



Timber Tongues

HRH Welcomes Ella to Clarence House

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Article reproduced from the [original press release](#)

The Prince of Wales's Christmas tree was delivered to Clarence House on the 3rd of December 2010 by a sustainable form of transport - a working horse.

Ella, a grey Percheron mare, had the privilege of pulling a cart carrying the pine tree into the royal residence where The Prince was waiting to greet her and representatives of the British Horse Loggers, of which he is Patron.

At the reins was Doug Joiner, Chairman of the British Horse Loggers.

His Royal Highness has been a supporter of the working horse industry for a number of years and met Ella a few years ago when he

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Sledge Wanted

I have just got a job for some logging near Llanbrynmair, where the client has unfortunately chopped the logs into 1m - 2m length, about 250 of them!

Does anyone have a sledge or similar I could borrow, or could you advise me on putting something together quickly or cheaply?

This will hopefully be a few weeks work for me a year, but now they know they won't be chopping the logs so short again, so should only be needed for a day or two at the start of the work. Hope to commence end of April.

Please contact me if you can help. Thanks. **Barbara Haddrill, 07901 741217; barbara@carnog.co.uk, www.carnog.co.uk**

Chairman's Report

Doug Joiner

BHL AGM

This year's AGM will be held at 6.00pm on Saturday 14th May in Childer Wood, near Ledbury in Herefordshire. A formal notification, as required by the constitution, will be posted to all members in due course and will include an agenda with all the business to be discussed and the details for the election of the committee for 2011/12.

BHL Competitions.

These will now be held over the AGM weekend. This is the first time we have done so and it will be an interesting experiment. Providing an open to all activity is what we have tried to achieve for the AGM weekend. Running the competitions in July has meant that a number of members could not attend due to other commitments such as shows and hay making.

Horses and members will be welcome from the Thursday before to settle in, help to build the course and, on Friday, have a practice. There will be no practice on the Saturday or Sunday.

We will be hosting a small party of Japanese horse loggers from Tono City. They work professionally in Japan on quite a large scale by their own account. It will be fascinating to meet them.

<http://sites.google.com/site/tonobahan>

<http://sites.google.com/site/tonobahan/home/ibennt> for a short video

They also 'race' their horses' largely Percheron and Belgian crossed with a local breed, Banei horses, although they don't look much like crosses to me!

Click [here](#) to see more on google about Banei Horse Racing.

Five competitions in all; singles and pairs, stallions singles and pairs and the fell and extract competition. All fiercely fought but always friendly and fun. For more information see the web site.

www.britishhorseloggers.org/pages/bhl%20events.html

BHL Charitable Trust

The two apprentices continue to make good progress. Mike is looking ahead to his graduation later this summer and Rich is building his herd of Exmoors. We will be making an exciting announcement about Mike's future work at the open meeting after the formalities of the AGM. We have a good number of contractors offering short placements and Chris Wadsworth is considering offering a main placement to a new potential apprentice for the full three years. Many of you will have skills and experiences that are relevant and useful and I encourage you to consider offering an input, no matter how small you may feel it will be, to the apprenticeship scheme. It will support our efforts to ensure the long term and healthy future of our profession. We continue to receive serious ap-

plications and we need your support.

www.britishhorseloggerscharitabletrust.org

British Festival of the Working Horse 2012

A reworking of the format will still see a three day Festival in Windsor but with a different emphasis on the three days. We are hoping that the European Horse Logging Championship will be held at the event. In France in 2010 and Belgium this summer, it is a fitting event for our first British working horse festival. We will also be holding the 'Charlie Pinney Award for Innovation in Horse Work Equipment' as a tribute.

Friday, 7th September will be a full day of horse logging and woodland management demonstrations. These will take place in a small wood which will be worked by a team of contractors in the weeks building up to Festival in order to show clearly how a horse logging contract works and on the competition and demonstration areas next to the wood. This day will be for professionals and schools; similar to our presence at the APF. We are hoping to work closely with local schools, LEAF, the RFS, Confor and other groups.

Saturday 8th September will be the main 'show case' day with a full programme of demonstrations, competitions and main ring entertainment. Saturday evening will be started off with a cham-

pagne reception for all taking part, courtesy of Laurent Perrier Champagne.

