

## Forestry in the News

### Roche – Destruction of our Woods

Compensation, which was used in the case of Coollattin Wood, is now again being used in the case of Tomnafinnoge to produce the most extraordinary and bizarre twist of events, Wicklow T.D. Dick Roche claimed in a Dáil Debate.

Mr. Roche was speaking on the 1988 Local Government Planning and Development Bill, now before the Dáil, which inter alia addresses the thorny compensation issue.

"Coollattin is another planning disaster and one where we can never reverse the clock" he said in the debate. "In that planning disaster the bludgeon of compensation was used to push ahead with the most wanton and wholesale destruction of something which was unique, which was part of our heritage, which merited preservation, which would have had endless commercial possibilities in its preserved state if Messrs Bridge Farm Limited, the people behind the destruction, had had the sense and the wit to look for an alternative way of using their resources.

"But no, compensation was again used in the case of Coollattin and it is now being used in the case of Tomnafinnoge to produce the most extraordinary and bizarre twist of events", he said.

Mr. Roche went on: "This case has adopted a peculiar sinister twist in that the fear of compensation has at this very moment forced the county council, who have made an amenity order to protect

Tomnafinnoge, into the courts against third party objectors who have taken a case to An Bord Pleanála.

"In this case the third party objectors, including myself, are objecting to a consent granted by the planning authorities, again granted in fear of compensation to the so-called developers" he added. "It is my belief that the developers, who have devastated Coollattin and who have plundered the magnificent oak woods, should not be let within five miles of any tree with a buzz saw in their hands."

Mr. Roche, who was pleased to note that senior members of the Government shared his concern, said "that the irony in the case of Tomnafinnoge and of Coollattin was that the very county council which should be defending these woods now found themselves by a perverse twist of fate in the courts assisting the very dirty work which the elected representatives in Wicklow wished to resist."

"Such is the ridiculous level to which the compensation issue has reduced the local authority" he said. "We are not the only Council that finds ourselves in a difficulty on the compensation issue. Every planning authority finds themselves in that situation."

*Bray People,  
8th January 1989.*

### Strategy for Developing Forestry

The European Community is increasing its aid for expansion of the area under trees at a time when considerable effort is going into the reduction of output of most farm produce and a recent communication from the Commission to the Council sets out proposals for a strategy and action programme for the forest sector.

The Commission has put forward a number of principles and aims on which the strategy and action programme should be based. They include the need for unification and coherence of the programme for the different subsectors of the forest industry – seed producers, nurseries, public and private forests, and so on – as well as solidarity between all sectors, and continuity of the programme over a period of years.

There are eight aims outlined. They include the full participation in land use planning and encouragement of the development of rural life through the involvement of forestry in regional development; the securing of supplies of raw materials; the contribution to

environmental improvement; the provision of its own dynamism to the forestry sector; the protection of the Community's forests against major damage; the extension of the role of the forest as a natural setting for relaxation, recreation and culture; the participation in development in the most disadvantaged areas in the world; and finally, giving the forests and the forestry sector their full place in the formulation and implementation of Community policies by taking better account of the sector's prospects and constraints.

Work to be done is outlined, including the improvement of the infra-structure, such as access roads and the public transport network; the rationalisation of parcels of wooded land to create forest management units; the promotion of modern techniques of protection, silviculture and processing; the harmonisation of national rules governing forests; the location of industries; the promotion of organisations, such as forest-owner associations; and the better development of forest products in the Community.

The Commission has also proposed that member States be required to adopt provisions governing afforestation, principally to prevent patchy afforestation of the countryside, which would run counter to improving silvicultural and agricultural productivity and might lead to a deterioration of the landscape.

*Carlow Nationalist,  
13th January 1989.*

## West Ignored In New Forestry Board

The fact that the newly appointed state Forestry Authority Coillte Teo does not have even one member from the Roscommon/Mayo/Galway region has been severely criticised by Mr. Michael McGreal M.C.C.

Cllr. McGreal who has been campaigning to have the Headquarters of the New Authority located in Castlereagh said this week that the make up of the new body, with the majority of its members coming from Dublin and the East, gives little reason to build on the small glimmer of

hope that existed for Castlereagh.

It is unbelievable, Cllr. McGreal said that the entire Galway/Mayo/Roscommon Region which had the largest block of forestry in the country had been deprived of membership of the new Government appointed Authority.

The new Authority was clearly Leinster orientated despite the dominance of forestry in the West.

It is indeed very hard to understand that County Meath which has the lowest acreage of forestry of any county in the country (710 hectares) had a member appointed to the board and Dublin which has the 3rd lowest acreage had three members appointed. This was, said Cllr. McGreal, another example of neglect of the West.

*Roscommon Champion,  
13th January 1989.*

## £1 Million Forestry Deal Unveiled

The largest private investment in Irish forestry yet, totalling £1m was announced yesterday by Glenasack Forestry Investment Company of Glenville, Co. Cork. The seven-figure investment by a private investor is almost unique in a sector which until now has been dominated by the financial institutions.

Glenasack managing director, Mr. Tom Collier, said yesterday that he expected that 1,500 acres the company would buy and develop on the investor's behalf would be worth £1.7m in 10 years time, and £6.9m in 35 years time, without taking inflation into account.

The investment had been made by Curtharda Investments, a company formed under the aegis of accountants Arthur Young O'Hare Barry, to channel funds from a number of private investors into forestry.

Glenasack has been involved in forestry since 1983 and already acts on behalf of a number of leading financial institutions.

The Company's chairman is Mr. Tom Cavanagh, of Fermoy, well-known in Cork business circles and a director of AIB.

*Irish Press,  
14th January 1989.*

## 'BLACK' FOREST

Over 1,000 people are involved in black economy operations in the forestry industry, Deputy Richard Bruton declared in the Dáil yesterday. He was asking the Minister what steps he was taking to eliminate the practice.

Mr. Aylward replied that the difficulty lay in the employment of operators and individuals to harvest timber. However, he said the Department of Social Welfare were doing all in their power to stamp the practice out.

*Cork Examiner,  
4th February 1989.*

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## Timber Sales Topped £22m Last Year – Aylward

Sales of timber from State forests generated £22m last year Forestry Minister Liam Aylward proudly told the weekend's *Fianna Fáil Árd Fheis* in Dublin.

Outlining the success of Ireland's forests, Deputy Aylward noted that forestry now generated direct employment for 6,000 Irish people and approximately half the public forest estate was producing saleable timber which was supplying two pulp mills, and 25 sawmills.

"The quality of timber products from these mills is top class and their share of the home construction market is now 60 per cent, four times the 1980 level" he said.

The south Kilkenny deputy explained that the national planting target of 11,000 hectares was achieved in 1987 and had reached an all-time high of 15,000 hectares last year. The 1988 figure included the planting of 5,000 hectares by the private sector as business confidence had grown, translating

into increased investment, output and employment.

Ireland still imports £30m worth of sawn timber annually, but the Minister noted that the increasing amounts of mature timber scheduled to be harvested from our forests in the coming years would help reduce this figure.

