



Scotland's Finest Woods Awards 2010

Award Winners

Profiles of the Winning Entries 2010

The Community Woodland Award

Winner of the Tim Stead Trophy:

Forres Community Woodlands Trust for Sanquhar Woodlands, Forres, Moray

The Forres Community Woodlands Trust was formed in 1999 to purchase 16 hectares of local woodland threatened with development on behalf of the local community. Sanquhar Woodlands (47 hectares) immediately south of the town was purchased in 2002.

The FCWT believes that local woodlands are major assets with potential to deliver a wide range of economic, environmental and social benefits. Its vision is 'to bring together as much of the woodlands in and around Forres into community management and, where appropriate, ownership' and its mission is 'making the woodlands of Forres relevant to the local community'.

The judges considered that the project is the 'gold standard for community woodlands' with 'an astonishing and professional approach'. They say more should be done to encourage others to visit and learn.

Local Chartered Foresters freely giving of their time combined with committed volunteers from across the community plus thinking outside the box provide for what the judges described as 'an outstanding and professional approach'.

The Schools Award

Winner of the Schools Award 2010:

The Charleston Academy, Kinmylie, Inverness

The school was singled out by the judges for the way it was effectively engaged in developing learning opportunities through a Forest School programme, rural skills training and conservation work all using woodlands in the school's catchment area.

Interestingly, one of the woods that the school uses is Abriachan Forest and the Abriachan Forest Trust is Highly Commended in this year's Silver Jubilee Competition.



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The Silver Jubilee Competition

Overall Winner of the Silver Jubilee Prize and Winner of the John Kennedy Trophy for Multi-purpose Woodlands:

Forestry Commission Scotland - Inverness, Ross and Skye Forest District for Glenmore Forest Park, Aviemore, Inverness-shire

In 1992 Glenmore was the first of the FC's declared Caledonian Forest Reserves, and notably it won the John Kennedy Trophy for multi-purpose woodlands. The FC's environmental policies were praised, and in particular the plans to regenerate the ancient Caledonian forest.

A Forest Design Plan was prepared in 1994, and then comprehensively updated in 2006. The plan lays out the primary objectives as protection and enhancement of nationally and internationally important species and habitats, provision of recreation and education facilities, and protection and enhancement of the visual appearance of the forest. Sustainable timber production is then a secondary objective, and the overall aim is to balance all of these objectives of management.

The entrant proposed that Glenmore would be a worthy winner of the Silver Jubilee Prize as it has 'excelled in the delivery of multiple objectives, achieving massive strides forward in the two decades since the previous award in one of the most iconic locations in the country'.

The judges considered Glenmore to be an outstanding forest; they say that 'the scale of change to achieve objectives in Glenmore has been dramatic and the importance of the forest within the Cairngorms National Park has increased significantly since it won the John Kennedy Trophy in 1992. The estate now combines biodiversity conservation, timber production and high quality access in an impressive way, handling 350,000 visitors across the forest park each year'.

Winner of the Hunter Blair Salver for silvicultural excellence:

Dr James Bryce for Newbyth Oak Wood, East Linton, East Lothian
(managed by Colin MacBrayne)

The objective at Newbyth is high quality hardwood timber production, with amenity and recreation also important but secondary.

Since winning the Hunter Blair Trophy in 2007, the oakwood has been registered as a seed stand and selective thinning carried out, removing mostly birch but also turkey oak which will help to maintain the purity of any seed collections. The



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oakwood has also been enclosed in a new boundary deer fence and it is likely that this will allow the establishment of natural regeneration.

Recent management has transformed the oakwood by greatly increasing stem increment of the most valuable trees, thereby reducing rotation length and the financial return to the owner. By improving crown condition, creating additional openings in the canopy and erecting a new deer fence, conditions have also been created for the future adoption of Low Impact Silvicultural Systems. When some of the better stems reach commercial maturity, consideration can be given to opening up parts of the canopy and allowing natural regeneration/ underplanting to fully establish. At this stage it is considered that this process will start as a single tree selection system but over time it is likely to evolve into group selection.

The entrant proposed that, although hardwood silviculture is not a new skill, in modern times it has had less prominence as industrial monocultures of spruce took centre stage and therefore the management of Newbyth Oakwood represents a small step in the rebirth of this ancient art and as such is worthy of further recognition.

The judges describe the oak wood as 'an exemplar of broadleaf silviculture'. The quality of crop management was singled out for praise with the thinning, brashing and monitoring an excellent demonstration of what is sadly a dying art in Scotland and 'a window on the past'.

Whilst the production of hardwood timber is the main objective, the judges note that nature conservation and amenity benefits are largely provided by default but are no less valuable for that.

Winner of the Dulverton Flagon for the Innovation and Diversity displayed in management:

The Crown Estate for Glenlivet Estate, Tomintoul, Banffshire

Glenlivet Estate, extending to around 23,000 ha, has been part of The Crown Estate since 1937 and includes 3,500 ha of commercial forests. Afforestation by the Forestry Commission in the 1950s and 1960s resulted in the establishment of the pine and spruce woods that dissected the countryside. Managed by The Crown Estate since 1985, a highly integrated, long term restructuring programme of thinning, clearance, replanting and investment in multiple-use forest activities has been pursued.

The aim is to produce a sustainable crop of commercial timber for the future and long term employment in the area, while maintaining and improving the benefits for shelter, diversity for wildlife and facilities for recreation.



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Since winning the John Kennedy Trophy in 1993, the woodland management has included a wide range of different actions, projects and initiatives which have addressed best silviculture practice, sustainability issues, economic development and the environment. The forestry and land management work is ongoing and The Crown Estate is committed to all aspects of the long term future of Glenlivet and its communities. This will be facilitated through the continued identification of new development opportunities and innovative land management. Plans are in place to develop new interpretive projects, downhill mountain bike trails, events, educational resources, access improvements and new biodiversity projects.

The entrant proposed that Glenlivet Estate would be a worthy winner of the Silver Jubilee Prize as it is an exemplary model of integrated sustainable multi-purpose forest management. The Crown Estate has demonstrated consistently over a number of years its commitment to innovative silviculture practices and research, outstanding forest management, support of the local economy and community, best practice in access provision, a dedication to the delivery of conservation and biodiversity projects and shared this good practice and achievement through various education and interpretation projects.

The judges describe Glenlivet as a dynamic, well run estate which is continually innovating. The changes since the original award in 1992 are substantial and continue to progress. The small staff team is praised for its efforts to engage with those who can benefit, ranging from schools to businesses. The quality of forest management was considered high and well planned with recreation facilities of a high standard - the adventure playground at Tomintoul was considered particularly noteworthy.

The judges felt that the estate's keen and enthusiastic focus on innovation and drawing in partners and resources to contribute to and benefit from the estate was particularly worthy of recognition and reward hence their decision to award a special prize for innovation and diversity.

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