Sunday 9th September will see a reduced main ring programme with added breed and equipment parades and prize giving. Demonstrations will be in full swing and competitions brought to a close.

Morgan Car and Raffle

The BHL Charitable Trust is now licensed to run a 'society lottery' with the Gambling Commission. The raffle will be of a brand new 3 wheel sports car made available to us by the Morgan Motor Company. This is a stunning reworking of the 1920's classic iconic racing car and has just been launched at the Geneva Motor Show to great acclaim.

Tickets will be £10 each in books of five and will be available for sale soon.



Leonardo

We have enjoyed 3 previous study tours funded by Leonardo European funding; to France, Romania and the Czech Republic. The bid that Debra Olsen and I worked on for a study tour to Poland was rejected and we have reworked it and resubmitted it. We have travelled on the VETPRO programme as it is the only one which will support a one week study tour. We have always been of the opinion

that a two week or longer study tour would be too difficult for busy contractors. Sadly, the national agency have tightened the criteria due to abuses. VETPRO is for vocational, educational and training professionals and Ecorysis (the agency) want to see a clearer link between participating and training than before. On their advice, we have included a new condition that all beneficiaries of the funding will actively support the apprenticeship scheme. There are, of course, other conditions and all applicants have their applications considered by the BHL committee. On the last study tour we had more applicants than places so we had to apply the conditions then applying to agree who would be most appropriate to send. On this new condition a placement provider, mentor or training course organiser and deliverer will be able to demonstrate their support clearly and this will put pressure on others to show how they support the scheme. As in previous years it is the job of the applicant to put forward a persuasive case to reinforce their application.

We hope to know in time for the AGM weekend whether our new application has been successful.

Stock Gaylard

Charles Buckler is organising the horses attending here on 27th August. There will be the usual 'elements of the competition' as a main ring event plus more demonstrations and horse based activities. Horses by invitation only; talk to Charles if you wish to bring a horse or horses. Held in the beautiful grounds at Stock Gaylard it is a great event to go to.

European Horse Logging Competition

This will be held in Libramont, Belgium on 26th and 27th July. Contact Doug Joiner if you wish to take part. Horse transport may be organised if a large enough group attends and expenses will be available. It is a wonderful event to spectate at and we would love to have a British team competing, especially in the build up to the British Festival in 2012.

Training courses

Check the web site for more details and dates. Courses will be on mensuration, tariffing and marketing in July (see page 6 of this newsletter for details) and our emergency package of equine and human forestry first aid and emergency farriery in November. Courses are now charged at £100 per person for a full, catered weekend of excellent training.

FECTU

Following the success we had hosting the FECTU annual general meeting last year, I will be travelling to Southern Sweden to represent the BHL in all its incarnations. Any other members wishing to attend will be most welcome. As ever, anyone from the BHL attending will do so at their own expense. Attractive offer, eh?

www.fectu.org

Doug Joiner.

Dead Boring ***Julian Philipson***

Recently a friend of ours died suddenly, though no one should have been surprised as he was over 70. He was the best of men, a mainstay of the local smallholders group, regularly called in by his former employers as an expert digger driver, well liked by all. He lived in a cottage on a reclaimed colliery site, kept a flock of sheep and some beef shorthorns, and had finally got his land and buildings into the shape he wanted.

It turned out that he had not made a will, and that his wife Margaret was not actually lawfully wedded to him. All the property and assets were in his name.

Under the law of intestacy (that is if you die without a will) property is divided according to strict rules, first to a lawful wife, then any descendants and so on. Margaret will get nothing. Bill's son has put the property up for sale and she expects to be turfed out without much more than the clothes on her back.

Why mention this in a newsletter dedicated to horselogging? Well, horseloggers are by their nature given to unconventional lifestyles and not all have regular family lives. So, remember, under the law in England and Wales, there is no such thing as a common-law wife. Make a proper will!

And another thing! Executors of a will are obliged to realise assets for the best value they can and not to consider what the wishes of the deceased might have been. So in my will I have stipulated that they are not to sell my livestock for the highest price but to find good homes for them.

Horse Logging Competition ***Peter Harmer***

This will be run along side the original competition, which is to be held on Saturday 14th May 2011 at Childer Wood, Hereford. After which of course will be the AGM of the BHL.

