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Vet set to aid rural victims of Kosovo conflict

A CO LONGFORD veterinary surgeon who has just returned from Kosovo will shortly launch an appeal to help rural Kosovars get their farms back into production.

Mr Brendan C. Mimnagh, secretary of a new Irish non-governmental development agency, was horrified at the damage done to the countryside by the war last year.

As a founder of Volunteers in Irish Veterinary Assistance (VIVA), Mr Mimnagh said he was horrified during a visit to Kosovo by the extent of the killings and the destruction caused.

"Apart from the lack of young men, because many of the men between 15-50 were just slaughtered, the most urgent problem is lack of fodder," he said.

Mr Mimnagh, who returned on Christmas Eve, said that during the war, 60 per cent of the cattle, 70 per cent of the sheep and 90 per cent of the fowl on farms in the area he visited had been killed or stolen.

"What the Serbs could not steal they ate or destroyed in the area I visited, which is known as Velka Krusha. There are whole villages of widows there."

He said that VIVA, which was originally set up as a programme of Bóthar, the livestock development agency based in Limerick, has now registered as an independent entity.

It aims to provide animal healthcare and education for disadvantaged people in the developing world. It has set up projects in Africa with Bóthar.

"We will be asking farmers in particular in the midlands and in the rest of the country to provide money for fodder which we will buy and bring in from Italy," he said.

"The farmers need this feeding stuff because they were driven out before they could get fodder for this winter and it will be late next summer before there will be another crop."

Offaly company tries to help rural Kosovo



Mr Tom Roche, from Tullamore, Co Offaly, a director of Just Forests, with his "Know Wood" tea education and awareness category. Photograph: Paddy Murphy

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es to create wood culture

'Know Wood' board wins
special education award

ASPECIAL national education award has been won by a Tullamore, Co Offaly-based organisation, Just Forests, which this year marked its 10th anniversary.

The organisation produced its own "Know-Wood" board and CD-ROM to create a "wood culture" in Ireland.

The winning project was devised by Mr Tom Roche, director of Just Forests, which is based at Bury Quay in Tullamore, where the organisation was founded.

Few people in Ireland know or care more about wood and trees than Tom, who is from Chapel Street, Tullamore, and has devoted his life to the subject.

"I began my working life as an apprentice cabinetmaker and I enjoyed working with wood. When I qualified I took off and went to Australia," he said.

"While in Australia, I worked on a sheep farm where there were very few trees and the people who lived there looked after the trees very well.

"Myself and the other two lads on the sheep farm had to use the same bath water and then that water was poured on the trees to keep them alive.

"That was when I began to realise just how important trees and timber really were and I took that knowledge home with me when I returned to Ireland in the early 1970s," he said.

On his return he ran his own business in Tullamore until 1989 when he set up the Just Forests organisation to promote an awareness of forestry here and for the just development of the world's forests.

Part of the work of the organisation is to draw up certification of development standards for Irish forests, which the organisation overseas and Tom co-ordinates.

"We have lost a lot of our old forests and we are looking at a relatively new culture of growing softwoods here. We have a weak wood-culture here," he said.

"A lot of people are not able to look at a piece of wood and say what it is and I set out to address that problem as simply as I could."

Five years ago he designed the board, which could be used in schools, public libraries or in other areas of education to teach people about wood.

"The board I developed is wall mounted and carries six samples of Irish-grown hardwoods, six samples of Irish-grown softwoods, three samples of composite materials and three samples of tropical hardwoods from independently certified forests," he said.

The board carries samples of the ash, beech, sycamore, chestnut, oak and Spanish chestnut. The softwood samples include Sitka spruce, Scots pine, Douglas fir and Lodgepole pine. In addition to the tropical woods, he also included composite wood products such as chipboard and other materials made from residues of Irish forests.

