-time employee felt like a huge step. To afford it would require a substantial increase in commissions or sales. As we all know wood based business do not tend to have big profit margins and even once established few of our salaries are much above minimum wages! Also he only had very basic woodwork skills and our complex ever changing work is very difficult for a novice.



We managed to secure £2000 towards his wages in his first year from a local charity and a local organisation, working on behalf of Perth and Kinross Council's Youth Employment Action Plan, agreed to pay Mike's minimum apprentice wage for the first three months while he "Got Ready for Work". I continued to explore options for training. At the end of the three months we became aware that David Young (a former tutor at Kirkcaldy College) was setting up Young Enterprises and getting registered as a 'training provider'. The council agreed to support Mike for a further three months until a plan could be set up. At the end of this six months Mike was becoming a much more effective member of the team and we agreed to then employ him full time (on the minimum wage) and Young Enterprises would validate his training (and be paid as the 'training provider').

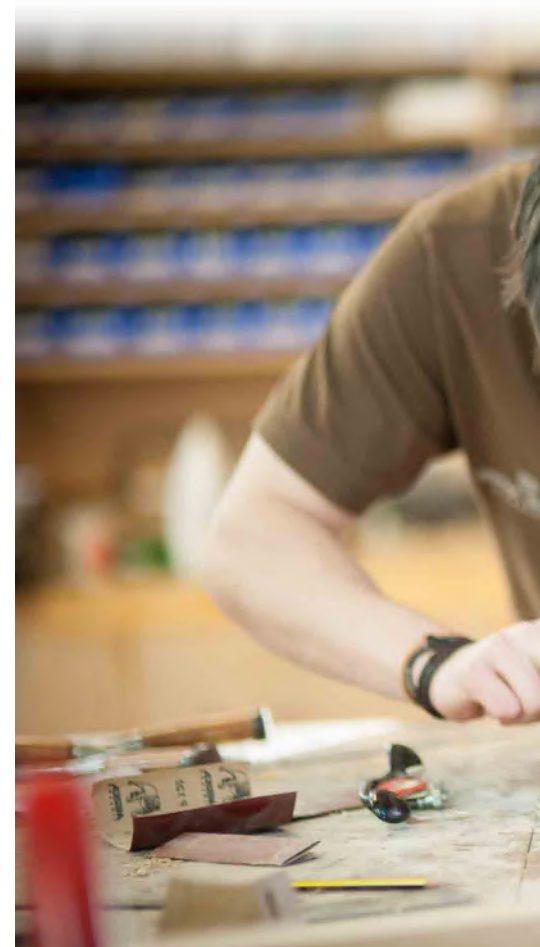


Business advisors suggest that before a decision there should be research, a goal and a plan of how to get there. However, many of our decisions are made quickly based on a hunch that we are leaping in the right direction. We said we would take him on, and I started looking around for support.



Why go to all this effort to establish an apprenticeship and not just offer him a job? Well, the obvious one was that an apprenticeship may have attracted benefits for us as an employer, but our main concern was a feeling of responsibility to a school leaver to ensure he would receive a properly recognised qualification and therefore have more options open to him in the future. It was also helpful to have a defined time period that we were all working towards and reduced our feeling of responsibility to provide him with a life time of work. For Mike it offered him employment for a defined period of time, it gave him a chance to find out if this is what he really wants to do while receiving a formally recognised training and it would always be easier to find alternative employment once you have had a job.

