

Joris Van Acker

Recently becoming the new president of IRGWP is the perfect occasion to write this bio.



Allow me to present you a mix of my career and my family life, both always have been inherently connected. Both have also contributed substantially to the current level of management skills I acquired over the years.

Born in 1960 as son of a farmer I got already early a major interest in nature and the way people produce primary products. But more than getting familiar with breeding cattle and cultivating rye or barley, I got mainly interested in trees and wood products. So I decided studying sciences and finally got a degree in forestry and wood technology designated as bio-science engineer. My master thesis dealt with enhancing treatability of spruce and this was the start of my interaction with IRGWP. My first attendance to an annual meeting was Avignon in 1986 where I presented a poster. This was an excellent meeting and triggered me to continue on this track. In 1988 at IRG19 in Madrid I presented my first paper based on my work as master student. Since then my IRGWP links not only allowed me to present regularly my research, but I started also as convenor of a working group on treatability and later became working party 4 leader and participated in the Scientific Programme Committee, this under the guidance of Richard Murphy and my mentor Mike Barnes.

My work related to wood protection has been the backbone of my career, however the full skeleton was always way more diverse. I started my PhD research at Ghent University mainly focussing on treatability and durability of plywood. For a short time, I then moved away from academia to become a plant manager at a plywood mill where I



was responsible for the production of rotary cut veneers of mainly poplar. Next step I started as key researcher with an industry based research team on poplar processing back again at the Laboratory of Wood Technology at the Ghent University. Prof. em. Marc Stevens who was my mentor for my master thesis became not only my

promotor for my then still due PhD. He became more and more a colleague allowing me to initiate many different national and international research projects on different topics related to poplar, wood modification, wood coatings, plywood, moisture dynamics, natural fibre composites, dendrochronology, tropical wood species and the impact on forest management and getting the support of an excellent team. The high level of freedom, independency and self-sufficiency enabled me to broaden my interest in international networking related to



wood research. Amongst others there is for sure IRGWP but also several COST Actions, ECWM, InnovaWood, the International Poplar Commission and CEN TC 38 standardisation. All have become part of my daily activities.



Although I indicated that my family is connected to all of this I could start with saying my wife Marijke Nys was earlier a colleague student and became a colleague researcher but changed career to the cultivation of cutting flowers and also has a business in small antiques.



She is a very active person and based on my level of scientific travel I am considered similarly active.



Over the years we became a large family with 9 children, and since 2015 we are also for the first time grandparents of Leon.



Besides being a professor at a university active in research, teaching and services , I have been and I still am a horticulturist during weekends, a do-it-yourself builder of necessary extensions to the house and from time to time a travel guide and minibus driver for the family holidays in France and Portugal. But things change and today I do no longer write so many e-mails at night.

