



Timber Tongues

Flying the Flag at the European Horse Logging Championship 2012

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Representing British horse loggers — traditional Cob mare Elizabeth, with BHL apprentice Richard Eames

Superb horsemanship and horses were on display when British, German, Czech, Swiss and Japanese competitors gathered for the 2012 European Horse Logging Championship at the Ragley Estate, Warwickshire.

Many had travelled for several days, and for hundreds of miles, to be there. For many, the chance to get together with other dedicated and expert horsemen was as important as the competitions, and this hard-fought Championship was also marked by some great camaraderie.

See pages 3 to 6 for the results, pictures and a report.

More flags! (left) Elizabeth leaps the ditch and bank, the first obstacle in the Championship; (centre) the Czech banner held high in the procession from the camping area to the competition ground; (right) Max Frei-Buchegger's Haflinger Stuart sporting his Swiss fly fringe



Chairman's Report

Doug Joiner

I am delighted to be able to welcome you to another excellent newsletter after what has been a particularly busy and dramatic summer of local, national and international events. These are all covered in the newsletter and on the various websites so read on.

Of particular interest to me is the 2013 AGM. This will be held in Staffordshire over the weekend of 1st and 2nd June

2013 alongside the usual (and less usual) competitions and other events. It promises to be a jambo-ree full of surprises, not least of which will be who will stand and who will be elected as Chair of the BHL as I stand down after 13 years.

Anyone who is interested in finding out more, please contact any of the current committee members for a chat. This is a very exciting prospect for the future of our profes-

sion and of our association. More news to follow and election details are, again, on the website.

I would like to close by adding my warmest congratulations to Fiona Boylan for winning the Morgan 3 wheeler. It will surprise no one that she did not believe the phone call straight away. I must have a reputation ...

www.britishhorseloggers.org
www.britishhorseloggerscharitabletrust.org
www.britishfestivaloftheworkinghorse.co.uk



At Frame, the carpenters' convention held on the St Fagan's estate near Cardiff — extracting timber from woodland, after the tree had been felled by axe

Demonstrations

Doug Joiner and Ella have been out and about once more this year, giving demonstrations to publicise horse logging and the BHL.



At the Royal Welsh Show, Builth Wells — Doug gives a demonstration and commentary on the use of log arches



Can't quite believe it ... Fiona Boylan is congratulated by Pit Schechter

Morgan 3-Wheeler Raffle — The Draw

The long-awaited draw for the Morgan 3-wheeler took place on Saturday 15th September at the European Horse Logging Championship, which ran alongside the APF forestry event.

The draw was made by Pit Schlechter, chairman of FECTU, the European Draught Horse Federation. Doug Joiner, who oversaw the draw, had borrowed a traditional tombola for the occasion.

The winning ticket was number 03754, held by Fiona Boylan of Belbroughton near Stourbridge.

Doug immediately phoned Fiona, who was a spectator at the Championship, and invited her to the reception tent to see the winning ticket for herself. Seeing is believing ... and a delighted Fiona was officially congratulated by Pit.

All profits from the raffle will benefit the BHL apprentice scheme, which is run by the British Horse Loggers Charitable Trust.

Thanks to all of you who purchased tickets in support of this worthy cause!

European Horse Logging Championship 2012 — The Winners



Singles Champion:

Jürgen Duddeck, Germany with Votan de la Petrousse (*left*)

Pairs Champion:

Matthias Rensing, Germany with Mira & Marie (*right*)

*The balance —
Jürgen and
Votan position
the log precisely
to achieve perfect
balance across
the obstacle*



*The parbuckle
— Matthias
moves his
mares forward
carefully to
draw the log
onto the
forwarder*

Results

(maximum possible score 420; two rounds, top score taken)

