



# Custos Sylvanum

Newsletter of Surrey's Tree Wardens

Volume 1, Issue 1

April 2003

## A message from Raymond Thorn

**WELCOME TO THE FIRST ISSUE of the newsletter. With the help of committee members, your editor has been able to put together this publication to replace the minutes of the quarterly committee meetings.**

No doubt you will find the newsletter livelier than boring minutes. You will also be able to find out what is planned for the coming months within the tree warden world here in Surrey. Do please read all the articles and give your feedback to the editor and committee members. If we are to succeed in this venture we must know your thoughts to enable us to improve the publication.

By the time you read this newsletter the tree planting season will be nearly over. Thoughts will turn to the summer events, so why not come and join your fellow enthusiasts at an outing to share and improve your knowledge of all tree matters.

Hope to see you soon.

Raymond Thorn,  
Chairman, Surrey Tree Wardens Steering Group



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## ...and one from the Editor

**HELLO, and welcome to *Custos Sylvanum*. I should start by explaining the newsletter's name. It is simply a rough Latin translation of "tree warden". As tree lovers, we use botanical Latin terms so often that another seems fitting.**

Whether we all know what these terms mean is another question. There will be a regular feature, therefore, on the names of trees and other plants, and what they translate to. We start the series with that characteristic tree of Surrey, the Oak.

The main purpose of the newsletter is, as the name says, to bring you news. This can be news of events, discoveries, publications or anything else that is relevant. Equally, it can be of things that have taken place or those that are forthcoming.

I cannot find these out on my own. As Raymond says, opposite, we need your contributions. Please send me anything that you think would interest your fellow Tree Wardens. My contact details appear below.

Don't be shy or feel that what you have is too trivial. Everything is welcome and I hope to be able to find room for it all.

This is *your* publication, not some ego trip for the Steering Group or a duty drearily to be done, so please chip in. I hope you enjoy it.

With best wishes,

Roger Whitehead



**Copy date for the next issue is 15 June 2003. Please email material to [rgw@office-futures.com](mailto:rgw@office-futures.com). If it is typed (no handwriting, please), send to Roger Whitehead, 14 Amy Road, Oxted, Surrey RH8 0PX (telephone: 01883 713974)**

## News from the groups

### **CHRIS PEAD, our Secretary, has been helping to save some doomed trees in Staines.**

Last December, Surrey County Council said it intended to fell a stretch of 39 trees in Penton Road, Staines. It felt that they were making the pavements narrow and uneven, and a hazard to pedestrians. Local people disagreed with this severe approach. They set up an organization to fight the proposal, calling it SPROUT (Save Penton Roads Outstanding and Unusual Trees).

Residents treasured these trees not only for their beauty and amenity value but for their history. Some had been planted over 70 years before and had associations with local VIPs, including the cricketer, Ranjit Sinhji.

After a vigorous lobbying and publicity campaign, SPROUT, with the aid of Chris and others, got SCC to agree to a fresh inspection. The upshot of this was a new plan. In this, only 11 trees will now be removed, with 10 replacements being planted, although not all in the same place. There will be pruning and pollarding of some of the remaining trees, which include London Planes, Chestnuts, Limes and Firs. In some places, footpaths will be smoothed and re-routed.

Congratulations to all involved, and well done Chris!

### **SPELTHORNE Tree Wardens plant trees in Ashford, reports Dave Pope**

The secret of a good street planting is to have the cooperation of a well-organised resident. At this recent Ashford planting we were lucky to have the help of one such, Mrs Whitlock.

She and her neighbours in Village Way, Ashford, Middlesex, wanted to plant flowering cherries in the gaps of their partly tree-lined street. They contacted Spelthorne Council, which gave the OK. They also asked Spelthorne Tree Wardens for help, which is why I'm writing this.

Six weeks before the planting, we contacted the local gas, electric and water companies. This was to

confirm there were no safety concerns before digging holes on the verges.

We then ordered 11 bare-root flowering cherries from Van Den Broek Nurseries at Row Town, Addlestone. One of our wardens had earlier selected and tagged the trees where they were growing.

The day before planting, Spelthorne council provided a lorryload of mulch and 11 tree guards and hoses. Meanwhile, the nursery dug up the trees for us to collect, and provided half a dozen posts and ties. We recycled the remaining posts and ties from previous plantings. Mrs Whitlock allowed us to store the trees in her garden. We covered their roots with plastic bags to prevent their drying overnight.

