



WOOD SCIENCE NEWSLETTER

September 1996

FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I write, the sun shines on Euro 96, Wimbledon and the Test match with India at Lords. As well as providing a bumper crop of sport, 1996 is also proving to be a year for wood science and timber engineering conferences spurred on by the impetus provided by the launching of Timber 2005 and the 75th anniversary of the Building Research establishment.

In April our own conference, covered elsewhere in the issue by Alasdair McGregor, broke new ground by raising the number of papers presented to eleven and by hosting a record number of exhibition stands. Many of the papers will appear in future editions of the IWS Journal, recent editions of which have been highly praised by the scientific community. We were fortunate to enjoy the company of Dr Mark Irle and Gavin Jordan at Edinburgh despite the fact that Buckinghamshire College's joint venture timber engineering conference was in progress in Hungary during the same weekend.

The month of May found me in Stuttgart where my postgraduate students Richard Drake and Jane Pritchard, student members of the IWS, presented papers at the 1996 International Conference on Wood Mechanics, hosted by the German delegation of the Management Committee of COST 508, an EU-funded initiative. Three fascinating days were spent immersed in the thorough examination of topics such as mechano-sorptive effects, creep, fatigue, reconstituted wood products, mechanics of green wood, fracture mechanics, damage and NDT. The latest COST 508 directory of European wood mechanics was distributed at the conference. The directory is comprehensive and impressive. There is no doubt that in tandem with our European and international colleagues we are part of a much larger and stronger research community. The Institute's contribution to the STEP programme has demonstrated our willingness to promote the use of wood in a European context. Should we forge closer links with European institutions in the future?

Later on in May I attended a joint meeting between the Institution of Structural Engineers and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

on the subject of Timber Structures and Connections. Members of the IWS who spoke included Dr Luke Whale and Christopher Mettem and the overall aim was to promote EPSRC-funded activities in the Built Environment area. Peter Ross from Ove Arup, a regular on the Institute Branch Meeting circuit, presented a fascinating view of the research needs of the structural designer and he was to make a further impressive contribution to the inaugural Timber Industry Alliance Conference in June.

The Timber 2005 Strategy, commissioned by the Construction Sponsorship Directorate of the Department of the Environment, is designed to prioritise the research and innovation needs of the timber industry and calls on the expertise of wood scientists and timber engineers in the UK. The TIA has emerged from Timber 2005 and it brings together 25 trade associations covering the entire forestry and timber industry and its national and international trade representatives. The Institute is an educational adviser to the TIA and Terence Mallinson, the TIA Chairman, addressed the IWS Council in March.

The TIA conference was addressed by Sir Michael Latham who is the leading advocate of reform in the construction industry. He seeks a 30% reduction in the whole life costs of construction and extraction of the "hassle factor". Simon Palmer if the TTL implored the audience to "stop doing things better and to start doing better things."

Maurice Holloway and I enjoyed a thoroughly thought-provoking and exciting day supported by a galaxy of big names from the world of timber and we are proud that the Institute is part of the Alliance.

The Building Research Establishment has recently held a series of excellent Open Days at Garston to celebrate their 75th Anniversary. It was a pleasure to tour the timber science and engineering facilities and to meet Dr Peter Bonfield and Dr Roy Miller. In September the BRE and TTL have organised a Seminar on "Timber in Construction: Challenges for the Future". Peter and Roy will be making presentations along with Terence Mallinson, Peter Ross, Hugh Mackay, Prof. Bart Banks and Dr Richard Murphy, all members of the Institute. Dr John Brazier, Chairman of our Education Committee, will be acting as a rapporteur.

It can be concluded that our Membership is at the forefront of activities in the field of wood science and timber engineering. The Institute is a key player in the provision of education and training for Timber (UK) plc and will support changes in construction practices which are bound to occur during the next ten years. From September the Institute will be in the capable hands of our new President, Peter Latham, and I wish him the very greatest success in steering the IWS towards the Millennium.

Martin Ansell FIWSc

PETER LATHAM PRESIDENT ELECT

Peter Latham has been a member of Council for over twenty years, and has been actively involved in promoting training and education for the timber trade. He has regularly Chaired the TRADA Training and Education Committee and has a long association with the Buckinghamshire College where he is an external examiner on the Forests Products Course.