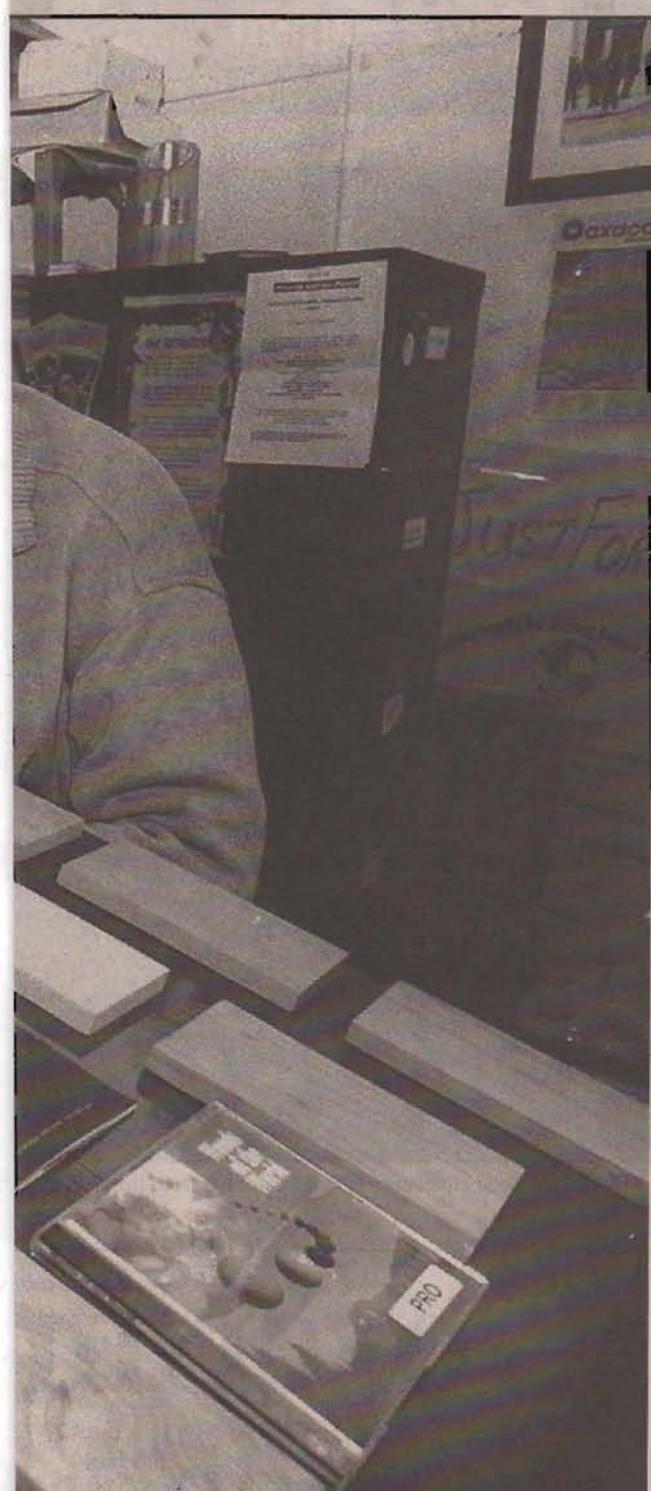
He said making the board would not have been possible without the support of Coillte, the Irish Forestry Board, and the Minister for the Marine and Natural Resources.

"They jointly contributed over £50,000 so the board could not only be manufactured but promoted as well, and this month it will be officially launched," he said.

The board is currently being manufactured in Co Tipperary and the hope is that not only schools and libraries will buy it, but it will also be taken up by local authority procurement officers, architects, building contractors and joiners.

Early last month, the product won the Irish Forestry award in the education and awareness category, a prize of £1,000 and a special RDS medal and perpetual trophy.

"I hope it will do a great deal to spread the knowledge of wood and wood products throughout the country and, indeed, abroad," said Tom.



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IRISH TIMBER & FORESTRY



The
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Know Your Wood Project

Takes National Award

TULLAMORE-based forest campaigning group, Just Forests has scooped a national forestry award for education and awareness.

