



THE

Irish Forester

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY OF IRISH FORESTERS

SUMMER 2013

Society opposes sale of Coillte harvesting rights

The Society published its position paper on public forestry in Ireland in April and followed this with a presentation to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Agriculture on 7 May. The paper stated that “the proposal to privatise the harvesting rights of publicly owned forests for up to 80 years has the potential to disrupt the sustainable development of forestry and the forest products sector”.

Society members Donal Magner, John Prior and Gerhardt Gallagher made a presentation based on the Society’s policy position paper Public Forestry in Ireland. They argued that a major change in the ownership or management of publicly owned forests will alter the way these forests are managed, especially in relation to SFM and their ultimate benefits to the State.

As an all-Ireland body, the Society outlined how both Forest Service organisations in Ireland ensure that a range of standards and guidelines on the economic, environmental and social functions

of forestry are fully adhered to and enforced, including:

- SFM structures are in place to provide continuity in management.
- Due care for the environment and existing forests during all operations.
- Protection against disease and infestation.
- The promotion and continued implementation of an open forest policy.
- Maintenance of areas reserved for research purposes.
- The employment of qualified forestry professionals at all stages of forest management.
- The principle of sustained yield to maintain continuity of wood supply to existing industries tries.
- Provision for periodic inventory of forest stock.
- Adequate auditing and certification to continue in the context of any management / ownership change.

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Society publishes a limited edition print of The Trees of Great Britain and Ireland



Sir Henry Elwes (third from left), great grandson of Sir John Henry Elwes, co-author of *The Trees of Great Britain and Ireland*, the editorial committee of Donal Magner, John Mc Loughlin, Kevin Hutchinson and Pat O’Sullivan, with Matthew Jebb, Director, National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin at the launch on 6 March.

Message from the President

Welcome to our Summer newsletter. I want to begin by thanking members for affording me the opportunity to lead the Society for the next two years. It is a great honour to follow in the footsteps of so many eminent Presidents.



Currently, there are a number of important issues facing the forest industry. There is considerable uncertainty surrounding the future of Coillte as a result of the proposal to privatise its harvesting rights. A decision on this proposal is now imminent. The Society launched its position paper on the proposal at its recent AGM. In it we have set out clearly why we believe the proposal has the potential to undermine the sustainable development of forestry and the forest products sector in Ireland. The Society accepted an invitation to address the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Agriculture on 7 May.

The Society welcomes the all-Ireland Chalara Control Strategy which sees the authorities, North and South, working in unison to address a serious threat to ash plantations. The Society advocates much greater use of home produced planting stock, particularly of native species. Importation of planting stock should be an action of last resort.

In 2010, the Society introduced three new categories of Technical membership – Arboriculture, Landscape Management and Ecology. We will work to integrate these new categories into the organisation and conclude the work begun three years ago. The CPD programme, which is essential to maintaining professional standards, will be reviewed. This programme is now ten years old and the Society must ensure that it serves the needs of the members in the future.

Pacelli Breathnach
President
Society of Irish Foresters



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The Society believes that these safeguards cannot be guaranteed to stakeholders, if the harvesting rights of public forests are sold. In recognition of this major risk, the Society opposes the Government's proposal to sell the harvesting rights of Coillte's forests.

During our presentation the Society, as an all-Ireland body, welcomed the recent change in Northern Ireland's legislation on public access which strengthens the previous policy of permissive access. Stakeholders now enjoy a 'legal right' of access to all forests owned by the Forest Service, Northern Ireland.

The Society believes that the proposal to sell the harvesting rights lacks transparency and has not been rationally assessed. It also deplores the lack of consultation with stakeholders in reaching this decision. In addition, there has been no input to the debate by the forest authority – the Forest Service – on the silvicultural implications of the proposed sale.

Our managed forest history is quite short– less than 100 years of continuous management by the State and 30 years by mainly farmer owners – compared with centuries of sustained management in the continent of Europe. In this regard, the Society calls for the establishment of an independent structure to examine public and private forestry development to ensure a viable forest industry.

