



FEATURE

MY JOURNEY TO TECHNICAL MEMBERSHIP

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Q. Please tell us a little about your background

A. My background is in fisheries enforcement and environment management. For ten years, I was a water bailiff, responsible for catching salmon poachers on some of Wales's most iconic rivers such as the Towy, Usk and Wye. I followed in the footsteps of my father who was Head Water Bailiff for 35 years and my grandfather before that for 18 years. Having worked for Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and its predecessors for 30 years across various roles, I've gained a range of transferable skills and a strong platform to switch into forestry. I'm passionate about the countryside, and throughout my life I have come to appreciate and understand the intrinsic value that our woodlands bring to our environment, wildlife, economy and wellbeing.

Q. What are the highlights of your journey in forestry?

A. My continuous professional development (CPD) is a highlight for me. My strengths lie in providing effective leadership of teams to deliver organisational goals. However, unlike other teams I've managed, I soon realised that I needed to quickly gain a deeper understanding of what forest and land management entails. While learning something new every day, as a team leader I have gained significant knowledge and understanding of the operational planning and delivery of harvest, timber production and restock programmes. This includes all aspects of legal liability, industry standards and forest certification schemes relevant to the operational aspects of delivery.

Q. How did you get into forestry?

A. In Wales, forestry falls under NRW's remit and an opportunity presented itself to apply to become Forest Operations Team Leader. Happily, I was offered the job which I grasped with both hands. The last five years have brought a refreshing change for me – a roller-coaster of learning and professional development to gain a basic understanding of what forest operations is all about.

Q. What are your main challenges?

A. The answer to this question is two-fold. Firstly, our woodlands in South Wales Central are very close to communities and not the easiest of places to deliver forest operations. The lack of suitable access to some of our woodlands is also a concern. We have timber locked up within these forests which needs management intervention, but without appropriate timber haulage routes this is difficult. Secondly, we face decreasing budgets so constantly need to prioritise our work.

Q. How has being a member of the Institute helped you?

A. Being a member of a professional body is important. The Institute has provided a platform which has enabled me to apply good governance and high professional standards in my day-to-day role. It provides a wide range of relevant CPD opportunities which has enhanced my competencies and personal attributes.

When I took on the role of Forest Operations Team Leader, someone mentioned the idea of getting a mentor. I soon realised that the team of foresters I was managing were fast becoming my mentors, and by learning from their knowledge and experience I was able to grow and develop my own silvicultural experience and put it to good use in managing the Welsh government woodland estate.

Last year, I decided to collate all of my experience and undertake the Technical Membership Entry (TME) process. I'm delighted to say that on 25 October 2024, members of the Institute's Examinations Board approved the assessors' recommendation that I be promoted to Technical Member status.



Learn more about the Technical Membership Entry process at [charteredforesters.org/memberships/technical-membership](https://www.charteredforesters.org/memberships/technical-membership)