Quality timber was a major requirement of the industry, he said, and to encourage this, all structural timbers – both Irish and imported – have had to meet strict conditions set down by the National Standards Authority of Ireland since January. The Minister believed this would help Ireland's drive to gain access to markets in the UK and mainland Europe.

The formation of the new State sponsored body *Coillte Teoranta* in January also represented a new phase in the development of the Irish timber industry. "The increasing marketing of our forest estate and the continuously increasing volume of timber becom-

ing available from our forests make it opportune to give the activity a strong market oriented and commercial focus" Deputy Aylward said.

While the Government was pressing ahead with the development of public forestry, it was also taking positive steps to sustain the momentum which had built up in private forestry in recent years. He predicted that private sector planting would increase to 6,500 hectares this year – an increase of 1,500 hectares on 1988 and the revised grant schemes would have a role to play in this regard.

Minister Aylward also noted that a major drive for increased EC funding had also begun, as forestry uniquely met all the current policy objectives of the EC in areas of regional and national development.

In the medium term, he envisaged a three and a half fold increase in the level of EC funds devoted to forestry between now and 1993.

*Kilkenny People,  
10th March 1989.*

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## Forest Move Gets Council Backing

Mayo County Council is backing a call to have Letterkeen forest, Newport, be declared a forest park area.

This was agreed at a meeting when Mr. Frank Chambers outlined the asset which the amenity was to the region.

Ireland West Tourism was supporting the idea and the

area was of prime importance as an attraction for visitors.

It was one of the most scenic areas in Mayo and held tremendous potential for development.

"The council should recognise this as a unique piece of

beauty within the county which has not been exploited," he said.

The project was listed as part of the application for EC Structural Funds.

*Connacht Telegraph,  
8th March 1989.*

## Uproar But Forest Prices Fall

Admission charges to Dun-a-Ri Forest Park, Kingscourt, which have caused a storm of protest in the area, have been reduced.

Coillte Teoranta, which took over the forest parks from 1st January last, has set the charges at £2 per person; £5 for a family and £15 for a season ticket or for a coach group.

The charges caused uproar among the local community who have been using the facilities of the park for many years.

Now the charges have been reduced to £1 for an individual and £3 for a car and passengers.

The bus and season ticket charges remain at £15. Children are admitted to the park and its facilities free of charge.

A spokesman for Coillte Teoranta said the charges cover car parking facilities. Even at £15 the season ticket represents good value for locals who are able to visit the park as they please during opening hours.

*Meath Chronicle,  
8th March 1989.*

## Developments in Coillte Teo

The ICTU have formed a Committee composed of all Unions with members in Coillte. The Committee will be responsible for the co-ordination of policy on all matters relating to forestry and the affairs of Coillte, with the exception of pay and conditions. A draft constitution for the Group has been drawn up and arrangements are in hand to have this constitution adopted.

On 15 March the Congress launched a policy document on forestry called 'A Future for Forestry'. The main elements which are called for in the ICTU programme are:

1. A planting programme of 30,000 ha of new land to be afforested annually.

2. Increased timber production from the current level of

1.3 million m<sup>3</sup> per annum to a sustained rate of 25 million m<sup>3</sup> by the year 2040.

3. An immediate creation of at least 2,000 new permanent jobs.

4. A massive increase in harvesting and processing jobs as the new plantings begin to produce timber.

## COLERAINE FIRM BOUGHT

Chipboard firm Spanboard based in Coleraine is being bought from Aaronson Bros. by Portuguese group Sonae Industria e Investimentos for about (Stg) £8.4 million.

Last full year figures at Spanboard showed profits before tax of £573,000 were earned on turnover of £14 million in the 12 months to September 30th. Net assets at the balance sheet date were £3.59 million.

*Irish Times,  
29th March 1989.*

5. Both public and private sectors to be involved, with a major role to be played by Coillte.

6. A national land-zoning policy for forestry to be adopted to ensure conservation and amenity interests are safeguarded.

7. Stringent measures to be taken to ensure that the black economy is eliminated from the programme as virtually all afforestation, public and private is funded by the Irish or European Community taxpayer.

8. The planting of broad-leaves to be given a high priority.

9. Comprehensive planning and research must be carried out to ensure even growth in the processing industry to maximise jobs and other benefits to the economy.

*Public Services Review,  
April 1989.*



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## **Finsa's £3m Investment on Target**

Finsa Forest Products Ltd. the Scariff based chipboard manufacturer has accepted final deliveries of energy generation and drying plant as part of its current £3m investment programme. Construction is on schedule and will be commissioned before summer.

The new equipment will allow Finsa to generate energy from factory waste for its drying facility. The company employs 150 people at Scariff, manufacturing added value chipboard products such as malamine and special veneers for the construction and furniture industries. An additional 150 are employed in wood forestry and distribution. Seventy per cent of Finsa production is absorbed by the Irish market and the remainder is exported to Britain and Northern Ireland.

Finsa Forest Products Ltd. purchases fifty per cent of its raw material (pulp timber) from Coillte Teo., the State Forestry organisation and the balance from the sawmilling industry in the form of residues.

*Clare Champion,  
14th April 1989.*

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## **Tripartite Meeting on Damaged Forest Roads**

Anger was expressed at a meeting of Leitrim County Council on Monday over the damage being caused to roads in the county by trucks involved in the extraction of timber from State forests.

Councillors also vented their annoyance with the decision of Coillte Teoranta to spend the county's £60,000 allocation for repair of forest access roads on one particular road in North Leitrim without consulting the local authority.

Coillte has decided to spend £60,000 developing a road at Meeneymore, Glenfarne, but the Council is up in arms because it feels the local authority should decide where the money is to be spent.

In attendance at Monday's meeting were Coillte representatives, Messrs. C. Lynch and J. A. Mannion, who responded at length to complaints from councillors about the damage being caused to county roads by trucks owned by private timber hauliers and contractors involved in bringing in materials to construct forest roads.

North Leitrim members said the main problem areas in Glenfarne were along the Ballaghbehy/Briscloonath road and Blackrock where the bridge was in bad condition. Also mentioned was the Darragoon area of Kiltyclogher.

Councillors complained that excessive weights were being carried by trucks, extracting timber and they wanted to know if Coillte could impose the legal weight restrictions on hauliers.

But Mr. Lynch responded that Coillte, while sympathising with the Council, could not enforce weight restrictions on timber loads; they were not an enforcement agency under the road traffic acts and it was up to the purchasers of the timber to obey the law.

He also rejected suggestions that Coillte had any responsibility for road maintenance. Their primary purpose was to sell timber and close the gap between expenditure and income.

Following a lengthy discussion during which a number of councillors stressed that they were not opposed to forestry, but felt the local authority should be funded to repair roads damaged during timber extraction, it was decided to set up a tripartite meeting, involving the Council, the Minister for Forestry and Coillte to see if the Council could be given a slice of the £60,000 to repair roads in North Leitrim.

*Leitrim Observer,  
15th April 1989.*

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## Bord na Mona and Coillte Teoranta Redevelop the Peatlands

With only 5% of midland bogs remaining a resource, the other 95% having been cut away during the last 40 years, it now seems that the bogs themselves, if the present rate of utilisation continues, will have been exhausted as a resource by the mid 1990s.

