



# Custos Sylvarum

Newsletter of the Surrey Tree Wardens Network

Special Edition

March 2008

## Advance Notice Surrey Tree Wardens' AGM 24<sup>th</sup> May 2008



Above: The grounds of Morden Hall Park which will be the venue this year's AGM

### Message From The Chairman

It has been a strange year since we last met at the AGM held in Juniper Hall. The Surrey Tree Warden Network committee has been low on numbers. Our Events organiser Dave Pope emigrated to Canada; Roger Whitehead, our Editor in Chief took a sabbatical and has extensively travelled the UK; and due to person commitments two other officers ended up working from afar.

However, despite the difficulties we have had a number of successes. All the Parish Councils in Surrey have been contacted and reminded of the Tree warden scheme, which has resulted in a surge of new members. Contacts have been made with all the local authorities and the details of tree officers sourced. Three successful events have been held, the Wey & Arun canal, coppicing willow at Shepperton and a tour of Painshill Park. You can read about these later. There are also 4 more events scheduled for later this year, the soonest being the AGM on the 24th May and second a look at the ancient trees and management techniques of woodland in Richmond Park on 29 June 2008. Details will be forthcoming.

The STWN website has been commissioned and TMS Design, who designed the London Tree Officers website, is presently putting it together. I apologise for this taking so long but it has been a difficult process because we have had to consider many options. The new website will have the following:

News Area, Events Database. Online Image Database, Details on Tree ID, Pest & Disease, Planning law etc and usual details on being a Tree warden, local and regional contacts and links to relevant web pages

I need you all to start submitting content to help build the website, initially please send it to me at [adam.owen@guildford.gov.uk](mailto:adam.owen@guildford.gov.uk)

I hope this year will be fruitful and you will begin to see the benefits of the Surrey Tree Warden Network, and work with us to make Tree wardens in Surrey a group recognised and valued by the communities and authorities we are a part of.

I hope you can attend the AGM and look forward to seeing you there,

Best wishes,

**Adam Chairman - STWN**

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## Unusual Ornamental Trees That Can be Found Growing in The British Isles

### (1) The Foxglove Tree (*Paulownia tormentosa*)



Following the recent trend to milder winters, many trees that would normally have only been seen growing in Southern Europe, or perhaps the Scilly Isles and other areas of the British

Isles favoured with a mild climate, can now be seen in Southern and Midland counties of England and even on occasions further north.

One such tree is the Foxglove Tree, so named because of its prolific blue flowers in early spring which bear a striking resemblance to the Foxglove. A downside to growing the Foxglove Tree in this country is that flower buds are developed in late summer and mature in early autumn, which in the event of a severe winter the buds would be killed and therefore no spring floral display although the tree itself can withstand quite low temperatures. However, this shouldn't be a deterrent to planting such a magnificent tree.

The Foxglove Tree is sometimes grown as a shrub, being cut back each year to encourage the production of very large ornamental leaves on the shoots as they elongate in the spring.

The leaves are large heart shaped and the flowers are large and showy ranging in colour from lavender blue to almost white depending on variety and soil type. The fruit is a large capsule with winged seeds which remain on the tree into winter. They prefer rich loam and a protected situation. Propagation is by seed, cuttings or by rooting leaves when they are 1 inch long.

The Foxglove Tree is native to China. According to legends and records, dating back 2600 years, people in ancient times used Paulownia Trees for various purposes. In the work Zhung Tze, it is recorded that Phoenix flew from the south sea to the north sea without perching on trees other than Paulownia and without eating anything but bamboo fruit".

The Chinese have been planting Paulownia Trees for many centuries around their dwellings in order to bring good luck and to attract the Phoenix.