After studying Economics at Exeter University, Peter joined the family timber importing business, James Latham plc, in 1973 with initial responsibilities for staff training and recruitment. He then spent a number of years as a sales representative before moving to its subsidiary company Richard Graefe, the High Wycombe based veneer manufacturers, as Production Director.

During the 1980's, Peter was made a Director and given the responsibility for creating a Group merchanting business, Latham Timber and Building Supplies, and built the business through acquisition and by organic growth to 10 depots across southern England, employing 180 staff and generating £18 million turnover.

Pippa Latham MIWSc

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The Council of Management wish to record its thanks to those listed below for their support as Corporate Members.

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CONFERENCE EDINBURGH 1996

"SOME TOOK THE HIGH ROAD AND SOME TOOK THE LOW ROAD"

One hundred and fifty delegates and partners arrived by plane, train and car to Scotland's capital for the 41st IWSc National Conference held at the splendid George Inter-Continental Hotel in the heart of Edinburgh.

As main sponsors, CSC Forest Products found the ideal forum to generate awareness of their new company, formed by the merger between Norbord Industries and Caberboard Limited. Other sponsors included James Donaldson & Sons Limited who sponsored the Gala Dinner, the Timber Trades Journal, COFI, BPIB and Technology for Timber. The President's pre-conference reception was supported by the City of Edinburgh Council and the main sponsors of the 1997 Conference, the American Hardwood Export Council.

The Conference was opened on Saturday morning by Joe Martoccia, Sales Director of CSC Forest Products, who introduced the programme which had been extended to include 11 separate papers across four broad categories, Forestry, Timber in Structures, Preservation, Coatings and Fire Retardants and Challenges for the Future.

The Open Forum which followed immediately afterwards provided an ideal opportunity to discuss these issues while they were still fresh. Indeed, the Open Forum, chaired by John Park, demonstrated that the delegates had found all the papers thought-provoking, occasionally controversial and certainly challenging. The bold attempt to increase the range of subjects effectively reduced each paper to a 30 minutes time frame and, despite excellent control by the various Session Chairmen, the programme gradually ran a wee over time. Whilst



Alasdair McGregor oversees the Presidential presentation to Audrey Dixon (TTJ)

this was an indication of the quality and content of each paper, it also reflects the growing status of the conference itself. There is no doubt that the combination of the present standing of the Institute of Wood Science and the quality of its chosen venues, together with its informal and relaxed social programmes, attracts both quality speakers and delegates alike.

This year's social programme attempted to remind delegates where they were without necessarily over-egging the pudding. The President's Reception, hosted at the City Chambers by the Depute Convenor of Edinburgh Council, featured Robbie Burns' stirring Address to the Haggis, delivered by a suitably kilted pipe major followed by generous helpings of haggis, neeps and tatties. On the Saturday afternoon, delegates' partners were taken

on a conducted tour of the Royal Mile, including a well earned cup of tea. At the Gala Dinner on Saturday evening, President Martin Ansell talked of his two year term in office and his hopes for the future, in particular the optimistic prospects of the newly formed Timber Industry Alliance. The standing ovation he received at the end was a measure of his achievements over the last two years and the great respect with which he is held.

As guest of honour, Gordon Faulds, Managing Director of Sinclair Lang Limited, did not disappoint. His entertaining account of a St. Mirren Football Tour to Brazil was built around the theme of 'it's a Small World'.

The Conference finally wound up on the Sunday morning with a visit to the Royal Botanic Gardens.

There is no doubt that much of the success of an event like this is due to unglamorous, unseen work behind the scenes. This year's Conference was well organised by a small team led by the President. Everybody played their part to the full and, in the end, the event was enjoyable, educational, informative and fun. Our thanks go to the speakers, all the sponsors and, of course, the delegates for making Edinburgh '96 such a success.

Alasdair McGregor, AIWSc Chairman, Conference Committee.



