

The Poplar Tree Company

NEWSLETTER



Changes within the Poplar Tree Company

As many of you will know Simon Tambling left the PTC last year. This role has been taken up by me William Jackson. In the latter half of last year I have managed to visit the majority of the Joint venture sites and discuss many of the issues facing the Joint venture members and their plantations. This process will continue this year as I visit the remaining sites.

The aim of this newsletter is to update and inform you of work currently being done by



Above:- Testing of the peeling plant

the PTC and what we believe the future holds for Poplar. This newsletter will become a half yearly publication and anyone can sign up to this on our website. www.poplartree.co.uk

All planting for this year was completed by early April with three new joint venture sites. One in Wales and the other two in the Midlands. Areas of mixed broadleaf also being planted. We are now looking to next year and more new sites



Those of you who received the last news letter will know that work had started on the peeling plant. This work has mostly been completed now. The buildings are up and the peeler has been installed and is running. Due to the fact that none of the poplar plantations are at full mature size we are still testing and developing the markets for poplar products. Timber prices for all wood have been rising and the markets we have looked at have been encouraging.

Newsletter Date

June 2007

Special points of interest

- New forestry manager
- Peeling plant installed.
- Breeding stock and new varieties of poplar.
- Rust and the future.
- The Poplar competition.
- Sludge application
- Mowing your sites
- Certainly wood the marketing side

Variety problems and new varieties

Issues of rust and the associated problems that this has brought to poplar plantations is probably the main concern to most growers. With this in mind we invited the breeders over to advise on the best course of action. We have dropped all varieties that were affected by the new strain of rust and under the advise given have introduced a selection of Italian and Belgium varieties. This brings the total number of clones we are able to offer to nine with several more available for specialist uses. eg windbreaks and energy crops. The breeding programme has changed from concentrating on rust resistant clones to rust tolerant ones. This means that if another strain of rust comes along it will not break down the resistance of the trees, as in the case of the H

Where plantations have had issues with the H clones we have replanted. With the tolerant clones the trees will hopefully continue without die back being a problem. Many of the newer clones have grown very well in our test sites with growth rates that have surpassed our existing stock. The rust issue is a global problem and we are continually reviewing the advise available and will keep you informed of any changes that may arise.

The majority of plantations are looking well and with all sites we will continue to monitor their progress as done in the past. If you have any queries please call me on 07966 178884.

Poplar competition held in the national Forest

Poplar Competition

THE POPLAR CHALLENGE

2007

Woodworkers from all over the country are invited to take part in a free competition to construct something creative from a `Kit` of poplar timber.



Previous products made

In conjunction with the National Forest Company (NFC), the Poplar Tree Company is running a competition to find the best use of poplar wood.

All entries will be judged and the winner announced at the National Forest Wood Fair, to be held at Beacon Hill Country Park in Leicestershire on Bank Holiday Monday 27 August 2007.

Poplar is a light and easily



workable wood and previous entries to the competition have included toys, indoor furniture and garden products. All exhibitors will receive a pewter cup. The winners in each category will receive a cash prize and the overall winner will hold (for 1 year) the Poplar cup.

Packs can be collected from the NFC and PTC at any time. Please phone ahead to make an appointment – up to 50 packs are available so “first come, first served” closing date for collection is 22nd June.



Additional income within woodlands

Sludge Application

Since early 1999 water companies have been unable to dispose of sewerage sludge at sea, to dump in landfill is too costly. (increased taxing)

Current food production methods and pressure from buyers and consumers have made it more difficult to give away sewerage as fertiliser for crops.

Forest areas are seen as a good option for

the disposal of sewage sludge providing the site and crop can sustain the work needed. Most poplar sites are well suited in that they are fairly flat and poplar greatly benefits from the added nutrients, with growth rates increased in the following years.

For the past few years the Poplar Tree Company (PTC) has been incorporating bio solids (cake)

into new poplar planting sites. Cake has also been applied into existing woods after the first two thinnings have been completed.

The Environment Agency visit each site to discuss application rates with ourselves and the contractors. Payment is made on a tonnage basis to the land owner.



Equipment used for cake application

If there are any members or land owners interested in this then please do contact us.

Mowing and managing your site

It is vital to complete mowing in the second week of July to end of July between the poplar rows and around the headlands because:

- We need to be able to access the wood to assess the maintenance operations that are required, and to be able to physically carry out this work e.g. pruning/removal of spiral guards.
- Cutting at this time of year is the most effective particularly where docks and thistles are present.

- To maximize air flow and reduce the risk of leaf rust (a fungal disease).

- Early spring is also a good time but later be aware of birds nesting

As a reminder it is best to use a flail mower, where a 2.5m – 2.8m machine is used one pass will be sufficient, otherwise use 2 passes.

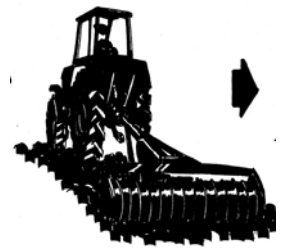
On the younger woods you may damage the branches when carrying out this operation, this is not a problem as these branches will

be removed when the trees are pruned.

Exceptions to these rules are where bird cover or other planting has taken place as discussed and approved with a site visit.

In some cases where the trees are established mowing may be done every other year or half the plantation one year then the other half the following year.

As long as there is a management plan recorded then changes can be made or discussed when visiting the plantation.



Planting bird cover within a poplar wood

The Marketing of Timber



Certainly Wood has now been trading for over 18 months and is run by George Snell and his brother Nic who has joined the business as Marketing Director having spent the previous twenty years involved in the marketing of soft fruit, selling strawberries and raspberries to the major supermarkets.

Whilst the poplar peeling line is being further developed Nic has focused on the firewood and kindling business and this has shown huge growth as more and more people turn to wood burning at a time of rising energy costs and an ever increasing focus on the environmental benefits of burning wood, a

carbon neutral fuel. The company has forged close links with a number of wood burning manufacturers and distributors who now recommend Certainly Wood's premier kiln dried firewood and kindling. A retail network of over 250 outlets has now been established throughout the UK and this number continues to rise. One of the main reasons for the success has been the high quality of kiln dried wood, which is essential for wood burning stoves.



Kindling and firewood packs



Certainly Wood the marketing side of wood production.



New Polish band saw with boards palletised for drying

All the kindling is produced from poplar thinnings and considerable time and investment has been made in the production of kindling with a new band saw being purchased from Poland which has revolutionised the boarding of round poplar ready for making into kindling. The packing line has also been improved to further reduce costs. The kindling business continues to expand as more and more customers see the benefits of not only a premium product but also a clean and convenient pack unique in the market place.

If you are able to receive the newsletter by email or know anyone who would like to receive it, then please register on our website. www.poplartree.co.uk