

FCA NEWS



Welcome

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The 2004 AGM is going to be a special occasion. As most of you will know, in January a completely new Board and Policy Committee were elected. In March the new Board held a weekend long meeting at Head Office in Aberdeenshire where the role of the FCA was discussed in detail. The Association needs to set clear and transparent objectives. These aims must place the needs of the members as the number one priority and, as a result, the following goals have been set for 2004/05.

- The management of the Association must be made more accountable and operate in a more professional manner. Accounts have to be kept up to date and reporting procedures have to be introduced so that the Board can monitor and control the work of the association.
- The present membership categories are a mess and open to abuse. The FCA is a forestry contractor's business organisation. The membership categories have to be re-organised. A resolution will be placed at the AGM to achieve this objective.
- The present membership codes of practice are not workable and they also leave the Association open to legal liabilities. This issue should have been dealt with before now. A resolution will therefore be placed at the AGM to change the Code of Practice from a mandatory requirement into a voluntary code.
- The Articles and Memorandum of the Association have caused much discussion over the past years. A resolution will be placed at this year's AGM to remove anomalies and to make the elections to the Board and the Policy Committee more consistent and transparent.

At the 2004 AGM the members will also have the opportunity to hear what the Board is recommending, to improve the immediate and the long-term benefits to the membership.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS MUST IMPROVE DRAMATICALLY.

Benefits come in many guises and include everything from the direct benefit of purchasing at preferential prices to having access to grants. On the day of the AGM members will have an opportunity to discuss these and other issues so that ideas can be noted and evaluated and if practical, implemented.

Finance is a core problem to the development of the Association. Three years ago we all saw what can go wrong if there is not competent financial management. The problem is that the FCA has become over dependant on "project" funding. Alternative ways of raising funds must be found to give the FCA financial stability.

The Board recognises the need to generate profits from commercial activi-

ties. A commercial arm of the FCA will have to be set up, which will be under the control of the membership. For this reason a resolution will be placed at the AGM to establish a subsidiary company, to investigate the financial opportunities open to commercial operations, which would be run to directly benefit the membership of the Association.

The external image of the Association has been steadily deteriorating over a number of years. The political representation that the Association should have been making on behalf of the membership was marginal. As a result, the politicians and the Government and other agencies that control our industry have ignored the needs of the Forestry Contractors. It is the intention of the Policy Committee to rectify this situation and to develop and promote policies that meet the needs of the members and the Contracting sector.

As part of a revision of our public image, it is essential that the Association is made to look more professional. The FCA represents professional Forestry Contractors and should therefore have a professional image. For this reason the FCA website is going to be redeveloped and our magazine will also have to be reassessed.

In the last four months the FCA has taken several big steps forward in its work to become more responsive to the needs of our members. The replacement of the old Board and Policy Committee was only a beginning. As many of you will appreciate, the task of turning around our association is a big undertaking and will take time. It is therefore important that the members support the new Board and the Policy Committee in their attempts to turn around our Association and make it more responsive to the needs of the members.

In this whole process of re-organisation, the members' input is essential. Without the members, the Association is nothing. As a member you must make your views known to your elected representatives. Please attend the AGM and make your opinions known. If you cannot attend please consider giving the Chairman your proxy so as to ensure that the changes that are planned do take place.

Remember the FCA is your association; it exists to represent your opinions. Your support is therefore needed.

I look forward to meeting you all at the 2004 AGM.

Brendan Burns
FCA UK Chairman



Contact details

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George Cripps East Cramlington **01670 734814**
Charlie Parker Brampton **016977 47208**
John Swift Cinderford **01594 823313**
Alan Waters Chichester **01243 778106**
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SCOTLAND

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John Wilson Brodrick, Isle of Arran **01770 830348**

WALES

Phil Dunford Corwen **01490 460611**
Alun Jones Dinbych **01745 540325**
John Rees Swansea **01792 885425**
Michael Taylor Llanrwst **01492 640753**
S P Wadley Monmouth **01600 772294**

Woodland Initiatives

Northwoods

Neil Harrison
Tel: 01669 621489
Email: neil@northwoods.org.uk

Yorwoods

Will Richardson
Tel: 01765 609355
Email: info@yorwoods.org.uk

www.fcauk.com



WEST MIDLANDS TRAINING SCHEME

The FCA has recently been given approval by DEFRA to run a Vocational Training Scheme (VTS) funded project in the West Midlands. The project is short-term (5 months) and is being run as a pilot in order to gauge the demand and nature of training requirements within the forestry industry in the West Midlands. This is important because the VTS has been notoriously difficult for forestry to access, due to a lack of evidence of demand, which DEFRA require before they will approve an application.