Now the problem facing those previously involved in the exploitation of this resource is what could replace the peat and turf industry as a major part of the Irish economy. This question was tackled recently by the Minister for Forestry, Mr. Liam Aylward T.D., at the launch of a new report on "The Utilisation of Irish Midland Peatlands".

As outlined, both in the report and in the Minister's speech, the most effective way of cushioning the blow that will be dealt to the Irish economy by the disappearance of the peatlands, is to begin work, even now, developing this great natural resource create possibly the base for what could even be greater national assets. With this end in mind, it was decided last year that all Bord na Mona cutaway

bogs suitable for afforestation should be turned over to Coillte Teoranta – the Irish forestry board for forestry purposes. This decision was taken for three reasons. Firstly to provide immediate employment for those previously involved in the industry and who would face redundancy were the exhausted bogs to remain undeveloped, secondly because of the particular suitability of the timber crop to the midland area and lastly because of the economic viability of such a crop.

Coillte Teoranta themselves recently made clear their intentions as regards the development of forestry as a viable new departure in the immediate future. Established to run public forestry on a commercial basis their plan is to double the

1988 planting levels by 1993. They can only be aided in this by what promises to be full co-operation from those who can allocate to them the necessary land to make possible this form of development. The Chief Executive of Coillte Teoranta, Mr. Martin Lowery in particular is enthusiastic about the prospects of his company's success in view of the co-operation they are receiving from all other sectors in their efforts to establish forestry. They can then only be further aided by the guarantee of the government that they should receive up to 60% of Bord na Mona cutaway bogland over the next 10 years.

Should the co-operation between those involved in the development of the peatlands and those in Coillte Teoranta continue, the optimum re-use of peatlands is assured and midland forestry could help to replace midland peat as an important indigenous resource.

*Evening News,  
7th April 1989.*

## Germans' £m plus Forestry Negotiation

Negotiations for a £1.6 million plus forestry development for County Cork are at an advanced stage.

A meeting took place in Fermoy, this week between a West German group, the Bavarian Timber Growers Association, and Tom Collier, General Manager of Glenasack Forestry Company, Glenville.

The significance of the meet-

ing was underscored by the fact that also present were forestry Minister Liam Aylward, T.D., and Dr. Edward Farrell of UCD.

Chairman of the Glenville-based Glenasack Forestry Investment Company, Tom Cavanagh, said that members of

the Bavarian Foresters' Association visited Fermoy this week at the invitation of Glenasack which hopes to persuade the group to invest in Cork.

They were met by Forestry Minister Liam Aylward, T.D., Dr. Edward Farrell of UCD, Tom Collier, General Manager of Glenasack and Chief Inspector of Forestry Niall O'Carroll, Gene Fitzgerald, MEP and Deputy Ned O'Keefe.

Tom Cavanagh said Glenasack is hopeful the Bavarians

will lease land in County Cork which the company would then plant with trees and manage for an annual fee. However, he added that it is still too early to say

whether the Bavarian group will go ahead with the investment.

*Corkman,  
5th May 1989.*

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## Emerging Co-operative Growth Sectors

Mr. Martin Lowery, Chief Executive, Coillte Teoranta, at a Seminar on "Emerging Co-operative Growth Sectors" organised by Irish Co-operative Organisation Society Limited emphasised the importance of the recently published National Development Plan, 1989-1993, for forestry development. He said that Coillte Teoranta, the newly established commercial forestry company, welcomed the planting target of this plan – a doubling of 1988 national planting levels of 15,000 hectares to 30,000 hectares by 1993. Coillte Teoranta was prepared to play its full part to ensure that public planting made a major contribution towards the achievement of this target.

Coillte Teoranta was established to run public forestry on a commercial basis. The new company is gearing itself to that task. Its immediate priority is to ensure

that its core business is efficient and to install commercial structures to increase efficiency levels and take full advantage of its commercial status.

Mr. Lowery considered that there was considerable scope for a closer working between Coillte Teoranta and the co-operatives in achieving their common interests. The company had an enormous reservoir of knowledge and expertise in the establishment and management of forests – an area where it takes years to rectify initial mistakes – and could provide relevant services to co-operatives and, indeed, private forestry investors in general. There were possibilities for joint ventures or partnership arrangements with the co-operatives in regard to a range of forestry activities. These could extend, as necessary, to innovative ways of making land available for forestry through, for example, leasing arrangements between Coillte Teoranta and farmers/co-operatives.

*Dungarvan Observer,  
6th May 1989.*

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## New Concepts for Forestry on the Farm

Mr. Bulfin, Head of Forestry Research, Teagasc, Kinsealy Research Centre, said in a paper presented to the "Trees of Ireland" AGM that the climate of opinion has never been better for the promotion of forestry on the farm. With the changes in EC policy towards agricultural surpluses and the introduction of quota restrictions and the partial removal of price supports for some commodities, farmers see the need

for alternative enterprises. On most marginal farms, whose soils have physical limitations for other forms of cropping, forestry is the only alternative enterprise. Planting grants, income supports and advisory services have all been put in place or increased in the last few years.

Media coverage of forestry has increased considerably and helped to create a favourable climate of opinion and yet the level of farmer involvement in forestry has not reached expected levels. The answer lies in the difference between State

or investment forestry and farmer forestry – the farmer must make an annual income from his forest. If farmer forestry is to be successfully promoted the farmers must be financially supported while his trees are growing. If the EC and the national government wish to promote farm forestry, then they must support farmers who switch to forestry at least to the same level as similar supports being offered for farmers still in agriculture.

Teagasc is carrying out research on a number of forest systems suitable for farms. Much of the land coming out

of agriculture will be marginal land with major physical limitations for cropping. Tree species – and a very limited range of tree species – will be the only feasible alternative enterprise. Coni-

fer forestry, with Sitka spruce as the major species, will be the major forestry system. On some of the better – but still marginal land – a much wider range of species will be possible.

New forestry systems such as short rotation forestry for energy and pulp or Agroforestry for high value timber may be feasible.

*Tipperary Star,  
20 May 1989.*

## Forest Fire Raged for Five Hours

A forest fire which raged for five hours destroyed an estimated 90 acres of mature forestry at Glountanefinnane, Ballydesmond on Tuesday.

The fire was brought under control by almost 100 fire fighters from both sides of the Cork/Kerry border.

The alarm was raised at lunchtime when local farmers saw the plantation blazing at three points, and 50 firemen rushed to the scene from Kanturk, Millstreet, Mallow, Charleville and Castleisland.

They were joined by forestry workers who assisted with beaters and shovels to prevent the fire from spreading.

At one stage a 6,000-acre plantation on the other side of a fire-break was threatened, but the fire was controlled.