What is the training he received? Mostly it has been hands on practical work in the machine shop and at the bench with an appropriate level of supervision. In the early days he was extremely closely supervised and this was very time consuming. What we didn't do was give him tasks to master before moving on to the next thing. An 'efficient' more factory like workshop divides up tasks and has specialists in each one but Angus does not advocate that. He believes it is much more rewarding and interesting to see a project through from start to finish. So Mike was plunged straight into big live projects. He says now, that this was the most surprising and most exciting thing about coming to work with us. He has also had tea making and sweeping up duties but never did anything the rest of us didn't also do. As our work is always changing it can be quite overwhelming for a novice to really grasp what is going on with big complex projects but it does have the possibility of a really deep kind of learning and I think resonates with Problem Based Learning which was at the vanguard of medical education in the early 1990's and underpins the new Curriculum for Excellence in schools. I studied for a Post-Graduate Diploma in Education for Health Care Practise in the mid 1990's and there was a lot of talk of 'paradigm cases' being a really useful tool for deep learning and this really means looking at a complex and memorable whole to better understand all the little elements that make it up. So in skill or craft based training you are learning lots of different skills and techniques in one project. David Young talks about furniture making skills as either 'making frames (chairs)' or 'carcasses (cabinets and kitchens)' but in Angus's designs both and more can appear in the same piece of furniture. Becoming really skilled and competent in a complex craft takes a long time: Angus and Steven Gray (our Senior Maker) talk in terms of a decade and they are still learning and developing their skills. I think a complex craft is making "fine furniture" as opposed to the "hand-crafted sandwich" use of the word craft. By the end of the first year Mike could make our most often repeated design, the Unstable Stool, without assistance and by the end of his apprenticeship has a high level of competence in the myriad of skills involved in our fine furniture making.



Mike has a SVQ Level 3 in Fine Furniture Making - the first person ever to be awarded this qualification and he is also David Young's first student to have completed SVQ Level 3. David Young said "in twenty years of skills based education I have only seen six or seven students go through small workshops to gain a qualification" and that it has been "very rewarding" to see Mike's progress. What is a SVQ (Scottish Vocational Qualification)? Concentrate here: it is awarded by the SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority) and is a competency based qualification. The SQA describe SVQ's as benchmarks of competence. A competence is a skill or task that is being demonstrated at the correct level and in the correct context over a period of time. Anne Wheatley of Young Enterprises says "vocational qualifications used to be about knowledge - now it's about doing the do" and vocational qualifications are now "more valuable" as "they changed to be more about showing you can do things rather than knowing how to do things". Young Enterprises visited Mike in our workshop (anything from fortnightly or six monthly!) and provided training and assessed him by setting written tasks, talking to Mike, Angus and Steven about his practise; examining his work and a couple of times observing him in Young Enterprises' workshop. Mike also received a Modern Apprenticeship Certificate. Rather disappointing when a SVQ3 is compared to other awards on the SQA website it seems to be considered at similar level to Scottish Higher and Anne Wheatley states

"In many industries (eg retail, travel and tourism) an SVQ3 is normally the level that a 'team leader' or 'manager' would be working towards. However in our industry (and other hand skill industries) a level 3 indicates a higher level of hand skills and complex techniques" She also noted that Mike is working to the highest standard with the highest level of hand skills compared to all of their other apprentices. Craft based competence is still not highly regarded by the SQA and at the moment there is no other formal body we can go to. However when Mike recently went to interview for a summer job as Woodwork Assistant with Camp America I asked if they had looked at his certificates.

"No" he said, "they just looked at what I can do".



As this included images of vessels made for COLLECT: The International Art Fair for Contemporary Objects presented by the Crafts council at the Saatchi Gallery, London I guess you need no more.

Mike has just returned from America and will re-join our team at the end of September.



Written by
Lorna Ross

www.angusross.co.uk



source from a few different suppliers, some who manage large estates, as well as a local tree surgeon who specializes in large site clearance jobs. I find the hardwood market a much more rewarding line. I have a five headed moulder planer as well as a 600mm wide planer thicknesser and a spindle moulder, therefore I can do wide and varied items to suit various customers. I purely work with native hardwoods for furniture makers and DIY customers, who appreciate one off pieces of timber, each with its own unique look. I enjoy assessing a tree prior to cutting into it and revealing what is hidden within. I have gotten to know different customers' wants and likes and it is rewarding selecting cuts for specific clients. Having web presence has been a new thing for me and while I have not got the website the way I would like it, it certainly does generate enquiries.

While in the developed world mass produced timber from giant mills is the way ahead and is unlikely to ever go back to small family run mills, there is room for the small bespoke mill, where knowledge of timber is still required. Trees as a resource are not uniform - with lack of experience or understanding good timber can be wasted in the automated environment of a large mill. I get a lot of satisfaction from taking a wind-blown log from an estate and breaking it down to its best cuts and selecting it all for specific customers and projects.



MOYNE SAWMILL

I started sawmilling timber on our farm in 1989 aged nineteen. We had an old tractor driven rack saw bench with a 42" Yankee blade, which lay abandoned in a field. We had access to plenty of good sound trees, so I set the old bench up in a hay shed and cut fencing posts initially.