Because Foxglove Trees are not only very fast growing but produce high quality lumber (1 cubic metre within 10 years) and are therefore being planted commercially for timber production particularly in Australia. Foxglove Tree wood is light in weight and colour, yet it is strong, dries easily, has a beautiful grain, does not warp, crack or deform easily. The wood is easy to work with and suitable for the manufacture of furniture, plywood, mouldings, doors and many other uses. The leaves and flowers are rich in nitrogen and therefore serve as good fertiliser and fodder.



Instead of just growing forests only or food crops only, you can plant your food crops amongst your forests. Over the last 30 years in China, where more than 3 million hectares of Foxglove Trees

have been intercropped with food crops (wheat, soya, and other cereals) increased yields have been consistently recorded.

The flowers are colourful and beautiful in spring and the trees are green and shady in summer. Foxglove Tree species are therefore very suitable for beautifying and enriching the environment. They are also

equally suitable for landscaping of urban and industrial areas. Foxglove Trees can adapt to a wide range of temperatures. All species in Australia are known to withstand temperatures of -10° to +40° centigrade. The non-ornamental species of Foxglove Tree *Paulownia elongata* is used down under for commercial crops.

## Recent Events 2007/8

### *Wey & Arun Canal 11/08/07*

In August last year some 20 Surrey Tree Wardens took to the water by way of a visit to The Wey and Arun Canal to look at the restoration work and in particular the extensive tree and hedge planting along the banks and towpath.



**Above: Wardens admiring the recent restoration works and view from a newly restored bridge.**

After a walk along the canal to view the recently restored "Devil's Hole Lock" the group under the guidance of two Wey and Arun Trust members, David Jessop (Maintenance manager) and Michael Joseph (Conservation manager) went along the banks of the yet unrestored section to look at some protected badger sets.

After seeing the sights of the canal and its environs members retired to the Oslow Arms on the bank of the canal at Loxwood for refreshments and to cool down as the day chosen for the visit was one of the hottest of an otherwise indifferent summer.

Once watered and fed the group set off for a 2 mile trip down the restored canal on a reconditioned narrow boat the "Zechariah Keppel". The trip was to Drunswick lock and back and took approximately 2½ hours - so ended a very enjoyable day out.



**Above: inside the "Zechariah Keppel".**



**Above: the "Zechariah Keppel" on its way back to Loxwood.**

## Willow Coppicing Event - Shepperton February 2008

We are grateful to Sally Fletcher for organising and leading the willow coppicing event - here is her report:

The workshop was a great success, it was a lovely day and I think everyone enjoyed the different activities. Me and other coppicing veterans showed how to coppice, Sarah showed how to make the living willow structure, Lucy showed what

could be done with weaving dry willow, and Dave Pope and others made living willow chairs on a light metal framework made by my hubby Julian. We were also very lucky to have the use of Paxmead guide camp, a lovely venue overlooking the Thames.

**Sally Fletcher**



Above some of the 20 tree wardens who turned up for this event and the Painshill Park Guide on the right with a white coat.



**Above: photos taken on the coppicing event held in Shepperton**

**Notable Surrey Trees**



Left: The ancient "Crouch Oak of Addlestone"



Above is the oldest and largest Tulip Tree in the UK and is in Surrey within private grounds, however the landowners wish not to have its location disclosed



**Left: Painshill Park Cobham, Surrey**

A successful visit to the famous Painshill Park on the 3rd April this year was organised by Warwick Hutchinson (Elmbridge tree warden).

We were guided round the Park by a very

**Photos of unusual trees in Surrey needed for next issue - send to the Secretary [cpead@onetel.com](mailto:cpead@onetel.com)**

## Events Planned for 2008

Richmond Park 29<sup>th</sup> June or 6<sup>th</sup> July



**Guildford - Urban Forestry**  
**13th September**  
**Leader Adam Owen**  
**Details to be confirmed**



**Bedgebury Pinetum - Kent**  
**6th November**  
**Details to be confirmed**



The above events still have to be fully finalised so please keep the above dates free so that there is a good turnout to justify the work done behind the scenes in organising these events.