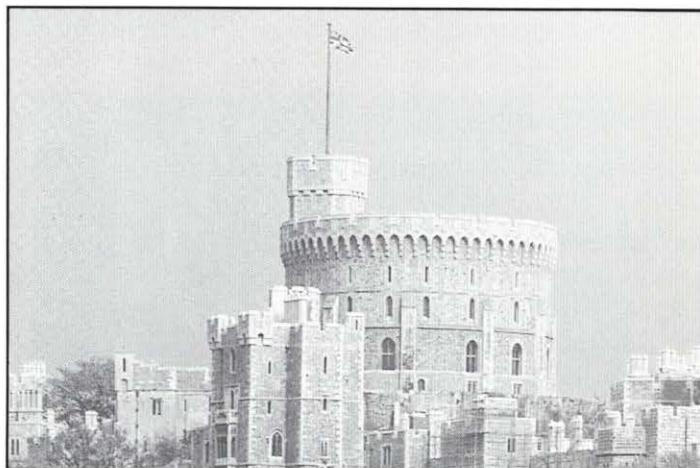
John Park leads the Open Forum

FROM CASTLE TO CASTLE OR ROOK TO ROOK

The National Conference next year moves from the beautiful and historic Edinburgh to the beautiful and historic Windsor. From Lothian to Royal Berkshire. The Conference Committee, headed by the President elect, Peter Latham, is well advanced with its plans and has booked the sumptuous Windsor Castle Hotel for the 4/6 April '97. Dates indeed for our diaries.

The Castle Hotel with its ample parking is situated in the centre of Windsor opposite the Guild Hall where it is hoped to hold the President's reception, and a very short walk from the magnificent Castle itself and the town's excellent array of shops. To improve on such a venue would be difficult to imagine!!

The Conference itself will have fewer papers than this year's but, in the main, it will follow the very successful formula which has evolved over the years, culminating of course with the Conference Dinner on the Saturday night. Speakers have already committed themselves and now we must too and reserve the dates in our diaries, 4/6 April '97.



BRANCH LINES

SCOTTISH BRANCH

A very familiar figure at nearly all Scottish IWSc Branch meetings over the last decade, and indeed at the national conference in Edinburgh this year, Eric Wyllie, has announced that he will resign as Branch Secretary this year. Eric, who practises as a timber engineer from his consultancy company in Edinburgh, has seen many changes to the Scottish Branch. He was instrumental, around seven years ago, together with Alaister McGregor (then of TRADA now of James Donaldson & Sons Ltd) in rescuing a rather moribund Branch and turning it into one of the most active in all the UK. Eric has seen chairmen come and go over the intervening years but he has acted as a steadying focus on the group and it was with much regret that the branch committee accepted his resignation. As current Branch Chairman I feel particularly exposed without Eric's experienced hand to guide me but fortunately there is no sign of any reduction in Eric's general commitment to the Scottish Branch.

At the Scottish Branch A.G.M. in May this year outgoing chairman, David Sulman of the Scottish TRADA office made a special presentation to Eric of a writing set and passed on all our best wishes to Eric for the future. Meanwhile the secretariat of the IWSc in Scotland moves to the Scottish Institute for Wood Technology at the University of Abertay Dundee where Paul Durrant is waiting at the end of the phone (01382 308930). I hope that the fine tradition of the Scottish Secretariat established by Eric Wyllie can be maintained in its new home.

John W Palfreyman FIWSc (Branch Chairman)



Eric Planting an Oak Sapling earlier this year with the Edinburgh Natural History Group, at the River Almond Walkway, Forth Estuary.

WESTERN COUNTIES

At a meeting in June Tim Phillips was elected Chairman and Martin Ansell Secretary for the ensuing year.

Members and guests enjoyed six events during the '95/96 season with a varied selection of subjects and venues. Whilst our joint meeting with RIBA held at the University of Bath was extremely well attended, we were not disappointed to average twenty or so at our other meetings.

Our next year's diary is now virtually complete and we look forward to another successful season.

Tim Phillips, CMIWSc (Branch Chairman).

LIVERPOOL BRANCH

As we move into another session, the Committee are putting the final touches to the Programme of Events. Since the last Newsletter the Branch has held several interesting and rewarding meetings, including a joint meeting with Bangor University and a joint Seminar with the North West Timber Trade Association.

At the former, Roger Williams-Ellis gave a hugely entertaining talk on the trials and tribulations of private forest management in the UK. Mr. Williams-Ellis owns and manages the last private forest estate in his county in North Wales, and left us all in no doubt that land use for forestry is seen as the poor relation in terms of government support, even where it takes place on land unfit for almost any other activity. He went so far as to say that greater income could be obtained from achieving set-aside status, than for producing timber. A sobering thought when one considers the import statistics for wood products. The meeting was supported by the Department of Forest Science at Bangor University and by Anglesey Timber Company Ltd. to whom we owe a debt of thanks.