*Donegal Democrat,  
2nd June 1989.*

## Enterprise Equity Invests in Leitrim Firm

Enterprise Equity (Irl) Ltd., the Venture Capital Company, established by the International Fund for Ireland, (which operates in Counties Leitrim, Cavan, Donegal, Louth, Monaghan and Sligo) announced that it was investing IR£250,000 in A. S. Richardson & Co. Ltd., of Newtowngore. The Chief Executive of Enterprise Equity, Dr. Declan Glynn, in making the announcement stated that A. S. Richardson & Co. Ltd., was a good example of a company with strong committed management which should contribute significantly to the local economy and employment over the coming years.

The Leitrim-based sawmillers who have recently acquired and re-equipped a mill in Sligo are particularly attractive from the point of view of Enterprise Equity in that their products are based on a native raw material which is of increasing importance nationally but also to the economies of the border counties. "The products not only substitute for hitherto imported materials but are themselves exported in increasingly significant quantities", said Dr. Glynn.

*Leitrim Observer, 3rd June 1989.*

## Forestry Central to Economic and Environmental Planning

The forestry industry is a very important part of our economic and environmental planning for the future, said Minister for State Michael Smith yesterday.

Launching a comprehensive development plan to take Irish forestry up to 1993 he said that almost 2,300 jobs would be created between 1989 and 1993.

He said that the next phase in forestry development would see a doubling of planting levels from a record 15,000 hectares in 1988 to 30,000 hectares in 1993 which would be achieved through a combination of public and private planting.

More forest roads to be constructed, harvesting and marketing programmes to be increased by 33% to 2 million cubic metres by 1993 and sufficiency in sawn softwood to be increased by 60% to 80% by 1993.

*Cork Examiner,  
9th June 1989.*

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## New Pinewood Mill for Thurles

Announcing a new Pinewood Mill which will employ between 25 and 30 people between now and next Christmas and with a potential for up to 100 jobs, Mr. Michael Smith, stated that this was a small but very important and prestigious project for Thurles. Negotiations had concluded between the Sugar Company and the parent Company Ballycassidy Mills, Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh on the acquisition of 5 acres on the Sugar Factory site and an option to purchase an additional 10 acres. The mill will be housed in one of the bays and weighbridge and parking area will be fully utilised in the new industry.

Twenty six per cent of our forests are pine and up to now this timber has been mainly used for low added value timber products. The new Mill and the second and third phase of these developments will ensure that this very valuable wood will be used for joinery and high quality timber products, mainly for export.

*Nenagh Guardian,  
10th June 1989.*

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## Strokestown Company's Success Story

A Strokestown-based forestry company, comprising former FÁS trainees, is fast becoming one of the success stories of the North West.

Ashling Woodland Development was the brainchild of five young people, who met during a woodland management course run by Crann, the Woodland Trust, at Killegar, Co. Leitrim, in 1987.

The Strokestown company was recently shortlisted for the Board Gais/An Taisce Resource Ireland Environmental Awards, receiving a prize of £500.

During their studies with the Leitrim-based group, they identified a gap in the market for increased private planting, a lack of a service company catering for large-scale planting, maintenance and management for broadleaved woodland.

While working with Crann, the trainees were taught the benefits of broadleaf trees over conifers. Although conifers are faster growing, they are less environment-friendly.

"We are aiming to redress the balance in planting, from both a landscape and ecological point of view. Our target is 50 percent

broadleaves," said Joe Gowran, Joint Manager of AWD.

Because broadleaves are seen as less commercially viable than conifers, one attraction lies in the investment opportunities they present: "If you spent about £1,200 now on planting, provided the conditions were right, those trees could be worth about £12,000 in forty years' time," Joe estimates.

They are popular for people who wish to invest in their children's futures, although many stems are usually of reasonable value after thirty years. Joe sees substantial employment potential in broadleaves, not only from planting and harvesting, but also from creating recreational sites for the likes of fishing and shooting, etc.

Having planted over 124,000 trees between November and May, the group are anticipating further growth next year.

"On a conservative estimate, I would expect to expand by about fifty per cent by spring 1990," Joe reckons. The co-operative also has plans to employ new members, extend their transport fleet, computerise their accounts and contracts, and begin a nursery.

With endless enthusiasm, and the appropriate expertise, this group of young people are set to make their mark on one of Ireland's growing industries.

*Leitrim Observer,  
1st July 1989.*

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## Public Sworn Enquiry Hears Evidence on Wood

A special amenity area order made by Wicklow Co. Council in May 1987, in respect of Tomnafinnoge Wood, part of the Coolattin Estate, was the subject of a public sworn enquiry at Shillelagh Courthouse on Tuesday and Wednesday, June 27th and 28th.

The two-day enquiry was held before Mr. Michael Ward, an inspector with the Department of the Environment.

Wicklow Co. Council is seeking to have the special amenity area order confirmed by Environment Minister Padraig Flynn.

Bridgefarm Company Ltd. of 89 Upper Leeson Street, Dublin 4, the owners of most of Coolattin Estate, objected to the order.

Over the two days, the hearing listened to sworn evidence from

five witnesses – two from Wicklow Co. Council and three from Bridgefarm.

Additionally, there was an unsworn submission from Coolattin Woods Action Committee – a group which favours strongly the confirmation of the amenity area order.

Two further submissions were made by Mr. Leonard Mason, who described himself as a citizen of Shillelagh and by a Mr. Noel Kelleher.

*Carlow Nationalist,  
7th July 1989.*

## Major Improvements Planned for Lough Key Forest Park

Following mounting pressure from local associations and politicians Lough Key Forest Park in Boyle will undergo a major facelift in a bid to bring its facilities up to standard and to get the crowds rolling back in.

The lifeline for the park, where gate receipts have been sadly dwindling for the past four years, came this week from the Forestry Board, Coillte Teoranta. A new section within Coillte, New Business has been set up to examine Forest Park Development and Lough Key is one of three parks that will be receiving particular attention.

A spokesman for Coillte explained that facilities at the park needed upgrading urgently and they had met with the local Chamber of Commerce where ideas for development had been discussed.

As an immediate priority he stressed that the first item on the development list would be the Caravan and Camping area and following on from that they would be combining the findings of the Chamber's report with their own and implementing some new works.

However, before any work can be carried out, and they are hopeful that at least some of the works will be in place for the 1990 season, finance for

## FOREST GRANTS

The Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland has recently made the Environmental Assessment (Afforestation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1989 which implement the requirements of the European Community Directive No. 85/337. The Regulations apply to applications for grant aid for initial afforestation projects received by the Department's Forest Service on or after September 1st.

The Regulations prohibit the Department from making grants for afforestation projects where it appears likely that the planting will have significant effects on the environment unless the Department has first taken into consideration information as to the project's environmental impact.

The requirement for a forestry project to have a supporting Environmental Assessment will be considered on a case by case basis taking account of both quantitative and qualitative factors.

*Down Spectator,  
20th July 1989.*

the project which they estimate could cost up to a half a million pounds over a number of years has to be located. "We are now looking at the various funding options open to us including the EC, Bord Fáilte and our own resources, but we have not ruled out the possibility of some type of private investment and we are always open to all offers," the spokesman added.

*Roscommon Herald,  
21st July 1989.*

## **£1m Bill for Forest Fires in Fermanagh**

**Almost £1m worth of timber has been destroyed in forest fires in Fermanagh this summer.**

A Forest Service official reported that about 250 acres of trees, valued at almost £1m, had been destroyed.

