



SURREY TREE WARDENS

Newsletter Summer 2014

Wood, Water, and Watch Out

Good news: - otters returning - and sobering news: - the onward march of Oak Processionary Moth - both were on offer at the AGM of the Surrey Tree Wardens in Lingfield in June. The first speaker of the morning was Jim Jones of the Surrey Wildlife Trust. He gave a talk on the close relationship between trees and water, especially in river catchment areas, and explained how trees have helped in the return of otters in some Surrey rivers. Trees play a vital role in helping to prevent bank erosion, reducing run-off and therefore flooding, as well as providing shelter for animals and interestingly an important nutrient source for fish and insects from decomposing leaves and debris.

Jim is masterminding the Living Landscapes campaign in Surrey, which aims to increase biodiversity and reduce pollution levels, especially run-off from agricultural land, and also create wildlife corridors to link up existing wildlife havens such as nature reserves.

The next speaker was Gillian Jonusas who works for the Royal Parks and has to deal with the serious problem of Oak Processionary Moth in Richmond Park. The pest was first discovered in the UK in 2006, and has spread to a number of locations in the South East of England. In its caterpillar form, it has thousands of microscopic hairs, which are carried by the air, and can cause severe skin rash, breathing problems and other allergic reactions for unsuspecting humans and

mammals. The caterpillars also defoliate trees, and after several seasons can kill them.

Gillian described the various life stages of the moth. The adult female lays a batch of eggs on twigs in the upper canopy of trees from July to September. The eggs are difficult to find, and they overwinter on the tree. Larvae hatch in April, and live in the larval form until early summer. This is when they grow the toxic hairs. They feed on leaves in groups, and when not feeding, they congregate to form white silken nests or 'tents'. The caterpillars follow each other, head to tail in procession to and from the nest, hence the common name. They moult several times in the nests and cast off their skins and hairs. Eventually the fully grown larvae pupate, and the emerging adult moths are on the wing from July, whereupon they mate, lay eggs, and the whole cycle starts again.

Gillian has an army of volunteers in Richmond Park who look for nests in the trees. The nests are then physically removed by workers in protective clothing, as chemical sprays are not appropriate where so many people are living nearby. This is a nasty pest that needs to be eradicated from Britain. Watch out for it and if you find it, report it immediately to the Forestry Commission or your Local Authority.

The AGM concluded with an afternoon guided walk around the Lingfield Nature Reserve.

Diary Dates

Diary Dates

Diary Dates

Diary Dates

Sat 27 September: South East Regional Forum hosted by Kent Tree Wardens at Aylesford. See back page for details.

Sat 18 October: Surrey Tree Wardens Tree Identification morning. 10.00 at South Nutfield Village Hall.

23 September – 23 October: Seed Gathering Season

29 November – 7 December: National Tree Week

Fortieth Birthday Forum

The Tree Council is 40 years old! It began in 1973 – remember, Plant a Tree in 73? The Council and the Tree Warden Network it created later have come a long way since. This year's South East Regional Forum will reflect that journey. Speakers will explore the changes to our trees and woods in that time, with one speaker a former Forestry Commission officer, another from Network Rail to talk about railways and trees, and a third looking at heritage trees and how to protect them. In the afternoon there will be a chance to see at first hand a woodland infected with Ash Dieback, and to visit the Forestry Commission trial grounds where they are trying to find ash trees that might be resistant to the disease.

The Forum takes place on Saturday 27 September at The Friars, Aylesford, Kent ME20 7BX from 10.00 to 17.00. If you haven't already had booking details, go to the Tree Council website, www.treecouncil.org.uk and look under Tree Wardens /Update.

World War One Commemorations

The First World War, and one of the first images that come to mind are the ripped and blasted trees on the battlefields of the Western Front. So it seems appropriate that the centenary of the war is commemorated through new green, living woods planted for future generations. The Woodland Trust is establishing four woods throughout the UK, one in each of the Home Countries to commemorate the centenary. The wood for England is to be in Surrey, at Langley Vale on the Downs near Epsom. The 640 acre site will be planted with 200,000 native trees.

Another initiative to commemorate the First World War comes from the British Legion. Tree Wardens are invited to plant trees in their local town or village in memory of the men who died over the four years of the war that began a hundred years ago. There is a website with the details: www.centenarygardens.co.uk. Trees for planting will be supplied by Ashridge Nurseries in Somerset. The scheme will also help raise funds for the Legion as it continues to support men and women damaged in conflict.

Leafsnap

Leafsnap UK or What's That Tree? A new app for iPhones lets you take a photo of a leaf and match it to a database of 156 tree species. The free App has been developed by scientists at the Museum of Natural History, and was launched in May. As well as instant species identification, it also contains more than 2,000 high-resolution images of tree features, such as flowers, fruit, bark and leaves. Fact files are also available, including information on whether the tree is native or introduced, where it grows, when it flowers, and other clues to help with identification. When users take and upload a leaf photo, the image and geographical location is added to the Leafsnap database. This information can then be used by scientists monitoring the UK's tree population, the effect of climate change on trees, and in general biodiversity research.

TWO HOURS A MONTH!

That's all the time it takes to be **TREASURER** of the Surrey Tree Warden Network. Our current treasurer, Don Henderson has announced he is hanging up his calculator, and a successor is needed. There must be someone who could take on this easy book-keeping job. Please contact our secretary Chris Pead on secretary@surreytreewardens.org.uk

NAME THAT TREE

How can you tell a beech from a birch, or sorbus from salix? Tree identification: a morning out for Surrey Tree Wardens. **Saturday 18 October, at 10.00, at South Nutfield Village Hall, Mid St, South Nutfield RH1 4JJ.** Then out to the local woods. Jon Stokes will lead the event, and will give the latest, probably grim news of Ash Dieback. It will end about 1.00.

The newsletter is to keep you in touch with us, and us in touch with you. There is also the STWN website: www.surreytreewardens.org.uk.

Chris Pead: secretary@surreytreewardens.org.uk. Newsletter: Liz Ramsay lizramsay@aol.com. If you wish to come off the mailing list contact Sue Henderson: membership@surreytreewardens.org.uk or ring Liz on 01737 822329