

## PRESS RELEASE



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### **Sparsholt College lecturers search for Britain's tallest tree**

On 18 February, Mark Tansley and Steve Woollard, two lecturers in arboriculture from Sparsholt College Hampshire, will embark on an expedition to measure some of the tallest trees in Britain in their hunt for the UK's tallest tree. Although the primary aim of the project is to record the height of the trees, they also hope to raise awareness of the fantastic natural heritage of the UK and promote interest in a range of tree industry related opportunities.

Mark, 29, from Salisbury Plain, has spent several months planning the expedition which will involve scaling trees over 60 metres tall, all of which are located in Scotland. "It's a fantastic project to be involved in" said Mark. "It will be a great experience to climb some of the tallest trees in Britain. Finding a new champion tree would be a huge bonus. I'm looking forward to the whole experience."

Steve, 34, from Warminster, is also a qualified climber and is looking forward to the challenge of climbing the UK's biggest tree. "This is a rare opportunity which I definitely couldn't say no to. It is a huge incentive to think that we might discover a new tallest tree."

Both Mark and Steve are course tutors on the National Diploma in Forestry and Arboriculture at Sparsholt College. On their return, the duo plan to involve their students in searching for some of England's tallest trees. "The students are really interested in the project and can't wait to follow it up" said Mark "We've got a few leads as to where some previously unmeasured tall trees

may be growing, it should be a fantastic practical task to seek them out and climb and measure them.”

Joining Mark and Steve on the trip are Lukasz Warzecha, an international award winning extreme photographer and lead tree climber for an arboricultural company in Edinburgh, Justin Palmer, NPTC assessor/SRT instructor and retailer for Safety Technology in South Wales and Chris Hunter, lead climber for Urban Forestry in Bury St Edmonds.

The trees were chosen in conjunction with the Tree Register who administer and keep records of the UK's tallest trees. Six of the top ten tallest trees are located in Scotland due to a good growing environment, a mild and wet climate and sheltered valleys.

The team's first stop will be Argyll, where they will measure a Douglas Fir on 19 February. This will be followed by a second Douglas Fir at The Hermitage near Dunkeld, Perthshire on 20 February. Their final destination is the Grand Fir in Diana's Grove, Blair Castle on 21 February.

The team are using measuring techniques approved by the Tree Register. They will use both Single and Double Rope Technique to carefully climb to a safe point near the top and use a pole to reach the tip. From the bottom of the pole they will drop a 100m tape to the floor. The team will not be exposing themselves or the tree to any unnecessary risk. For accuracy, they hope to measure each tree twice. In addition to this they will take up to four laser hypsometer measurements from ground level.

All participants are fully qualified tree climbing arboriculturalists and have between 5 and 17 years industrial experience each with over 50 years in total.

The expedition is being sponsored by STIHL, an internationally renowned manufacturer of chainsaws and garden power tools, who are providing specialist high performance clothing and helmets for all the climbers.

**Notes for editors:**

- Further information about Sparsholt College can be found at [www.sparsholt.ac.uk](http://www.sparsholt.ac.uk)

**Photos attached:** Sparsholt College lecturers Steve Woollard and Mark Tansley.

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