The RDS Forestry Award for 1999, for a wood education board, is a most welcome birthday present for Just Forests as the group marks their 10th anniversary.

The winning project, the Know-Wood board is designed

to create a wood culture in Ireland and to heighten awareness of forests.

The handsome, wall-mounted board comes complete with CD-ROM and colour booklet.

It consists of six samples of both Irish grown hardwoods and softwoods, three samples of composite materials (made from the produce/residues of Irish forests) and three samples of tropical hardwoods.

The project, had laid dormant for five years, but has been resurrected courtesy of support from Coillte and the Department of the Marine and Natural Resources.

The board, which is patented, will be launched in Tullamore in mid-January 2000. Schools, public libraries, local authorities, architects, building contractors and joineries are expected to support the project.

Members of Just Forests collected a cheque of £1,000, along with a perpetual trophy at a ceremony yesterday in Dublin.

TRIBUNE 10th September 1994

'Know Wood' Project For Offaly Schools

A pilot project that emphasises the importance of trees and wood is being introduced to ten primary schools in County Offaly.

The brainchild of Tullamore man, Tom Roche, it is hoped that the feedback from these schools will help to decide the final format of the programme, which will then be introduced to schools nationwide.

Irish Woodworkers for Africa (IWFA) was founded in September 1989. Since then, IWFA has endeavoured to inform and educate the public at large of the importance of wood / trees in all of our lives, by means of the very popular hands-on exhibition of native and exotic woods - Wood of Life.

Having been seen by an estimated 40,000 people at 30 venues around Ireland, the Wood of Life exhibition has been described as a very positive educational tool in stimulating personal acceptance of a more

responsible attitude towards wood and trees. Although woodwork students are the main target group of IWFA, thousands of primary school children have attended the exhibition.

Over the past 16 months, IWFA had investigated the possibility of introducing into the classroom tangible information on wood and the important role it plays in our lives. With funding from the Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry (Forest Service), the Know Wood system emerged.

This colourful, hands-on display board, containing a variety of Irish-grown woods is designed to enhance and complement other subjects including nature, the environment and geography studies.

Over the next three months, by prior arrangement, a number of visits to the participating schools will take place. The purpose of these visits will be to enquire from teachers and pupils what

the final format of the Know Wood system ought to take before going nationwide.

The pilot project is being launched by Mr Maurice Mullen, Principal Officer with the Forest Service, in the Bridge House on Wednesday 14th September.

From here on, responsibly planned forestry is going to play a pivotal role in rural development, job creation, a cleaner environment and the conservation of precious tropical rainforest ecosystems, states Tom Roche. 'The Know Wood system will hopefully be a positive tool in informing schoolgoers of the real value of wood - the renewable resource.'

OFFALY EXPRESS
SEPT 10th 94

PAGE 11

Ten Offaly Schools to take part in project on Woods

TEN PRIMARY schools in Offaly will take part in a pilot project to promote knowledge of timber, called "Know-Wood".

The project is organised by Irish Woodworkers for Africa (IWFA), which was founded in September 1989 by Mr. Tom Roche, Arden Vale, Tullamore.

The pilot project will be launched by Mr. Maurice Mullen, Principal Officer with the Forest Service, in the Bridge House, Tullamore, at 4 p.m. on September 14th next, when "Know-Wood" boards will be presented to representatives of schools taking part. This display board will act as a draft for the development of the "Know-Wood" system.

PLEASE

'Wood is Good'..

Know Wood Schools System Launched in Tullamore

By Eleanor Collier

Another innovative project from Tullamore man Tom Roche, founder of Irish Woodworkers for Africa, was launched in Tullamore last Wednesday. The idea is to introduce tangible information on wood and the important role it plays in our lives, into the classroom.

Display boards, featuring examples of twelve Irish-grown woods with text on each and known as the 'Know Wood System' were presented to representatives from a cross-section of ten schools in Offaly. The system is being introduced in conjunction with Coillte and received funding from the Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry.

