

# EQUIPMENT REVIEW

## CHAINSAW MILLING

**Worcestershire County Council's Countryside Service recounts its experiences with on site conversion of timber.**

One of many factors stacked against the small woodland owner and ranger service is that of the economies of scale. The handful of trees felled annually just don't warrant the cost of a mobile mill or of having them carted off to one of the few remaining saw mills. One solution is a chainsaw mill, cheaper and easier to use and more mobile than many trailer borne mills.

The set up bought by the Countryside Service is an Alaskan MKIII saw mill attachment made by Granberg International. Our set up uses a large Stihl chainsaw and a purpose made 'fence' and allows wood to be planked at the spot where it was felled. Any large chainsaw can be used. A ladder is used to provide a flat surface for the first cut after which the depth gauge on the fence is adjusted to the appropriate level. By running the saw down the length of the tree, planks are simply 'fenced off' at the set thickness.

This is a dirty dusty job and every plank cut, wastes the thickness of the bar to dust. However as a small scale set up that can be purchased for just under £1000 it allows all sorts of small scale woodworkers and woodland owners to harvest and convert their own timber.

## RIGHT RAW MATERIAL

At Worcester Woods Country Park we have around 40 hectares of Oak woodland with a hazel coppice under storey. From the evidence available it appears the wood was clear felled in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, possibly between the wars. What we now have is a pretty uniform crop of 60 – 80 year old oak that in the current timber market has such a low value as to make it barely worth harvesting, a problem faced by many woodland owners.

However in a busy Country Park (estimates 225,000 visitors a year) what we do have is demand for timber, so rather than buying in pressure treated softwood, the chainsaw mill has enabled us to harvest our own timber, which we have used around the park for a range of items including benches and a boardwalk.

As a tool the mill has its limitations, but if kept sharp and well maintained it can be a useful and innovative piece of equipment that allows the utilisation of an otherwise low grade resource into a product with much added value.

The set up is available from:

### **Dick Leigh Chainsaw Specialists**

Gar, Ashleigh, Clitheroe Rd, Barrow, Clitheroe, Lancashire BB7 9AQ  
Tel: 01254 823578

Cost: c. £900

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