PS. (No weapons allowed, unless prior agreement has been sorted).

PPS (For the AGM that is).

Competition Concept:

The competition is open to both teams of two or single entries, each team is given an area of woodland, in which there will be a number of trees marked for felling. (The trees when felled should yield approximately two cubic metre's of usable timber). The trees are felled, extracted and presented stacked in three metre lengths in an allotted landing area. How the timber is extracted is up to the individual team, be it whole pole or short wood, long gears, arch, forwarder it is up to them. But it must involve a horse, mule, donkey or oxen. The competition will be timed and must be completed within three hours.

Requirements:

All chainsaw operators must hold NPTC CS30 and CS31 they must wear full PPE as recommended by the HSE, all chainsaws and PPE will be inspected by the judges.

All horses must be deemed fit for work by the judges and all harness will be inspected.

There will be limited places and a small entrance fee of £4.00 per team, closing date for entries 30th April 2011.

For entry forms apply to:

Peter Harmer

01905 381 081 or email: sowerpaw@fsmail.net

"horse-loggers are by their nature given to unconventional lifestyles ... so make a proper will!"

Going Underground

A short story from Crunchie Whitby

Anyone who knows me will know I have a deep interest in anything horsey, especially when concerning my favourite gypsy cob type ponies.

Well a tale recently recounted to me, I feel may be of interest to horse loggers, though not about logging it does say a bit about the hardiness of these particular ponies.

Back around the 1950's, my friend Brian's, father and grandfather ran a farm at 'Littledown' on the way to the Forest of Dean. Brian recalled how the Romany travellers, after spending the summer picking plums and peas in the vale of Evesham and hops and apples in Herefordshire would make their way to over-winter at a place "crumps meadow" deep in the forest. Well Brian's father was well known to many of these travellers, who would stop at the farm when passing to see if he would 'have a deal' on some of the young stock they had accumulated, on their summer wandering. This would give the travellers a bit of cash to see them into the winter, and Brian's father on acquiring a dozen or so would then sell these on to the bigger mines in the forest (the smaller ones dealing directly with the travellers) making a profit for himself for his troubles.

These unfortunate ponies would then be used down the mines lugging coal and tools in complete darkness, even being stabled in the dark in underground stables. In fact for their entire stay of 18 months to perhaps two years these ponies would see no daylight at all. After their session was up the survivors (and I'm sure many didn't survive the damp dark conditions) Brian's father would buy them back at next to nothing. These ponies would arrive at the farm, mostly bald, totally blind and in a pretty poor condition. Brian recalled how they were placed in a dark shed made of corrugated metal at the back of the farm kept for this purpose. All over this shed nail holes had been made in the tin sheets and then plugged with paper and suchlike, after a day or two to settle one of these plugs would be removed allowing a shard of daylight in. The ponies at first would huddle in a corner away from this

scary thing, but gradually the panic would calm and the next day a few more holes would have been unplugged and the next few until weeks later the door may be opened a crack and eventually the ponies could be taken to graze in complete daylight. Over months their hair would grow back and with good grazing they would regain condition until no-one except themselves knew what ordeals they had endured. When the travellers passed again many of these animals were sold back to them to be kept for pulling wagons. After all they could be brought cheap and had gained plenty of work experience down the pit.



What a joy it must have been for them to graze on the lush verges with birds singing and the sun on their backs after their imprisonment underground.

Vacancy

Please apply to the BHL Committee

The position of **BHL Newsletter Editor** is up for grabs. If you have:

- A natural eye for a good layout
- A natural curiosity and talent for ferreting out & editing good copy
- The ability to remain objective amongst a group of strongly opinionated, hardworking horse loggers



Then **WE NEED YOU!**

This is your chance to become more involved in the BHL and to be in the know! There is the potential for remuneration subject to negotiation.

To apply, please email your details to the Chair—chair@britishhorseloggers.org. Applications will be considered at the upcoming AGM.

Training Course 16/17 July Marketing & Mensuration

Locations:

- Day one Childer Wood
- Day two Hall Wood

Details:

Two introductory methods of measuring standing timber volumes:

- Estimation of standing timber volumes for inventory purposes for conifers
- and Abbreviated tariff system for broadleaves.

These systems should enable a contractor or woodland owner to estimate standing volumes of a compartment or stand of timber with reasonable accuracy.

