



**01/13**

**NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE USE**

**ISSUED: 19<sup>th</sup> April 2013**

## **Scottish Woodlands Student Excellence Award Announced**

The Scottish Forestry Trust is delighted to announce that the winner of the Scottish Woodlands Student Excellence Award for 2012/13 is Greg Searles, a postgraduate student then based at the Forest Products Research Institute, Edinburgh Napier University. His thesis on "Improving the quality of Sitka spruce structural timber through raw material segregation and alternative sawmill cutting patterns - Acoustic segregation and structural timber production" was completed during 2012. Recent research mapping the properties of the British spruce resource has given reason to be concerned about the trend in quality over time; particularly in respect of stiffness, which is the property that determines structural grade for British spruce. The research shows that by processing lower stiffness logs differently it would be possible to reduce strength grader failure rates although the economics of this would depend on market values and production costs.

Speaking from his home in Australia, Greg said, "I thank the Trust and Scottish Woodlands for this recognition and I am extremely happy to have been able to contribute to this important area of research. I would also like to thank James Jones and Sons for donating so many logs which were essential for the success of the project. The thesis aims to show the effects of various sorting options with acoustic tools for trees and logs and tries to offer some practical processing alternatives to improve quality and productivity. I am really delighted that the work has been recognised."

Course supervisor Dan Ridley-Ellis of the Forest Products Research Institute, Napier University, Edinburgh said "On behalf of all of Greg's postgraduate advisers I am delighted that his innovative applied research has won him the Scottish Woodlands Student Excellence award as well as a PhD. Greg's work has provided us with valuable new insights into the efficacy of the use of acoustic tools and has shed light on the problem of why sometimes these standing tree tools work well and sometimes they do not."

Commenting on the latest award, Guy Watt, the Chairman of The Scottish Forestry Trust said, "Trustees were particularly impressed by the quality of the final thesis and by the practical relevance of the findings. The quality of British spruce coming to the market both now and in the future is an area of concern to the forest industry and Greg's work has helped to identify some practical opportunities and has pointed out areas for future research needs."

Presenting the award to Greg, Colin Mann, Managing Director of Scottish Woodlands Ltd and a Trustee of The Scottish Forestry Trust, said "I am delighted to present Greg with this award and wish him every success in his future career. Not only is it important to recognise achievement through excellence but it is also important to support graduates as they start off on their career path in the forestry sector."

**Ends**

**Notes for Editors:**

**The Scottish Forestry Trust in May 2011 launched The Scottish Woodlands Student Excellence Award** in order to recognise excellence in the quality and relevance of the output from Trust funded PhD Studentships. The Award provides £250 per recipient as a result of funding provided by Scottish Woodlands Ltd.

**The Scottish Forestry Trust** is the leading UK Charitable Trust providing funds for research, education and training in support of British Forestry. Established in 1983 by a gifting of share capital, the Trust is a registered charity and has a remit to provide private sector funds to support research and education throughout the British forestry industry. Since 1983, the Trust has provided over £2m to 150 projects ranging from supporting post graduate education through to contributing towards industry applied research and assisting policy formulation. For more information and to sign up to our newsletter, go to [www.scottishforestrytrust.org.uk](http://www.scottishforestrytrust.org.uk)

**Scottish Woodlands Ltd** is a leading Forestry Management Company with a long tradition of serving forest owners and investors in Scotland and the rest of the UK. Originally established in 1913 as The Cooperative Forestry Society, its history can be traced back for almost 100 years. The current company, which is substantially employee owned, has grown and developed significantly to become a major player in the British forestry and timber industry, delivering over 900,000 tonnes of timber per annum into UK sawmillers, and planting in excess of 25% of private sector new woodland expansion with an annual turnover in excess of £60 million.

Further information, and a photograph of Greg Searles is available from SFT Director, Bob Stubbs at [director@scottishforestrytrust.org.uk](mailto:director@scottishforestrytrust.org.uk)