

# EDITORIAL

## Influencing Change

When the first issue of *Irish Forestry* was published in 1944 the challenge facing its readership was to successfully establish a forest industry in Ireland. This ambition must have seemed remote given the poor quality of land which was made available for afforestation and the absence of clear forest policies. Pioneering foresters of the 1940s had limited information and resources at their disposal: forestry would continue to be the land-use of last resort for another half-century and would wait until the sixties before the first tangible forest research results would be available. Small wonder then that the editorial aim of the early journals was to satisfy its readers' thirst for solid informative articles. The main object of publishing *Irish Forestry* was, according to Mark L. Anderson, "to benefit the individual members of the Society and through them the Society as a whole" (Editorial – Vol. 2, No. 1, 1945).

The educational theme has remained constant throughout the first 50 volumes of the journal. The Society's objective "to advance and spread the knowledge of forestry in all its aspects" has also shaped the journal's own aims over the last half-century. As a result, *Irish Forestry* has remained focused; evolving slowly but consistently as a technical and scientific journal aimed mainly at Society members.

However the forestry audience has increased. This is reflected in the Society's own membership which has grown and diversified. Foresters are, as never before, involved in a professional way with a wide cross-section of the general public including specialist interest groups such as farmers, investors and environmentalists. All of these have legitimate interests and concerns about the development of forestry. The Society, through the journal and the recently revised *Policy Position Statements*, should address these concerns. It is important, therefore, that the Society builds on its educational ethos. The challenge facing *Irish Forestry* is to strike the optimum balance between technical issues and wider policy, social and economic issues and to ensure that the end result is communicated in a style which is accessible, informative and (dare we say it) entertaining. Accordingly, we have made a number of changes to the journal both in terms of content and format. This edition places considerable emphasis on issues such as forestry policy, farmers attitudes to forestry etc. These subjects along with social, economic and environmental issues will be addressed in future editions. They will not however, dominate the agenda but will be presented alongside technical issues in a way which is challenging yet consistent with the Society's objectives. The more obvious changes in this issue of the journal are to the design and format which have changed little over the years. These have been restyled to complement and enhance the content. We believe that these changes will have a positive effect on the journal's readability.

The journal is more than a one-way information medium: it needs to include a lively interchange of ideas and opinions to stimulate the debate on contemporary forestry and to influence change. We therefore welcome and encourage articles and letters from all our readers. Dialogue is essential if *Irish Forestry* is to develop as a journal capable of generating informed discussion on a wide range of forestry issues relevant to its readership.

Submissions to *Irish Forestry* are welcome and will be considered for publication. News items, general articles and letters are particularly welcome. These should be addressed to:

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