

JULIAN FORBES-LAIRD

QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

Julian Forbes-Laird is Senior Director at FLAC, a small but internationally reputed arboricultural and environmental risk consultancy. He has over 30 years' experience in arboriculture, and works with a wide range of public, corporate and private clients.

Together with Alistair Baxter of Aspect Ecology, JFL is co-principal of Sylvan Consulting, which provides planning and development-related advice on ancient woodland, veteran trees and historic landscapes.

JFL started his career on the practical side of the profession, completing a transition to consultancy in 2000 after a decade 'on the tools'. After two years spent working as an independent consultant, he spent a further two years as Senior Consultant at CBA Trees, before establishing FLAC in 2004.

Having developed and lectured widely on a respected and peer-reviewed method designed to quantify the risk posed by defective trees (THREATS), JFL is a recognised authority on tree hazard assessment. He has undertaken numerous forensic accident investigations, including in relation to fatalities caused by trees, and has appeared as an expert witness in the High Court several times.

He is *Special Advisor on Tree Risk* for Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd and Consultant to *L'Union Internationale des Chemins de Fer* (the world cooperation body for railways), for whom he has drafted a new International Railway Standard *Technical Aspects of Tree Risk and Vegetation Management – Recommendations*. He now leads FLAC's collaboration with its technology partner, Airbus Defence and Space, on the development of natural hazard management systems.

JFL has published a number of articles in the arboricultural and landscape press, variously covering tree risk assessment, legal aspects of liability for hazard trees, subsidence, and the arboricultural significance of certain wood decay fungi on trees. He is the author of RAVEN, the only appeal-validated field recognition system for ancient veteran and notable trees.

In addition, JFL is a well-known figure on the international arboricultural lecture circuit, covering specialist topics such as the philosophy of tree risk assessment, retrenchment pruning of veteran trees, the use of remote sensing technology for vegetation management and infrastructure protection, and forensic entomology for tree-related accident investigation.

In 2019 he developed a proof of Professor Claus Mattheck's principle of the *Axiom of Uniform Stress* in trees, and has subsequently been granted Licensed Lecturer status in *Visual Tree Assessment* by Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, being one of only a handful of such licensees worldwide.

JFL is regularly instructed in the area of tree root damage to buildings, frequently acting as an expert witness in this complex area of arboriculture.

JFL has been instructed as an expert witness on several occasions in relation to prosecutions for offences under Tree Preservation Order legislation and has appeared for both prosecution and defence in the Crown Court. Additionally, he is author of the TEMPO system for assessing whether trees merit TPO protection; TEMPO is used by over 60 local authorities and dozens of consultants.

JFL has appeared numerous times at planning-related Public Inquiries, the majority of which have concerned ancient woodland, veteran tree and historic landscape issues.

JFL was a technical editor of BS5837:2012, being responsible for preparing drafts of the clauses relating to tree survey methodology, and demolition & construction in proximity to trees.

In December 2021, he was appointed Chair of British Standards Institution committee B/213 *Trees and tree work*, with responsibility for steering the revision and development of all British Standards relating to arboriculture.

JFL has undertaken several items of original research, including:

- Stability of trees on slopes to derive failure criteria for tree height against degrees of slope
- The use of infra-red aerial photography for tree vitality assessment
- Site-related predisposing factors for storm resilience modelling of large-scale tree populations
- Cross-correlational analysis of woodbank width as an indicator of century of formation

A summary of JFL's memberships, designations and appointments is set out below:

- Chartered Arboriculturist and Registered Consultant of the Institute of Chartered Foresters
- Member of the Royal Society of Biology
- Member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
- Professional Member of the Arboricultural Association
- Registered Consultant of the Arboricultural Association 2004-2018
- Member of the Expert Witness Institute
- Member of the Royal Forestry Society and holder of its 'Professional Diploma in Arboriculture'
- National Special Advisor on Tree Risk for Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd
- Consultant to the world cooperation body for railways, the UIC
- VTA Licensed Lecturer, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology
- Chair of British Standards Institution technical committee B/213 Trees and Tree Work

JFL has a Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in Theology and a Diploma in Greek and Roman Studies, from the University of Exeter; and read for a Masters in War Studies at King's College London.