Therefore, if you are based in the West Midlands – especially the rural areas of Herefordshire, Shropshire or Worcestershire – and think you or your business may benefit from training, get in touch with the FCA now in order to register your interest for when the project starts.

A CAP ON WOODLANDS?

Concern has been expressed regarding the effect that the recent changes to how farm subsidies are paid may have on woodlands – specifically farmers planting new ones and managing their existing ones. Due to the uncertainty of how the proposals will affect individual landowners, there is a fear that they will just stop doing anything. The FCA, along with other forestry organisations, is aware of this concern amongst many of their members and will ensure this is passed on to DEFRA and the FC whenever possible. If you detect a downturn in business from farmers and other landowners affected please let us know so we can report this.



Projects Updates

TRAINING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS – UPDATE

FCA UK - Training and Business Development Projects

Project Area	Project Finish Date	Training Courses	Training Grants	Technical Support	Workshops	Development Plans	Contact Details
Eastern Wales	31/07/04	•	•	•	•	•	Ian Sheffner (07778 577707)
West Wales	31/12/04	•	•	•	a	•	Tommy Groat (07968 106613)
Highlands & Islands – Business Development	30/06/04	N/A	N/A	•	•	•	Alan Kennedy (07720 790105)
Highlands & Islands – New Entrants*	31/12/04	•	•	•	N/A	•	Kirsty Robb (07881 938941)
Forestry Forward Initiatives – North Scotland	31/12/04	•	•	•	•	•	Alan Kennedy (07720 790105)
Forestry Forward Initiatives – South Scotland	31/12/04	•	•	•	•	•	Kirsty Robb (07881 938941)

* Wage Subsidies are available for new entrants under the 2-year Highlands and Islands - New Entrants Project.

Whilst training grants are available under the majority of projects, overall budgets are also used to support a wide range of other activities, including workshops, guidance and support from local, regional and national staff, industry representation and technical updates, representing the wide range of benefits on offer.

FCA TRAINING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS ARE SPONSORED BY:



HEALTH & SAFETY WORKSHOP

A Health and Safety workshop took place at James Jones & Sons' processing plant in Forres on 20 March. Attended by harvesting contractors and machine operators that work to the Company, the workshop dealt with tree cutting operations within the red zone around overhead power lines. It was led by Mark Wilson from Scottish and Southern Energy's (SSE) Dingwall office. Participants, on passing a short written test at the end of the day, could expect to receive SSE's 'Competent Person' certificate, authorising them to supervise and be in charge of a work party.

Conducted entirely indoors, the first session was spent looking at plant identification, system electrical line diagrams and site location maps. The remainder of the workshop went on to look in detail at the general safety precautions that are applied by the power industry and SSE in particular. This was based on the Company's 'Operational Safety Rules' pamphlet, a copy of which was retained by all participants at the end of the workshop. Particular emphasis was placed on documentation such as the site Safety Document and the Permit to Work. Accident reporting, use of PPE and treatment for electric shock were also covered.

This workshop was arranged by the FCA through our business development project 'HI Forestry Future'. Please contact the Project Officer, Alan Kennedy on 01343 569280 or at alan@fcauk.com, if you would like to receive support under this Project.



MAKE IT IN SCOTLAND ROADSHOW



Careers Scotland was created in April 2002, bringing together the knowledge and expertise of the former Adult Guidance Networks, Careers Services, Education Business Partnerships, and Lifelong Learning Partnerships.

Careers Scotland aims to deliver and continually develop an integrated range of high quality guidance services, information resources, learning experiences and employability services. They aim to enable people of all ages to maximise their career potential, support employers and to improve the operation of the labour market.

Make it in Scotland National Rollout – Manufacture Your Future, comprises a series of events held all over Scotland to promote employment in the manufacturing industry to school children. The children attending are in their second year of high school and on the brink of choosing the subjects they will study in third and fourth year.

The format of these events is the same across Scotland; local companies and employers involved in the manufacturing industry are invited along to provide 20 minute 'workshops' with the children, incorporating a practical activity to give them a feel for the type of work carried out by the companies. The children are encouraged to ask questions and find out as much as they can.

