



THE *Irish Forester*

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY OF IRISH FORESTERS

WINTER 2015

Forestry income tax exemption is restored in Budget 2016

Minister's removal of forestry from 'High Earners Restriction' is warmly received

The forestry sector received a significant boost in Budget 2016 which contained two announcements of interest to forest owners and investors. The forestry programme received an allocation of €113.8m for the coming year and the announcement that forestry income has been removed from the 'High Income Earners Restriction' (HIER) category was warmly welcomed.

Referring to the removal of forestry income from HIER for forest owners, Tom Hayes, Minister of State with responsibility for forestry said: "I believe that this is a very progressive move, the benefits of which will be felt long into the future." The removal of forestry from HEIR has restored the tax-free status of forestry to its pre-2007 position.

The removal of forestry from HIER is important, maintained Minister Hayes. "Forestry is of major economic importance in rural Ireland, as well as providing social and recreational benefits," he said. "Forestry also

plays a vital role environmentally in terms of carbon sequestration, the potential of biomass energy and the preservation of biodiversity and natural habitats."

A Department spokesperson said that profit from forestry is now tax exempt for "active farmers and foresters" presumably including forest owners. Society President, Niall Farrelly welcomed the Minister's announcement. "He deserves congratulations in restoring tax exemption which is a major boost to the sector," he said. "It is an acknowledgement of the long-term nature of forestry and is also a recognition of the benefits of forestry in relation to sustainable development and climate change."

"The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine has secured €113.8m for the Forestry Programme in 2016, which will provide for existing premium payments and support the planting of approximately 7,000 hectares of new forests" said Minister Hayes.

Emeritus Professor John J. Gardiner is honoured by Society



Niall Farrelly, President of the Society, presents the Honorary Membership medal to John J. Gardiner, Emeritus Professor of Forestry at University College Dublin, in recognition of his very significant contribution to forestry education in Ireland.

In October 2013, Professor Gardiner delivered the Annual Sean Mac Bride lecture 'Celebrating 100 years of the Department of Forestry at UCD'.

Message from the President



We are coming to the close of another busy and successful year for the Society of Irish Foresters. Once again the Society, in association with the Wood Marketing Federation, organised a well received forestry conference. I am delighted to see the return of the Society's 'annual conferences' as they go a long way towards providing a professional forum for forestry in Ireland. The Society has also become increasingly active in developing international links with our fellow professionals in the UK and in France.

Another high-point of the year was our study tour which visited the Aquitaine region of France. Based in Bordeaux, the tour was hosted by EFI-Atlantic, INRA (Pierroton) and CRPF which represents the powerful private forestry sector in that region. Participants were greatly impressed with the level of research based initiatives (see page 2) being undertaken and by the professionalism of a vibrant forestry sector which currently employs 48,000 people. Forestry is ranked as the third most important industry in the region's economy; it is surpassed only by the wine making and tourism industries.

As 2015 draws to a close, I would like to thank the members of the Society for their support and assistance during the year, especially those members who helped on our many sub-committees and other initiatives. I wish all our members and their families a very happy and peaceful Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Dr. Niall Farrelly
President

New and enhanced powers of access to *Irish Forestry*

Brian Tobin

Having spent some considerable time during the last few years preparing and updating a paper-based index for *Irish Forestry*, it hasn't been lost on me how quickly a few issues can generate a lot of material. As a result, it has been of frequent irritation to know that there is an article somewhere which answers a particular question; to have a vague feeling that I remembered it from such a year and inevitably, to be forced to leaf through reams of pages to track down the elusive piece. So, in a moment of weakness, driven primarily by a selfish requirement to compensate for a poor memory, I naively accepted the task of building a digital and openly available archive of journal material. Many months later the task is all but complete, though I realise there are bound to be some teething problems, so I hope if any member generates some particularly surprising results they might communicate the issue to the Society's office.

For some years the Society has had digital scans of all issues available on its website. However it was not possible to search effectively through all content back to 1943 from a single access point. Nor was it possible for Google to do it for us since whole-issue pdf files are opaque to such searches. Consequently the first step was to slice up the entire back catalogue of issues into single article files. This mass of material was then carefully described and categorised with suitable metadata to allow a database to access and search through the material. Following this everything was 'sewn' back together and loaded onto a new digital platform, to be accessed from



a portal on the Society's new website. This mammoth task was tackled bravely by a crack team of summer intern students who laboured relentlessly for many weeks. I am very grateful to the ladies who took on this work with such tireless care and aplomb. Led by Danielle Lopes, the team included Julie Bibaud-Alves, Claire Corsaint, Auxane Gennetais, Fanny Meynieu and Thais Farias Pereira da Silva.

I do hope all members will take some time to examine the search function of the new journal site. Under the 'Archive' tab, a list of issues will be

found. However, the most interesting feature in my opinion is the 'Search' tab, or the 'Browse' section on the right of screen. A quick dip into this section, By Issue, By Author, By Title or By Section should make even the most disinterested reader smile and I challenge anyone to resist being enticed down many paths to peruse journal articles that were almost forgotten among the packed milieu of past articles. As will quickly be seen, we have an extraordinary diversity of articles in our archive. I believe every member will appreciate this new and ready access to our often "sparkling" past.