Singles (1st round /2nd round) top score

- 1st Jürgen Duddeck, Germany, with Votan de la Petrouse (413/413) 413
- 2nd Matthias Rensing, Germany, with Afra (412/391) 412
- 3rd Josef Svoboda, Czech Republic, with Salva (367/411) 411
- 4th Mike Paddock, UK, with Lisa (351/408) 408
- 5th Crunchie Whitby with Holly (345/394) 394
- 6th Daniella Svobodova, Czech Republic, with Agua (324/393) 393
- 7th Takashi Iwama, Japan, with Ella (330/389) 389

- 8th Richard Eames, UK, with Elizabeth (381/366) 366
- 9th Max Frei-Buchegger, Switzerland, with Stuart (0/298) 298
- 10th Peter Coates, UK, with Nathan (254/293) 293
- 11th Joe Deacon, UK, with Merlin (270/retired) 270

Pairs (1st round /2nd round) top score

- 1st Matthias Rensing, Germany, with Mira & Marie (413/retired) 413
- 2nd Josef Svoboda, Czech Republic, with Agua & Salva (365/410) 410
- 3rd Mike Paddock, UK, with Lisa and Primrose (390/401) 401
- 4th Crunchie Whitby, UK, with Holly & Snippet (375/394) 394

European Horse Logging Championship 2012 — Report

Cathrin Vaughan



Top left: Mike Paddock takes Lisa and Primrose over the ditch and bank, the initial challenge before picking up the log

Left: Mike and Lisa at the stack — the log ends must align precisely for maximum points

Above: Lisa, Primrose and Lisa's foal Apollo set off for the competition site

Right: Josef Svoboda with Agua and Salva at the stack and the wobbly bridge



German horse loggers Jürgen Duddeck and Matthias Rensing were worthy winners of the European Horse Logging Championship, which took place alongside the APF forestry event on the Ragley Estate, Warwickshire, on 13–15 September.

The Championship was hosted and run by the BHL, and featured some excellent horsemanship and horses.

The trophies were presented by BHL chair Doug Joiner. He said: 'The competition was closely fought, very competitive, demonstrated the very highest standards of skill and harmony between horse(s) and handler, and still remained friendly.'

Jürgen Duddeck, singles champion, explained how he found his Ardennes gelding Votan, now 14 years old. He was looking for a logging horse, when one day a friend phoned him: 'She said she knew where an Ardennes was – Votan. He was there alone in the forest, in bad condition – he was going to the butcher. I saw him, and I said, "This is my horse." That was four years ago. He's a special horse and there's a special relationship between us – he knows I have saved him.'

Most of their logging work, in the Black Forest, is done over the winter: 'In the summer he has a holiday. I do landscape gardening, and Votan is ridden and does carriage rides.'

Pairs champion Matthias Rensing brought three horses from Germany, entering 19-year-old Afra in the singles competition, and Marie (7) and Mira (13) in the pairs. He said: 'My horses went well, and we made a nice show. That is the most important thing I want to do – not to win, but for people to see harmony between man and horses.'

Josef Svoboda's three-year-old Noriker mares from the Czech Republic performed very well, taking second place in the pairs competition, with Salva coming third in the singles.

Josef said, 'I'm very much satisfied with my horses. It's the first time in my life I've taken such young horses to a competition, and they performed perfectly. This is thanks to my whole family who took part in their training from the first year of age, carefully. This effort is to make happy and healthy, well-produced horses.'

However, he warned, 'People may think you can go competing with

three-year-old horses: I only did it with all the skill and experience I have – you have to be a long-term horse logger to do this.'

He said the level of expertise required for horse logging is underestimated: 'Working a horse in the forest, when you have a horse that's well trained, it's the same level of skill as riding high-level dressage: turns, stepping over, backing and so on – you find the same things in dressage.'

After the Championship, Josef formally handed Agua and Salva over to their new owner, Doug Joiner.

British horse loggers took up the daunting challenge of matching their skills against the best in Europe, and Mike Paddock and Crunchie Whitby especially held their own, ranking amongst the winners in both the singles and the pairs competitions.

Mike, Lisa and Primrose were accompanied round the course by Lisa's foal Apollo, handled by Crunchie. Apollo's sire is Mike's working Brabant stallion Remco.