The FCA have attended a number of these roadshows, ranging from as far apart as Stranraer to Thurso, representing the Forest Industry. A 20 minute

slot is not nearly long enough to let the children know about all aspects of forestry, but it is possible to dispel the misconceptions that most of them have - that it is wrong, in any circumstances, to cut trees down. So much publicity is given to the desecration of the rain forests that they assume we are doing the same thing in this country.

It is also surprising how many kids think a Sitka Spruce takes 400 years to grow and that when it is cut down this would be carried out with an axe!!

Many thanks again to West Coast Tool Hire in Ardrishaig who provided chainsaws for these events, and also to Ponsse UK Ltd in Lockerbie who provided a huge box of goodies for the kids along with some great posters which depicted just how technologically advanced we are in the forest industry in Scotland.

Kirsty Robb



INSURANCE PROBLEMS IN WALES

Following a number of meetings held across Wales by the FCA for its members on the subject of insurance, it has become apparent that some contractors, sub-contractors and chainsaw operatives are working without adequate insurance cover. Some reports indicate that some individuals hold no Public Liability or Employers Liability insurance whatsoever. This is a particular problem in South and West Wales regarding tree felling and tree surgery.

We would request that if you are aware of any such individuals that you stop using their services immediately until they hold the relevant insurance cover or if necessary stop using their services altogether. Such companies or individuals should be reported to your local Trading Standards Officer.

It would only take one more serious accident or fatality in our industry to yet again raise the insurance premiums for responsible businesses and pass on the costs to individual homeowners and landowners.

The FCA is striving through its Code of Practice and its various training projects to improve the standards in the industry and yet certain individuals seem content to break the law and bring the rest of the industry into disrepute.

Please do not let this happen.

If you want more information on this subject then please contact the FCA at: FCA Ltd, Dalfling, Blairdaff, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, AB51 5LA. Tel: 01467 651368. Email: members@fcauk.com.



Wales

TREE TRUNKS FOR RIVER WORKS

Salix River and Wetland Services are a company specialising in river and wetland conservation who are currently working with the Environment Agency on demonstration projects on the Towy and Dulais rivers.

Their aim is to restore tree cover to eroding river banks and to prove to river managers that blockstone is not the only way of protecting banks.

The company has been trying to source live willow trunks and branches (*fragilis*, *cinerea*, *viminalis*, *alba* etc.) as live revetments to prevent erosion. The ideal size is 2-3 metres long by 200mm-400mm diameter. Some 40 of these were needed initially.

They are also needing to find tree roots with 2-3 metres of trunk still attached – the rootball needs to be 1-1.5 metres diameter. In this case any species of tree would be OK.

Transport can be paid for, also the roots, particularly if contractors can deliver to the Llandeilo area.

The initial project lasted for two weeks during April and if successful it is envisaged the Environment Agency will adopt these methods as best practice in place of blockstone in Welsh rivers.



Contact David Holland, Salix River and Wetland Services, National Wetlands Centre, Penclacwydd, Llanelli SA14 9SH. Tel: 01792 413073. Fax: 01792 403103. Email: davidholland80@hotmail.com.

THE WOOD ENERGY BUSINESS SCHEME

The Wood Energy Business Scheme (WEBS) is a new support programme for businesses in the Objective 1 areas of West Wales and the Valleys, and the Objective 2 area of Powys. It has been established by Forestry Commission Wales on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government, with European funding through both Objective 1 and 2 mechanisms, and was formally launched by the Minister for Economic Development, Andrew Davies, in March.

WEBS will provide appropriate projects with grant support to facilitate the installation and operation of woodfuel powered heating and power generation plant, and equipment for the initial processing of roundwood into chip and pellet form. By doing so it will provide the pump-priming impetus for development of a viable supply infrastructure. This in turn provides a real incentive for landowners to bring woodland back into management, with associated environmental benefits, and potential rural employment prospects.

Perhaps even more importantly, WEBS will help stimulate 'carbon-neutral' heat and power generation, and allow woodfuel to make a valuable contribution towards the Welsh Assembly and UK Government's ambitious targets for renewable energy. This includes a commitment to provide 10%

of UK energy requirements from 'renewables' by 2010, and 20% by 2020. The scheme will provide grants towards the initial capital cost of relevant plant and equipment, typically boiler systems, drying facilities, and wood-chipping/pelleting machinery, to businesses able to provide a detailed business case for a wood fuelled system of between 40KW and 2MW capacity. This will typically be small to medium public buildings, schools, hospitals, leisure centres etc. It will also support District Heating or Combined Heat and Power installations which supply heat to a number of buildings, and power to the National Grid. The percentage grant available will depend on the strength of the case for support and the actual location, but will be potentially as high as 50%.