Fermanagh produces about 40% of the timber produced in

Northern Ireland and contains about one third of the State forests.

The spokesman said the ground was so dry that fires thought to be put out repeatedly flared up again.

*Belfast Telegraph,  
28th July 1989.*

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## **FORESTRY – A Need for Association for Small Forest Owners**

Many farmers have now planted the marginal areas of their farms either individually or in groups. To help farmers to extract the maximum benefit from this investment there is a need for farmer forestry associations. These associations are now being set up. In structure they will be in the form of co-operatives, which will be affiliated directly to the Western Forestry Co-operative. Such associations would keep the farmers involved abreast with forestry developments generally, provide information on grants and forest related payments, and provide all the back up services required for forest management and marketing. They will also give collective strength to the small producer, act in a representative capacity to ensure that farmer and small forest owners get the maximum advantage from their forest crop.

### **Greatly Increased Acreage in Farmer Forestry**

Since co-operatives like Kiltoghert, NCF, and Killeshandra have taken an active role (through the Western Forestry Co-operative), in private forestry development, farmer forestry is viewed in a new light. The objective of a planned approach to forestry development, with farmers and communities having an input, has been met with a very positive response. People who were

opposed (and understandably so) to the way private forestry was being developed are now supportive of the co-operative approach. Accordingly, despite the appointment of a highly experienced co-operative officer to County Leitrim, all requests from farmers and groups of farmers to have part of their lands planted could not be accommodated in the planting season just ended. The attractive co-op services included cheap in-

puts, free back up for the farmer equipped to carry out the work himself. It also provided a complete contrast service to establish and maintain the proposed plantation with no financial burden, for those without help. All the co-op requested was that the proposed development would compliment other developments, would not involve good grazing land and would include broadleaves in the species mix.

### **State Forest Approach**

It is fully recognised that the great work being carried out in getting farmers to afforest the non-agricultural areas of their farms could not have been achieved without the positive co-operation of the State Forest Service – (now Coillte Teo). The officers involved in private afforestation have shown dedication, enthusiasm and helpfulness, and deserve to be congratulated.

*Leitrim Observer,  
29th July 1989.*



## FOREST PROJECT LAUNCHED

A unique tree-planting project is now underway in two of the country's most famous castles as a contribution towards restoring Ireland's forest heritage.

"Plant a Tree for Ireland" is a scheme devised by the Dromoland Castle, Co. Clare-based Forest Heritage Ltd. aimed at people of Irish ancestry living around the world and Irish people at home.

The trees will be planted in the 1,700 acre Dromoland Castle, Newmarket-on-Fergus. The other location chosen for tree planting is the beautiful demesne of Ashford Castle, Co. Mayo.

The cost of a tree is £125 which includes ownership of the tree for 100 years, the placing of a plaque on the tree with the owner's name engraved on it and maintenance of the tree for five years. The owner will also receive a certificate of ownership.

The types of tree available for planting at present are Common Beech, Copper Beech, Red Oak, Common Oak, Ash and Sycamore.

*Evening Press,  
3rd August 1989.*

## West Limerick Christmas Tree Boom

West Limerick is to become a major Christmas tree growing area, with the announcement recently that one and a half million trees are to be grown on 530 acres.

The company behind the venture – Kerry Tree Technology Limited are to continue exporting daffodils to the US following their success of sending one million flowers there this year.

Jim Costelloe, a native of Foynes, who manages the forestry-growing division of the Company, said that already 30 acres of Noble Fir Christmas trees have been planted in Athea, with more on the 170 acre site at Loughill where the daffodils are also growing.

The Christmas trees will be exported mainly to Germany and will take about 7 years to develop. An interesting aspect is that the foliage will also be exported as this is used as decoration on graves.

*Limerick Tribune,  
5th August 1989.*

## Galway Farmers 'Left Out in the Cold' by Forestry Body's Regulation

Outraged small farmers in County Galway claimed this week that they were being discriminated against by the new State forestry organisation, Coillte Teoranta.

They are angry at Coillte's announcement that they will only buy up plots of land exceeding 50 acres for forestry or plots over 25 acres if they are adjoining existing plantations.

Western farmers feel that this stipulation prevents them from selling up parts of their land, which is practically useless for viable agriculture, to the forestry agency in order to get finance to develop the better parts of their holdings.

Tuam County Councillor, Pat Finnegan has now taken up

the small farmers' fight against these conditions.

"It doesn't make sense that these conditions apply in the west of Ireland since the average holding is less than 40 acres and they don't stand much of a chance of selling smaller amounts of land for forestry," said Cllr. Finnegan.

He suggested that Coillte reduce their requirement to between 10 and 15 acres for farmers in the disadvantaged areas to give smaller farmers an opportunity to sell off land which they did not require.

Liam O'Flanagan of Coillte Teoranta said that it would be a totally uneconomic prospect for the organisation to undertake the planting of forestry on

an area any less than what was specified on their advertisement.

"Between administration costs and other overheads it would cost us the same to develop 10 acres as it would 100 acres for forestry," said Mr. O'Flanagan.

He said that farmers interested in selling off a small portion of their land for forestry could ap-

proach private forestry investors to see if they were interested.

But he said that the best advice for any small farmer was to advise an auctioneer that the land had become available

on the market for forestry and there was a possibility that private investors might become interested.

*Connacht Tribune,  
25th August 1989.*

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## Ulster Farms Take Up Tree Scheme

Almost one thousand farmers, fifty-nine of them from Northern Ireland, have responded to the Government Farm Woodland Scheme, launched a year ago to encourage the growing of more trees.

Mr. David MacLean, Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture in London said: "We have received nearly 1,000 applications to plant 17,500 acres of woodlands over the first three years of the scheme and we expect about 75% of this area to be

with broadleaved trees.

"These new woodlands will provide important environmental benefits both by enhancing the landscape and by creating new wildlife habitats."

He said they had decided to change one of the scheme rules

so that in future farmers with an interest in more than one holding would be allowed to submit a separate application in relation to each of their farms, subject to the maximum of 40 hectares per holding.

The scheme, an experimental one, came into effect last autumn with the aim of providing a maximum total area of 36,000 hectares for three planting, after which it will be reviewed.

While only 26 farmers, with an area of 186 hectares have taken up the scheme in Wales, 59 Northern Ireland applicants want to plant some 248 hectares.

*Belfast Telegraph,  
31st August 1989.*

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## Ballyhooly's Eurocentre for Acid Rain Test

A group of scientists in the Faculty of Agriculture, University College Dublin, have established an intensive acid rain monitoring station in a forest at Ballyhooly, Fermoy, Co. Cork. The group, led by Dr. Ted Farrell, a forest soil scientist, have received an EC grant of £103,000 over three years to support the study. In a complex collaborative effort, soil scientists, forest scientists and physicists from UCD, Coillte Teo. (formerly the Forest Service), Thomond College and the University of Munich, are measuring concentrations of pollutant chemicals in the atmosphere and are monitoring the passage of rain-borne chemicals through the forest crown and their absorption by the soil.

