



# UK Loggers Competition 2015

**By Andy Campbell**

Astley estate in north Norfolk was the venue for this years UK Logging competition. Situated next to the Swanton Novers, a Norfolk Wildlife Trust woodland, the setting was idyllic. One by one the competitors started arriving with some camping and some preferring B+B. The farm had topped the grass on one of the rides giving us a fantastic campsite on a hilltop in the woodland. Bit of a gathering and welcome speech and we were off. When writing these articles I never assume that anyone has any idea what it involves or that they want an in-depth breakdown of the rules. What I'll do instead is give a brief description of the event and the scores achieved. We had 16 competitors this year who all have to complete 5 events. Their saws need to be spotlessly clean for one of them so scheduling the running order is quite a mission. Logging legend, reigning champion and committee member Richard Elliott took this to hand to ensure we all had ample time to prepare for each event. Richard's father, Jim Elliott was head felling judge not seeing much daylight for two days as he painstakingly examined and scored every ones felling cuts in the woodland. He was assisted by his daughter, Rachael, and Patrick Martin. Both

you hit the button your hands are checked for cuts and the saw for correct preparation. The saw is then removed from the table by Tony and placed ready for the next event. Any failure in preparation that leads to the saw needing any maintenance during the next 2 events results in zero being scored for the chain exchange. Peter Fox again topped this one completing the event in a new UK record time of 11.7 seconds giving him a score of 126 points.



Andy Campbell awaits the verdict

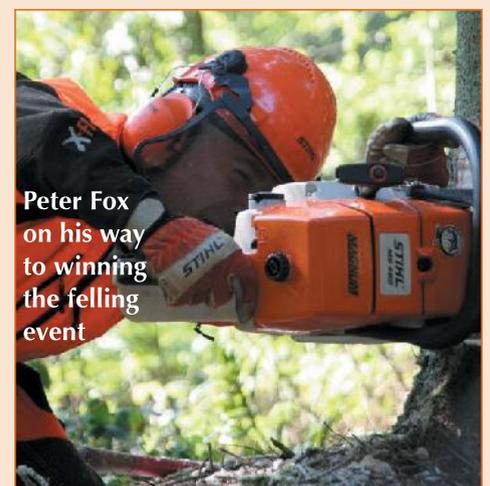
The next event is the combination cross-cut, my personal nemesis!! Two 45cm logs are placed on frames and angled 7degrees up and 7 degrees down 3m apart. All of these events are against the clock so this is the last time I'll mention timings. Competitors must cross-cut a disc from each making the cuts from the bottom to middle and top to middle with as little misalignment as possible and keeping the cuts square to the logs. I don't care what anyone says this is unbelievably difficult to achieve with consistent accuracy. Miss your cuts by 1mm and you've already lost 5 points. Misjudge your angles and lose 3 points for each 0.5 of a degree you are from 90!! This would simulate cross-cutting trees benched across others in the forest that need to be cut square. This event was judged by Richard Siddons from Wales and Peter Fox's wife, Rachel. The highest score in this was oh yeah, Peter Fox again with 178points. 200pts would be max with perfect logs in a benchmark time of 27seconds. More points can be achieved if you can cut perfect logs quicker.



Head Felling judge Jim Elliott doing his stuff

had made the trip from Devon to help with the competition. If you can fell your tree in under three minutes; as close as possible to a pre-placed target stake with all your stump measurements within tolerance you can earn a maximum of 660 points. Peter Fox from Cumbria was top here losing only 15 points for being 15 cm off his target stake with a score of 645.

We have three technical events in the competition that you have to complete sequentially. The first is the chain exchange. As this event is the most time crucial the method of timing has to be accurate. Technical wizard, Tony Savage, from Cumbria has constructed an electronic timing device triggered by a trip gate and stopped with a button on the table. This enables timing to 1/100th of a second and is essential for this speedy event. 1m in front of the trip gate is a table on which you place your saw with a spare chain and combi spanner. Tony torques up your sideplate nuts to 20Nm to make it the same for all. Once through the gate you have to remove your sideplate, bar and chain, fit the spare chain and reassemble to a proper, working condition. Once



Peter Fox on his way to winning the felling event





## Richard Elliott - 2015 UK Logging champion



The last technical event is the precision cross-cut. Two 45cm logs are placed on the levelled hardboard and the bottom 30mm buried under damp sawdust. You must cut 2 discs, square to the log as close to the hardboard as possible without hitting it. Hit the board and score nothing for that log. Metal stoppers are placed against the ends so you have no idea how close you are. The trick is to get close, but not too close, as fast as possible and not waste time trying to get that extra 1mm closer. Richard Elliott stopped Pete's roll with a top score of 233. 250pts are possible for perfect logs and 27seconds.