Visit by Bulgarian foresters



John McCarthy (back, right) of None-so-Hardy Nurseries hosted a visit by senior Bulgarian foresters and officials, pictured with John Mc Loughlin and Pat O'Sullivan of the Society who organised this section of their visit to Ireland. Also included: Yeni Ivanova Tsootsova-Katsarska, advisor at Minister's Office; Emilia Staneva Manolova, Director, Strategic Planning Directorate; Mariyana Petkova Nikolova, Director, Legal-Regulatory Activities Directorate; Krasimir Zlatkov Kamenov, Deputy Director, EFA; Lubcho Petkov Trichkov, Director, Projects and International Relations Directorate, EFA; Nikolay Vasilev Vasilev, chief expert, Projects and International Relations Directorate, EFA; Katerina Ivanova Kutina, project accountant, EFA; Yuri Stefanov Mikov, Director, South Western State Forest Enterprise; and Todor Georgiev Bonev, Deputy Director, North Central State Forest Enterprise.

New chairman of IBEC forestry group



Congratulations to society member Daragh Little, who was recently appointed chairman of the Irish Forestry and Forest Products Association (IFFPA), the forestry sector in IBEC. IFFPA represents the broad forest and forest based business sector from nurseries to the timber processing industry.

Daragh, who is a Technical Councillor on the Society's council, aims to ensure that the government and other key decision makers recognise the value and importance of the forest industry to the environment and the economy. Managing Director of Forest Enterprises Ltd. (FEL), he is a graduate of UCD with over 20 years' experience in the forestry sector. He plans to build relationships within the sector and "bring together existing members with a vision of making IFFPA the voice of forestry in Ireland".

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Workshop on Code of Practice for the Valuation of Commercial Plantation



Henry Phillips

This year the Society of Irish Foresters sponsored three workshops on the important topic of valuing commercial plantations. There is a huge demand for this service to members as evidenced by the large attendance at the final workshop in Mullingar on 23 May.

The workshops comprised an indoor session

where all aspects of the Code of Practice are explained, followed by an outdoor field session to illustrate the main issues around valuation. Topics covered in each workshop included the purpose of a valuation, factors affecting a valuation, methods of valuation, land values, forecasting volumes and selecting discount rates. The Society would like to thank Henry Phillips, Daragh Little, John Phelan and Tom McDonald for providing this series of workshops.

Augustine Henry medal



John McLoughlin presents the 2013 Augustine Henry medal to Alan Clarke, UCD at the Society's field day and AGM at Knocksink Wood Education Centre, Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow on 11 April. This annual award is presented to the forestry student who gains the highest marks in the final year examinations.

Forest protection the theme of Augustine Henry Forestry Lecture and seminar



Although forest fungi can have benefits, these have been overshadowed in recent years since Irish forests have been attacked by two fungal diseases *Phytophthora Ramorum* and Chalara ash dieback. The Society decided to organise two events in early 2013 to address these issues.

This year's Augustine Henry Forestry Lecture, entitled "Are Ireland's Trees under threat from pests and diseases?" was delivered by Dr. Alistair McCracken (above), Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute, Belfast to a large attendance in the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin. The subject of the lecture was timely given the outbreak of Chalara ash dieback in Ireland.

On 3 April, the Society, in association with Teagasc, organised a seminar on the topic "Forest Fungi in Ireland". Fungi in Irish forests have recently received much negative press as result of the damage caused by Chalara fraxinea and *Phytophthora ramorum*. However, fungi can also provide valuable non-wood forest products. Pictured are the seminar: Dr. Paul Dowding, Trinity College, Professor Jim Trappe, Oregon State University; John Mc Loughlin, Mr. Gabriel Roe, Senior Inspector, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and Dr. Richard O'Hanlon, Teagasc.



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Society field day in Frenchpark, Co. Roscommon

Dr. Niall Farrelly, Teagasc Forestry (Research) provides information on thinning yields and intensities at Frenchpark, Co. Roscommon.

Society members visited thinning experiments established by Teagasc in a highly productive crop of Sitka spruce to determine the effect of different thinning treatments on the growth and development of the forest crop. The field day also demonstrated the impact of different thinning intensities (regulated by basal area) and the impact of delaying thinning by three years.

Stradbally Forestry Show



Pacelli Breathnach, President SIF and Dermot Houlihan, Chairman, Association of Irish Forestry Consultants (AIFC) compare notes at the Forestry, Woodland and Bio-energy Show in Stradbally Hall, Co. Laois on 11 May.