A forest research lesson from the French

Pat O'Sullivan

The high point of this year's study tour was undoubtedly our visit to the forest research campus of the National Institute of Agronomic Research (INRA) at Pierroton, near Bordeaux. Tour participants were impressed by the cutting edge forest genetics programme which is focussed on producing enhanced forest reproductive material, addressing the challenges of climate change and breeding for pathogen resistance. These research programmes are the driving force behind technological adaptation, improved silvicultural practices and the accumulation and transfer of knowledge among practitioners.

The network of research support structures was impressive, particularly the forest advisory and co-operative groups which work together to develop the private forestry sector. At the heart of this industry was a well resourced forest research programme which provided the spark to drive the industry's innovation and development. Supported by this research programme, France's forestry sector is well placed to address the many challenges and opportunities which will arise over the coming years. Impressive developments in forest genetics and advances in cultivation, establishment and silvicultural methods are the practical results of long-term investment in forest research and development.



Study tour of the Aquitaine region of France: Benny O'Brien, Niall Farrelly, Amélie Castro (CRPF), Annie Raffin (INRA), John Guinan and Frank Barrett absorb an excellent presentation on tree improvement research at ONF's *Pinus pinaster* seed orchard near Mimizan in the Landes.

In France the dividends flowing from a well-resourced forest research programme are readily apparent. In Ireland successful agri-businesses such as Glanbia and Kerry have benefited hugely from their significant investment in research. Forestry is no different. The fact that we now have a thriving forestry and forest products sector in Ireland is due, in large part, to the comprehensive research undertaken in past decades.

In our recent policy paper 'A revised structure for forest research in Ireland' the Society advocates on-going investment in research to ensure the forestry sector achieves its full potential. Irish forestry is now in dire need of long-term research in key areas such as forest performance under changing climates, tree improvement, silviculture, forest protection and transferring research findings into practice to underpin the development of the sector.

Society welcomes forestry tour from Worcestershire



Members of the Royal Forestry Society in Glendine, Co. Laois. The group was led its President, Andrew Woods (extreme left) and SIF Public Relations Officer, Kevin Hutchinson (extreme right). In early September the Society hosted a week long study tour by 30 members of the Royal Forestry Society (Worcestershire Division). During the week the group visited the Phoenix Park and Aras an Uachtaráin; Glendalough and the Wicklow Mountains National Park; a harvesting site near Newtownmountkennedy; continuous cover forestry at Knockrath Wood, Rathdrum; private forestry sites in the Slieve Bloom Mountains; Sitka spruce in Glendine; Laois Sawmill Ltd. and rounded off their visit with a presentation on hurley ash and the hurley making industry in Kilkenny, of course.

The Glendalough class of '86



Forestry can still provide much needed jobs in rural Ireland but it can't compare with the period 1950 - 1980 when forestry was a major employer, before increased mechanisation reduced numbers as it did in other sectors such as agriculture.

In 1986, Gerry Patterson, Forester in Charge of Laragh Forest issued an invitation to staff and former staff of the Forest Service in the Glendalough area to meet at the Upper Lake for a photocall. In a rural area with a small population it was gratifying to see how many accepted the invitation. Out of an estimated 50 'past and present employees' 41 turned up. In addition, we estimated that a further 60 people were employed in other aspects of forestry in the locality such as harvesting and haulage. In 1986, when this photograph was taken, 34 men were still employed by the Forest Service and most of the remainder had either retired or had gone on to pursue careers in areas such as contracting and sawmilling.

For the record, the following people assembled at the Upper Lake, Glendalough:

Back row – Eugene Curran, Jack Murtagh, Tom Timmons, Tom Devitt, Tommy Nolan, Seamus Cullen, Patrick McDonnell, Stephen Mitchell, Noel Kinsella, Pat Porter, John Steele, Bob Dagg, John Byrne, Aidan Byrne, Peter Murphy, Jim Murphy, Shay Ward, Edward Delamere, Kevin Byrne, Paddy Fox, Jim Kennedy, Charlie Byrne and Richard Miley.

Front row – Owen Kenny, Jim Kavanagh, Tommy Roche, Andrew McDonnell, Denis McCoy, Johnny Richardson, Jim Conway, Gerry Patterson, Michael Holden, Jack Duffy, Charlie McCoy, Jim McDonnell, Bill Conway, Bill Stacey, Ritchie Cullen, Paddy McDonnell, Donal Magner, Christopher Stacey. Sadly many have passed away in the intervening years, but the photograph is a reminder of an era when forestry played a huge role in so many households in the Glendalough area.