The IWSc/NWTTA Seminar in April was, after much hard work on the part of the organisers, a resounding success. Speakers from the panel products and softwood trades, the joinery industry and from a major shipping line were in attendance and all had fascinating presentations which were well received. Our colleagues from the NWTTA put in a lot of effort to make the event successful, especially President Bob Tomlinson and Secretary Gordon Mellor. We should also mention sponsors Meyer whose generous financial contribution raised the profile of the seminar by several notches.

For the forthcoming session, we have arranged to repeat the Seminar idea in April 1997, and again this will be a joint venture, this time with the NWTTA and RIBA. Before then we have a presentation in September from Neil Dixon of Vincent Murphy and our Branch Annual Dinner in November, when incoming IWSc President Peter Latham and Michael Buckley of The American Hardwood Export Council are lined up as guest speakers.

Next February sees the 40th. Anniversary of the inception of the Liverpool Branch, and plans are afoot to celebrate this with a special meeting with a historical theme, and with an anniversary version of the Branch Dinner in the Autumn of 1997. We would like to stage an exhibition at one or both of these events. Committee member Frank Latham has already brought forward some fascinating items of memorabilia and we would welcome news of anyone who has any interesting material lying around. Any of the slightly older members of the Institute feel like getting involved? Please phone me on 01352 759681.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Ian Garner on being elected Vice Chairman of the Branch and to thank the rest of the Officers and Committee for their sterling support over the duration of my Chairmanship. I, for my sins, am now sentenced to be Secretary, so I hand over the Chair into the very capable hands of Geoff Bagnall, whilst Ian Arends take over as Treasurer.

Paul Davies AIWSc Branch Secretary

THAMES VALLEY AND CHILTERN BRANCH

The first meeting in 1996 was a visit to the Oxford Forestry Institute where we had a demonstration of the OFI Prospect database which is soon to be available in Windows format. A tour of the facilities followed during which we were treated to a visit to the wood species library and to the extensive herbarium containing many historic samples including many which were the original samples used to define their species.

A joint meeting with the Oil and Colour Chemists Association in February saw a presentation by Roy Miller on paints and finishes. This was particularly well attended and proved to be a very interesting evening.

The afternoon visit to the Globe Theatre was also well attended with around 40 participants split more or less equally between TV&C and London branches. A tour of the nearly complete theatre was followed by a presentation by Peter McCurdy on some of the background to the reconstruction. The theatre is due to open for performances on August 21.

Continuing a season of joint meetings, April's event was a Species Identification Quiz Night run by John Brazier and David Woodbridge and held jointly with the Institute of Biology. Unfortunately I missed what was said to be an interesting and enjoyable meeting but it was perhaps just as well as the TRADA conference room was said to be bursting at the seams.

The final event of the season was another afternoon visit to the British Waterways Lockgate Workshops near Tring where we viewed some of the "Historic" machinery still used to manufacture lockgates for the canals.

At our AGM this year it was decided to re-elect the existing committee so we have a stable situation following some major changes last year. We agreed a programme of events for the coming season which will include the following subjects:- timber bridges; timber research at Buckinghamshire College and at BRE; timber preservation; timber in roofs; new grading rules for oak; historic timber frame construction; decay in growing trees; medieval woodland practices and a tour of the Oxford University Parks. The dates are being finalised and will be included in the programme printed shortly. We hope to have good attendances at our meetings again this season.

Dr Vic Kearley AIWSc (Branch Chairman)

AUSTRALIA

and your support for the visit.

It was now time to perform

How would the presentation go? Do they really want to listen to the tales of a softwood trader from the other side of the world? Would the title of the presentation attract enough support?

My worries were over. The lecture theatre started to fill. It even started to look quite respectable, and there were also people on the front row. The hour long paper accompanied by slides simply flew by, although reading an extract from a report in the "Australian Lumberman" magazine and I quote, "although the presentation took well over an hour it would be impossible to cover every item".

Was it really that long? I think that time covered the questions and answer section.

I was pleased with the report in this journal. They claim to have a readership of around six thousand covering Australia PNG, New Zealand and the South Pacific. It gave a good plug for our Institute and it's activities. Many thanks to the "Australian Timberman".

It appeared that few, if any, had fallen asleep as we went into the social side of the evening. I could have done with a month here instead of just two days. So many new faces and an increasing collection of business cards. How friendly they all are. Membership of our institute can be a tremendous focal point of our interest in the trade. You can make so much of this if you wish. This becomes even more apparent at an international level. Our Institute is all about people as well as those important qualifications. What friends you can make, such an opportunity.