There will also be discussions on tree selection for thinnings, timber quality, defects and prices.

Cost: £100.00

Each student will require a copy of FC booklet 39 and a metric girth tape which may or may not be supplied by the BHL awaiting decision.

To book your place now, please contact Peter Harmer. 01905 381 081 or email: sowerpaw@fsmail.net



"The public reaction to the proposed 'sell off' of our state forests shows an emotional and powerful sympathy with the woodlands..."

Keep it Local Doug Joiner

I am a supporter of certification and the appliance of verifiable standards to farming and forestry. I have farmed organically and my wood and woodland products are FSC certificated. It is vital that sustainable and careful management and production is thoughtfully controlled and spurious claims policed and prohibited. Certification should detect illegally logged timber and ensure that the timber and timber products are as sustainable as we would argue that timber can be. Well managed woodlands are productive in the most renewable resource we have; water and sunlight in synergy creating a virtuous and endless cycle of a specialist habitat essential for particular species of flora and fauna, a renewable fuel and a renewable building material which is, at worst, carbon neutral and, at best, can lock up carbon for many years.

I was invited to participate in the pilot of the SLIMF (small, low intensity managed forests, I think) certification scheme when it was first tried by FSC and Woodmark and have been certified, sorry certificated, ever since. SLIMF was launched to enable UKWAS to be applied more flexibly to those who managed smaller blocks of forestry for whom 'full' certification was onerous and too expensive.

This initial venture into affordable certification stumbled after the pilot project wound up and we saw prices rise suddenly to insupportable levels. Even though I would have loved to stay with the Woodmark scheme, administered by the Soil Association, I was forced to leave.

The alternative to SLIMF certification for smaller blocks of woodland is to join a group scheme. This is what I did for a few years and it allowed me to continue to be certificated. I was never entirely happy with being in a group scheme and when it folded, I transferred to the Control Union Certification scheme with which I remain to this day. This is a genuine 'SLIMF' scheme and reduces the administrative and financial burden that I would otherwise face. As a 'sole trader' I do not have staff who can deal with enquiries, forms and audits and any time I spend on this is down time, costing me double; paying for the service and not earning while being audited. A bit like being on holiday without the fun. Annual audits concentrate on specific areas of the UKWAS standard and involve roughly half a day to complete. This is more acceptable to a small contractor such as myself, devoid of office staff and certification specialists, rather than the much more time consuming process of the full UKWAS interrogation.



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The positives of certification are to do with being in a virtuous club, of being able to 'prove' that your work and your products are recognised as high quality. Without certification anyone can make any claim they like about their timber; what it is, where it comes from and if it is sustainably produced. There are two reasons why someone would make such a claim and only one of those reasons is because the claim is true. External scrutiny and verification is vital.

The real benefits for my business are less obvious and sometimes intangible.

If I want to sell to certain procurers such as the Forestry Commission or to Local Authorities then being certificated is a pre-requisite. I do find that almost no-one else knows what FSC stands for, recognise the tick and tree logo or, frankly, give a fig. I sell my timber and timber products locally and that is what excites my customers. My letter heads and invoices all display my FSC credentials and I make a point of telling my customers that they should be pleased that they have had the knowledge and conscience to buy FSC certificated timber. They invariably ask what that is and the nearest I have come to an understandable explanation is to tell them it is a bit like being organic. They understand that, to an extent, but then often ask me if my timber is more expensive as a result of this added status.

The reality is that I spend hard earned cash and some rare 'spare' time on pursuing a dream that makes little business sense; which results in almost no sales and no price premium. I sell my timber because I price it well, sell it locally

and usually deliver it for free, and because I use horses for the extraction. My customers love the local production; if it is oak I can take them to the stump and show them where 'their' tree grew. They love to see the horses working, they enjoy our lightness in the wood. I have had some additional and temporary kudos from my horse drawn delivery of a Christmas tree to a well known London address but this had neither a link with certification nor financial gain; it certainly did not champion local production.

The future is with the consumer but the consumer needs educating.

