



Registered charity no. (England & Wales) 1103202



ANNUAL REPORT  

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2020/21

# Foreword

**John Leigh Pemberton, Chair of Trustees**



The UK Government has set an annual target of 30,000ha of new woodland planting. Much effort is being directed by Defra and private enterprise at increasing tree seed and nursery capacity, but we are the only organisation undertaking work to improve broadleaved trees' performance – growth rate, form, timber yield, disease resistance – through traditional selection and breeding.

Since 1991, we have been identifying superior trees in terms of vigour and disease resistance – 'plus' trees – and have collected graft-wood from these to establish seed orchards. We create breeding programmes using this material and undertake long-term trials to assess the performance of each species.

We use research to make sure that the next generation of broadleaved trees will deliver all the environmental, social and economic benefits that they possibly can. By helping trees produce more timber more quickly, survive longer and store more carbon, we know that many more people will choose to plant broadleaved trees, with all the benefits they will bring to our environment, our economy and our society.

2020 was, of course, a challenging year for us all. Despite the restraints placed upon us by the Covid pandemic, we still undertook most of the trial assessments, seed collection and testing and much of the planting work we had planned. In what was a very difficult fundraising year for all charities, our income only reduced by around £4000 on the previous year. So it is with huge thanks to our many supporters that we are looking forward to getting back to 'business as usual' later this year.

*John Leigh Pemberton.*



Our vision is to achieve the highest possible  
benefits from our broadleaved woodlands...

# Availability of improved planting stock

Anyone planting trees, where timber is the primary objective, ought to be using the highest standard of planting stock available. When trees grow vigorously, producing straight stems with light branching, they are more likely to produce a profitable crop of high quality timber. Vigorous early growth gives quicker establishment, reduces weeding and cleaning costs and gives an economic advantage over trees of poorer provenance or quality.

The Forestry Commission have issued guidelines around the use of Forest Reproductive Material (FRM), which guide our work. There are four categories of FRM:

- **Source-identified FRM** comes from general or specific locations within a single region of provenance or native seed zone with no specific superior qualities recognised.
- **Selected FRM** is collected from stands showing superior characteristics, e.g. better form, growth rate, health.
- **Qualified FRM** derives from the selection of superior individual trees which have not undergone any form of testing.
- **Tested FRM** derives from the selection of individual trees or stands which have been evaluated for genetic quality or, in comparison to accepted standards, have been shown to be superior.

**Future Trees Trust is working to bring Qualified and Tested FRM material to the market for some of our most important broadleaved species.**



The following nurseries have all been supplied with silver birch and wild cherry seed, improved to Qualified standard. Each nursery grows its own supply of trees from the improved seed, which is supplied by **Forestart Limited**.

Alba Trees	<a href="http://www.albatrees.co.uk">www.albatrees.co.uk</a>
Ashtrees	<a href="http://www.ashtreesnursery.co.uk">www.ashtreesnursery.co.uk</a>
Castle Howard Nursery	<a href="http://www.castlehoward.co.uk">www.castlehoward.co.uk</a>
Cheviot Trees	<a href="http://www.cheviot-trees.co.uk">www.cheviot-trees.co.uk</a>
<i>Also supply Qualified sycamore</i>	
Christie Elite	<a href="http://www.christie-elite.co.uk">www.christie-elite.co.uk</a>
Heathwood Nurseries	<a href="http://www.heathwood.co.uk">www.heathwood.co.uk</a>
Johnsons of Whixley	<a href="http://www.nurserymen.co.uk">www.nurserymen.co.uk</a>
Maelor Forest Nurseries	<a href="http://www.maelor.co.uk">www.maelor.co.uk</a>
<i>Also supply Qualified sycamore</i>	
Oakover Nurseries	<a href="http://www.oakovernurseries.co.uk">www.oakovernurseries.co.uk</a>
Prees Heath Nurseries	01948 841353
Thorpe Trees	<a href="http://www.thorpetrees.com">www.thorpetrees.com</a>
Trees Please	<a href="http://www.treesplease.co.uk">www.treesplease.co.uk</a>
W Crowder and Sons	<a href="http://www.crowdersnurseries.co.uk">www.crowdersnurseries.co.uk</a>

There is Qualified planting stock available for silver birch, sycamore and wild cherry. We are currently establishing seed orchards that will produce Qualified downy birch, pedunculate oak, sessile oak and sweet chestnut, and seed will be available in the next 5 – 10 years. Tested oak will also be available in the next 5 – 10 years.