It was not such an unusual thing to start a sawmill as my grandfather, was a naval engineer who had worked with Barnes Wallace's team on the bouncing bomb during the war and built a Sawmill in Rhu. He collected wooden mangles and turned the rollers on a lathe for the traveling rack bench. He ran the mill which had a 60" Yankee blade, with his step-father who was a time served sawmiller for the Singer sewing Co. Later when my grandfather moved to a hill farm in Aberfeldy he and my uncle set up another sawmill which became well known for making potato boxes for the Perthshire potato farmers.

At Moyne Sawmill I have had to move with the trends and times, as the timber industry like so many other industries has changed dramatically since the recession of the 90's. Initially while I mainly produced timber fencing, I also produced blocks for boat builders, pallet wood, surveying pegs and sleepers for a wide and varied customer base. Within a rough thirty square mile area there were at least eight other sawmills producing similar products. Each with a workforce of experienced staff. With the down-turn in the building sector during the nineties, large semi-automated sawmills that could churn out large or small sections with a small workforce and who had steered away from fencing timber had to find new outlets. These mills pushed fencing timbers more and more which in turn meant that small family run mills were squeezed out as they could not compete with the large mills. The eight mills I spoke of are all gone and this is a pattern repeated throughout Britain. The magic formula of capitalism is to find a competitive edge to compete - the simplest way is to do more with less employees. A formula which, if taken to extreme I wonder if it can be called progress!

Only time will tell...

For me personally, my own business model is connected to my life style. Living on a farm, I split my time between breeding sheep and milling native hardwoods. I treat one job as my hobby and interest and the other as work, the weather or level of stress I feel day to day determines which one is which. But in reality I enjoy both and it's a work life balance I am happy with. Looking back there was a time where I employed several men within the Sawmill as well as fence erectors on building sites, this was a very competitive market and extremely unrewarding business to run. I appreciate working as a one man band now after having that wide experience and background. I mill and kiln dry all native hardwoods which I

Over this summer I have started several improvements. Within the mill itself I have improved dust control as well as general layout. I have purchased a lot of new stock/interesting trees from around Scotland. I have started a new insulated dry store which is nearly complete, this will be ready for the winter months coming. My new larger dry store will house a much larger selection of kiln dried wood and stacked in such a way customers can pick through boards with ease. I also have a new shop area/counter with display for finished items such as mantles and fire surrounds, shelves and mirrors, which I hope to have ready by the end of September.

Timber, like food, is a commodity we will always need. The timber industry has played a leading role in the development of the world, from huge oak forests felled to build the English navy to the spread of the US westward. In the wild west of America, such was the demand for sawmill

workers that adverts were placed in papers in New York offering high wages for workers and to encourage them to head west all travel expenses for workers would be paid. Pioneer towns were built up round sawmills and the main roads in were where the logs were skidded in, making them rough and mucky hence you didn't want to end up on 'skid road'. Alternatively massive wooden flumes were built, to float semi dried trees down to the mills, one such was sixty five miles long with trestle legs up to one hundred feet high, flume herders were stationed every five miles, and people used to ride on the logs to get a free ride. Men used to be able to work in the woods and mills and be so well paid they saved up and then would leave roaming from town to town creating the myths of the wild west and drunken gun fights and gambling etc. I do wonder what Saturday night in Glasgow would be like if everyone wandered around with a six shooter!

But again that era is past and now there are even experimental trucks in the US which are driverless - things are always changing and timber and agriculture are no exception. For me I will be content to see my new dry store completed and filled with kiln dried hardwoods and wait for the next step for my own little ship Moyne Sawmill.



Written by

John Ferguson

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THE ITALIAN CONNECTION PART 3

Branding + Marketing from Italy to Scotland

My last article for the journal detailed the information gleaned from the Italy trip last summer conducted by several ASHS members looking at the Italian chair district and subsequently the associated forestry and sawmilling industry that surrounded it.

My conclusions on the trip are detailed as follows and include my thoughts on how ASHS might proceed in a genuine, pro-active, collaborative way to kick start a significant hardwood manufacturing industry, employing local people producing simple high quality products using Scottish timber.

