



# Timber Tongues

## *Horse Logging Capabilities on Display at the APF*

### **In this issue:**

**Chair's Report** 2  
*Kate Mobbs-Morgan*

**Trait de Comt'est 2016** 3  
*Carole and Peter Coates*

**British Horse Loggers at the APF 2016 Exhibition** 4/5  
*Cathrin Vaughan*

**Rowan Working Horses Demonstration Day** 6/7  
*Cathrin Vaughan*

**The Doug Joiner Horse Lodge** 8  
*Gudrun Leitz*



*Max Hibbert and Freddie — see pages 4 and 5 for more. Photo by Cathrin Vaughan*

## *Learning to Log*



*Kate Mobbs-Morgan and her pair of Ardennes geldings giving a demonstration and "have a go" sessions — see pages 6 and 7 for more*

*Photos by Cathrin Vaughan*





## *Chair's Report*

### *Kate Mobbs-Morgan*

Past the autumn equinox now and the evenings draw in quickly which should leave more time for catching up with paperwork! Funny how the inclination is not really there though!

It is only a few weeks since some of our members attended, on behalf of you all, the APF forestry exhibition. My feeling is that it went very well despite the fact that we had a funny little pocket of woodland to work with. The horsemen demonstrating showcased the horses really well, working with two singles and a pair of cobs on the move for each demonstration.

We had a lot of interest each time and many sensible questions. Sometimes these events are slow burners but I think work will come from it for some.

It still feels important, from the interest shown for us as a membership to have a presence at shows like this. Although the BHL gets a payment for demonstrating it does cost a reasonable sum for us to be there.

I have to say though, in defence of that, everyone being paid goes way beyond the call of duty and those manning the stand all give their time pro gratis. As an aside we also had the best sales ever of logoed items and this will all go back into the pot!

The Woodland Management course has been run again, and we got enough attendees to almost cover the costs. That is such a positive as it is a four-day course and the participants came in from all over the UK. The power of Facebook!

The website is undergoing an update with some additions at the moment so we expect to be back on track with that very soon. I realise it has been slow in the coming and difficult to update information, so thank you for bearing with us.

Well, keep watching our Facebook page and website for 2017 events. We have some thoughts in the pipeline that should be interesting.



*Logging horses at the APF 2016. From top:  
Chris Wadsworth's Cob mare Blue  
Crunchie Whitby's Cob mares Ivy and Snippet  
Max Hibbert's Belgian Draft gelding Freddie  
Photos by Cathrin Vaughan*

## *Trait de Comt'est 2016*

### *Carole and Peter Coates*



*Jurgen Duddek of Team Germany with Votan*

It is a truth universally acknowledged that if there is a heavy horse show going on where you have to take a ferry for a few hours then we will be interested in it. And the latest ferry trip took us to Nevers in France to the Trait Comt'Est event in Burgundy. This is a new event developed by the Comtois breed association and actively supported by the Department of Nièvre Council.

Held at the Ferme du Marault agricultural centre which is also the permanent home of Charollais cattle breeding, it provided a good background for showcasing the abilities of heavy horses of many Continental breeds. Around 250 horses were working in driving, ploughing, logging and performing environments; the main breeds being Ardennais Belges, Franches Montagnes (a Swiss breed), Bretons, Cobs Normands, Percherons, Boulonnais and Comtois.



*The main building of the site*

The object of the show is to test the ability of the animals rather than “show” them. There were six tests held over three days:

**Manageability in an urban environment:** In France in excess of 60 towns use equines to collect rubbish, manage green spaces, people transport etc.

**Horse Logging:** In France, horses are often to be found working in sensitive areas, not just forests but also river banks. This test illustrated the problems horse and handlers are likely to find and how they work round them to complete the job.

**Labour:** Many parts of the world are still cultivated using traction animals, not just equines but also bovines and camelids. The test used different crops and different types of equipment to show what can be done.

**Carriage driving:** A 15 km route around the farm that had to be carried out in a set time.

**Marathon:** The teams had to perform as quickly as possible in a set order.

**Obstacle course, four in hand:** A compact test of manageability, manoeuvrability and skill. It was fast and exciting.

All the tests emphasised man and animal working together – the partnership – required to achieve a safe and successful result.