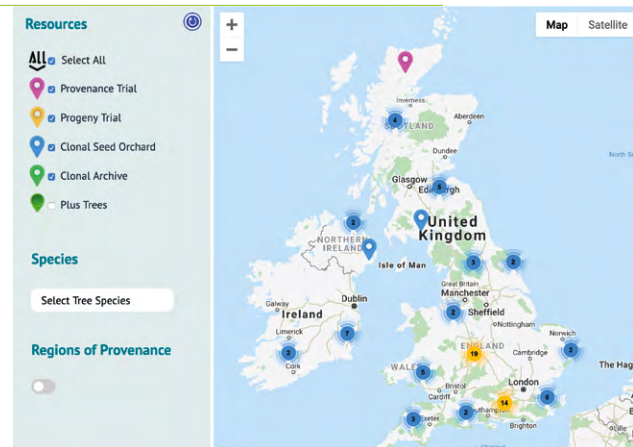
...both for today's society  
and for future generations.



# Highlights of 2020/21

## UK Forest Genetic Resources website launched

Working in partnership with RBG Kew, Forest Research, UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology and Woodland Trust, in January 2021 we launched an online, map-based platform displaying UK field trials that are investigating tree improvement or conserving our Forest Genetic Resources. This invaluable research resource is publicly available and free to access. It allows individuals, institutions and charities to share data, facilitate research and foster collaboration as our woodlands face new challenges from climate change and novel diseases and pests. You can visit the website at [www.ukfgr.org](http://www.ukfgr.org).



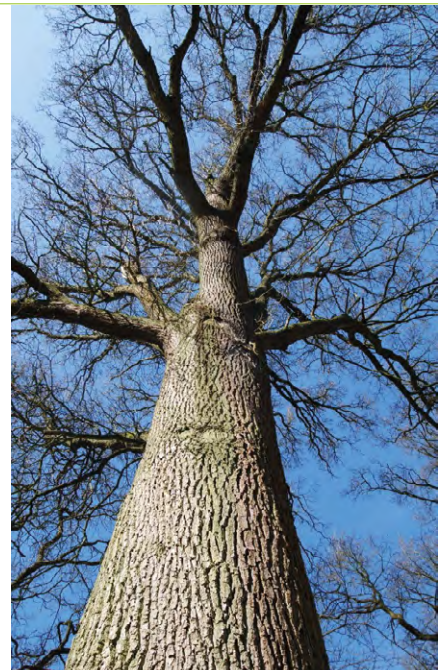
## Vastern Timber – “Wood for the Trees” film

Our new corporate supporter Vastern Timber featured our work in one of their series of YouTube films “Wood for the Trees”. In the film, our Head of Research Jo Clark explains the importance of our work in terms of creating a viable hardwood timber resource for the nation. We’re delighted that Vastern are showcasing our work in this way. You can watch the film here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=oSpYGGPHjR4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oSpYGGPHjR4)

## Oak grafted seed orchard update

Our oak grafted seed orchard project aims to tackle the challenges of irregular acorn production by establishing up to six seed orchards across Britain that will provide high-quality British acorns. We are currently planting four orchards with grafts from plus trees (superior individuals for timber production) selected across Great Britain.

Covid restrictions meant that we were unable to undertake climbing and scion collection from oak plus trees this winter. However, we were able to plant last year’s grafted trees and hope to complete four orchards in the next two years. Once the trees get a little bigger, these orchards will produce qualified seed for the industry. We will undertake the next round of climbing and grafting this coming winter.



Our work makes planting native broadleaved trees  
far more economically viable...

## Engaging young foresters with the Patsy Wood Trust grant



Working with the Royal Forestry Society and with support from the Patsy Wood Trust, last year, **Jonas Brandl** became our first Patsy Wood Trust Scholar, who undertook a wide range of forestry duties while learning more about tree improvement and our work. On completion of his scholarship with us, Jonas secured a role with Landschaftsagentur Plus – a German forestry company working principally on restoration projects. Jonas is developing a project around life-cycle assessments and is involved in overseeing afforestation projects.



The second Patsy Wood Trust scholar, **James Cryer**, left, is being hosted by forestry consultant William Hamer in the Chilterns. James says: “I am thrilled to have been offered the position of Patsy Wood Scholar. It is promising to see that despite the current pandemic the forestry sector remains strong and I feel privileged to be able to continue learning my craft so soon after finishing my degree. This position provides a unique opportunity to learn about all aspects of life as a modern forest manager and I am fortunate to be working under an experienced professional in William”.



