I learned of the above course through the CCFG website, and decided that it would be a useful course for someone like me who is relatively new to the forestry industry (I trained in arboriculture). The Hatfield Estate (where I currently work) made a decision in 2005 to manage all wooded areas through CCF principles, and at present I am learning ‘on the job’. I hoped that the course would assist me with my understanding of the theory behind what we are currently working towards, and I hoped to return to work with some new ideas of ways to improve our management. I also hoped to understand other options for woodland management if CCF was not deemed to be appropriate for a certain site.

The course was run over two days, with each day being split into two parts. The morning comprised a classroom / theory session and the afternoon was spent in local woodlands looking at different stand types and options for CCF. All of the woods we looked at were FC owned, and there were some woods which were being managed as CCF sites, and others which hadn’t been the subject of any management for many years; this was a useful contrast to see.

There were 14 people on the course, with 3 of us from the private sector and the rest were FC staff. This blend seemed to work well with the challenges being faced for each group being evident through the various discussions.

The classroom sessions were very helpful with our tutor Jens-Uwe Haufe having detailed knowledge of the subject. The presentations were filled with lots of facts and figures, which I have already found useful now back in my day job. We looked at the benefits of CCF transformation, however it was
made quite clear that this approach would be difficult in many situations, and that it would not always 
be quickly achievable. We also discussed the more intensive management that was needed to make 
CCF succeed.

We initially looked at preparing for transformation to CCF and the benefits of respacing sites early on 
in their establishment. The classroom sessions comprised many useful diagrams, which clearly demon-
strated the theory behind this stage of development. We then looked in more detail at the different 
methods of transformation such as uniform shelterwood, strip shelterwood, group selection, and finally 
the single tree selection system. We discussed the pros and cons of each method, and it soon became 
clear that the different methods were appropriate on different sites, and that all had their shortfalls.

We then looked in more detail at the methods of generating the next crop, once transformation was 
underway. This involved discussions about the natural regeneration method, and the many factors that 
will play a part in the success of this such as appropriate seed source, seedbed conditions, vermin 
control and light availability. We also discussed the use of planting as a method of regeneration where 
regeneration was difficult, or where there was a wish to improve species diversity.

The afternoon sessions were very useful with different stand types being visited each day, and options 
transformation and regeneration / replanting being discussed. It was clear that there are no easy 
routes to transformation to CCF, but that the end result can be very rewarding. The pros and cons 
of each approach also became more apparent when discussed on site, and it was also very clear from 
discussions with peers that record keeping within areas was a necessity in order to learn from past 
management decisions.

The course was very useful for me, and has allowed me to make several improvements to the way we 
undertake CCF management on the estate where I work. Given that the course was aimed at CCF for 
broadleaf stands, I now hope to book on a similar course for conifers in the near future.

'I currently work at the Hatfield House Estate where I have responsibility for managing the park, and also 
the estates forestry interests in close coordination with the forestry consultant. I have been working here 
for almost three years now, and it is a very diverse and challenging role, which involves a large amount 
of grounds maintenance in the park, as well as managing diverse range of forest plantations spanning over much 
of Hertfordshire. I originally trained in arboriculture, and prior to working at Hatfield, I was the Arboricultural 
Manager for the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.’ Glen Harding.

Thanks to Jens Haufe for providing the Diagrams
Note by Rik Pakenham, CCFG England Co-ordinator

After discussions with CCFG the Forestry Commission kindly agreed to open some of their in-house training days to the private sector. Glen was one of the first private sector attendees.

The courses are led by Dr Jens Haufe the Forestry Commission training officer based at Ae Village, Parkgate, Dumfries.

This training course is designed to provide a general introduction to the principles of continuous cover forest management. Indoor sessions will cover CCF terms and conventions, silvicultural aspects of thinning, stand stability and site assessment, transformation methods and operational aspects of transformation. Examples of CCF management will be shown and discussed on field visits. Practical exercises include thinning, site assessment and development of management pro-formas.

This year’s courses are at:

Lyndhurst (New Forest) - 1/2 May, 2014 - with a focus on broadleaved tree species
Ruthin (Denbighshire) - 10/11 June, 2014 - with a focus on spruce and shade tolerant conifers
Aboyne (Aberdeen) - 14/15 October - focus on ccf with pine and larch
Lyndhurst (New Forest) - 21/22 October - focus on broadleaves

See CCFG website for more information