In order to ensure sufficient supplies of fuel are available before the private sector supply comes on stream, Forestry Commission Wales has agreed to allocate 100,000 tonnes of small round wood from its own felling programme in the initial years of the scheme.

For further information about WEBS, please contact: Peter Webster, Marketing Manager – WEBS. Tel: 01970 821220. Mobile: 07817 014805. Email: Peter.Webster@Forestry.gsi.gov.uk



Membership

THE FCA WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Elwyn J Biddulph, Tregaron;
David Brown, Sacriston;
Daniel Brown, Dorking;
Nigel Deans, Newcastle Upon Tyne;
Neil Egleton, Hillingdon;
Adrian Farey, Abergele;
James Furze, Wells;
David A Hughes, Llanrhaeadr;
Benjamin Hummel, Churchdown;
W R J Jones, Welshpool;
David Keylock, Wymondham;
V P Lockett, Prestatyn;
Daniel Lowe, Ryde;
Jennifer Macrae, Portree;
Paul Madden, Brodick;
Colin McNicol, Perth;
John Reed, Blakeney;
Myfyr P Roberts, Denbigh;
Dave Sewell, Kings Lynn;
Chris Seymour, Brompton;
Graham Taylor, How Caple;
Alan N Tharratt, Hull;
Gareth Thomas, Carmarthen;
David Whittall, Hereford.

Members Benefits

Remember that, as a member of the FCA, you can place an advert on the FCA website (<http://www.fcauk.com>) to look for work, or advertise a job vacancy you may have. Either email gillian@fcauk.com or phone 01467 651368 to give your details.

Email addresses

We are trying to introduce a new service to members to keep you up-to-date with current issues. We will send you an email when an item, which we think might be of interest to you, is posted on to our website. If you want to receive these, please ensure that we have your current email address on our database. Send your email address to: members@fcauk.com.

Also, in order to save costs, we would like to start sending out some of our correspondence to members by email. If you would like to receive your correspondence from us by email, please send your email address to: members@fcauk.com.

Change of Address

Are you moving or have you moved? Are you receiving all your information at the correct address? If any of your address details have changed, then please contact: Tina Ingram, FCA Ltd, Dalfling, Blairdaff, Inverurie AB51 5LA. Tel: 01467 651368. Email: members@fcauk.com. If you have an email address, let us know.

Are you reading this and not a member of the FCA? For further details on membership, please contact FCA Ltd, Dalfling, Blairdaff, Inverurie AB51 5LA. Tel: 01467 651368. Email: members@fcauk.com.

FAREWELL TO JANE SMITH



Goodbye Jane and Thanks

Just over eleven years ago Hugh Lightbody, the first FCA Chairman, and I were interviewing for the very first staff post of membership secretary. We were both unaware at that time that the successful applicant would go on to become the longest serving FCA employee working in total for eleven years and three weeks.

That longest serving employee is of course Jane Smith, known to all of you who have been with the Association for any length of time, and especially to those at the beginning when her role combined secretarial work, membership, newsletter writing, running and organising the office and being the front office person (well actually the only office person). Her enthusiasm and willingness for hard work, her long hours testifying to her commitment, has been a major plank in the success of the FCA from the first tentative start to the major association that it is now grown to be.

In that eleven years (minus a two year break to breed) Jane has played a key role, firstly on the membership side and then concentrating on the business side of the Association, becoming business manager in recent years. Throughout her time with the Association, Jane has been minutes secretary to the Chairman and Board of Directors and the Policy Committee, I know that all the Chairmen will wish their thanks to be passed to Jane.

So, on behalf of the FCA membership, and especially all the staff that have worked with you during the eleven years:
Goodbye Jane and Thanks

Barrie Hudson

Letter from Richard J Maunder of Bournemouth

Due to being out of work for four months, I am not able to afford my membership anymore. I did ask the FCA for help when I was first out of work, but have heard nothing back. Also I and a number of people in my area view it unfair that someone has received a grant for £100,000 to buy a new harvester. This is not a level playing field. Also, it seems by your own map that you have no one covering the South of England.