The study plot at Ballyhooly is the first in what is intended to be a network of such monitoring stations in forest stands around the country. No damage resulting from the long-range transport of airborne pollutants has been observed in Ireland, but

these plots and a larger network of forest observation plots established by Coillte, will ensure that if any damage occurs it will be quickly identified and sources of pollution isolated.

The Ballyhooly site has been selected because of its similar-

ity in stand structure and soil properties to the Hogenwald site, near Augsburg, in Bavaria, where the acid deposition research work of Lehrstuhl für Bodenkunde, University of Munich, is centred. As a Norway spruce stand on a free-draining mineral soil in a relatively unpolluted environment, Ballyhooly can act as a control site for forest stands over much of Central Europe. The duration of the project is three years. It is the intention of the research team to extend the network of intensively monitored plots, by establishing another two or three on sites more typical in species composition and soil type, of Irish conditions.

*Environment Ireland,  
September-October 1989.*

## Dockland Dump for Trees

Scientists in Belfast are probing the possibility of turning the city's biggest rubbish dump into a forest.

The revelation follows yesterday's news that an industrial estate built on part of the dockland dump in Duncrue Street is now under threat from underground build-ups of potentially explosive methane gas.

Last night, a councillor for the area, Nelson McCausland, revealed that no more industrial units will be built on the rubbish tip stretching along the shore of Belfast Lough which flanks the M2 Motorway.

Councillor McCausland said: "A decision has been taken that it will be too dangerous to use the reclaimed land on the rubbish tip for further industrial development.

"Instead, the scientists have already moved in with an experiment to plant trees on the tiphead.

"Experiments have suggested so far that such a base is ideal for growing trees. The type of rubbish now being thrown out by people is apparently good for growth when it eventually breaks down in the soil."

*Irish News,  
September 1989.*

## Farm Ministers Agree New Funds for Forestry

EC Farm Ministers have reached agreement on a multi-million pound programme for the development of the Community's forest and forest products industry.

The First Action programme will run from 1989 to 1992 and is aimed at encouraging forestry development on what was formally agricultural land. This is seen as an important plank in the Commission's attempts to reform the Common Agricultural Policy while at the same time providing alternative employment and activities for rural communities.

Under the new programme, special areas like Ireland which have been chosen for structural assistance will be given special aid for forestry development. The Government is hopeful of securing £89 million over the next five years. The Minister of State at the Department of Energy responsible for forestry development said that the agreement was "crucial to the Government's aim of expanding Irish forestry, creating new jobs, doubling planting targets to 30,000 hectares per year and increasing timber by one-third."

*Business & Finance,  
September 1989.*

## Forestry Report Highlights Problem

A report by Landwise Scotland, following a study tour of farm forestry systems in Western Europe, claims that simply subsidising farmers to plant trees will not produce successful farm forestry.

The report said that many farm forestry systems in Western Europe are in serious trouble and 'unless the lessons highlighted in this study are taken account of, farm forestry we are creating in Scotland will end up with the same problems'.

The study showed that many farm forestry systems in West-

ern Europe were facing major economic and social problems due to small scale forests, the disruption of the traditional complementary relationship between farming and forestry due to changes in both industries and shifts in the population between country and town.

Small scale foresters were having to compete with large scale producers of timber in selling a low value product on to a highly competitive world market and the problems of that small producer were extremely acute.

The report also claimed that it could not be assumed that a farm forestry system would necessarily be beneficial to landscape and wildlife. Among the recommendations to the report are:

The aims of a farm forestry system must be clearly established from the beginning and the woodland structure created around them.

Forestry co-operatives must be established to allow small scale growers to compete in the marketplace.

Effective extension services

are of key importance and such financial support may be more important for success than direct subsidies.

Movements of populations between country and town and change in the nature of agriculture and forestry have been affecting the changing farm forestry systems in Europe for

more than 100 years and this process will continue. Any farm forestry systems must therefore have maximum flexibility so it can adapt and persist long enough to produce timber.

*Mid Ulster Observer,  
7th September 1989.*

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## Coniferous Forests Can Threaten Fisheries

Coniferous forestry can be incompatible with maintaining salmon and trout fisheries, the Institute of Fisheries Management study course in Galway was told on its final day yesterday. Mr. Brian Morrison, of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland, said that the worst effects of afforestation only became apparent 15 or more years after planting, when the leaf canopy closed. At this stage, there could be a marked increase in the acidity of the water and the level of aluminium it contained.

If the water became too acid, the fish fry were unable to hatch from their eggs because the enzyme they used to remove the shell was neutralised, he said. He compared the delayed action to that of a time bomb.

"Conifers are not the primary cause of the problem," he told the meeting, explaining that acidity would only rise to fatal levels if the soil was shallow, well leached, and overlying insoluble rocks. Where it was over rocks containing lime there would be less effect.

Dr. Nigel Milner, of the Welsh Water Authority, said that 25 per cent of the Welsh uplands had been afforested. "Fish and forestry are in direct collision there," he said.

As a result, his authority had commissioned the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology to prepare a map showing areas of low calcium soil where afforestation should be restricted to avoid acidification. However, the Forestry Commission did not accept that there should not be more planting or limited planting in these places.

Both speakers emphasised that the harmful effects of forestry began as soon as planting preparations started. Ploughing to improve drainage released silt into the rivers, which could kill the young fish and alter the vegetation growing there, Mr. Morrison said. If streams were canalised, deep pools in which the fish survived during drought

were lost. Fish populations in streams in forested areas had been found to be half that in those outside, he said.

Dr. Milner said that, as a rule of thumb, trees should be kept at least five metres from a small stream and three times the width away from a larger one. The Forestry Commission had prepared guidelines for these matters which it applied to its own planting and as a basis for approving grants to private ones. However, a number of conservation bodies were now working with it to produce a better version.

Ms. E. Twomey, of the Department of the Marine, said that a parallel project to prepare guidelines was going on in Ireland, involving State and private forestry interests, the central Fisheries Board and her department.

"We've been looking for guidelines since 1983," commented Micheál Kennedy, manager of the Western Regional Fisheries Board. The WRFB is taking legal action against the Forest Service as a result of pollution caused by the aerial fertilisation of trees in Connemara last summer.

*Irish Times,  
15th September 1989.*

## Irish Timber Council Brochure

A large gathering of businessmen, foresters, architects, engineers and prominent members of the timber trade, saw the Minister for Energy, Mr. Robert Molloy, TD, formally launch the Irish Timber Council's new corporate brochure on September 6. The Minister had been invited by the Irish Timber Council to launch this brochure which will be used as a marketing aid by the Council in promoting Irish timber.

The brochure highlights the sophistication of the processing sector of the industry in the production of quality sawn timber for construction. Also featured is the added value which can be gained from such residues as sawdust and woodchips in the manufacture of chipboard and medium density fibreboard respectively. Irish timber in the furniture industry, post and rail fencing and a diversity of other timber products are featured.

The use of Irish timber in projects such as the Killykeen Forest Park Development, the Hall of the Vicar Choral in Cashel and the Glulamined arches of Artane Sports Complex is highlighted.

