

# EDITORIAL

Since its first appearance in 1943, *Irish Forestry* has led the way as the forum for published research and discussion into forestry in Ireland. Each editor has in turn endeavoured to provide Society members – Ireland’s professional foresters – with the latest information on research and development in our chosen field. In many ways, a quick glance at the contents page of any particular issue of *Irish Forestry* over the past half-century provides the reader with a brief but insightful snapshot into developments and initiatives current at that time. Along the way, some of these were tried and failed, while others succeeded and went on to become standard practice. Taken together, however, all have brought forestry in Ireland to its current state as a renewable landuse not only capable of supporting an ever-growing processing industry, but also capable of sustaining a wide range of additional roles – from landscape enhancement and rural development to increased biodiversity and carbon sequestration.

Just as the contents of earlier issues of *Irish Forestry* offered a flavour of what was current at that time, so too do the contents of this issue. Contained within are papers relating to all stages of the wood chain, from species and provenance selection and the effect of early formative shaping on broadleaf quality, to a review of the impact of wind on established forests and an exploration of the potential application of chemical modification to Irish timber. Also included are a range of papers dealing with issues which are perhaps not directly related to the wood chain, but which nevertheless reflect the wider role forestry in Ireland is now being called upon to fulfil. These include studies of avian biodiversity and nutrient dynamics in Irish forests, a proposed landscape planning and design model, a review of the potential of western red cedar as a candidate for furthering species diversity, an example from Nepal of local stakeholder participation in forest management, and a study of Ireland’s tree collections, which play an important role in providing forest recreation and nurturing a public understanding of and a sense of wonder in trees.

This writer believes that the diversity of material now appearing in *Irish Forestry*, and indeed the diversity of professionals now contributing on a regular basis to the journal, reflect a coming-of-age for forestry in Ireland, not only in terms of its status as the fastest growing landuse on the island, but also in terms of its multi-functional role and ability to deliver a huge range of benefits, economic, social and environmental. This achievement is a legacy handed down to us by our predecessors, and hopefully we can continue their vision and belief in the future which underpin the very nature of forestry in all its aspects. Perhaps our biggest failing, however, is our inability sometimes to communicate this vision and belief to other professionals and to the general public - a weakness all too apparent when one reads the recent policy paper on forestry from the Heritage Council. Numerous initiatives, some originating from the forestry sector and others from other quarters, are, however, beginning to foster a tree culture in Ireland. These include the Millennium Native Woodlands Initiative, the Tree Register of Ireland, Trees of Time and Place, the Forest of Belfast and Tree Day, to name-check but a few. As well as achieving their own specific aims and objectives, all of these combine to provide a context for the development of forestry in Ireland. Meanwhile, forestry has become in recent years a multi-professional discipline, a landuse led by the professional forester but in close co-operation and consultation with a huge range of other interests and disciplines.

These are indeed exciting times for Irish forestry. Perhaps future members of the Society will review current issues of the journal and reminisce on the time when forestry in Ireland came down from the mountains and onto the lowlands, both physically and in the minds of the people of this island.

Submissions to *Irish Forestry* are welcomed and will be considered for publication.

The attention of contributors is drawn to “Guidelines for Submissions”.

Submissions to be addressed to:

The Editor,  
The Society of  
Irish Foresters,  
34 Upper  
Drumcondra Road,  
Dublin 9,  
Ireland.

*Editor*  
Kevin D. Collins

*Business Editor*  
Sean Lenihan

*Editorial Committee*  
John Fennessy  
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