We also recruited a student to undertake doctoral research investigating drivers of oak masting, supported by the Patsy Wood Trust, the Scottish Forestry Trust, the D.G. Albright Charitable Trust and the A.L.A Green Charitable Trust. This study aims to find the answers to the key questions about oak trees’ tendency to produce abundant quantities of acorns only very irregularly. **Ryan McClory**, left, started the study in September 2020 at Reading University.

## RFS journal publication

Last year also saw the publication of a key paper in the Royal Forestry Society’s “Quarterly Journal of Forestry”. Our Head of Research Jo Clark and Researcher Joe Beesley co-authored “Developments and Opportunities in Broadleaved Tree Improvement”, which reviewed progress at Future Trees Trust, discussed the opportunities of new broadleaved species and invited readers to identify plus trees and to host trial sites. You can read the article here: [www.futuretrees.org/developments-and-opportunities-in-broadleaved-tree-improvement/](http://www.futuretrees.org/developments-and-opportunities-in-broadleaved-tree-improvement/)



## Living Ash Project update

We are now in the second phase of the Living Ash project, again funded by Defra, with the aim to secure tolerant material for seed production purposes. We will be testing our selections using chemical fingerprinting and controlled inoculations to quantify tolerance, developing new propagation techniques and adding more tolerant trees to the archive. The tolerant seed we produce will be used to replant lost ash trees in our native woodlands.

The Living Ash Project runs until August 2024, and we encourage you to get involved and report tolerant trees to us. You can do this here [www.livingashproject.org.uk/the-survey/](http://www.livingashproject.org.uk/the-survey/)

... and incentivises the planting and management  
of native broadleaved woodlands.

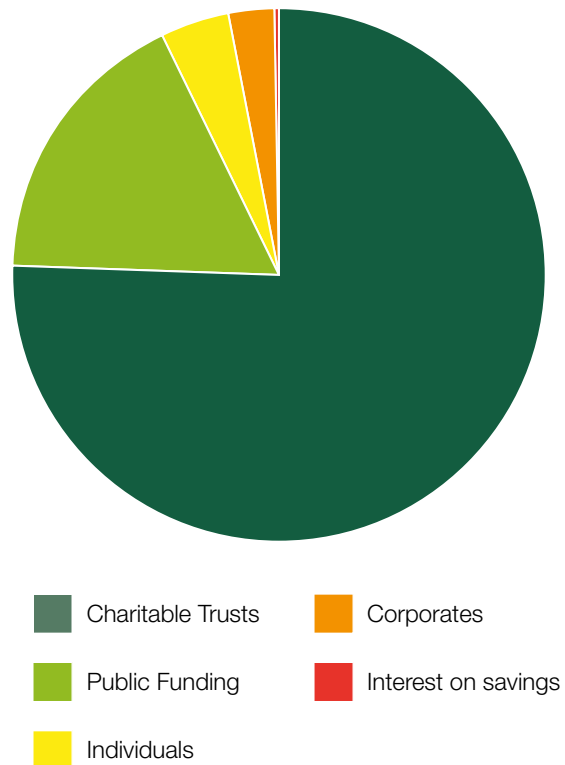
# Fundraising, income and expenditure

## We are extremely grateful to all our supporters, which this year included:

A. M. Holmes  
Action Oak  
Aitchison Tait Trust  
ALA Green Charitable Trust  
Aylesford Family Charitable Trust  
Banister Charitable Trust  
Carew Pole Charitable Trust  
D. G. Albright Charitable Trust  
D. S. Smith Biodiversity Fund  
DEFRA  
D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust  
Esme Mitchell Trust  
Forestry and Land Scotland  
Gardners Books  
Hasluck Charitable Trust  
Henry Hoare  
Hole Park Estate  
Hugh Fraser Foundation  
Ian Addison Charitable Trust  
Ian Askew Charitable Trust  
John Ellerman Foundation  
Joseph Strong Frazer Trust  
Langdale Trust  
Lord Faringdon Charitable Trust  
Marsh Christian Trust  
Oliver Wheatley  
Patsy Wood Trust  
Philamonic Trust  
Ratcliff Foundation  
Reading University  
Richard Davidson  
Schroder Charitable Trust  
Scottish Forestry Trust  
Shanly Foundation  
Sir Jeremiah Colman Gift Trust  
Sir Richard Storey  
Summerfield Books  
Taurus Foundation  
Thomas Nelthorpe  
Tilhill  
Vastern Timber  
Whitaker Charitable Trust  
William Dean Countryside & Education Trust

## Income

In 2020/21, our income was **£289,205**, as illustrated below.