The Melbourne leg was taken up with visits to timber merchants in the city a short jaunt to the beautiful Botanic Gardens, and a Eucalyptus plantation. Eucalyptus everywhere. How confused you can become with the regions. Described in Tasmania as Oak, but back on the mainland as Victorian Ash. There are about six hundred species of Eucalyptus, the days of night school were all coming back to me. There are 22 million hectares covered by Eucalyptus forest in South Eastern Australia. This tremendously versatile timber is strong, resistant to wear, easily worked and can take a variety of stains.

More confusion, this time in the timber yard, at the site of Scandinavian Whitewood being described as Scandinavian Pine. Who cares so long as it is being bought and consumed. Once the salesman always the salesman!

But how it rained in Melbourne. My two weeks in Australia were rain free until we hit the capital of Victoria. The UCM umbrella came in handy for the first time. Can you imagine anybody taking an umbrella to Australia? This was a presentation to our chairman by UCM who had been kind enough to sponsor the internal flights. However it was probably snowing at home, so why should I be bothered about a little warm sub tropical rain?

With reluctance it was now time to move on, Sydney awaited. If you ever believe there could be a shortage of lumber world-wide take a look out of the window of the plane as you fly from Melbourne. I need say no more.



Keith Purcell presenting the UCM umbrella to Harry Greaves.

Our regional representative in Sydney is Bill Joe. A most amiable and enthusiastic Institute member. In Sydney I was rushed off my feet because of such little time available. If it's Thursday it must be Sydney. Oh!, how I have wanted to say that before. The delights of the interior of the Opera House are to be savoured. All the solid timbers inside this magnificent building are Brush Box.

Another presentation to be made at the offices of the State Forests of New South Wales Research Division. A respectable attendance again, I could get used to this. More cards and more new acquaintances, and yes, I did get to Bondi Beach although in the dark and only for dinner. The few hours spent here were most pleasant.

Twenty four hours in Sydney are hardly enough, as the suitcases were hurriedly and badly packed once again in a dash for the flight to Queensland and Brisbane awaited me. By now the conversations with the taxi drivers were taking on a familiar format as we were in the last days of a general election. I think I now know more about the political opinions in Australia than at home.

Brisbane is another experience for the traveller. How different each city appears to be in Australia.

A warm, in more ways than one, welcome from David Gough manager of the timber research section of the Department of Prime Industries here in Queensland. Yet more research and promotion for the industry. How do they do it?

It all changes as you go further north, not much Radiata here. It's too hot for *P. radiata*. *Pinus elliottii* is on the go with the local title of Slash Pine. Planting of *Pinus caribaea* is on the increase following more forestry trials. Fire had ravaged the forests around Brisbane at the end of 1994, in fact these fires had been the worst in Queensland's history. At one stage the speed of the fires had reached six kms., in under two hours, even leaping

across the sea to the nearby Bribie Island.

But what do you do with the timber? Salvaging scorched trees before they begin to deteriorate has to be done fast - within eight months. Some 400,000 cubic meters of *P. elliottii* now had to be stored and kept in good condition. I had never seen so many logs in my life at a site just north of Brisbane. This volume would be enough to keep any large Scandinavian mill going for nearly two years.

And that question again from the foresters. What price can we get for our softwood in Europe? As in Perth I left them with some disappointment. It would appear that they achieved similar prices on their home market as we benefit from as an importing country. It confirmed to me as a buyer what I have been told by suppliers from around the world for years. "You get your softwood too cheaply in the UK". I would agree. Don't you think that the material from which we derive our livelihood is too cheap?

My lecture in Brisbane was the most relaxed performance so far. Perhaps the cool beer served before the talk had us all in a good mood, I think the attendance held up particularly well for a Friday evening, especially when the recreational delights of the Queensland coast beckon for the weekend. More enthusiasts here, how I wish I could have spent more time in Brisbane. More trade pals, more invites to return, more thank you letters.

I was coming to the end of my Institute grand tour. Brisbane had been so kind to me because of the added impetus of David Gough and his social programme. It even ending with an election night garden party. "Politics and the IWSc, I thought that only happened at our council meetings".