Crunchie commented, 'Perhaps the Europeans would have liked the course to be a bit harder, but it was



Above: Crunchie Whitby in the Singles competition with Holly at the wobbly bridge — lining up for this obstacle is more difficult with a single horse than a pair

Below: Crunchie in the Pairs competition with Holly and Snippet at the shunt — the challenge is to roll the small log in the foreground without knocking the upright markers



Danielle Svobodova with Agua at the loading ramp — the log is pulled part way up the ramp and held there for 15 seconds

a challenge, definitely. Some obstacles like the shunt were a lot harder with a single than a pair. Mine went pretty well, we didn't disgrace ourselves, and I'm happy with that. Just showing that they can do it, can stand in there with the Europeans, is enough for me.'

Richard Eames echoed this, saying, 'It was nice to meet people from Europe. I don't think we from the UK disgraced ourselves — British loggers need a bit more self-belief.'

Richard and his Cob mare Elizabeth had a full week: helping to build the course, giving demonstrations, and competing. Richard said, 'She's a bit inexperienced, and was a little bit keen. It's tricky when you've got your work head on and then switching to competition mode — and she's never done a competition before! In the demonstrations she had to pull a reasonable-sized log, uphill, so she had to put more into it, in forward-going mode — but you want slow and steady for competitions.'

Peter Coates's part-bred Shire Nathan was also in working mode. Peter said, 'Nathan was a bit gung-ho — he's used to getting on with the job, so we lost points because he was so keen to get on and work. But it was a nice course, a good challenge, nothing there was impossible.'

Chief judge was Maggie Braunton, assisted by Chris Wadsworth and Kate Mobbs-Morgan. The competitors complimented Maggie for her professionalism, and Crunchie said, 'She's done a sterling job.'

Maggie said, 'These are very good horses, all forestry horses, and this isn't a forestry situation. There was a very high standard from overseas and this country. There was a very strong competitive feeling, but also a lot of support when they were watching each other — when someone did well, a great cheer went up.'



Takashi Iwama with Ella exiting the box — Takashi checks behind him to ensure the log does not knock over any of the markers



Above: Japanese entrant Takashi Iwama who competed in the Singles competition with Doug Joiner's Percheron mare Ella, is awarded a special trophy

Below: chief judge Maggie Braunton presents a pair of leather reins to Danielle Svobodova of the Czech Republic — the only female competitor, and the youngest at 17 years old



Joe Deacon with his Shire gelding Merlin — Joe has just taken up the reins after the voice command section where the horse has to move forward and then halt on command



Peter Coates turns Nathan within the box — a test of precision and control within a tight space, avoiding contact with the markers



The wobbly bridge takes shape — chainsaw operator Andy Iredale at work

Julian Philipson and Doug Joiner welcome Jim Johnstone (left), who travelled south to see the event

Chief judge Maggie Branton reviews the scores in a close-fought Championship



Demonstrations: Matt Waller with Holly (top) and Steffi Schaffler with Lisa

Martin Clunes chats to Matt Waller and admires his Suffolk mare Holly

Building the course — Chris Wadsworth, Max Hibbert and Andy Iredale

Danielle Svobodova, Josef's daughter, was the only female competitor, and the youngest at 17. In recognition of her achievement, Maggie presented her with a pair of fine leather reins, donated by harness maker Tärnsvö Garveri.

The BHL were glad once again to welcome Takashi Iwama from Japan, along with Ken Hachimaru and Katsuhiko Isezaki.

Takashi won the annual BHL competition in 2011. He attended the Championship to compete, and for the opportunity to meet working horsemen from other countries.

As a non-European entrant, with Doug Joiner's Percheron mare Ella, Takashi received a special trophy.

He said, 'Ella was brilliant. It was delightful to see other countries' professional loggers, and I admired them all. I enjoyed it a lot.