FSC, in all its wisdom, set a major PR event, "FSC Friday", (what do you mean you have never heard of it?) on Friday of the bi-annual APF Exhibition when I, and all good foresters, were busy. FSC does need to get much more active with its publicity and showcase the excellence of woodland management and timber production it both promotes, aspires to and, allegedly, ensures. FSC needs to expose the huge problem of illegally logged timber, its link with organised crime and other trafficking. FSC needs to engage the hearts and minds of a public that should consider timber as the first choice for building and heating and show that using FSC certificated timber brings even more benefits at no extra cost.

There is an enormous opportunity right now. The public reaction to the proposed 'sell off' of our state forests shows an emotional and powerful sympathy with the woodlands that nice Mr. Cameron seriously underestimated. This could be capitalised on by FSC to promote the excellence of our timber and timber products coming from very well managed woodlands that have superb environmental benefits for a greatly improved bio-diversity and the perfect environment for us to enjoy.

If they do not make the most of this opportunity, they are failing in their primary role.

FSC also needs to support and champion local production to get back into step with developments in food production and other consumables that we rely on. As a producer of timber and timber products that I sell only into the local market I am offended by FSC charcoal in my local supermarket that comes from Brazil and South Africa. I do know that international trade for developing countries is important but there are many home bred charcoal producers selling a superior product to eucalyptus charcoal from South Africa and it is these producers we should be supporting. I have long argued for an 'FSC Plus' category that is an additional accolade for those who sell their certificated timber locally. The accolade is not worth much if FSC is not known about or understood.

So, FSC, earn your fees and start to make a difference firstly to the recognition that timber is the ultimate in sustainability, secondly that locally sourced timber is the right product and, finally, that good woodland management is great for landscape, aesthetics, bio-diversity, sanity and future timber production."



Thoughts, Musings and Grumbles on the Future of Horse Logging

Peter Harmer

Apparently we are short off copy again for this issue of the newsletter, (no surprise there then). So I've been wheeled out to rattle a few cages again. (Well at least I'm consistent). So prepare to be thought-provoked or outraged and send your letters to the editor (poor lass).

For quite sometime, I have had some concerns about the direction that some horse loggers seem to be taking in the UK (hopefully, completely unfounded and please correct me if I am wrong. Letters to the editor please).

That is that most seem to aspire to be horse drawn timber extraction contractors or at best, harvesting and horse drawn extraction contractors. So why is this a problem, surely this is what horse logging is all about, well yes, but I am not sure that it is enough to survive.



Karen Kilshaw with Jake extracting firewood to be processed on site.

"...it won't stop you from taking on harvesting and extraction contracts when they're on offer, but it will give you another string to the horse-logging bow and I am sure a better paying one."

Let me try and qualify this. All too regularly I hear of machinery based harvesting and extraction contractors going bust and they supposedly have what it takes to survive in the "forget the quality feel the width" type of volume markets.

"But we work in a niche market" I hear you cry, true, and a major part of that niche seems to be conservation bodies such as Natural England and local Wildlife Trusts, (more letters to the editor) So what's wrong with conservation bodies, nothing except they rely very heavily on funding from central government and the EU.

Now I believe for the time being that EU funding is pretty safe but central government not so sure. Now if I don't think you should be competing in conventional forestry against the machine boys and girls, and you should certainly think long and hard about something the machine folks can't or won't do (there is normally a reason for them not wanting to play) and I'm not so sure about the conservation bodies as a good long term customer, where should you be looking for your work?



Crunchie extracting logs straight to Doug's mill

I think (and I know this will not suit everyone) you should be looking at making horse logging a part of your business and not just your only business. So wherever possible you become firewood merchants that happen to extract their firewood with horses or a mobile saw miller that extracts his

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or his customer's timber to the mill by horses, fence, gate manufacturer, or perhaps a chainsaw carver. It's the old adage of "adding value" which has long been a mantra of most manufacturing companies both large and small. Now just because you make some of your money from firewood round (and if it is possible why not a few horse drawn deliveries, just think of the PR in that) it won't stop you from taking on harvesting and extraction contracts when they're on offer, but it will give you another string to the horse-logging bow and I am sure a better paying one.

Let me run this one by you, if you felled and extracted someone else's firewood I would hope that you would be paid somewhere a round £30-£35 per cubic metre stacked at road side but if you where to buy that firewood for £10.00 per cubic metre you will be able to sell it cut split and delivered for £140.00 per cubic metre. (Two loads at £70.00 per load).