At 10am on the day of the planting, six tree wardens and some residents were ready to dig. Thanks to the numbers taking part, the trees were in just two hours later. We staked all the trees correctly, fitting hoses and strimmer guards to help ensure the plants' long-term success. The residents were left to mulch the trees. They of course have the responsibility of looking after the trees in the coming years.

Thanks go to Mrs Whitlock. She not only organised the funding from residents to buy the trees but, with her daughter, provided ample tea and cakes to keep the troops well fuelled! Eleven extra trees are now growing healthily along Village Way.



## New Members

The following have recently become Surrey Tree Wardens:

- Jack Pinkerton (Spelthorne)
- Sylvia Chantler (Spelthorne)
- Warwick Hutchinson (Elmbridge)
- Sarah Hart (Mole Valley)
- Jonathan Foster (Waverley)

A hearty welcome goes to them all.



## Events

### FOR SURREY TREE WARDENS

OUR FIRST OUTING this year is again to the New Forest, on Sunday, 11 May. This event is, I'm afraid, fully booked. If you did not book, you might instead like to go to Gatton Park that day (see opposite).

Events planned for the rest of the year include:

**Sunday, 14 September – Coppicing at Cranleigh**, with Surrey Wildlife Trust and Guildford Borough Council

**Sunday, 5 October – “Woodland Decayers”**. A guided walk, ‘somewhere in the Guildford area’, on fungi and their role in woods. It will be led by Adam Owen, Tree and Woodland Officer, Guildford Borough Council

**Date to be set – Visit to an arboretum**

**Date to be set – Visit to Windsor Great Park**

THE SOUTH EAST FORUM will take place at **Windsor Great Park on Saturday, 4 October 2003**

This is a get-together of the Tree Wardens in the Home Counties, being organised by Windsor and Maidenhead Tree Wardens and the Tree Council. There are lectures and practical outdoor sessions on the theme of cherished trees and hedgerows.

Lunch and tea are included in the price of £12.00. The Forum starts at 10am for 10.30am, finishing at 4.30pm. Places are limited, so book quickly via the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's Countryside Service, on 01628 777440.

### OTHER EVENTS

THE ANCIENT TREE FORUM has two major events this year in the south east (see [http://www.woodland-trust.org.uk/ancient-tree-forum/events/events\\_index.htm](http://www.woodland-trust.org.uk/ancient-tree-forum/events/events_index.htm))

**Saturday, 26th April – The Alan Mitchell Lecture 2003**, at Windsor Great Park. “The Ancient Oaks of the British Isles – the remnants of Europe’s rainforest”, by Ted Green

**Sunday, 8 June – Ancient Trees & Oak Apples at Kenwood**, Kenwood Park, London NW3. An English

Heritage event that uses Kenwood’s oak woodland as a backdrop to explore the cultural significance of ancient trees. Booking essential.

AT GATTON PARK there are two main events (see <http://www.gatton-park.org.uk/gp/default.htm>):

**Sunday, 11 May – “Go Green at Gatton” environmental fair**, 1pm – 5pm. Adults £3

**Saturday 7th June – “Lets talk trees and their invisible world”**, 2pm – 4.30pm. Talk ‘on the hoof’ by Ted Green (Ancient Tree Forum) and Jill Butler (Woodland Trust and Ancient Tree Forum). £7

Tree Wardens also might like to get involved in two hazel coppicing weekends planned early next year:

- Saturday 3 / Sunday 4 January 2004
- Saturday 17 / Sunday 18 January 2004.

Please contact Trevor Benton for more details, on 01737 215805; email: [trevor.benton@ntlworld.com](mailto:trevor.benton@ntlworld.com).

FURTHER AFIELD, there are:

**7 to 15 June – Hampshire Woodland Week and Wood Fair**. Run by Hampshire County Council, this is a series of events throughout Hampshire including ranger-led guided walks. Details at <http://www.hants.gov.uk/countryside/woodfair>.

**19 to 21 September – Weald Woodfair**, at Bentley Wild Fowl and Motor Museum, Near Lewes, East Sussex. In its eighth year. Includes demonstrations, trade exhibits and educational activities. Details here: <http://www.eastsussexcc.gov.uk/env/events/woodfair>.



