

Great Britain ace Turner aims for top Euro chop spot

It all started with a bet pledged during a drinking session in New Zealand and now Timbersports is an international event with a man from the Lothians set to appear in two major events for Great Britain.

Graham Turner (pictured competing) from Penicuik heads to Wales this weekend for a training session ahead of an invitational event in Paris in two weeks followed by the world event in Stuttgart in November.

Basically, its about how quickly men cut their way through big chunks of timber with a hand-held saw and also a chain saw, and it is dangerous as the competitors wear chain mail in some of the tasks.

The 37-year-old, self-employed fencing and forestry contractor has form. He was second in the National Pro Championships in 2022 and was in the British squad which finished seventh in last year's world championships.

This year, Turner was fourth in the British in June but was disappointed with his performances in the Royal Welsh Show and at a STIHL-backed European Trophy in Poland.

The Great Britain squad are, however, determined to improve on last year's position when they travel to Stuttgart later this year for the worlds.

Turner said that all events simulate actual felling and wood chopping of trees and he added: "The events spring from a 50 dollar bet between two men who were out for a drink in New Zealand.

"It then became a series in the 1980s in America and now it is world-wide. There are six tasks, three with an axe and three with chain saw. The axe we use is really sharp, you could shave with it, and the chain saw is hand-held and tuned by the user for maximum effect. You must be able to carry it on stage and start it with a pull chord."

Competitors wear chain mail when we use the chain saw and Turner said the event is "fast and furious" with time the key element.

There are five men in the British team and they have high aspirations. Turner added: "We have a really strong team this year and we are looking to improve on the seventh we recorded last year. That was our best for around ten years. Indeed, we are looking to finish as the top team in Europe this time and we are training hard."