## News Round-Up From Local Wardens

### Godalming

We are not entirely idle in Godalming. I and a neighbour organised a collection in our road, (The Drive, Busbridge) last Autumn, and a few weeks ago we had a Community Planting of 30 cherry trees, plus wire guards, in the verges - to fill gaps and replace trees lost through old age or vandalism. We also put in about 1500 bulbs - mainly crocus and daffodil. About 20 people turned up to help, and enjoyed themselves so much we are having a party to celebrate.

**Pat Wilson**

### The Spelthorne Group

The Spelthorne group of tree wardens have been appointed tree planting contractor to Surrey County Council for trees on the highways within the Borough and have recently been engaged to plant 30 plane trees in Kingston Road for the sum of £2000. The Spelthorne planting group of volunteers are led by David Woods and David Pope who over the past few years have planted many hundreds of trees, including for housing associations, Parks and open spaces, cemeteries and for members of the public wanting a tree planted outside of their house after having first obtained permission from the highway authority.

It is through its planting activities that the group is able to generate funds from money paid by the recipients of the trees

The group also have their own tree nursery within the grounds of Laleham Park walled garden made available to them by Spelthorne Borough Council. Donated trees by members of the public are nurtured here until they are of sufficient size to be planted out.

**David Woods & David Pope**

## **Can We Conquer Conker Canker?**

**Martin Strike**

When I think back to my days as a school-boy at the turn of the 70's, I picture four things.

There are of course Spangles and grazed knees. Then there is walking home with trouser pockets bursting with shiny conkers, and, of course, an unhealthy fascination with Pans People!

That's all 35 years ago, and the world has moved on much more than I would have liked it to. Mars withdrew Spangles in the 1980's (damn you, Chewits!) Grazed knees went with my progression into long trousers, and I'm told Pan's People now bake cakes for the WI.

The one thing that has remained constant are the horse chestnuts or conker trees. A shiny brown conker, freshly released from its unappealing green shell is still I believe, pretty much the most beautiful sight in nature.

The same trees that silently accepted my wanton throwing of sticks all those years ago, have continued to allow such brutal behaviour to new generations of kids, including my own. They have stood quietly by, as my adolescence came and went and I moved from three to two and ultimately four-wheeled transport and the years rolled by. They remained tall and forgiving in the background even when I pierced their offspring and cracked them against others, having surreptitiously soaked them in vinegar first.

But these stalwarts of my youth are in trouble. The first reason is hopefully nothing worse than aesthetic problem for most trees and is the disfiguration of leaves into crinkled dry brown crisps by Leaf Miner Moths. Up to 700 of these creatures have been

found in a single leaf, devouring the chloroplasts within. It is these diminutive pests that have made our beloved horse chestnuts look so afflicted these last 2 years. It is hoped that a good old-fashioned winter would see these pests off. But as each years contagion draws on yet more of each trees reserves and the apparent onrush of global warming this may be an optimistic assumption.

More seriously, up to 10% of conker trees has developed a fungal pathogen called Phytophthora or, excuse me, Bleeding Canker, so named because the symptoms include a red or rusty secretion from open wounds in the trunk or main branches. This has spread alarmingly over a similar time span as the Leaf Miner and can be a tree killer if it completely encircles the trunk.

There is currently no explanation or remedy for this dreadful condition, with the botanical world working hard to establish causes or treatments. Informed advice is to leave infected trees alone (unless representing an imminent danger to persons or property beneath). Because it is not known how the pathogen spreads, to cut down infected trees, or remove affected areas might do more harm than good.

Lets look after these trees as best as we can, continuing to love and admire them, and making every effort to find a cure. We owe them this; after all, they are part of your history as well as mine.

### **Important!**

**If your e-mail address or Tel. Numbers have changed please update the Secretary as event details and changes sometimes need to be notified at short notice.**

### **Contributions Required**

**Articles and local news items pertinent to tree wardening welcome from members - submit to the Chairman or Secretary.**