I left Australia with a firm opinion that the timber industry was an integral part of the country's economy and had much support, and expected to receive even more, from the incoming government. Research and promotion appeared to flourish. It was like a breath of fresh air. How do they do it, or was I looking through rose tinted glasses?

When I joined our Institute some thirty years ago, I would never have believed that I would have become President, to represent our Institute and meet the membership in Australia has been an added privilege. Our Institute has provided me with that little bit extra that one does not gain from day to day trading. It has given me friendships which can never be broken or forgotten, and now some new ones on the other side of the world.

I am grateful for the opportunity and support from the IWSc to make the visit possible along with the sponsorship for the internal flights from the UCM Timber plc.

Finally my personal thanks to the then Chairman of the Liverpool branch, Paul Davies who brought his computer resources to the fore with the format and printing of my paper entitled "UK Timber Imports - At The Cross Roads of World Supply".

Keith Purcell FIWSc

AUSTRALIAN VISIT

REPORT ON AUSTRALIAN VISIT FEBRUARY 1996 BY IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT KEITH PURCELL

It's not the first time that I have visited our colleagues in Australia, although on the earlier occasion some eight years ago it was a very informal "look in" at HQ in Melbourne whilst passing through following a family visit. This time it was a more serious (although most pleasurable) affair.

You may well remember my promise to the membership to visit all of our regional branches during my Presidency. This I was able to fulfil during my term of office, although to fit Australia in with the other activities was just a little too much during the two years. It was as Past President that I made the journey, but at least I feel that I have lived up to my promise.

Before telling you more about the odyssey, some of you may not be quite so aware of the size and activity of our Australian Branch. Let me now set the scene.

Whilst we refer to it as a branch, there are in fact four areas of regional activity based around Perth, Melbourne (HQ), Sydney and Brisbane. Our membership is just short of two hundred, but a very high quality two hundred I assure you. We owe a lot to the facilities and support that have been made available to us by CSIRO, at their base in Melbourne. Without the diligence and downright hard work of Bill Keating (our Chairman for many years) we probably wouldn't have a presence in Australia at all. Bill has been the cornerstone for the Institute. Under the present Chairman Dr Harry Greaves and his committee, we have a very firm base in Australia. It seems strange that with them begin so far away from the roots of the Institute here in the UK that there is such strong activity. This is obviously a great delight to us and perhaps we shouldn't be querying this too much. I put it down to a good committee and sheer devotion.

February was the month of departure. The preparations for this went back a lot further. It all started off very informally, but as the request came back to do all the regions I thought to myself that I had better put up a good performance by actually giving a presentation at all the venues. The visit had taken on a new enhanced profile. So what was I to speak about?

Being mindful that the membership in Australia has more of an academic and scientific base to it, what was this commercial creature to speak about. I decided that honesty was the best policy and to produce a paper on my activities as a softwood importer based in North West of England. Producing the paper was easier said than done, but after a supreme effort over the Christmas '95 break this emerged with the title of "UK Softwood Imports - At the Cross Roads Of World Supply".

This was illustrated by a comprehensive slide collection accumulated over a few years of travel. Incidentally I never let my slides out of my sight, travelling with them ready loaded in the hand luggage. I would have been sunk without them. The strange rattling sound coming from the carousel within the shoulder bag caused a few strange looks over the eight flights I was to take. Perhaps they thought it was me that was falling apart. By the very end of the visit they may well have been right. The last two days had me flying just over one thousand miles and making three presentations.

So let's get started!

The first port of call was the arrival in Perth Western Australia. Because of time limitation (what's new with that these days?) I made the journey in one hit from Heathrow arriving some nineteen hours later. The brief stop at Singapore for refuelling, not only the aircraft but the passengers, is a welcome break. If you ever make this journey yourself make the most of the shower room, or even the swimming pool in the transit lounge. One hour is just sufficient and keeps you going for the last leg down to Perth.

Whilst our membership in Western Australia is rather small, about thirty or so in the whole territory, the welcome and arrangements made for me in Perth were just right for the jet lagged traveller, not too strenuous. Of particular interest was the on site visit to a *Pinus pinaster* (Maritime Pine) forest just north of the city. As we tend to hear so much about *Pinus radiata* these days, this came as quite a surprise. This species is ideally suited to the dry and especially warm corner of this massive continent, and the limestone terrain of the area. Whilst *P. pinaster* is stronger than *P. radiata*, little finds its way into construction as it's such a resinous tree. Much of the *P. pinaster* ends up at the local MDF mill and in the packaging trade. A mature specimen will be about thirty five years old, although the first thinnings may well be taken out at about fourteen years and small sawlogs at eighteen.