Finnish foresters visit Laois Sawmills



Society member and principal of Laois Sawmills, Jim McNamara (left) hosted a visit by Finnish foresters, from the Metsä Group, to his mill on 26 April. The foresters led by Petri Tahvanainen were impressed with the range of products produced by Laois Sawmills including garden furniture, fencing, pallets and wood pellets,

Michael O'Donovan receives honorary membership



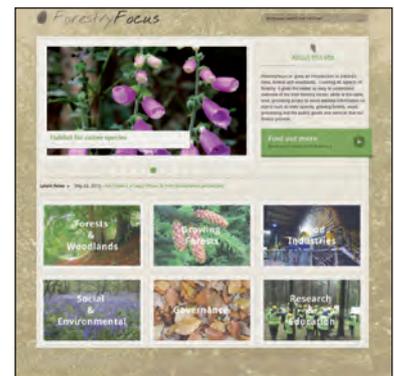
John Mc Loughlin had the very pleasant task of awarding Michael O'Donovan honorary membership before he handed over the presidency to Pacelli Breathnach. Tributes were paid by Tim Crowley, former general manager Coillte and John. "He has been my trainer, my union chairman, my boss and my friend, and of these four roles, the friendship has lasted the longest and has meant the most to me," wrote Tom Hunt in a heartfelt tribute read by John Mc Loughlin at the presentation. Tom, who was unable to make the presentation met Michael first "on the 6th of January 61 years ago at 8.00pm. Recalling their first meeting, when Michael met Tom and his fellow students at Rathdrum Railway Station, he wrote: "The next day at 8.00am, he introduced us to cross cut saws, and subsequently directed us in the sawing of 1.5 metre diameter beech trees which had recently been blown across the avenue leading to Avondale house. During our time with him there, he encouraged us to become members of the Society of Irish Foresters, and the great enthusiasm he felt for the organisation was obvious."

John Mc Loughlin present the certificate of honorary membership to Michael O'Donovan for his contribution to Irish forestry and the Society of Irish Foresters.

ForestryFocus – Society launches new website

Society President Pacelli Breathnach launched ForestryFocus.ie, the Society's latest initiative. This new website, which is aimed at a general audience, provides an introduction to Ireland's trees, forests and woodlands. "Covering all aspects of forestry, it gives the reader an easy to understand overview of the Irish forestry sector" said Alistair Pfeifer, the originator of the website.

"It also provides access to more detailed information on topics such as tree species, growing forests, wood processing and the public goods and services that our forests provide," he said. Pacelli thanked Alistair for his many hours of work and said that the site will be a "one stop shop for members of the public seeking information on Irish forestry

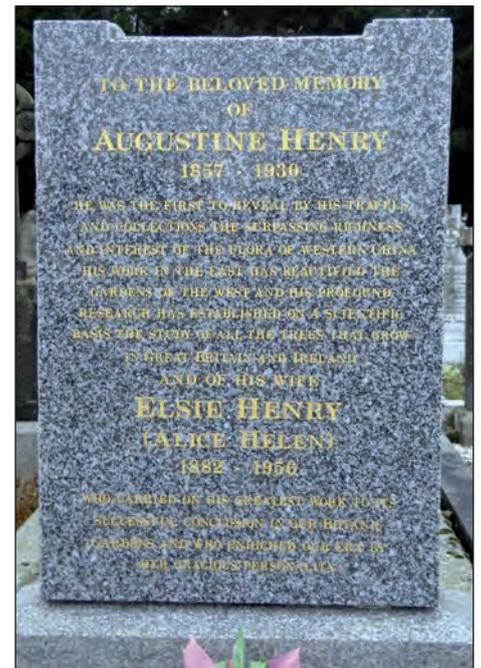


In the footsteps of Sir Dalton Hooker



In November Seamus O'Brien (left), Head Gardener at Kilmacurragh, will lead an expedition to the Sikkim Himalaya in northeast India to study trees in their native habitats. The expedition will re-trace the footsteps of Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker (1817-1911) who travelled through the region in 1848 and 1849 and will allow these intrepid tree enthusiasts to study a wide variety of trees, including conifers such as *Abies densa*, *Abies spectabilis*, *Larix griffithii* and *Picea spinulosa*, and broadleaves such as *Acer sikkimensis*, *Acer campbellii*, *Magnolia campbellii* and *Tetracentron sinense*.

Refurbished Henry headstone



The Society supported the recent refurbishment by Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council of the headstone at the grave of Augustine and Elsie Henry in Deansgrange Cemetery.

Northern Field Day

The Society visited Aughtentaine Estate, near Fivemiletown, Co. Tyrone on 17 May. Much discussion focused on restocking areas where site preparation had included incorporating sewage sludge and mounding. Estate owner, James Hamilton Stubber and Dessy Henry of Scottish Woodlands Ltd., also demonstrated the impact of crown thinning and woodland management regimes in areas where landscape amenity objectives predominate.



