

# Cumbria Forestry Festival

Lured by Cumbria Woodlands' promise of 'the county's biggest and best ever Cumbria Forestry Festival', on a warm, mid-July Sunday a significant number of vehicles left the M6 at Junction 41 and made the short journey to Baron Inglewood's impressive Hutton-in-the-Forest estate. Those signing into the free event were automatically entered into a competition to win a day course for two people with Woodmatters. The Kendal-based business works alongside communities to promote the benefits accrued from sustainable woodlands.

Did the event, which was 'designed to celebrate the county's hard-working, talented and passionate forestry sector', deliver or disappoint? 50+ exhibitors represented the county's forestry industry, biomass production sector and a wide range of woodland crafts.

There appears to be no shortage of up-coming entrepreneurs willing to exploit Cumbria's available timber resource... Certainly many of the exhibitors, visiting professionals and members of the public with whom I exchanged comments felt their expectations had been met.

Edward Mills, Cumbria Woodlands, explained: "Our target audience for this long-overdue event, which has been made possible by EU funding and support from the Lowther Estate, Sheffield and Co Ltd and AW Jenkinson Forest Products, was not the general public. Nevertheless, as one of our aims is to educate people about the sustainability of locally produced timber products, wood-fuel, woodland management and the many benefits well-managed woods can bring, we encouraged their presence.

"What we strove to achieve was the involvement of the county's woodland owners, farmers and the support of those from the forestry sector. Our message is to raise awareness amongst these groups of the valuable and sustainable resource offered by Cumbria's trees. We already have an expansive database of woodland owners, but showcasing small machines and offering the opportunity to discuss techniques, innovation and networks helps others who aren't

yet managing their woods to understand how the trees' financial potential can best be exploited and the sustainability of the resource retained."

A coordinated operation saw 35 high-standing timber poles felled as part of the nationally recognised UK Loggers annual competition. Removed from the arena and moved around the event site in turn by a logging horse, an Oxtac skidder, a tractor and forwarding trailer and an Alstor mini-forwarder, the timber was delivered to exhibitors on the Hutton-in-the-Forest site. A mobile sawmill, the Truncator saw-horse, a Cordmaster firewood processor, woodchippers and charcoal kilns took advantage of the offer and demonstrated their importance in the timber processing chain.

The deft manipulations of the chainsaw-wielding UK Loggers, competing for this year's honours, held an appreciative, ice cream licking audience spellbound. Event organiser and long-term team member Peter Fox reported: "Sponsored by Husqvarna, funding has also come from Iggesund. Our poles were supplied by the Lowther Estates, extracted by Sheffields and hauled by Somerscales before being erected by Metcalfe Plant Hire.

"The 2013 competition has 18 competitors plus Danny Kloska, an experienced German guest. We've also 6 competitors in the under-24 years of age class. The young ones coming up are full of promise, so there seems to be a future ahead for the UK Loggers. Plenty of sponsorship is forthcoming as we demonstrate best practice in UK felling techniques. This has heightened significance, given that the industry is currently reappraising safety and training."

Honours in the five disciplines in the championship were distributed as follows: Richard Elliott of Devon (both limbing and the combination cut); Phil Dunford of Wales (felling); Kristian Garnham of East Anglia (changing bar and chain); Peter Fox of Cumbria (precision cut). Richard Elliott (Captain Cool to his team mates!) was overall winner. Chris Watson was best newcomer. *Susan Burke*



Sarah Rose and Edward Mills of Cumbria Woodlands explained that a huge amount of planning had brought together the biggest players in the Cumbrian forest scene as well as the smaller and newer ventures that earn their money from Cumbrian timbers.



Furniture makers Huw Lowden and Steven Younger – both native Cumbrians – have taken over both Danny Frost's company name and his Wood-Mizer LT40. Huw reported that, now nine years old and in good order, the sawmill cuts mainly oak and ash grown in Cumbria.



Kevin Read, son of the well-known horselogger George Read, extracts timber from the arena with Danny. Kevin tries to take at least one day a week off the forestry machines to train Danny who is relatively new to horse logging.



A full range of planting services is offered by Canadian Jonathon A. Hastie. For Shap-based Jonathon and his colleague Tom Pocock (left) matching the correct species with the growing conditions is a priority. According to Jonathon, the availability of cell-grown stock should make planting a year-round possibility.



All involved in the UK Loggers were very appreciative of a couple of Ian Jacks: Ian Jack of Lowther Forestry supplied 35 standing poles for the felling competition. The other Ian Jack, of Metcalfe Plant Hire Ltd, worked unpaid overtime to ensure that these were securely planted in the required position in the arena.



Husqvarna provide sponsorship to the UK Loggers. They also had representation on the showground in the form of new dealership FHL Chainsaws. (Left to right) Campbell Logie, Nigel Fawkes and Ian Hall offer a service from their premises at Rowanburn near Canonbie, and prices appear to be competitive.



Lakes Biomass demonstrated a Canadian built Cord King firewood processor. Oli Coupland loads the log deck with the crane on the company's Kronos forwarding trailer. Lakes Biomass source all their timber within Cumbria.



Richard Elliott (right) beats Peter Fox into second place, but there are no hard feelings. Peter remains determined to get his hands on the trophy one of these years. No competitors left the arena empty handed, courtesy of Aspen Fuels.

David Cameron loads timber with the crane of the Alstor mini forwarder. The machine is part owned by Clark Mactavish of Threapland in Cumbria. Graeme Mactavish reported that although the original intention was to make the machine available for hire, it turned out that it soon became almost fully committed to the company's own woodland contracts.



While an expectant crowd was willing the target stake to shatter, the competitor will probably have known, as soon as he started to retire to safety, that his tree would fall slightly wide of the mark. The Forestry Contracting Association continues to give as much support as it can to the UK Loggers.



Hunter Wilson of Gretna Green provided the limbing poles and Robin Hood Sawmills, Keswick supplied the limbing branches used in this year's UK Logger's championship. It is the little things that make a difference, and the contribution made by both concerns to the event's final, fast-paced competition was welcomed by the team.