'What I learned from the loggers was some techniques in the way they relate with their horses, which I want to combine into my way, to sharpen my skill for myself and other loggers and apprentices, and to be a better working horseman.'

Takashi said he was pleasantly surprised by the large number of spectators, and also at finding a bar in the middle of the forest!

Thanks go to those who volunteered as course builders, stewards and front-of-house, including Julian Philipson, Chris Wadsworth, Max Hibbert, Gary Kendall, Andy Iredale and David Roycroft.

Gary and Max said they had learned a lot from building the course, and Gary added, 'Doing the stewarding as well, I could tell the people who've got a bond with their horses: Matthias has a very good understanding.'

Chainsaw operator Andy Iredale helped to build the course, and then played a key role in the Championship as the 'chainsaw hazard'. He said the bravest horse was Jürgen Duddeck's Votan: 'It was interesting —

where I was positioned I could probably see how the horses reacted better than everyone else. The only horse that ignored me completely was the strawberry roan Ardennes — he just plodded on as if I wasn't there. All the others looked my way and tensed a bit.'

The BHL also ran horse logging demonstrations, led by Richard Eames with Elizabeth, with Matt Waller and his Suffolk mare Holly, Steffi Schaffler and her Ardennes Lisa, and Pete Harmer on chainsaw. Together, they demonstrated the full process of felling and extracting timber.

Matt Waller's mare Holly attracted the attention of actor and presenter Martin Clunes, who was at the Championship for one day to film a TV documentary. Martin, who owns two Clydesdales, was impressed to see a working Suffolk, and stopped to talk to Matt and admire Holly.

'Seeing is Believing' — Horse Logging on a Royal Estate in Wales

Cathrin Vaughan

HRH The Prince of Wales invited the top names in Welsh forestry and woodland management to his Llwynywermod estate near Llandovery for a demonstration of horse logging.

The 'Seeing is Believing' event on 10 July was hosted by The Prince of Wales, who as patron of the British Horse Loggers came up with the idea to promote the use of horses in forestry by showing how effective and efficient they can be.

The 40 invited guests represented all the major forestry and woodland organisations across Wales, as well as forestry businesses and estate owners.

Five horse loggers demonstrated in two areas of woodland how timber extraction can be carried out efficiently and with minimal impact.

Penhill Wood is a very wet site which would be difficult to access and badly damaged by using machinery. Thanks to horse logging, the formerly neglected wood is now a productive and profitable source of firewood – which is fetching ever-increasing prices. The area worked in last year shows minimal damage, while machinery would have caused severe rutting and rendered the wood inaccessible for several years.

The Oak Wood is a coppice woodland, being managed for cleft wood and firewood in the short term and valuable saw logs in the longer term. Horses are key to the management plan. BHL chairman Doug Joiner said, 'Horse logging allows for a highly selective silvicultural management of our woodlands resulting in a quality of woodland management and woodland care that is difficult to equal.'



HRH The Prince of Wales meets Steffi Schaffler and Lisa

The demonstrations were given by:

Former BHL apprentice and Duchy of Cornwall employee Mike Paddock with his Brabant stallion Remco, and his co-worker Megan Batt with her Cob gelding Jack.

Monmouth-based professional horse logger Kate Mobbs-Morgan of Rowan Working Horses with her Ardenne gelding Kipp.

BHL apprentices Richard Eames with his Cob mare Elizabeth, and Steffi Schaffler with her Ardenne mare Lisa.

The horse loggers demonstrated a range of techniques with single and double reins, and voice commands. The equipment included swingle trees, log arches and a bracken basher used on brambles.

Duchy of Cornwall Head Forester Geraint Richards, and Steve West of the British Horse Loggers Charitable Trust which funds the BHL's apprentices, gave commentaries on the demonstrations. There was keen



Kate Mobbs-Morgan and Kipp demonstrate horse logging in the Oak Wood

interest among the guests, and the horse loggers answered questions on horse breeds, their running costs and longevity, and extraction costs.