The project is being piloted in Offaly and it is hoped that there will be comprehensive feedback from teachers and pupils, so that similar boards can then be made for schools all over Ireland. The colourful, hands-on board is designed to enhance and complement other subjects including nature, geography and environment studies.

The Know Wood boards include ash, sycamore, oak, chestnut, scots pine, larch, beech, yew, douglas fir, Japanese larch, sitka spruce and Norway spruce. The schools that have been chosen to start the Know Wood System are Birr Convent School; Charleville NS; Daingean NS; Edenderry NS; Kinnitty NS; Killeigh NS; Mount Bolus NS; Scoil Bhríde NS; St. Francis NS, Clara and St. Philomena's School, Tullamore.

MC at the launch, which took place in the Bridge House, was Tony Dolan of the One World Group and he welcomed the principals, teachers and other parties to the occasion.

Terry O'Brien, Local Divisional Manager of Coillte, based in Mullingar, stated that Irish Woodworkers for Africa, the organisation that Tom Roche set up in 1989 has done great work and is continuing to do that.



The Know Wood pilot project for primary schools was launched last Wednesday evening. Pictured (l. to r.) Tom Roche who devised the project, Maurice Mullen, Forest Service, Department of Agriculture; Tom McGee INTO; Victor Haines Principal, Mount Bolus N.S.; Finola Corrigan, NT, St. Philomena's, Tullamore and Padraig Divilly, IFA.

He said that the new project is a tremendous step forward, as so many people take wood for granted. He said that 11,000 people are employed directly as a result of wood industries in Ireland.

Continuing, Mr O'Brien said that the IIRS have said that every 1,000 hectares of land that are planted as forest generate 44 full-time jobs. Coillte planted 12,000 hectares last year and if the private sector do the same, it shows how many jobs could be created. He wished the Know Wood project every success and told Tom and his organisation that they have the continued support of Coillte, who are delighted to be associated with the venture.

Tom Roche was next to speak, saying that Woodworkers for Africa links life and wood and highlights the important role that wood plays in our lives. It is run in association with Concern and currently in Waterford library. 'We have a say in ceasing the importing of tropical rainforests,' he stated.

He said that back in 1989, because of the concerns of global deforestation and the fact that he is a cabinet maker,

TULLAMORE TRIBUNE.
TRIBUNE 24th September 1994

he started looking at the uses of tropical wood. He said that we import the equivalent of 25 acres of African forest every day of the year. He decided to put on an exhibition to heighten awareness of the implicit role wood / trees plays in our lives and to reappraise attitudes to wood and went to County Librarian, Ann Coughlan who gave him the go-ahead.

Mr Roche pointed out that deforestation contributes a lot to famine, firstly to soil degradation. Where there is good forest culture you see good family communities, he said, adding that he had visited the Concern plant projects in Tanzania and visited a number of schools where tree planting is now essential to the curriculum. He said that he started listening to teachers and discovered that there was a mini-exhibition that every school could have. There are 12 samples of home-grown woods on the board, no tropical wood. It is initially a pilot project until some difficulties are ironed out and it is going to a cross-section of ten Offaly schools, which he plans to visit and ask questions at.

He said that he visited the Cameroons, where

there are a multitude of lifesaving benefits in the leaves. So many medicines come from Africa, yet 75% of the forests are destroyed.

Maurice Mullen, Principal Officer with the Forest Service in the Department of Agriculture said that it had been a unique idea to found Irish Woodworkers for Africa. It was also a great idea to mount the Wood of Life exhibition. And now the Know Wood system was yet another enterprise. The need to prevent tropical deforestation and working locally for global development was essential.

The Wood of Life exhibition has already been seen by over 40,000 people at 30 venues, he pointed out. Everyone who has seen this educational tool has seen how important it is.

'The Department are very happy to support the project,' he stressed. 'There has been a minor revolution in Ireland in the forest sector in recent times,' he stressed. 'The farming forestry scheme has seen a lot of benefits for rural areas and the development of industries. We have learned a lot about how we deal with forestry and we are now operating within strict environmental guidelines.'