Noel Foley, Pat O'Sullivan, John McCurdy and Jerry Fleming at the Society field day in Fivemiletown, Co. Tyrone.

Continued vigilance to control ash die back

Society makes submission to All Ireland Chalara Control Strategy



Chalara ash dieback can be detected in bark and foliage: lesion or scar on young ash stem is a sign of the disease (inset). When ash trees come into leaf, the Chalara disease is easier to identify. Symptoms include wilting of foliage, leaf discoloration later turning to black.

The Society welcomed the Department's proposed "All Ireland Chalara Control Strategy" and the north-south cooperation to halt its spread into "the wider environment". In its submission to the Department, SIF maintained that in a rapidly developing situation, good communication with the forestry sector and stakeholders is essential.

The submission stated: "The strategy should include a national publicity campaign to keep the public fully informed of developments and a dedicated Forest Service spokesperson to deal directly with public and media queries."

CHALARA UPDATE

Since ash dieback was detected last October, there are now confirmed findings in 23 counties – 17 in the Republic and all six in Northern Ireland. In addition 41 cases have been reported in nurseries, garden centres, private gardens, farm landscaping including AEOS and roadside trees throughout the island.

The Forest Service along with foresters and forestry companies has been working since October destroying infected plants. In addition, ash plants from infected batches of imported plants have also been destroyed.

The disease is much more widespread than it was in late 2013 but is still restricted to imported trees planted in recent years unlike Britain where the disease has spread to the wider environment. Plantation owners should check their trees regularly. Parkland and hedgerow trees should also be checked especially where planting has been carried out in recent years in REPS and AEOS schemes.

DETECTION

When ash trees come into leaf, the Chalara disease is easier to detect as the foliage turns prematurely brown and black (see photographs) Forest owners, forest nursery staff and members of the public are asked to be vigilant for the disease and report (with photographs, if possible)

any sites where there are concerns about unusual ill health in ash. Report to the Forest Service by e-mail forestprotection@agriculture.gov.ie or phone 01-607 2651. Reports will be followed up by a forestry inspector check.

In addition, nurseries should direct queries to the local plant health inspector. Queries can be sent to plantandpests@agriculture.gov.ie, by fax to 01-627 5994 or phone 01-505 8885.

Those who have concerns about ash dieback in Northern Ireland should contact the DARD Helpline on 0300 200 7847, or email dard-helpline@dardni.gov.uk.

Visitors to ash plantations that are infected should follow the Department's forest hygiene measures such as removing all plant debris from clothing and footwear before leaving the forest. Never remove any plant material from the site.

Sunken Cuthbertson plough



The forest staff at Toorleitra Forest, Co. Galway grapple with the task of rescuing their plough – as it sinks into the blanket bog, probably 1961. We have identified it as a Cuthbertson double mould-board plough but are open to correction. Planting of deep peats ceased in the early 1990s.

Survey on bark stripping by grey squirrels



Most foresters are familiar with the potential of grey squirrels to damage broadleaf trees by bark stripping. Damage usually occurs in June and July when the sap is high in the trees. Sycamore, oak and beech are particularly susceptible but all species, including birch and to a lesser extent ash, can be damaged. The incidence of such damage often accelerates post thinning a timely reminder to owners considering re-spacing broadleaf plantations established during the 1990s.

As part of a wider project on squirrels, which is being undertaken by NUIG and funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Carey said an attempt to quantify the extent of damage caused by bark stripping will be undertaken during 2013 and 2014. Foresters, woodland owners and the general public are asked to participate and to submit details of sites where they have observed bark stripping to Michael Carey, Furze Lodge, Newcastle, Greystones, Co Wicklow or email: careyml@eircom.net.

New Members

We welcome the following new members to the Society of Irish Foresters

Technical: Tadhg Dooley; Barry Downes, Adam Gordon, Marcus Hanbidge, Niall O'Toole, Wesley Seery, Simon McMenamin.

Associate: Christian Brennan, Cathal Woods.

Student: Leo Boyle, Sean Brennan, Paul Collins, Liam Donnelly, John Kennedy, Nick McCormack, William Malone, Cian Moloney, Cian O'Connor, Richard O'Hanlon, Niall O'Neill, Martin O'Shea, Naoise Tracey, Ciaran Walsh and Yan Liu.

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Photos of ash courtesy of IFFF BOKU/Thomas Kirisits

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