John O'Halloran, President of the Irish Timber Council, emphasised that the new brochure was a first important step in a marketing programme for timber products. This ambitious programme will involve co-

operation and support from different sectors of the timber industry including the Irish Timber Council, Coillte Teoranta and the Irish Timber Trade Association.

He also emphasised the Irish Timber Council's active role in their participation in the development of European Standards and their commitment to the development of a marketing strategy for the 1990s. This is aimed at developing an architectural wood culture in Ireland, and an awareness internationally of the range of quality timber products available from the industry.

*Co-op Ireland,  
September 1989.*



*At the launch of the new corporate brochure of the Irish Timber Council (ITC) were (from left): Mr. Martin Lowery, CEO Coillte Teo., Mr. Kieran O'Connor, OPW, Mr. John O'Halloran, President of the ITC, Mr. Bill Foley, ITC, Mr. Bobby Molloy, TD, Minister for Energy, Mr. Pat Cooney, Chairman Coillte Teo., Mr. Paddy Glennon, Glennon Sawmills, Mr. Peter Murphy, Woodfab and Mr. William Decon, Decon Sawmills.*

## Swedish Wood Firm May Locate Here

The Swedish forestry products group Stora Kopparberg is actively considering locating a large wood pulp plant in Ireland. In an interview in the Swedish business daily "*Dagens Industri*" yesterday, the managing director of the group's pulp division said that a number of expansion options abroad were under review, but that there were many advantages in locating in Ireland. "Among other things, Ireland is in the European community, and the country has a climate suited to fast forest growth", said Mr. Per Knuts.

The first stage of the proposed project would involve an annual production of 100,000 tonnes

of fluff pulp and establishment costs would run to at least a billion Swedish kroner (£110 million). "We have been to Ireland to look around and have informed the authorities there of our purpose", Mr. Knuts said. "We are now working on a study which should be ready in the late autumn. It will show whether the project is feasible."

It is known that Stora has

had earlier plans for a 600,000 tonne plant in Portugal and for a massive expansion of their existing unit in Nova Scotia, Canada. According to the company, the market for pulp is growing rapidly and they are determined not to lose their market share, particularly in the fine paper area.

*Irish Times,  
16th September 1989*

## New Body To Promote Forestry Launched

Mr. Bobby Molloy, TD, Minister for Energy, last week launched a new industry body set up to provide a co-ordinated approach to forestry development in Ireland. The new body, which is virtually unique in Europe, brings together organisations involved with all stages in the wood chain, namely, nurseries, tree growers, saw millers and processors, importers, as well as the State Forestry Company, Coillte Teoranta.

The Irish Forestry Industry Chain (IFIC), which has been set up under the aegis of the Confederation of Irish Industry, has the following membership: Coillte Teoranta, Confederation of Irish Industry, Eolas, Irish Farmers Association (Nursery Organisation), Irish Timber Council, Irish Timber Growers Association, Irish Timber Trade Association.

The first Chairman of the Irish Forest Industry Chain is Mr. Brian Hussey, Managing Director of Woodland Investments

Limited, the Vice-Chairman is Mr. John O'Halloran, Manager of Woodfab Limited, and the Secretary is Dr. Aidan O'Boyle, Director of Industrial Policy, Confederation of Irish Industry.

The key objectives of the

Chain will be to devise and promote a strategy for the Irish Forest Industry Chain embracing immediately: The development of a national forestry policy; The encouragement of a greatly expanded planting programme; The promotion and development of Irish timber on the home and European markets; Obtaining increased support from the European Community for development of the wood chain; Finding an acceptable mechanism by which existing derelict land can be more readily mobilised for forestry development and representing the interests of the member organisations to the public, local and national government, as well as to the EC Community institutions.

*Anglo Celt,  
28th September 1989.*



*Pictured at the launch of the Irish Forest Industry Chain were (from left): Mr. John O'Halloran, Vice-Chairman, Irish Forest Industry Chain, Mr. Bobby Molloy, TD, Minister for Energy and Mr. Martin Lowery, Chief Executive, Coillte Teoranta.*



## Minister Given Assurance Over Scariff Dust Problem

Finsa Forest Products, Scariff, have given an "absolute assurance" that the dust problem created in the area by them will be finally cleared up within the next twelve weeks. Minister for Industry and Commerce, Mr. Des O'Malley, TD, announced that he was given such an assurance by the board of the East Clare firm when he opened a new energy plant there last Friday.

Mr. O'Malley said that there was a certain environmental problem in relation to the operation of the Finsa plant and as a result there had been difficulties and discomforts suffered by the people of the locality.

Local people had been patient but during discussions with

Finsa he was told that they were determined to clear the "dust problem".

Mr. O'Malley was in Scariff in the presence of the Spanish Ambassador, Dr. Jose A. Yturriaga, to officially launch a second major investment in the future of Finsa Products.

He opened there a £1.7m gas generator installed to cut drying costs at the revamped timber processing operation.

Mr. Liam McElligott, Managing Director, Finsa Products Ltd., stated that the completion of the commissioning programme later on would mark a significant move forward by Finsa in the creation of a cleaner environment. Finsa was very clear on its attitude to the environment in the recent past and would combine on the same road to improvement in the future.

*Clare Champion,  
29th September 1989.*

## Smurfit Go For Trees As Investment

Smurfit Ireland is to invest IR£10 million over the next five years in a major Irish forestry programme.

The scheme will provide employment for 50 people in the preparation and planting of 10,000 acres in Kerry, Clare, Tipperary and Limerick.

Managing Director of Smurfit Ireland, Patrick J. Wright, said his company was reacting to the changed circumstances arising from EC and Dublin Government incentives for private forestry.

He explained that although the £10m is Smurfit's first investment in Irish forestry, the group has extensive world-wide experience of forestry management in southern United States. The company is currently engaged

in a programme to develop 240,000 acres of eucalyptus at a cost of £42m in Columbia and Venezuela in South America.

*Irish News,  
30th September 1989.*

## Wood Ireland A Success

The Society of Foresters have to be very chuffed with themselves for the success of the Wood Ireland exhibition of Irish Wood Products and Design at the UCD Campus in Belfield. It was the first national exhibition of its kind, quite an eye-opener as to how far the Irish timber industry has progressed in the last two decades and what the leading companies are doing in several fields. The centre was busy on the two days from the Friday opening to the Saturday evening closing when, at four, it seemed someone rang a bell and they came in a tidal wave to

catch the exhibits on the various stands before closing time.

The Society's PRO, John McLoughlin of Greystones began to wonder if they hadn't made a mistake by not running on until Sunday. Michael Smith who now holds down Science and Technology was delighted to be back with timber men again: (he was Minister for Energy with responsibility for Forestry).

The Taoiseach paid what was going to be a flying visit on the second day and stayed to examine a number of the more impressive stands and even took a hand at one turning lathe to the cheers of the crowd. He confessed to being "totally impressed by the skill and stylishness of the exhibitors" and the "marvellous range of Irish woods" so well packaged and presented.