During the day and late into the evening, Jehol provided demonstrations of acrobatic skills of both horses and riders.

The show was also used to showcase food products from the Burgundy and Franche Comte regions, e.g. Comte cheese, Burgundy wines, Charollais beef. There was a bizarre note, from an English perspective: at one point the commentator recommended that we try the horse meat that was being sold – a bit like saying “Get your Shergar burgers here”. Whilst I loved the show I couldn't see this going down at all well at the Shire Horse Show or Olympia.

In contrast to PferdeStark, held in Germany, this show did not attract many English visitors (there were four of us) which is a shame because it is well presented with a lot of variety with a really relaxed and friendly atmosphere in a beautiful area of France. There is a proposal to hold similar events in Belgium and Switzerland in 2017 and 2018.



## *British Horse Loggers at the APF 2016 Exhibition*

### *Cathrin Vaughan*



*Crunchie Whitby with Ivy and Snippet*

*All photos by Cathrin Vaughan*

September 15th–17th saw another successful APF Exhibition for the BHL. The UK's biggest forestry event, it is an excellent opportunity to showcase horse logging to the industry.

The BHL stand this time was a sloping site with good visibility of the horses at work, but with a narrow frontage sandwiched between two machinery stands. There was continual interest in the stand, and the three demonstrations each day were a big draw.

Pete Harmer organised the site, and he and Andy Iredale were the chainsaw operators.

The demonstrators were:

Chris Wadsworth from Yorkshire with his Cob mare Blue. Chris is already back at work despite his recent hip operation, confounding his doctors by the speed of his ongoing recovery!

Crunchie Whitby from Herefordshire with his Cob mares Snippet and Ivy, working as a pair.

Max Hibbert from Yorkshire with his Belgian Draft gelding Freddie.

The horses all coped well with the machinery and the crowds. In particular, Chris Wadsworth's Blue behaved impeccably when

one of the neighbouring stands felled a number of their trees dangerously close to her.

However, when the forwarder on this stand struggled to climb the slope, this did the horse loggers a great favour by illustrating perfectly how, in contrast, horses can come into their own on such sites.

Kate Mobbs-Morgan and Steffi Schaffler took turns on the microphone, keeping the audience interested and informed. As always, the demonstrations drew good crowds, and the BHL volunteers were kept busy answering questions, and promoting the advantages of horse logging.

The BHL gazebo served up tea and excellent cake (thanks, Linda and Pete!), and Linda Thackray also did good trade with BHL logo items, including mugs, T-shirts and signs.

It was good to see so many familiar faces, with BHL members drawn to the event from all over the country, and to make new friends – including from as far away as the USA.

Kate said: "I just want to say thanks to everyone who put so much time and effort into making the APF the success I think it was. Particularly though to Pete who did the site visits, much prep and many extra journeys to get everything in place. I felt the interest was good and we certainly had plenty of people around for all the demos. Thank you so much everyone for giving your time and smiling through!"





*Top and above: Chris Wadsworth with Blue*

*A misty morning at the campsite:*

*Top: Crunchie prepares his mares for a day's work*

*Above: Dave, Steffi and Merida*



*Left and above: Max Hibbert with Freddie*



## *Rowan Working Horses Demonstration Day*

### *Cathrin Vaughan*

Kate Mobbs-Morgan was invited to introduce horse logging to a wider community of horse people this summer.

Beacons Equestrian is a dressage and showjumping venue near Ammanford in South West Wales, and the invitation came as a result of wanting to offer something different to the riding club members.

So on 13th August, Kate Mobbs-Morgan and her Rowan Working Horses – Ardennes geldings Kipp and Sol – gave a horse logging demonstration followed by “have a go” sessions. The day generated great interest, with about 40 people there.

Kate explained the advantages of horse logging, and the versatility of horses for the job.

She compared the different types of collars and harness, including Swedish and American, and the relative merits of leather, biothane and webbing for

harness. The importance of using a collar rather than a breast harness for logging work was emphasised, and how this affects the angle of draft. Kate also showed how to harness up a pair.

Kipp and Sol are worked in open bridles, with jointed Mylor sweet iron bits. The 27-foot lines are attached on the lowest setting, although the bit rarely comes into play as the horses are mostly worked by voice. Although some horsemen use the single rein, double reins are most often used by UK horse loggers, and Kate also prefers them.