A number of obvious hurdles were identified in setting up something of the scale akin to that of Italy. Our lack of investment opportunities in machinery and equipment, the lack of sustained supply of high quality hardwoods. A capable and skilled workforce. Pressure on Government to help promote the use of locally sourced materials in the building trade.

Overcoming these hurdles will not be easy, but with some simple steps to increase the volume of timber needed, through simple products branded with a Scottish label of quality and reliability, we will find a good place to start.

Two main products were identified that ASHS members have the capabilities to produce that would almost instantly increase the demand for Scottish timber. These are engineered hardwood flooring, and supplying the joinery manufacturing trade with a standardised rough sawn boards sold through an independent timber merchant. Both of these products are currently being investigated which should lead to the following outcome:

If our sawmills throughput was increased due to the value added branding of simple flooring and joinery grade products, then we would have more timber coming through the yards to meet this demand.

The more timber our mills are going through then the better chance they have of siphoning off their prime timbers from each load and being more selective over what gets milled for furniture/joinery grade planking.

The more joinery planking grade materials we have at our disposal the better the supply chain can be, meaning our customer base can grow. This also gives our makers the confidence to develop products that can be made in higher volumes with native species. The more timber the sawmills need the greater pressure we can exert on the growers and foresters that these timbers come from, to increase their planting and production.

A market and end user driven strategy to increase the productivity of our mills is the most effective way to increase the use of locally sourced hardwoods and in order to achieve this we need a strong brand identity to promote our raw material.

ASHS has never had a manned point of sale. There are companies in Scotland that are well set up to take on this role and I feel we should be using their services to introduce us to a much bigger market. All we need to achieve a slightly higher sale price is a 'Red Tractor Label' for timber. I have floated these products to a number of companies and been met with enthusiasm with one simple caveat; that we guarantee continuity of supply and quality. This brings me on to my final point which is that ASHS must start employing rough sawn standardised boards in grade and thickness the same as our European counterparts as they are our direct competition in joinery manufacture and the single biggest user of hardwoods in the UK.



How to market these products and others like them.

- 1: Professionally developed website and brand that articulates all the various benefits of using our products/produce involving professional photography showing the process of the products being made, and the final product in situ.
- 2: Affiliation to other high quality brands that have the same aspiration such as the Scottish whiskey industry, Harris Tweed/textiles industry etc.
- 3: High profile designers/makers, house builders and architects using our products. ANTA, Makar, Helen Lucas, Dulchas, Russwood, Makay Flooring etc with testimonials from each.



4: Attend professional trade shows in Scotland to promote our group products. Home Building and Renovating Show (SECC), Scottish Homes Show Aberdeen, Highland Show etc.

5: Targeted and sustained marketing in periodicals and trade magazines such as RIAS.

6: Having a simple, clearly articulated brand and website that tells the end user why it's important to use our products and produce.

Hurdles are there to be overcome and this is the simplest way I can see to get us over them. There is a tendency to want to run before we can walk but the key to increasing hardwood production is to develop affordable, desirable products and put them under the noses of our customers. If this is done correctly the market will then take over.



Written by

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LT15 HELPS SCOTTISH TEACHER PROVE VIABILITY OF TRADITIONAL WOODCRAFT

James Thomson of Glenrothes, Scotland started Thomson Timber in 2007. Previously trained as a mechanical design engineer, he had worked in Australia and Edinburgh before returning home and taking up teaching woodworking for twenty years.

"The inspiration came from my students," James recalls. "One of the kids said to me, 'Why are you teaching us how to do traditional carpentry, when the chances are that when we leave school, we're all going to work in factories?' I thought to myself that I should really try to show them where these traditional skills are still being used."

The question was quite relevant, so James set out to discover where traditional woodworking skills are still essential in today's industries. High-end furniture construction was one area, as well as the restoration work on the old oak framed buildings around the UK. However, the area that really caught James' attention was the resurgence of interest for post-and-beam timber frame buildings.

James decided that building a timber frame would be a great way to illustrate the usefulness of their woodworking skills to the kids. With the involvement of local timber companies who donated the timber, James ran an extra-curricular course, and they built a timber-frame structure together with the kids.