Thank you.

Richard J Maunder

Reply from Brendan Burns, UK Chairman

Thanks Richard. First of all let me give you our apologies for you not previously receiving any help. You might already know that the FCA Board and most of the policy Committee have been replaced. The members obviously agreed with your sentiments and voted in a whole new set of people. Hopefully members will now receive the prompt attention that they deserve.

We appreciate the problems of lack of work in some sectors. I am told that as a result of our enquiries, another contractor member has been in touch with you to offer you work. I hope this has worked out.

Concerning the grants. It is my own personal opinion that one mans grant is another mans unfair competition and we have investigated the case that you have told us about. Unfortunately, there appears that we can do nothing about the processing of grants because it has been done by a separate agency, which appears to have abided by their rules, which did allow them to give a grant to the other contractor. It is not much compensation to know that the grant was far less than the £100,000, but you can be assured that we will be keeping an eye on these types of developments.

Again this is a good example of feed back from the membership so if you have information that you think we should be aware of, please tell us!

Letter from John Antram of DISS

Sorry, I don't want to renew my membership. I now realise that AXA/ Algarve insurance premiums have been overcharging me for several years. You might try advising your membership (self-employed tradesmen types anyway) to investigate NFU Mutual product.

Good luck to you all in the future.

John Antram

Reply from Brendan Burns, UK Chairman

Dear John,

First of all can I commiserate with you. As a contractor I have also found that Algarve's rates are not the most competitive. Please believe us that we will be speaking to Algarve and taking up the members issues. If members have actual examples of rates and premiums please send them to the FCA so that we can use them with Algarve.

You might already know that the FCA Board and most of the policy Committee have been replaced. Members were concerned that the benefits that they were being offered were not actually of any great "benefit". The new Board will be reviewing all these benefits and will be looking for better offers and deals that will help the members.

I appreciate that you feel aggrieved but I would ask you to reconsider your decision not to renew your membership. Every contractor is important to us and if we are going to build up a proper contractors association that will help contractors, then we need everyone to join and become actively involved.



Letters

May 1*	Climbing Workshop based on Barony Castle, Eddleston. <i>Contact Matt Cooper 01555 662562.</i>
May 5	Ignite – wood fuel industry training programme induction sessions (venues as below). <i>Contact Northwoods on 01669 621489 for further details or to book a place.</i>
May 6	
May 11	Riverdale Hall Hotel, Bellingham
May 12	The Corner House, Heaton Road, Newcastle upon Tyne
May 14-15	The Oaks Inn, Alnwick.
May 14-15	Scottish Woodfair, Dewars Centre, Perth.
May 14*	Risk Assessment for Commercial Arboriculture, Perth. <i>Contact Guy Watson 01794 368717.</i>
May 15*	Scottish Tree Climbing championship – North Inch, Perth. <i>Contact Eric Hamilton 01382 431805.</i>
May 15-16	British Horse Loggers Championship, Houghall College, Durham. <i>Contact Chris Wadsworth on 01287 634017 or Mark Turnbull on 01740 656705 for full details.</i>
June 14-17	8th World Conference on Timber Engineering, Lahti, Finland. <i>See www.ril.fi/wcte2004 for full details.</i>
June 19*	Dismantling Workshop, Daldowie Complex, Glasgow. <i>Contact Matt Cooper 01555 662562.</i>
June 24-27	Royal Highland Show, Ingliston, Edinburgh.
July 13-15	Great Yorkshire Show, Harrogate.
July 19-22	Royal Welsh Show, Builth Wells.
August 25*	Bat Awareness and Treework Operations Seminar, Balloch Castle, Loch Lomond (CPD Event). <i>Contact Chris Simpson 01555 662562.</i>
Sept 23-25	APF Exhibition, Ragley Hall, Alcester. <i>Contact Ian Millward on 01737 245081/email apfexhibition@gxn.co.uk</i>
Sept 25*	Autumn Excursion exploring Dawyck and Kailzie, Peebles. <i>Contact Donald Rodge 01620 842656.</i>
Sept 28-30	The Forestry Woodchain. Conference organised by Forest Research and BRE, Heriot Watt University, Edinburgh. <i>See www.forestry.gov.uk/forestrywoodchain for full details.</i>
October 30-31	Countryside Live, Great Yorkshire Showground, Harrogate.

* Arboricultural Association Scottish Branch events.



Events Diary 2004