



SURREY TREE WARDENS

Newsletter Spring 2014

The Floods – One Tale from the Riverbank

Sally Pemberton, a Tree warden for many years, lives right alongside the Thames Towpath in Shepperton. This year's floods have been the worst she has known. Her home has been flooded twice since the New Year. Sally keeps a blog, and here are extracts: how she and her husband coped with this year's endless rain.

Tues 7 January

The water started to trickle in around 5pm....

Wed 8 January

Water up another 2 inches, and into the barn. It came up much more slowly than 2003, so there was time to get stuff lifted. Even so, you had to be conscious of every movement, like getting your phone out while standing in water, and I managed to drop a whole pile of photos while taking them to a drier place.

Thurs 9 January

Roads were closed so no access to the field for Tree Warden activity. Just as well because the water came into the house and things had to be lifted: chairs onto tables, piano onto bricks. Bit gloomy eating supper surrounded by chair legs. Collected post and papers from the village, and for some of the old ladies on the Towpath who couldn't get out. Alison aged 96 was as cheerful as ever, and Joan aged 86, who had stocked up on biscuits and Marvel, she said.

Fri 10 January

Water up an inch, slowing down. We collected post, papers, Joan's prescription, and Rufus from nursery, then George, whose workshop was full of water - he hadn't realised how much it would come up and a lot was damaged. Life was so normal in the High Street away from the flood.

Sat 11 January

The planned Tree Warden Willow day was cancelled!

Thurs 13 February

What a long time ago it seems since the January blog, and what a doddle compared to now. The water in our house was 7" higher than in January, stopping just short of the freezer electrics. The water came up much more quickly this time, about 3" a day over 2 days before slowing down as the water spread further, peaking on Monday evening. Sunday was when the family baled out, to in-laws and my Mum.

The water has dispersed far more widely than 2003, including into the Ranges, which was 80 acres of flood meadow before the gravel got extracted and it got land-filled and capped with a clay non porous topping. But at least the water's going somewhere other than our houses.

I am getting sick of smelly socks from wearing waders all day. And the constant sound of water pumps (why?) and helicopters is wearying. The piano that arrived hours before the January flood is now delaminated at the bottom. But it's not the end of the world, it still plays. 5 of the cars parked at the top of Ferry Lane were hit by falling trees during the storm on Friday night. Mine narrowly escaped. Many of the trees coming down e.g. in next door's garden, have been Leylandii - overgrown hedges, tall and thin without much root strength. We and the other Towpath oldies have been doing fine, but it has been desperate for so many people who didn't expect to flood. I would like to say to them, please don't despair. It will pass. You'll get help and support with cleaning up. And don't get angry: blaming is a waste of energy. We are all responsible for this situation. If we could acknowledge this, and accept that we can't control nature, it would be the first step to finding a solution.

Sally appeared on BBC news: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-26169970>, and her Blog can be found at <http://beedances.blogspot.co.uk/2014/01/beedance-haiku.html>

Diary Dates Diary Dates Diary Dates Diary Dates Diary Dates

Surrey Tree Warden AGM: Saturday June 14

At the Community Centre, Lingfield. Put the date in your Diary: these Events are Inspiring!

OPAL: Local Eyes for Local Trees

Tree Wardens have a new role: local eyes for local trees. They are invited to join the OPAL survey, a nationwide tree health survey launched last year. OPAL stands for Open Air Laboratories, and will help scientists learn more about the distribution and spread of pests and diseases, by relying on a form of crowd sourcing: the more information they can gather, the better the analysis and results. It has a wider aim too: to encourage a new generation of people to engage with the natural world and share their experiences. The tree survey is just the latest of their projects. Go to: www.opalexplornature.org.uk. Click on Surveys, then Tree Survey. Information is wanted especially on the pests and diseases afflicting Oak, Ash and Horse Chestnut, and there are many of them, not just the well known Ash Dieback. There's a spine-chilling "Most Unwanted" section featuring the Asian and Citrus Longhorn Beetles, the Emerald Ash Borer and the Oak and Pine Processionary Moth. There are excellent identification pictures, and you can ask for, or download, the full survey pack. So when you are out for a walk from now on, keep your eyes open for tree problems. All results can be entered online, and a quick check on the distribution map for Surrey shows that most of the County waits to be surveyed. Also, if you spot any of the "Most Unwanted", report them immediately to the Forestry Commission: www.forestry.gov.uk/trealert

Ash Dieback

Chalara, the fungal disease affecting ash trees, continued to spread throughout the UK last year. It is now found in every part of the UK, though particularly in East Anglia and the South East where the first infected trees were spotted in 2012. It remains a severe threat to the native ash population, with experts warning that a large proportion of native ash trees could be killed by it. Scientists have now sequenced the DNA of the fungus, and work is going on apace to try to find some mechanism to prevent or contain its spread. Keep your eyes open this spring: any sightings must be reported immediately to the Forestry Commission. See the OPAL story for details on how to identify and report it.

Tree Care Campaign

The Tree Council's national Tree Care Campaign runs from March to September 2014 to highlight the need for better care for all trees. The campaign was launched in 1999 to urge anyone who has planted trees in the past five years to revisit them and carry out a few simple tree care tasks, such as clearing weeds, mulching and checking ties. These actions can save young trees from dying and allow them to develop into mature trees that enhance the landscape.

When tree care didn't happen



Walk in the Woods: May 2014

Walk in the Woods is the Tree Council's festival to encourage everyone to enjoy trees and woods. It could be a walk or a talk, down in the local woods, or down a tree-lined street. It is a great opportunity to organize an event and get new people interested in trees. If you want to get as much local involvement as possible, you can download the **free 2014 poster** from the Tree Council website, and register the details there to publicise it to a wider audience.

CONTACTS AND MEMBERSHIP

We want to hear from you, so please send in any information about events in your area, or what your group has been doing. There is also the STWN website: www.surreytreewardens.org.uk for latest news.

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