

FIELD DAY AT SALLOWS, FROSSES

Donegal Woodland Owners held a field day at the Evans Family forest on Saturday Nov.2nd.

Despite a very bad weather forecast approx. 25 members attended, luckily the rain held off for the outdoor discussion.

The forest was planted about 23 years ago on shallow blanket bog, elevation 200 metres on a very exposed site on the edge of the Bluestack mountains. Approx. 20 hectares was planted. It was decided that Lodgepole Pine was the only suitable species. Even though only a very limited market for lodgepole existed at that time Clive and Joan Evans had the foresight to plant anyway. Remember at that time grants and premiums were limited and farmer planting was in its infancy.

The work was carried out by Donegal Farm Relief Services and according to Thomas Becht the drainage is still working. As it happened the person who carried out the planting was in the group attending so could see the results.



In 2007 a road to an existing house was upgraded to serve the forest and house. Part of the cost was covered through a road grant by the Forestry Service, which Clive and Joan Evans extended at their own expense. It is well constructed and has plenty of lay byes and turning areas.

As it turned out the market for Lodgepole pine is good and a first thinning has now been carried out. This is not always advised for this type of land, but results so far look promising and should give inspiration to people growing on similar land to consider careful thinning.

DWOSL trained workers under the supervision of Thomas Becht carried out the work and Joan Evans and family are happy with the results. Every 7th row was felled, crosscut to 1mtr. lengths and carried out manually. Maximum distance carried was about 60 mtrs.

We were assured by Thomas Becht that the workers volunteered to remove the timber manually, it increased their earnings.

Yield approx. 10 trees to the cubic metre, giving approx. 35 cubic metre to the hectare. In 2 to 3 years time it is planned to carry out a selective thinning between the lines.

Costs per cubic metre - Felling €10, Crosscut to metre lengths €5, Carry out manually €10

Giving a total cost of €25 cubic metre of stacked timber. But remember not all ground or timber is suitable for manual extraction. Heavier timber was winched out. The timber has been purchased by DWOSL for the nearby Gasification Boiler.

Tragically, Clive Evans died in 2012. The forest stands as a living monument to Clive. The Evans family continue to ensure that this plantation is well managed and cared for and hope to be at the forefront of future development by achieving a Continuous Cover Forestry.

It is interesting to note that this type of land is now considered unsuitable for planting as it is deemed to be unproductive, no grants or premiums are now available on poorer upland areas. A pity the decision makers do not actually go and see for themselves that valuable timber can be produced on marginal land.

After the morning session we were invited for tea and refreshments in the old cottage on the site. Two blazing log fires, benches to sit on, tea etc. and a vast amount of "soup" which was a meal in its self was provided, perhaps Thomas could be persuaded to print the recipe in a future newsletter as I understand he organised the soup.

There then followed a lively and varied discussion on a range of subjects including the gasifier boiler project, timber security, DWOSL finances to name a few. But as this was a discussion not a meeting no minutes were kept, it was a great opportunity to allow members to air their views and to receive updates on several matters.

Thank you to Joan Evans and family for hosting the event. Also the DWOSL committee members for all the organising and time they put in.