The low impact of horse logging is a huge strength, but it is also financially viable. Geraint Richards gave the recent example of 85 tonnes of firewood extracted for a cost of £2000 using horses, sold at £3500. He said, 'That was a profitable operation, and with minimal ground impact.'

After the demonstrations the guests returned to the Tythe Barn for a lunch reception with Doug Joiner, BHL trustees and Duchy staff.

The Prince of Wales made a private tour of the woodlands to meet the horse loggers and their horses, before joining his guests. He spoke of his passionate belief that horses have a place in our woodlands – and pointed out that on the Continent they are seen far more often. He urged the invited guests help keep this 'marvellous tradition' alive by considering the use of horses, especially on wet, steep or sensitive sites.

The BHL is extremely grateful to His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, and his Duchy of Cornwall and Clarence House staff, for organising this event, which was very well received and has successfully raised the profile of horse logging in Wales.

'Ow Much?!

Chris Wadsworth

I have just spent a week at the APF show, helping set up the course for the European Horse Logging Championship, and then assisting with judging the competition. With lovely horses and top horsemen, for this old logger it was inspirational stuff for the flagging spirit.

The surrounding woods held various large metal objects, and some of my younger colleagues would wander away from the horses, to return with glazed expressions, drooling over a 'Unimog' or some other implausibly expensive object. There was a huge, tracked, self-propelled mulching machine across from the horse area, and I was informed it would cost £350,000. What, then, was the total capital cost of the vast array of 'Boys' Toys' on the show site?

Forestry has always been an industry operating on tight margins, and we live in financially severe times. Just who is buying all this stuff or, more probably, persuading the finance companies to buy it for them? Obviously, some people's definitions of restricted finances are different from my own.

Horse logging is a forestry harvesting system. The basic unit for mechanised commercial harvesting is the single-head harvester and the big forwarder. These two machines can represent a capital investment of £500,000 to £750,000. Can that be right? I wag my old peasant head, and mutter; 'I could buy a heck of a lot of good horses for the price of that lot!'

Let's follow that thought. I have one horse, a trailer, a towing vehicle and a chainsaw. I usually do some cutting, and work with another self-employed cutter. This is a fairly typical horse logging set-up, and also the least cost-effective way of approaching the job, particularly if I take jobs far from home. The biggest horse logging set-up I can think of in this country can put 2-3 horses and 3-4 men on a job.

Let's assume, for the sake of argument, that I am a horse logger with infinite resources. I pay top dollar for two big horses, and put new American collars and harness on them: say £12,000. Next, a new Landrover Defender, and a big horse trailer: £30,000. (I like this game!) While we are being flash, how about a two-horse grapple forwarder, and flatbed trailer to transport it: another £25,000! Chainsaws, hand winches, aid tools, PPE for a team of 3-4 workers, all the bells and whistles: say £7,000. Total so far: £72,000.

This is obviously wildly extravagant, but if we extrapolate up to £750,000 for a harvester/forwarder combination, the same capital investment would put 20 horses and several dozen workers on site. Just what output could that lot achieve?

It is, of course, ridiculous, but the capital investment of my fantasy horse gang can be reduced at almost every point. I can hear the snorts and chortles all the way from the Lake District. OK, George, just how many good cobs with collars and swingletrees could you put in the wood for that money?

Having spent the capital, we are competing on operational costs. The costs of running a big machine set-up must be colossal: fuel, hydraulic, chain oil, chains, bars, tyres, lord knows what other consumable spares. Depreciation must be incredible, likewise repayments and interest on finance and replacement costs. The costs of downtime for any breakdown don't bear thinking about. The big machine boys hire in low loaders to move between sites, often over huge distances, and that cannot come cheap.

In my fantasy horse gang, I have assumed investment in road vehicles and trailers. It would follow that lorries would replace towed trailers to move large numbers of horses, with economies of both capital investment and running cost per horse moved.