An on site inspection of fire control having ascended a fire tower led me to appreciate the many problems associated with a forest in such a dry environment. They must be on their guard night and day. One problem was the stolen cars being set alight after the "joy-ride". A bush fire will travel at an amazing speed. A recent fire in the area had travelled thirteen kilometres in just five hours.

I was met by the IWSc representative in Perth, Paris Alexiou, at the offices of Conservation and Land Management (CALM). Here I was asked about the prices achieved back home in Europe for softwood lumber. My response gave them little comfort as to the possibility of exports to the other side of the world. I now understand that Australia will have an expected surplus of softwood by the year 2005. This was certainly not the last time that this question was fired at me, but more about that later. Perth was finished off with a most pleasant dinner with my hosts on the shore of the Swan River and memories of a beautiful, and yet most remote city. It's a long way before you reach the next main town, some one thousand two hundred miles or thereabouts to Adelaide.

Adelaide was a short stop for catching up with old friends and the delights of the wineries in the Barossa Valley. Sadly we have not produced a branch in this city, although I can think of a few good reasons for establishing one, perhaps around Jacob's Creek. Oh yes!, it actually exists.

But back to business

The H.Q. for our Institute is in Melbourne where the facilities of CSIRO have enabled us to maintain such a healthy existence.

What a delight it is to find an organisation doing so much for the timber trade, such a wealth of knowledge and expertise can be found here. I was escorted from one research office to the next. Trying to remember all those names at once became a pleasant ordeal. One department after another. Where would it end? The answer to this was with the IWSc Chairman Harry Greaves. Along with Past Chairman Bill Keating these boys are the cornerstone of the Australian branch. I could spend a so much time telling you about the excellent work that the committee does, it would leave me little space left to go on to the rest of the tale. If one line could sum it up, it would be to say that "the committee of the Australian branch must be considered a tremendous asset and does much credit to our Institute, and long may they continue". Thank you Bill and Harry for all the arrangements



Sheltering from the rain in a Eucalyptus plantation.

SIDE LINES

THE TIMBER INDUSTRY ALLIANCE INAUGURAL CONFERENCE, 25 JUNE 1996 A SYNOPSIS

The theme was the necessity for the Construction Industry to reassess its markets, its procedures, and the principles of tendering and relationship between designers, engineers, surveyors, contractors, sub-contractors and material suppliers with their respective clients; thereby 'Constructing the Team', which can deliver a more efficient and cost effective service to reduce the whole cost of the built environment.

TIA is not a confederation, with a head office, and staff and bureaucracy. Its progress will depend on the input of existing Trade Associations and their members. It will create no new permanent organisations, but it will encourage existing organisations to reach out to their customers, the specifiers and designers who can decide to use the timber for construction.

The afternoon session of this Conference presented 'The House that Jack Built', which depicted a house built without wood and the consequences on the use of timber in volume terms. This was a shock treatment, to alert everyone in our industry to the challenges of other materials and specifications. It was followed by examples of innovation and opportunity for greater use of timber, presented by Matt Thomas, Managing Director of Meyer Wholesale, Simon Palmer, Construction Development Manager of TRADA Technology Limited, and Peter Ross, Associate Director of Ove Arup and Partners. The latter covered timber growing and harvesting to the most advanced designs in construction use of timber.

The audience of some 130 senior representatives of companies and trade associations of the timber industry debated these issues and the opportunities which lie ahead. Had there been more companies attending, the considerable value of this event would have been even greater.

If increasing volumes of timber from British forests are to reach the construction market, and if the imported trade is to penetrate these markets with products it can sell, meeting increasingly severe standards of strength, durability and performance generally, then the whole forest and forest products industry and its marketing arms need to address a range of issues leading to better business. If they do not, the result would be a continuing decline in value of timber as a whole. The challenge is real, and the opportunities are within our grasp.

The Timber Industry Alliance is now ready to bring together the best abilities available within and outside the forestry and timber world to build a bigger and better market for timber in construction.

If you wish to know more about the Timber Industry Alliance, contact the Secretariat, Dr. C.J. Gill FIWSc, Trada Technology Ltd, Stocking Lane, Hughenden Valley, High Wycombe, Bucks HP14 4ND

Alan Crabb CMIWSc is planning a future in boat repairing and is seeking a copy of FPRB 26 relating to the subject. Can anyone help please?

