



# ***Irish Timber Growers Association***

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## **Day for woodland entrepreneurs**

What does the Electric Picnic Music Festival, a Hydrodynamic screw generator, a 1949 built Barclay locomotive steam train, supershot paintball and pleasure woods have in common – they are all located in the grounds of Stradbally Hall, Co. Laois and on Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> June next the Irish Timber Growers Association (ITGA) are hosting a field day with the Cosby family to Stradbally Hall around the theme *Alternative Woodland Ventures*. The Cosby family have always been known for their innovation and they have generously agreed to host a field day to show how they employ their woodlands through various innovative ventures. Stradbally Hall has strong woodland credentials - the Tree Council of Ireland has listed a number of trees here as Champion trees in its publication ‘Champion Trees, A Selection of Ireland’s Great Trees’. Also, the Pleasure Woods, the old Arboretum near the main House, are currently being improved. ‘Innovation shown by the Cosby family and other woodland estates in Ireland is often overlooked’, according to Donal Whelan of the Irish Timber Growers Association, ‘for example the recently constructed Hydrodynamic screw generator (Archimedes screw) which provides the electricity for Stradbally Hall with excess electricity sold into the national grid is an initiative that could be more widely employed around the country’. This generator is a fish friendly system which was built employing some of the structure of the previous Old Mill Race on the site.

With the agreement of the Cosby family the Irish Steam Preservation Society has constructed over a mile of narrow gauge railway track through a Spanish Chestnut and Oak woodland at Stradbally Hall. The steam train is a 1949 built Barclay locomotive. The railway operates from a station through the woods, returning via a balloon loop. Bord na Mona have kindly sponsored the opening of this railway line for the afternoon so as field day participants can avail of the opportunity to experience travel by steam train from a bygone age.

Of course Stradbally Hall may be best known for the Electric Picnic Music and Arts Festival and Thomas Cosby will give a brief outline of the Electric Picnic initiative and its development over the years and the importance of the woodland settings as part of this music and arts festival. Field day participants will get the opportunity to view the various stages used during the festival including the Salty Dog Stage located within the woodlands.

This field day is ideal for anyone with an interest in alternative ventures in their woodlands and is open to members of the Irish Timber Growers Association, Society of Irish Foresters or by pre-registering with the Irish Timber Growers Association, contact 01 2350520.