In Moray and Aberdeenshire, we’ve fifty-eight and a half thousand hectares of land management, including about six thousand hectares of open ground, and my role is to oversee that. It’s a wide ranging, diverse role that primarily involves driving a desk, but it does give me the opportunity to get out.

Approximately ten or twelve years ago I didn’t feel well. I had a succession of symptoms, quite wide-ranging particularly stiff muscles, sore joints, that sort of thing. A general feeling of tiredness and lethargy. I went to my doctor. I suggested that they look at Lyme Disease, which was a bit out of left field at that time. The doctor was quite strongly of the view that the incidence was very low and it wasn’t worth investigating.

Six years ago, I was in New Zealand, I didn’t feel at all well - particular issues were muscle tremor, listlessness, pains, cramps, sore joints. I had that investigated when I came home and they discovered I had Lyme Disease, and I’d had it long-term.

I do have legacy symptoms. I had an episode about four years ago when I suffered Bell’s Palsy, a facial palsy, brought on by an inflammation of the nerves, which resulted in me having the visual impacts of a stroke in my face. I’d lost control of the right side of my face, which was quite distressing.

And as a consequence of that, I had a very heavy dosage of a drug called doxycycline which was an antibiotic which they used to treat Lyme Disease. That’s worked pretty well. I’m not as physically willing to challenge myself as I was before, but on a day-to-day basis I can coexist with it and it’s not a problem for me in doing the job that I now do.

They believe I’d had Lyme for approximately twenty years before it was developed. It is quite difficult because some of the characteristics of Lyme Disease can mimic other diseases. At the time I was working practically, there wasn’t the understanding and awareness of Lyme that there is now, and consequently, tick bites were something that happened routinely and nobody really paid any attention to them. It was just something that people treated as an occupational hazard and there wasn’t the awareness that there is now, and that’s cost quite a few people quite dearly.

Be aware of the presence of ticks and plan accordingly.

Checking for ticks is good personal hygiene – look at your outdoor clothing, clean it regularly, shower and look closely around your own body.

If you feel at all unwell after a tick bite, seek and pressurise your GP into properly investigating it.