FOREST WOOL-AN OBJECT LESSON IN EXPLOITING FOREST PRODUCTS WITH NOTHING LEFT TO WASTE.

Whilst researching the development of the frame saw in the 19th century I stumbled upon the following article under the general heading of *Scientific* in the Timber Trades Journal of 17 May 1873.

"Pine Tree Products. The pine forests on the Continent are utilized to a considerable extent. There are two establishments near Breslau, in Silesia, one a factory where the pine leaves are converted into what is called "forest wool" or wadding; the other an establishment for invalids, where the waters used in the manufacture of this pine wool are employed as curative agents. Two cases of these products were shown at the last Paris and Havre Exhibitions, which contained various illustrations in the shape of wool for stuffing mattresses and other articles of furniture (instead of horsehair), vegetable wadding and hygienic flannel for medical application, essential oil for rheumatism and skin diseases, cloth made from fibre, articles of dress, such as vests, drawers, hose, shirts, coverlets, chest preservers, &c., and other useful applications. For the preparation of the textile material an ethereal oil is produced, which is employed as a curative agent and as a useful solvent. The membranous substance and refuse are impressed into blocks and used as fuel. From the resinous matter they contain, they produce sufficient gas for illuminating the factory in which the manufacture is carried on."

David Woodbridge FIWSc

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

Since the announcements about the scheme in previous Newsletters and the Winter 1995 issue of the Journal, a substantial number of enquiries have been received. Many of them have related to the ways in which correctly undertaken and recorded CPD activities can be used as part of the requirements to progress from Certificated membership to Associateship.

Even if you do not intend to use the CPD evidence for the above reason we would strongly recommend that you keep records of the work undertaken. This may be, for example; attendance at lectures, IWSc meetings, technical articles, up-dating ones knowledge on Codes and Standards or educational visits.

Inserted with this Newsletter is a suitable A4 form on which to record your CPD. On the reverse the scheme details, as they stand at present, are detailed.

May we also remind you that supplies of the handsome leather personal organizer are still available. Please let us know if you require one.

If you need to know more please write or give us a call.

David Woodbridge, CPD Officer

THE BIRTHWOOD CALENDAR BY L'ETACQ WOODCRAFTS, JERSEY AS DISCOVERED BY JEAN TAYLOR FIWSc ON A RECENT VISIT.

BIRCH 24 December - 20 January
Elegant and sociable, you have refined tastes plus a vivid imagination. But are modest with it!

ROWAN 21 January - 17 February
You are known for your charm and generosity, though your affectionate nature could make you flirtatious. You always, though, remain kind and gracious.

ASH 18 February - 17 March
What a dynamic and popular person you are! Despite your impulsive nature, you are rather fastidious but absolutely trustworthy.

ALDER 18 March - 14 April
Some might call you stubborn but this positive streak makes you valued for your steady and zealous attitude to life and liked for your integrity.

WILLOW 15 April - 12 May
You are often accused of being dreamy, even moody, although your changeable nature includes a strong urge to be creative and can be most appealing.

HAWTHORN 13 May - 9 June
Aren't you a cheerful and optimistic person! Passionate but faithful too, in your own reflective way.

OAK 10 June - 7 July
You may be called proud and independent, although you are good at self-discipline too. Your vigour of mind and body makes you very likeable.

HOLLY 8 July - 4 August
Your calm and tolerant good sense can always be relied on. You are also perceptive and succeed in what you set out to do.

HAZEL 5 August - 1 September
What a clutch of virtues you possess! Not only are you compassionate and dedicated but you are modest and self-effacing too.

VINE 2 September - 29 September
Always restless, you have keen sense of adventure, plus the courage to go on. No wonder you are usually successful.

IVY 30 September - 27 October
You are an extraordinarily complex character but, as well as being original and clever, you are also a romantic at heart.

WHITTEN 28 October - 24 November
Self-assured you may be, admired for your energy and versatility but you are also inclined to be impatient and rather secretive.

ELDER 25 November - 22 December
With an artistic temperament like yours, it is no wonder that you act spontaneously but are also inclined to be jealous. You enjoy refined but intellectual pleasures.

BEECH 23 December
If this is your birthday, then you are not only a sensitive and tender soul but also unassuming. Fair comment is your forte.