"My son Craig works with me fulltime. He graduated in Art and Philosophy," James shares with a bit of a grin. "I was apprehensive as to where his career would go with an Art and Philosophy degree. Having said that, his ability to visualise things in three dimensions - you never have to tell him something twice. Plus, he taught himself AutoCAD."

Thomson Timber is located just east of Glenrothes, Scotland. The location is rural, but within a short drive of the coast and Edinburgh. The location has proved ideal. They attend local fairs and shows, and generate a great deal of enquiries from their timber frame stand. People are naturally attracted to the stand, and as they talk over the possibilities, many of the conversations result in future work.

"People who have horses, if you can describe it that way," James shares. "They are the people that we tend to have as clients." The common denominator among their clients is that they own land, horses, or both. Their last show was the Blair Castle Horse Trials, near

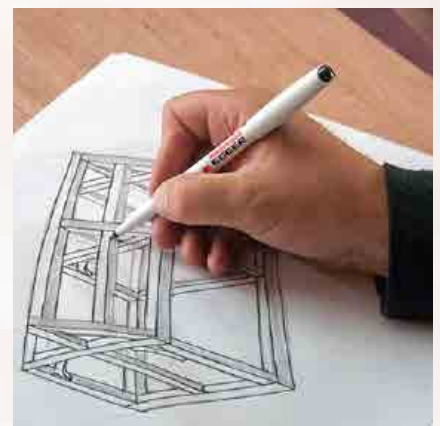


Pitlochry, Scotland, and that show resulted in more enquiries in the first day than any other show they had attended.

"If you look at what is on the market today, they [ready-made buildings] seem too flimsy," James says. "People don't like that flimsiness. They would rather spend the extra and have something that is going to last a lifetime."

"In my experience, having that hands-on approach is vital where they can take the model and move it around in space," relates James. "They can decide to move a door, add a different kind of window, or change the orientation slightly." Building the model helps him think through how he wants to accomplish some of the more technical joints and carpentry on the final project.

Several times, James has employed his computer skills to superimpose a photo of the model onto a photo of the client's yard, to give them an accurate look at what the final project will look like naturally, or to make sure that the building will not obstruct their existing view out to the sea. This added effort has helped finalise more than one deal.





Once the project plan is finalised, the real work begins! Logs are often selected before they are felled, so that the right lengths and cuts are made. Once the logs are delivered, further selection takes place as they pick and choose the right logs for each component.

Then the logs are loaded onto their sawmill to be turned into beams or posts. Posts, for example, must be cut from the very centre of the tree - boxed heart, so that when they shrink in the future, they will shrink equally on all four sides.

"That's one of the main reasons we have our own sawmill," James explains. "We couldn't get commercial sawmills to supply us with specific cuts from a tree. In timber framing, it's very important. We need to know we can use certain cuts of the tree for certain areas, knowing in which ways timbers will shrink and distort."

The LT15 is an affordable first step into high quality sawmilling for one's own purposes. Although on the lower end as far as price-point, James' sawmill has proved quite robust for close to 10 years, and capable of cutting diameters of up to 70cm and lengths up to 5.4 metres.

Beams and posts are milled slightly oversized, because James' sawmill includes an additional attachment for final planing and moulding.

"The advantage of having the Wood-Mizer moulder on the same rails as the sawmill means we never have to take that timber off the machine," James shares. "We can plane it to exactly what we want. It gives us a nice surface finish for interior timbers, and gives us an accurate and planed beam that we can easily work out reference faces for the traditional carpentry."

Once the beam or post is square and smooth, the AutoCAD drawing is referenced and a rod used to precisely mark out the locations of the joints. These are then cut with a chain mortiser and traditional chisels.

A trial assembly of the building is generally made at Thomson Timber, whether partially or the whole project. For projects that are impractical to fully assemble, they have practice mortise and tenon joints on hand to make sure everything fits as it should.

Because of requests from customers for a building that could be dismantled easily, James has adopted and now prefers a mechanical linking system to connect his joints over the traditional mortise and tenon method.

"I came across a dozen or so different methods," recalls James. "But in my opinion, the simplest and most efficient way of joining the timbers is to use the TimberLinx system. The whole building can be assembled virtually with only an Allen key. We can take buildings up and down in a couple of hours, without special equipment or special skills." One of James' goals is to leverage this system in a way that he can sell smaller buildings as a DIY kit, which

certainly sounds promising as an area of business growth.