## Expenditure

Our expenditure last year was **£235,185**

Expenditure on charitable objectives **£166,500**

Expenditure on core operating costs **£68,685**

Our operating costs represented **29%** of our total expenditure—the national average is around 25%. Our operating costs actually decreased this year, but because of the strict Covid restrictions, we were forced to postpone work such as trial assessments and tree-climbing for scion collection. Accordingly, the proportion spent on our core operating costs increased slightly from last year.

By making the planting of broadleaved trees more economically attractive, more, much better trees will be planted in the future...



# Meet the trustees



## **John Leigh Pemberton**

*Chair of Board of Trustees*

As the owner of the UK's largest chestnut products company at Torry Hill, Kent, John brings extensive commercial and forestry experience to the role of Chair.

## **Roger Coppock**

Previously Head of Analysts at Forestry Commission, in charge of research purchasing, with overall responsibility for Tree Health in GB.



## **Alice Snowden**

Alice has 15 years forest nursery experience, specialising in seed and selecting suitable seed sources. Producing the best quality trees from the best quality seed is important to her for so many reasons and ensuring the sustainability of timber as a resource is the main driver behind her involvement with Future Trees Trust.

## **Andrew Stafford**

Ex-Director at the Dulverton Trust, a major private charitable trust. Andrew has a wealth of charity development and governance experience.



## **Robert Lee**

Ex-Director at Forestart, the UK's largest tree seed retailers. Robert was a founder member of FTT and brings a host of commercial and technical experience to FTT.

## **Christine Cahalan**

Spent most of her career teaching forestry and doing forestry-related research at Bangor University, and is now a member of several forestry trusts and advisory panels.



## **Jason Hubert**

Jason works at Scottish Forestry, where he leads the team that provides advice to the Scottish Minister on all aspects of commercial forestry and supports the delivery of Scotland's Forestry Strategy.

Our full-time members of staff are:

**Tim Rowland** *Chief Executive Officer*

**Jo Clark** *Head of Research*

**Joe Beesley** *Researcher*

...with all the associated benefits and advantages  
these trees will bring

# Partnership working

We work with many of the principal stakeholders in the forestry sector. In addition to our long-term partnerships with Forestry Commission and Forest Research, we have formed working partnerships with:

## DEFRA

Funding our input to the Living Ash Project, a five-year project to find ash trees resilient to ash die-back disease with which to create a breeding population.



## Royal Forestry Society

Partners in our Patsy Wood Scholarship initiative



## Woodland Trust

Partners in the Sustainable Seed Source Project to find seed sources for important future species, not currently available.



## Millennium Seed Bank

Partner in our Sustainable Seed Source project, funded by Woodland Trust



## Action Oak

Research, fundraising and communications support to help protect the iconic oak tree.



## National Forest and Earth Trust

Hosting a number of our trials and orchards



## Confederation of Forest Industries

Partner in the National Tree Improvement Strategy



## National Tree Improvement Strategy

We are a founding partner of the National Tree Improvement Strategy (NTIS), which aims to unite all those with an interest in tree improvement – foresters, researchers, nurseries, land-owners, conservationists, processors and many others – under one ‘umbrella’ organisation, to ensure that conifer and broadleaved tree improvement progresses with less reliance on public sector funding.

This important sector-wide initiative launched in 2017 and we are confident that it represents the best way forward in terms of creating multi-level partnerships in order to secure the funding required to support the ambitious tree-breeding research programmes we have identified.

For more information, visit [www.ntis.org.uk](http://www.ntis.org.uk)

## Our plans for 2021/22 include

- **Locate more birch plus trees – 10 in Scotland and 30 in England**
- **Undertake phenology assessments in three of our oak progeny trials**
- **Collect graft-wood from additional trees for our Qualified oak seed orchards**
- **Establish small plots of improved material for demonstration purposes**
- **Collect seed from sycamore and birch plus trees to establish progeny trials for these species**
- **Continue work with the Living Ash Project.**



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