## Your Committee Officers

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## Names of the Oak

WE START THIS SERIES ON TREE NAMES with that quintessentially British tree, the Oak. The ecological, historical and cultural significance of these two native species (seldom distinguished between by non-botanists) is unrivalled. People have used Oak for timber, wood, fuel, charcoal, tannin and food since Britain was first settled. It is the national tree of Ireland and, because we have so many, was once known as “the Surrey weed”.

### Pedunculate or Common Oak

<b>Common Name Explained</b>	“Oak”, from the Old English, <i>ac</i> , in turn from the Old Norse, <i>eik</i> (cf the modern Dutch, <i>eik</i> ). “Pedunculate”, because the seeds are suspended on stalks or peduncles (from the Latin, <i>pedem</i> = foot)
<b>Botanical name(s)</b>	<i>Quercus robur</i> . Synonyms: <i>Q. pedunculata</i> ; <i>Q. robur</i> var. <i>pedunculata</i>
<b>Botanical name explained</b>	<i>Quercus</i> was the name by which it was known to the Romans. A speculative link is made with the Greek, <i>choiros</i> , for pig, because of swine’s liking for acorns. Another is with the Greek, <i>karuan</i> (= nut) and <i>keras</i> (= horn), because of the wood’s hardness. A third is with the Celtic, <i>quer</i> (= fine) and <i>cuez</i> (= tree). <i>Robur</i> means strong and, to the Romans, signified oak wood or any hard wood.
<b>Vernacular names</b>	black oak; <i>crann-darraich</i> (Gaelic); <i>craobh-dharaich</i> (Gaelic); <i>dair ghallda</i> (Irish); <i>dâr</i> (Welsh); <i>darach gasagach</i> (Gaelic); <i>derwen goesog</i> (Welsh); <i>derwen gyffredin</i> (Welsh); English oak; female oak; macey-tree (“mace” being the fruit); pedunculated oak; stalk-fruited oak; Sussex weed; Tom Paine; trail (male catkins)

### Sessile or Durmast Oak

<b>Common name explained</b>	“Sessile” because the seeds ‘sit’ on the branches (“sessile” is related to “sedentary”). The “Durmast” tag seems to have arisen from an 18th century misspelling of “dun-mast”, that is, having dark fruit. (“Mast” is these days applied mainly to the fallen fruit of Beech.)
<b>Botanical name(s)</b>	<i>Quercus petraea</i> . Synonyms: <i>Q. robur</i> var. <i>petraea</i> ; <i>Q. sessiflora</i> ; ; <i>Q. robur</i> var. <i>sessiflora</i>
<b>Botanical name explained</b>	<i>Petraea</i> means rock-loving (from Latin & Greek <i>petra</i> = rock). Durmast Oak is found mainly in the hilly areas of Britain, to the north and west.
<b>Vernacular names</b>	bay oak (applies also to <i>Q. pubescens</i> ); chestnut oak (applies also to <i>Q. prinus</i> ); <i>crach dderw</i> (Welsh); <i>dair ghaelach</i> (Irish); <i>derwen ddigoes</i> (Welsh); <i>derwen fawr ganghennog</i> (Welsh); maiden oak, male oak; sessiliflore oak; sessile-fruited oak, white oak (applies also to <i>Q. alba</i> )
<b>Vernacular names for either species</b>	<i>aac</i> (Old English); <i>ac</i> (Old English); acorn-tree; aik-tree; ake; <i>darragh</i> (Manx); <i>dair(e)</i> (Gaelic); <i>dar</i> (Cornish); <i>darach</i> (Gaelic); <i>darrach</i> (Gaelic); <i>darag</i> (Gaelic); <i>darroch</i> (Gaelic); <i>daur</i> (Old Irish); <i>derow</i> (Cornish); <i>derry</i> (Irish); <i>derw</i> (Welsh); <i>derwen</i> (Welsh); <i>dru</i> (Gaelic); <i>dur</i> (Gaelic); <i>durr</i> (Irish); <i>eak</i> ; eike tree; <i>eitheach</i> (Gaelic; from ‘eating’), <i>furren</i> (Gaelic); hokoke; ooc; <i>rail</i> (Gaelic); <i>ral</i> (Irish); <i>ralach</i> (Irish); rump (the foliage on Oak Apple Day, 29 May); <i>tuilm</i> (Gaelic, applied also to Elm); woak; woke; yoake

To save space, I have not given the sources for the details above but if you would like to know more, or can suggest other information, I should be glad to hear from you. I have also not given all the variations in spelling of ‘oak’ and ‘ac’, of which there are dozens.