At the end of day 1, all is running according to plan. My good friend and estate woodsman, John Dew had turned up half way through the day to see what's what and brought his friend Andrew Graves for a gander. Andrew's family run local bakery and butchers and he asked me what everyone was doing for dinner that evening. I said we had a small BBQ planned but nothing special. He disappeared for a few hours and returned with a van full of cooked chicken, local sausages, porkchops and bread rolls. Enough to feed us all to bursting with left overs for breakfast. His generosity and efforts still bring a glow to my soul when I think about it. Richard Elliott has recently tied the knot with his long suffering partner Jo and Pete Fox produced a cake to celebrate. The catch was that it was two cakes stacked on each other and Richard's task was to cut the top cake without cutting the cake beneath with a chainsaw. This he did in true style unbelievably cutting the top cake and just scratching the card between the two. (Just to clarify health and safety best practise was observed at all times during the ceremony!!). I'd like to say we all had a good nights sleep but the occupants of the only property in the woodland had a live band booked and played in their garden till the early hours. What are the chances?

Day 2 commences as day 1 and continues until everyone has completed the felling and technical events. During a short break for lunch the ladies in the scoring tent, Jo Elliott and Michelle Campbell tally the scores and work out the limbing order. Competitors limb in pairs in reverse order from lowest to highest scores. This is where the turned 6m x 14cm poles that have 30 fake branches fitted to the holes I drilled get dismantled in a few seconds! Competitors are awarded 200 points before they start for quality of work and will also earn another 200 if they can remove the branches in 30seconds. You lose 20 points if you leave a 5mm stub or damage the stem 5mm deep. If you can limb quickly you earn 2 points

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each 0.5s you are faster than the allotted 30. Tactics play a big part here: Do you go quick and risk a stub/dig or do you go steady and accurate? Your position before starting usually determines this choice. Final positions can be dramatically altered depending on your approach. As I always say if you are going to make a fault you may as well stop and do nothing for 5 seconds as 5 seconds are worth 20 points. The final was a heart stopping limbing between Richard and Peter. Peter managed a highly respectable time of 23.31 seconds (428pts) with a clean pole but Richard raced to victory with a world class time of 16.94 seconds (454pts) enough to crown him UK Logging Champion 2015. Competitors under the age of 24 years have their own category and this was won by Josh Russell.

Names	Bar & Chain	Precision	Combi	Felling	Limbing	Total
Richard Elliott	110	233	172	642	454	1611
Peter Fox	126	221	178	645	428	1598
Phil Dunford	100	214	174	628	354	1470
Andy Campbell	100	216	165	577	396	1454
Mark Edwards	100	215	154	557	414	1440
Alun Jones	92	209	174	563	334	1372
Josh Russell U24	96	211	124	564	348	1343

The loggers would be nothing without the help of everyone who either judges, helps or takes part. Indeed Richard Elliott often threatens to retire but admitted he is reminded of the great atmosphere and friendship each competition and hangs on another year. We can never have enough help and if you would like to get involved either helping or competing please contact us through the website [www.ukloggers.co.uk](http://www.ukloggers.co.uk)

### Thanks to:

- All those judges and helpers who gave up their weekend to make the competition possible.
- John Dew, the local woodsman for all site arrangements and supplying my son with a playmate for 2 days.
- Jamie Smith for the Limbing pegs.
- Alex Laver for lurking around every corner with his camera and taking some amazing pictures.
- Andrew Graves for a bellyful of great food.
- William Hepworth of Astley estates for producing everything I requested and more.

### The UK Loggers are generously sponsored by:

- Husqvarna UK who pay our annual IALC subscription and supply two top prizes of a 576xp chainsaw, 1 for the Experts (over 24's) and one for the Juniors (under 24's).
- The Anglo American Oil Company who supply Aspen alkylate fuel and merchandise for each competitor.
- Hunter Wilson Ltd who turn our limbing poles free of charge.

If I have missed anyone in this article I am very sorry but please be assured you are not forgotten.