Proper costings for keeping and working horses are hard to come by. Individual approaches and circumstances vary widely. It would be very useful if the BHL Charitable Trust



Real horse power: Richard Eames and his Cob mare Elizabeth at the APF

could at some point fund proper independent research to provide credible figures to present to the industry, and show how economies of scale would result from larger operations.

A horse-based system employs large numbers of people, both for cutting and horse work. I see that as a good thing, but it would take time to build a skilled workforce. We can soon breed work horses, but finding and training good people would take longer. We have made a good start with the Apprenticeship, it is only a matter of momentum thereafter.

It is almost a given that any site worked by horse loggers has some feature that makes machines less attractive or productive. It follows that the rate of extraction by any method from such a site will be restricted, and horse work acquires a reputation for low productivity.

If we ever could find the capital, the horses and the people to address the larger harvesting projects, and (this is important) we had access to sites where machines could achieve near optimum output, we could show what a large, properly skilled and properly resourced horse operation could do. It would be interesting.

British Festival of the Working Horse ***Cathrin Vaughan***

Full 12-page report with photographs is downloadable from
www.britishfestivaloftheworkinghorse.co.uk

The inaugural British Festival of the Working Horse was held alongside the East of England Show on 6th, 7th and 8th July.

The event was attended by its Patron, His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, and drew spectators from across the UK and overseas.

Festival Co-director and organiser Doug Joiner said, 'We were very excited that His Royal Highness visited us in Peterborough. He continues to show an active interest in the viability of working with horses and to pioneer their use. We were able to show him the very latest developments and, of course, some brilliant working horses.'

The Festival, originated by the BHL, was far from being a nostalgic piece of living history, and

spectators saw horses working with innovative modern ploughs, cultivators and logging equipment.

The range of jobs that working horses do today were represented among the 12 horses present – they work in fields, forests and vineyards, in public parks, as pack horses, and on roads and canals. Living horsepower is supremely versatile.

A rolling programme of demonstrations showcased draft horse equipment and techniques, and the first Charlie Pinney Memorial Award for Innovation in Horse Work Equipment was presented.

The winner was Albano Muscado, for the Equi-Idea 'Multi', an Italian multipurpose cultivator and plough.

A highlight was the 'Working Horses into the 21st Century' Conference on Saturday, chaired by Carl Boyde, Southern Counties Heavy Horse Association President. The expert speakers from the UK and Europe attracted huge interest.

Papers were presented on:

'Horses as a Green Energy Source', Kit Vaughan, climate change expert.

'European Initiatives and Experiences in Uses of Horses for Work in Europe', Pit Schlechter, FECTU President.

'Horses in Organic and Biodynamic Production', Henry Finzi-Constantine, viticulturist.

'Selective Breeding and Keeping Horses Fit for Purpose', Fred Barrelet, equine vet.

Much missed was Julian Grant, who sadly passed away on 5th July. As the Company Secretary and a Director of the Festival, he was one of its main organisers. A minute's silence was observed by all those taking part, as a mark of respect. Co-director Doug Joiner said, 'He will be sorely missed by all.'

Duchy Home Farm horsewoman Megan Batt did a fantastic job as commentator on the demonstrations.

FURTHER DETAILS

Horses and Handlers

Peter Coates / Shire cross gelding — Nathan

Sue Day / Cob-Clydesdale-Friesian mare and gelding — Bonny and Bilbo

Richard Dalton / Suffolk Punch gelding — Trojan

Richard Eames / traditional Cob mare — Elizabeth

Mike Paddock / Brabant stallion — Remco

Steffi Schaffler / Ardennes mare — Lisa

Mark Tasker and Joe Godderidge / Suffolk x Cob gelding — Buddy; Percheron x Shire gelding — Albert

Matt Waller / Suffolk Punch mare — Holly

Jane Wordsworth / Comtois geldings — Major and Rodeo

Equipment Demonstrated

Hay cutter; Seed drill; Three-gang grass mower; Italian multipurpose cultivator and plough; French cultivator; Harrow; Two-horse, six-wheeled forwarder with powered loading; Single-horse forwarder; Bracken basher; Sledge; Cart; Dray; Swingle tree; Logging arch; Pack saddle

Equipment was supplied by: Richard Dalton, Sue Day, Joe Godderidge, Ed Hamer, Doug Joiner, Albano Muscardo, Mark Tasker, Matt Waller and Jane Wordsworth.