Crunchie and Mike getting wet!

I am certain that it will also prove to some potential forestry customers that you understand the financial imperatives with producing a raw material and that of course is what timber is, perhaps even convince some of your sceptics that you are not just a service provider that is only capable of working on a day rate and who has no knowledge or care for what their daily out put is worth in the real world.

Which is something I believe I detect amongst some BHL members, letters to the editor.

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visited Cornwall to learn about the work of Mr Joiner, who is a professional logger and woodland manager.

Another working horse, Dot, a British cob mare, also went along ahead of a reception The Prince hosted for the loggers at Clarence House.

As The Prince posed for a picture with the animals and Mr Joiner, a member of his household brought out a plate of carrots for The Prince to feed to the horses.

His Royal Highness joked with the woodland manager, saying: "Would you like a carrot?" The Prince burst out laughing when he said "Yes" and duly handed one over.

Also invited to the reception were organisers of the British Festival of the Working Horse, the first of its kind, which will be staged in 2012.

The animals play an unsung role in many areas from horticulture and small-scale agriculture to fruit production and even work in urban areas and pedestrianised zones.

The festival will take place in Windsor Great Park in September 2012 and will feature horses involved in work, competitions and in the main performance ring.

Apprentice logger Richard Eames, 34, from Thatcham in Berkshire, said it was important for his industry that figures like The Prince supported their work.

He added: "I've been an apprentice for a year out of a three-year course and this is my dream job, I love working outdoors and with horses."

"The festival will take place in Windsor Great Park in September 2012 and will feature horses involved in work, competitions and in the main performance ring."

BHL Membership Insurance Scheme—Renew Now

Dear Members,

This is to notify you that the BHL membership insurance scheme is now entering its second year.

The premium has been held with no increase. A 1% increase in insurance tax has led to a small rise in the overall cost of £6.50 so that the insurance for the year 2011/12 will cost £689 only. It is possible to pay in 4 equal instalments with an additional charge of £8.

This is tremendous value for money and is a genuine membership benefit.

The insurance runs concurrent with the membership year, 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011 and membership of the BHL for this period is a requirement.

In order to ensure I was fully insured last year I kept my old insurance in place until the BHL scheme became live. I then cancelled the old one, receiving a full pro rata refund of the cost. It is not recommended to have two parallel insurance policies running even if the old one is about to run out as it could be considered illegal and will certainly be confusing if a claim is made.

The insurance offers £10m public liability cover, £10m employers' liability cover, £10m products and pollution cover, £1m manslaughter legal defence costs, up to £5m war and terrorism with an excess of up to £250 or £500 dependant upon the claim.

It is available for partnerships, that is "A and B Lastname" trading as 'Horse Logging Business' for a single fee although limited companies can not be covered.

To take out the insurance send in two cheques to Doug Joiner. One, payable to "British Horse Loggers" for the membership fee of £30 (full member) or £60 (professional register only) per person and another, payable to "S.E.I.B." for £689 by the middle of March 2010 in order to process the application/renewal in time for the 1st April.

Please also include a list of all your insurable activities so that the insurers have a record and can advise you if there are any additional charges. (See full list of information they require below). The cover is for all forestry work but does not cover work off the ground, for example. As another example, additional charges were made last year for carriage rides but the insurance still came in cheaper than the previous policy with higher levels of cover.

Email or phone Doug for details of payments by instalment. You can also print and post the membership form on the web site which has a section to be completed for the insurance scheme.

From my own perspective, this policy saves me more than £800 per year and gives me better cover.

Best wishes,

Doug.

Information required is:

- * Name (including any 'trading as' name) and correspondence address for each member
- * full description of all activities,
- * confirmation of any claims/incidents that may have occurred,
- * turnover figure,
- * years trading and any qualifications if applicable
- * Employers Liability; an estimated wage roll for the employees.

BRITISH HORSE LOGGERS

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From the Chair of the BHL, Doug Joiner, Hill Farm, Bosbury, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 1HE.

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www.britishhorseloggers.org

Patron: His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales

The next edition of Timber Tongues
will be out in June.

If you would like to contribute, please
email your article in by Mid May 2011
to the newsletter editor.

The BHL Newsletter Editor
Email: editor@britishhorseloggers.org

