



Pictured: Zoe Knight, Membership Services Co-ordinator and Jen Turner Development Manager.

Future Foresters at Shuttleworth College

THE future is bright for the growing forestry sector – so heard more than 200 students from across the country at a unique Future Foresters Skills Day organised by the Royal Forestry Society and hosted at Shuttleworth College.

Speakers and exhibitors gathered to reveal the skills required to land a first job; to help employers optimise advances in technology; to move up the careers ladder or to take advantage of emerging opportunities.

RFS Chief Executive Simon Lloyd says: “Forestry is increasingly recognised as a major contributor to climate change mitigation. To grow trees on a scale being planned by the Government as well as adapting our existing woodland to climate change will require a very substantial up-skilling of the forestry sector.

“We were delighted to see students from nine colleges and two universities, apprentices and young foresters come together to experience some of the lat-

est in technology – from virtual reality chainsaws and forwarders to hands on climbing equipment and tree care.

“Our thanks Shuttleworth College for helping make this happen and to exhibitors for inspiring the next generation of those who will be tasked with caring for our woodland.”

Shuttleworth Student Celia Woodward is an Arborist Apprentice, studying at the college and working for Treelife Tree Surgeons in Hertfordshire. Celia was filmed by the RFS on the day about the event and her apprenticeship:

“This event was really helpful, we learned about new developments in root care and ways to prevent disease. I’ve always loved working outdoors and I’d recommend anyone to go for an apprenticeship, you never know what you are capable of,” said Celia. For more information on all the courses available at Shuttleworth College go to www.shuttleworth.ac.uk

CAMPAIGNING FOR BETTER RAIL ACCESS

Being disabled in 21st century Britain is no laughing matter.

- 1 in 4 disabled people don't like to use public transport because of negative attitudes by other passengers.
- Over 40% of UK railways are not accessible to people who are physically impaired

MANY people live with some form of physical disability making accessibility to public transport difficult at the best of times.

These challenges haven't stopped Ian Cooke, 68 a resident of Flitwick.

Ian was initially diagnosed with tuberculosis of the spine at 18 months old, but a later diagnosis discovered poliomyelitis.

Both his legs are affected and weakened by the virus and he is reliant on a mobility scooter and crutches to help him get about.

In 2010, he was diagnosed with post-polio syndrome a condition that affects polio survivors years after recovery from the first attack.

Symptoms include weakening of the muscles previously affected by the initial polio attack, muscle and joint pain and fatigue.

He regularly travels from Flitwick to London to attend appointments at St. Thomas' Hospital but faces a huge problem.

by **Caroline McCormack**

Flitwick has no lifts and he struggles to get across the footbridge and down the steps to the platform.

His mobility scooter is the ideal solution, he says, “I can't use my scooter because there is no lift or ramp in the station, I could



drive to Luton Airport Parkway but why should I?”

Most trains that pass through Flitwick have space for 2-3 wheelchairs and numerous seats reserved for people with walking difficulties.

Ian says “even if there were lifts and I could get onto the platform, I could not get onto the train without someone putting a ramp to the door of the train.”

His problem, shared by many is further hindered by the fact that

many stations are no longer manned 24/7 and whilst getting onto a train is difficult alighting at the other end is another challenge. He wants to see platforms conform to a standard height and raised where disabled carriages stop.

Every station in London is wheelchair friendly but if you are physically disabled, an elderly person, even a mother or father with a pushchair getting onto a train is no mean feat.

The Department of Transport's (DfT), The Inclusive Transport Strategy report published in July 2018, stated that it was committed to spending £300m on improvements such as lifts and footbridges between 2019-20 with completion by March 2024.

A total of 73 stations are set to benefit from this funding but Flitwick isn't one of them.

Ian remains resolute and has contacted several MPs, appeared on local radio and Look East in an effort to increase the exposure of this very important issue.

The response from MPs is “not at all encouraging” he said. Ian goes onto say: “At present, the funding is given out, like the lottery, a station has to be nominated and then it is picked by a panel if unsuccessful the station has to be nominated again.”

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