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The Quarterly Newsletter for a Federation of Tree Enthusiasts

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WINTER 2009/10

GROWING BROADLEAVED TREES FOR QUALITY TIMBER

by K L Rawling

The growing of trees is one thing; growing quality timber is something else. Today many woodlands are established for conservation, recreation and landscape effect. While these aspects are important, they are often the priority before production. However, all these facets can be combined together resulting in quality timber, which can be an integral part of the woodland.

Of course there are different types of woodland on differing qualities of soil, yet where the sites are fertile and have a Ph level between 5.4 and 7.2, then planting for quality timber should be undertaken. To do nothing or just apply a management system for the benefit of wildlife and public amenities is to ignore the potential to grow timber of the highest grade for which there will always be a demand. It should also be borne in mind that it can cost the same, or even more, to harvest poor quality than it does for high grade timber.

There are costs involved in producing high grade logs. However, never once in the 53 years of my forestry do I recall an owner, or agent say 'don't forget when you are selling this timber that in 1924, or whenever, it cost x amount to prune and thin them'. It was the value on the day of sale. Unpruned or badly formed trees can have the same volume of timber as well managed ones but they are in a different value class.

What then are the guidelines to the achievement of quality timber?

1. Ensure quality planting stock from registered seed stands. The registration numbers will tell you where the seed is from, which country and seed zone and which wood. All this is contained in the Master Certificate of Identity for reproductive material derived from seed sources and stands.

2. Plant the transplant so that the roots are spread down and the stem to the same depth as in the nursery. There is a big difference between planting them and sticking them in the ground. If the root system is not set

out properly then it will reduce the tree's ability to grow into a good form.

3. Poor formed saplings of Oak, Sweet Chestnut, Sycamore, Ash and Lime can be 'stumped' back about years 4-5. Stump back to about 4cm above ground level and keep the stump free from weed growth. Put the stem, which has been cut off, into the ground adjacent to the stump for identifying its position. The resulting shoots can be reduced to one in the second year after regrowth. These will then continue to extend into a good form from the established root system.

4. Formative pruning should begin about year six and only 50% of the stem cleaned, plus the reduction of any forked leaders to one shoot. Other large extending branches in the crown area can be reduced in length by half. The remaining section will tend to produce more leaves and somewhat larger ones. Also the diameter of the branch will not increase very much, so when additional pruning requires these branches to be removed there is virtually only the initial diameter scar. More trees should be pruned to start with than will be required for the final crop. This gives insurance against storm damage, disease etc. High pruning should then be on selected quality stems.

5. Nurse trees can be planted in the mixture to encourage height growth of the broadleaves but they are not essential. The better species being Western Red Cedar, Western Hemlock, Norway Spruce or Larch. Of more importance is the establishment of an understorey, Hazel, Birch or any natural regeneration. This will help the prevention of side shoots and epicormic growth from developing on the main stems. The understorey will also reduce the wind speed through the plantation and allow the CO₂ to filter up from the soil layer into the tree crowns. This is an essential source of nutrition for both stem and crown development. Without an understorey much of the CO₂ is blown out and lost from the woodland. By reducing the wind speed the crowns of the main species will not move excessively and this will help

to promote the growth of a cylinder shaped stem rather than a tapered one where there is a higher degree of waste. Windy days in summer produce more growth due to extra transpiration from the crown. This causes the trees to take up more water and nutrition.

6. Crown size is all important and the 50% of the total tree height should be retained. Alongside the size of it is the availability of sunlight to the whole of the crown area. Assimilation reduces as it comes down the crown if it is shaded by neighbouring trees. Light demanders such as Oak, Ash, Sycamore and Lime need full crown access to the sun. Beech, being a shade bearer, can be grown closer together and still produce the required volume of timber. An even crown formation will reduce abnormal ring width in the stem and not cause excessive stress in any one area.

7. Stem length can be from 5 to 10m, but what must be avoided is height at the expense of girth. Diameter is the grand essential along with even growth, which is related to thinning cycles and the intensity required for crown development. The resulting timber will have evenly distributed stress and tension, which upon conversion will cut evenly without twist or warping. Although seasonal weather conditions can affect ring width it is usually the lack of thinning and crown size, which can cause major differences of unevenness across the years in the distribution of the annual rings.