*Environment Ireland,  
November-December 1989.*



## Purchase Of Kinnitty Castle – Exciting Development

Kinnitty Castle and grounds totalling 62 acres has been purchased by the Shannon Development Company for £250,000.

When the Minister for Energy, Mr. Robert Molloy, TD, announced the purchase last week he felt that it would be utilised effectively to benefit the local community.

Some of the projects mooted by the Minister for the castle include, a holiday complex, an outdoor pursuit centre, an equestrian centre and riding school. There is also mention of

an international recording centre.

It is understood that Shannon Development will be seeking private sector investment. They are also confident of getting EC funding to promote the use of the building and the lands.

The castle, since 1951 has been in state ownership. Situated one mile from Kinnitty it was used as a National Forestry School from 1955 to 1984.

Knockmany Forest, Co. Tyrone has been judged the winning entry in the Royal Dublin Society's Irish Woodland Competition.

The awards were initiated by the Society in 1988 to encourage high standards of management in both private and public sector woodlands in Ireland. Knockmany Forest, the second oldest forest in Northern Ireland was acquired in 1911.

Coillte Teoranta was very highly commended for Ravensdale, Dundalk forest in Co. Louth and the Allied Irish Investment Managers Ltd were highly commended for woodland at Inagh, Co. Clare.

At a ceremony in Dublin, Mr. Bobby Molloy, Minister for Energy in the Republic of Ireland presented the award to the Department of Agriculture which was represented by Mr. Peter Bottomley MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Agriculture and officials from the Northern Ireland Forest Service.

*Irish News,  
4th November 1989.*

## IRISH FOREST AWARD

The Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture in Northern Ireland has won a prestigious environmental award for woodland management.



At a presentation of the Irish Woodlands Award 1989, at the RDS in Dublin, were (from left): Mr. Peter Bottomley, the Northern Ireland Minister for Agriculture; Mr. Bill Wright, Chief Forest Officer in Northern Ireland; Mr. Martin Lowery, Chief Executive of Coillte Teoranta; and Mr. John Bruder of Allied Irish Investment Managers Ltd.

## IFA Favour Local Farmers Benefiting From Forestry

The IFA have supported the development of forestry as an additional form of land use in the West of Ireland.

Marginal land adjoining farms stocked with cattle and sheep could be put to good use by

planting, earning yearly headage payment, plus a lump sum at harvesting.

However, the IFA have expressed concern at recent moves by financial institutions and large corporate investment companies which have launched forestry projects recently.

Chairman of IFA's Western Development Committee, Mr. Padraic Divilly of Kilkerrin, Tuam, said IFA's concerns are based on the fear that mass afforestation would result in large companies buying up tracks of marginal land for plantation at prices outside the reach of local farmers.

In the implementation of the

EC's Forestry Action Programme the Irish Government must weight the financial incentives available much more heavily in favour of farmers and the rural population generally rather than outside corporate investors.

"If this does not happen then there is a real possibility that almost the entire area of some countries could be turned into massive woodlands denuded of people." Mr. Divilly also says that there was a possibility that farmers would be able to get higher headage payments on the section of the farm that was planted for forestry.

The clear intention of EC

policies for the future of rural development is to maintain economically viable communities throughout the European countryside through the promotion of alternative enterprises, such as forestry. The Irish Government is duty bound to ensure that the EC Forestry Action Programme reflects the original intention, and is implemented on a planned basis so as to ensure that the social environmental and economic advantage accrue primarily to the rural population."

*Western People,*  
22nd November 1989.

## Bogland – For Farming or Forestry Asks ICMSA

The sale of cutaway bogs for forestry purposes was the subject of a heated ICMSA public meeting in Rochfordbridge. The meeting was addressed by the ICMSA President, Mr. Tom O'Dwyer and the Minister for Education and Fianna Fáil TD for Longford-Westmeath, Mrs. Mary O'Rourke.

Concern expressed by farmers living on the periphery of the local bogland in relation to the proposed sale of the bogs for forestry development, gave rise to the ICMSA meeting.

"The present incentives for forestry development are welcomed by the ICMSA. However, where cutaway bogland can be farmed it should not be laid down to forestry especially when it makes better farming than forestry land," stated Mr. Tom O'Dwyer at the Rochfordbridge meeting.

Mr. O'Dwyer added "Of course Ireland should increase the amount of land under forestry.

At present we have about 5% of our country under forest, by far the lowest percentage in the EC – yet we have the best tree growing climate. But in order to extend our forests we do not have to plant farmland or potential farmland.

"Ireland has 20% of its total area, or approximately 3 million acres of mountain and hill land ideal for forestry. Why then the rush to cover good potential farmland – either the low wet mineral soils or the cutaway bogland – with trees?

"I fully support forestry in the right place. However, I see the rush to plant farmland as a kind

of cop-out for the Government. If the land is planted then it is not available for general farming. This is just a postponement of the problem.

"As forestry is such a long-term project and its effects on the neighbouring community are long lasting, I suggest that afforestation should be subject to planning permission.

*Westmeath Independent,*  
24th November 1989.

## Christmas Trees Import Warning

A strong warning was sounded today about the importation of Christmas trees into the province.

Mr. Bill Wright, Chief Forest Officer, Department of Agriculture said: "It is illegal to import coniferous trees without a plant health certificate.

"Trees which arrive without the necessary documents are liable to be destroyed. Trees over 3 metres in height are prohibited and the only exceptions are those from the Irish Republic.

Mr. Wright added the restric-

tions were necessary to prevent introduction of the Great Spruce Bark Beetle which could cause considerable damage to forestry plantations.

*Belfast Telegraph,  
24th November 1989.*

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## **'BANK VOLE' ON THE RAMPAGE**

Are the forestry plantations along the Cork-Kerry border threatened by attacks on young trees by the "bank vole"? The pest is a form of rodent rather resembling a rat. It was not known to be present in Ireland up to about twenty-five years ago when it was discovered in Kerry. The forestry authorities say that the species has since spread over the county boundaries of Kerry-Cork and Kerry-Limerick. The department has reported "severe local impact" on young trees "in a small number of plantations". There have not been, apparently, any reports of "widespread damage" but the department says that "control measures are being considered".

*Corkman,  
15th December 1989.*

## **Christmas Trees Dearer**

If you're thinking about getting a non-shed Christmas tree this year, then unless you are prepared to hunt around a bit, better think again. The popular non-shed Noble fir could set you back £20.

Prices this year include VAT for the first time, because Coillte Teo (the Irish Forestry Board) is now a limited company.

So what sort of prices should you expect to pay? If you buy direct from state forests, Noble fir will cost between £12 and £16. The other non-shed Lodgepole pine will cost between £6 and £9. And the Norway spruce (which sheds) between £5 and £8.

Retail prices are higher with Noble fir fetching between £15 and £20, and Lodgepole pine and Norway spruce £8-£10.

*Irish Press,  
9th December 1989.*

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The above selected articles have been abstracted and edited from a wide range of national and provincial newspapers. It is hoped that they will provide a view of events and opinions on forestry issues that occurred in Ireland in 1989.

This section will be continued in future issues.

**Editor.**