The road less travelled

A Long Journey in a Short Time by Tony Gallinagh provides a fascinating insight to life in the Finn Valley

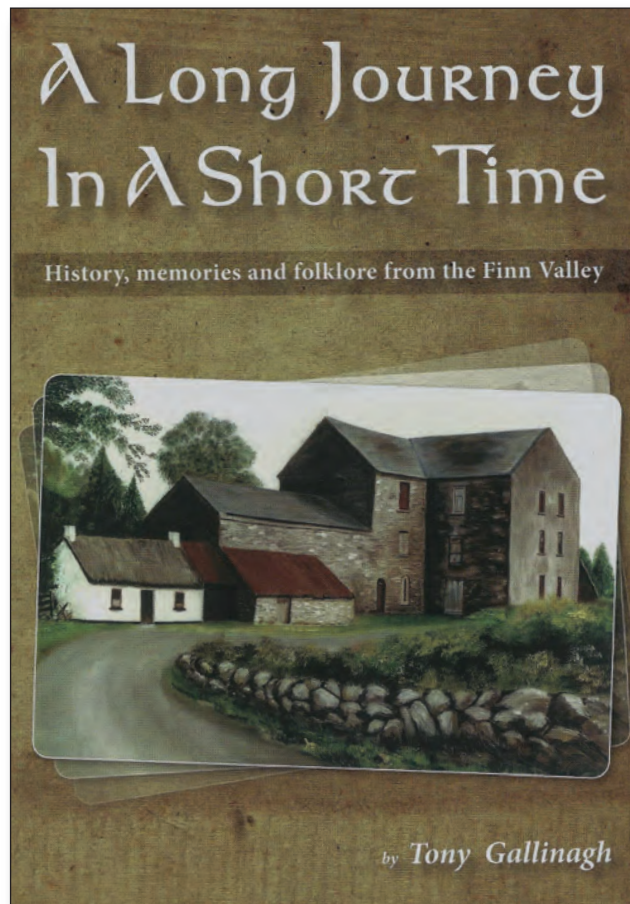
Tony Gallinagh is the latest forester to put pen to paper. His book, *A Long Journey in a Short Time*, is a social history of life in the Finn Valley, Co. Donegal rather than an account of his life in forestry. However, he provides a fascinating insight to his life as a forester in the introduction which prompts the question: is there another book on the way with a detailed account of his career in forestry and related activity? Tony spent a total of 51 years in forestry, comprising 35 years as a forester with the Forestry Division and with Donegal County Council followed by 16 years managing his own nursery and farm.

A Long Journey in a Short Time is focused mainly on a disappearing way of life which he felt compelled to record. This is his journey and the journey of his neighbours in the Finn Valley – and what a journey! Farmers who now use massive machinery to plant, tend and harvest crops will probably smile at the chapters which deal with growing potatoes and oats ‘the old way’ while the chapter dealing with flax – a major crop in the 18th and 19th centuries throughout Ireland – will be unfamiliar but rewarding territory for most readers.

Tony was born in Cappry in the Finn Valley in 1934 and was blessed with an excellent memory, keen eye-sight and a good ear for music and story-telling – so the sights and sounds are captured elegantly – from his first day at school to more recent happenings.

His book features the arrival of electricity to the area, the family’s first radio, his first rail journey and an account of other transport systems such as Bianconi’s connections with Donegal and the dreaded customs men. In addition, the birth of the ‘twin towns’ of Stranorlar and Ballybofey is faithfully recorded – back to a time when this area wasn’t a place for the faint-hearted.

The book is liberally illustrated with fine images throughout and is beautifully bound by Brown Printers, Letterkenny – a Donegal triumph all round. Members of the Society of Irish Foresters may purchase copies of *A Long Journey in a Short Time* for €15.00 (Paperback) or €25.00 (Hardback). This price includes the cost of delivery.



Please make cheques payable to ‘Society of Irish Foresters’ and send to: Pat O’Sullivan, Society of Irish Foresters, Glenealy, Co. Wicklow or make electronic payments to Ulster Bank, 130 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2 BIC: ULSB IE 2D IBAN: IE25 ULSB 9850 2008 7720 46.

Note: All proceeds go to Donegal Hospice.

SOCIETY EVENTS 2016

5-12 March
ESB Tree Week

7 March
Augustine Henry Forestry Lecture - Dublin
Trees and Woodlands in Irish Poetry
Donal Magner

8 April
AGM & Eastern Field Day
Co. Kildare

20 May
Northern Field Day
Castle Leslie, Co. Monaghan

10 June
Southern Field Day
Clonmel, Co. Tipperary

6 - 11 September
Annual Study Tour
Austria

30 September
Western Field Day
Frenchpark, Co. Roscommon

5 October
Annual Sean Mac Bride Forestry Lecture
TBC

New Members

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

Associate
Elaine Heney

Student
Daniel Coughlan; Fernando Gonzales;
Gonzalo Gonzalez Fer; James Kearins;
Richard Walsh

Technical
Enda Coates, Aaron Harrington;
Colm Lyons; Karol McLoughlin;
Patrick Power



To all our members, thanks for your support during the year

Nollaig shona is gach sonas i gcomhair na h-athbhliana

Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year

Acknowledgements

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