Kate demonstrated how manoeuvrable heavy horses are in the confined environment of a woodland, using the “box” formation of short logs (as used in the BHL competitions to test the skills of horse and handler), and fence stakes as bending poles.

Swingle tree and log arch were explained and demonstrated, and how to work a single horse and a pair.

The “hands on” sessions following the demonstration were booked solid, and Kipp was endlessly patient with his learner drivers.

The attendees included some who were interested in logging with their own horses, while a few others had already begun training their horses to work, and wanted to learn more.

Kate said, “It was an interesting invitation that threw up some good conversations about training, correctly fitted harness and tack, care of the animals etcetera, and the relevance in other areas of horsemanship. It was a pleasure to combine with such a mix of people working with their own horses in a mix of ways.”



*Above: Demonstrating the manoeuvrability of a heavy horse in a confined space*

*Below: Winching up a log to the log arch*

*All photos by Cathrin Vaughan*



*Demonstration:*

*Top and middle: Explaining the different types of harness available, and comparing their features and advantages*

*Below: Kipp with a swingle tree; about 40 people attended the demonstration day*

*'Have a go' sessions were fully booked:*

*Top: Long-reining with a pair*

*Middle: Moving timber with the log arch*

*Below: Hitching up to the log arch*



## *The Doug Joiner Horse Lodge — Gudrun Leitz*

Doug's contribution to the beginning of a revival of horse logging in Japan was honoured this July with the dedication of a stunning newly built horse lodge to his spirit and memory. The five-bay Doug Joiner Horse Lodge was commissioned by Welsh-born Japanese writer, actor and ecologist C.W. Nicol (or "Old Nic") through the Afan Woodland Trust, his model broadleaf woodland and education centre in Nagano. He has been lobbying for many decades for a more sustainable forestry policy in Japan.

The lodge has been designed by one of the most famous architects in Japan. It has room for five horses, stalls for grooming, harness, feed and so on. There is also a large living-gathering room, with a big wood stove and specially designed furniture – most of which is made of wood that has been extracted by horses.

Nic said: "We have acquired our first horses, Yuji Maru, 100% Hokkaido Dosanko and Chacha Maru, 75% Dosanko and 25% American Quarter Horse. In time we will add our endangered Nagano breed, the Kiso. These are not big horses, they weigh 450 to 500 kilos – small, but sure footed, gentle, intelligent, and adapted to snow country. For heavy work we can always bring down the big horses owned by Ken Hachimaru and Takashi Iwama, with whom we are closely co-operating.

"Our horses will be used for logging, hauling out firewood and charcoal, hauling small carts and sleds, then eventually for packing camping and other gear into the mountains, including the adjoining national park. They will not be used for riding.

"We pray and look forward for a long and friendly relationship with the international community of people who work with horses."

In July 2016, all was ready for the opening, and Doug's son Matthew flew out to Nagano to share in three days of festivities.

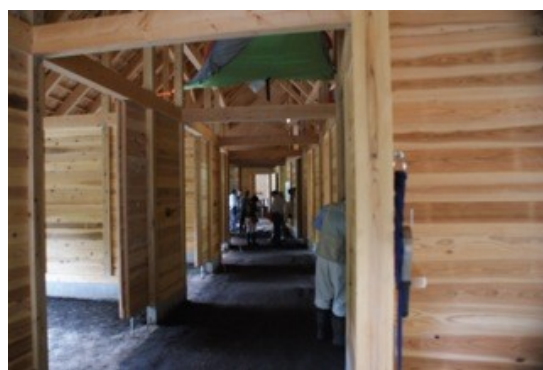
As Nic wrote, the small contingent of Japanese horse loggers are very outward looking, they know that Britain and Europe provide a strong model for a successful revival of horse logging in Japan. All of them value strong links with the British Horse Loggers.

*From top: The lodge from the southwest*

*Inside the horse lodge with sleeping quarters above*

*Nic and Matthew at the ceremony*

*Doug, Nic and horse loggers, when Doug and Gudrun visited Japan in 2013*



The next issue of Timber Tongues will be in December, and contributions are welcome.

How about sharing your experiences, opinions and expertise with fellow BHL members? Have you been working on an interesting contract, for example? Please email copy to Cathy Vaughan by mid-November.

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