They enclose the building using insulated panels backed with plywood. The inside can be pre-painted or stained depending on the final look required by the client. The panels can be used as the roof insulation as well, allowing them to make the building wind and watertight in the same day.

Between larger projects, construction of firewood stores, furniture and fireplace mantles keeps them busy. They sell mantles all over Britain, and use a wide belt sander with a 1.2 metre width capacity to produce mantles and tabletops.

"From my point of view," James shares, "Being able to produce items that will outlive me, and making use of the craftsmanship that's required to achieve that, that's probably the main attraction of my business. One of the things we find is that our customers spend a lot of time sitting in the building, just looking at the building, rather than looking out the windows! That's a great compliment."



Written by
Jacob Mooney

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Living Solutions was formed by Alice Berry and Paul Cruise in September 2005 after studying at the school for social entrepreneurs for a year. Living Solutions is a social enterprise and recognised charity based in Fife.

The aims of the organisation are to:
Conserve and protect the natural environment.

Reduce unemployment
Increase access to affordable housing/
promote the use of Scottish timber.

We started out doing horticultural work for a local housing association with 3 members of staff, a small team of volunteers and New Deal clients with only an old post office van and a small selection of hand tools.

Over the past 11 years things have changed, we have grown to 5 permanent members of staff and work out of a 10000sq ft timber workshop which has store rooms, a sawmill and yard. We also have 3 work vehicles, a forestry forwarder, tracked wood chipper and equipment such as mowers, high pruners, chainsaws and hand tools.



We offer a range of training opportunities aimed at helping young people find employment in forestry or other rural careers.

These are...

- A 3 month long rural skills "Academy" which gives young people a chance to try working outdoors, finding out about what type of jobs there are available, get practical experience and certified training such as Emergency first aid at work, risk assessments, manual handling, trimmer brush-cutter, Trauma first aid (for chainsaw injuries) and preventing and controlling pollution incidents.
- A 6 month intensive forestry training for 8 young people a year (aged 16-25). This involves training in chainsaws with NPTC and LANTRA assessments to learn to fell small, medium and windblown trees and use high powered pruners and wood-chippers. Training takes place as soon as they start with us so there is plenty time to consolidate this training on real work sites. Occasionally we train young people on forestry machinery such as forwarders, and they gain a forest machine operators licence
- 8 forestry apprenticeships a year. The apprentices work towards achieving a SVQ2 in trees and timber where they learn about the theoretical side of forestry such as Tree Identification completing an, as well as carrying out real jobs in forestry contracting. The work varies and has included felling dangerous and windblown trees, thinning operations, selective felling, coppicing, fencing and planting, Timber extraction and sawmilling.

We continue to develop, improve our services and build our partnerships year on year. We are members of Fife Rural Skills Partnership, of which Paul is current chair. Members of Fife social enterprise network, members of ASHS, member of Tayforth machinery ring. We partner with SCVO, Forestry Commission Scotland and Fife council

We have provided forestry services for estates such as Cambo and Wemyss, farms, Forestry Commission, SNH, SWT,



FCCT and have acted as a sub-contractor to other forestry contractors.

We continue to develop new programmes and are currently working towards affordable self-build housing using home grown timber.

We have also worked with vulnerable groups, people with physical and mental disabilities and people with social background problems.



Written by
Paul Cruise

www.living-solutions.org



ARGYLL SMALL WOODS COOPERATIVE
With Simwood and Luss Estates

Invite you to attend
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A One-day Workshop
(Tea/coffee and a sandwich lunch provided)

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- Be given an outline of levels of quality used by hardwood sawmillers and the reasons for selection or rejection
- Get an insight into the current markets available both locally and nationally
- Get an introduction into licensing, methods of sale and how to set up a sales schedule to their best advantage
- Hear about a proposed 'Shared forester' project


If you have hardwoods on your property and would like to know more about their assessment and valuation then this event is for you.

Places are limited so booking is essential. For further information or to book your place on the workshop contact:

Neil Donaldson, Argyll Small Woods Cooperative,
Tel 01583 441 373
Email: info@argyllsmallwoods.coop

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-  The label endorses the value of local biodiversity, character and identity in the woodland resource.
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For more info visit:

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