Sponsors

The East of England Show; Rod and Anne Gifford of Gifford's Recycling; Adam Hart-Davis; Doug Joiner; Gudrun Leitz; The Oakdale Trust; Laurent Perrier Champagne; *Heavy Horse World*

'The old codgers'

Gina Parker



Photo by Gina Parker

Here are Charlie Parker and George Read at the British Festival of the Working Horse, Peterborough

Between them 93 years in forestry and 79 years working horses!

Warning: longevity in this line of work can turn you into grumpy old men!

Election for Chair of the BHL at the 2013 AGM

At the Annual General Meeting in 2013, Doug Joiner will be standing down from the Committee after 13 years as Chair. The AGM will appoint the Committee and a new Chair amongst the other formal business outlined in the constitution.

The Objectives of the BHL and the strategies for achieving them are given on the BHL website. These formulate the job description and required skills set for the Committee and, in particular, the Chair.

Election process and time scale

Autumn 2012: Opportunities to find out more about the workings of the Committee and the role of the Chair from current Committee members and to get involved in BHL activities.

Potential candidates declare their interest to the Committee.

Candidates must be current BHL members and put themselves forward using the format given here as a guideline.

Winter and Spring 2012/13: Candidates submit an 'election address' in writing to be included in the March BHL newsletter (copy deadline 1st March).

AGM 2013: Elections to be held; the successful candidate will be elected by BHL members present at the AGM.

Information required to register a declaration of interest

Candidate: Name; Address; Phone number; Mobile number; Email address

'I wish to declare my interest in standing for election as Chair of the BHL. I am a member.' Signed and dated.

Proposer: Name, address, contact details and confirmation of BHL membership.

Seconder: Name, address, contact details and confirmation of BHL membership.

Biosecurity Alert — Chalara

The Forestry Commission (FC) is highlighting the threat of the highly destructive *Chalara* dieback of ash trees, caused by the *Chalara fraxinea* fungus. It has caused widespread damage to ash trees on the Continent. See www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara for full details, including symptoms.

The first British cases, early in 2012, were in a Buckinghamshire nursery, on ash plants imported from The Netherlands. Infected plants have so far been found in nurseries and plantings of young ash trees in many parts of England, and one area in Scotland.

The FC is urging vigilance, especially over ash trees planted in recent years, to eradicate the disease before it becomes established in Britain.

The next issue of Timber Tongues will be at the end of March, and contributions are welcome. How about sharing your experiences, opinions and expertise with fellow BHL members? Have you been working on an interesting project, for example? Please email copy to Cathy Vaughan by mid-March.

National Trust Contract



Photograph by Carole Coates

Peter Coates and his part-bred Shire gelding Nathan have completed a high-profile logging contract for the National Trust.

Peter was awarded the contract for work at Hardcastle Craggs, near Hebden Bridge in West Yorkshire, earlier this year.

Carole Coates said: 'The Trust manages extensive woodland on this steep valley and had decided to use some of the timber that had been felled recently by another party.'

'On Easter Monday and Tuesday with the company of Trust volunteers we extracted the timber to roadside and provided information on the process to volunteers and the public.'

'The weather was variable and Nathan behaved perfectly.'

Peter and Nathan were also called in to help at Howsham Mill, a restoration project, whilst Chris Wadsworth's Percheron gelding Ourigan was off work.

Carole said: 'It is a "sensitive" site at the side of the River Derwent.'

'Peter and Chris used Chris's forwarder to take scaffolding poles, planks etc across a water meadow. Nathan is getting quite used to building materials!'

This contract underlines how horses are ideal for a variety of uses on sensitive sites where machinery would cause damage and disturbance.

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