8. Log size and the time scale to achieve this are the result of stem pruning plus crown development by ensuring that the thinning operations are carried out at the right time and to the right degree. The stems are to be pruned to the height required in the earliest time possible, especially with Oak which must be before the heartwood develops and appears in the branches, or there will be the risk of stem rot through the pruning wounds by the disease *Stereum rugosum*. Twenty to twenty five years should be sufficient for ensuring that only the smallest area within the stem will have knots in.

However, this time scale is approximate and not specific. It is, therefore, important to keep records of what operations have been carried out and when, so that at the time of sale, it can be proven that early pruning was done. This will give assurance to the buyer of the quality.

9. Time of felling – the dormant season is best, late October to mid February. If you have no option but to fell quality Sycamore in mid summer then leave the crowns on for 2 weeks before dressing out. This will help to draw out the sap and retain the colour.

10. Some indication of the years of growth required to reach quality saw log size with minimum mid diameter of 45cm

Sycamore	60–70 yrs
Beech	80–100 yrs
Ash	50–70 yrs
Sweet Chestnut	60–90 yrs
Oak	80–120 yrs

These figures are not specific and can be different according to site fertility and quality of management

11. These are outline principles essential to the growing of quality timber. The species and size will to a degree dictate the market, with sports Ash on one side and furniture quality and veneer logs on the other. The time of selling should be in response to demand and price. Don't be too dogmatic about achieving the year of rotation. If the price is right go for it.

12. Within a mixed woodland trees mature at different times and differing stem sizes are required by the market, which will result in an uneven aged wood. This includes the removal of any nurse species. Continuous management will ensure the perpetuity of benefits to future generations of wildlife, people, landscape and industry.

Note: K L Rawling is a retired Forestry Consultant

IDENTIFYING TREES IN WINTER

Most people can tell an ash from an oak, a maple or birch simply by looking at the leaves but what about in winter? This is not only a gratifying bit of fun for the more experienced but a rewarding time for a beginner to commence studying trees.

For a start: note the form of a tree – its silhouette, then observe its habit – its branching characteristics, then the texture and colour of its trunk. Attention should be turned to the twigs which are not simply bits of stick; they will be smooth or if there are raised lenticels, rougher, and each section is separated by a bend or a swelling and at each of these points there is a bud and it is important to observe whether these are opposite pairs or on alternate sides of the twig so it 'zig-zags'.

Over the years many of these buds will have extended at an angle to the twig and this side shoot will later become a new twig, which means that those trees with opposite buds will have opposite pairs of twigs and those with alternate buds, alternate twigs, which will be the same for other species in that genus, so you can begin to make some useful lists.

In some trees, such as fruit trees like apples or cherries,

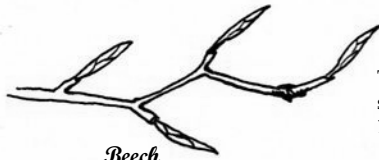
as mature twigs develop, some produce several knobbly, condensed side shoots, each bearing buds which produce the several leaves and flowers in the following year so the whole side shoot position is relevant.

Having established the position of the buds, it is important to assess if they are clasping, that is, closely parallel to the axis of the twig – see hornbeam, or spreading like the beech which is about 45 degrees from the twig. Those buds less than about 3mm are assumed to be spreading, not clasping, so bud size is a good observation to make but be careful that these are on normal twigs – not sucker growth which will be unrepresentative of the typical twigs.

Finally, and it is best to have a x10 hand lens for this, look at the bud surface for leaf scales which may be numerous and overlapping as in oak, or so few it gives a smooth appearance like plane trees. Note the colour too and if it is sticky like the horse chestnut. This tree has a well known leaf scar which most children know, but other trees have distinctive leaf scars too and winter is a good time to get to know them.

Give winter tree identification a try, you will enjoy it!

WINTER TREE IDENTIFICATION



Beech
(*Fagus sylvatica*)

Twigs slender, buds spiky, spindle-shaped spreading 1/2 inch or more long.



Field Maple
(*Acer campestre*)

Bud scales hairy at the tips, branches without spines; older twigs with corky ridges.



Crack Willow
(*Salix fragilis*)

Buds appressed to the twig, exposed bud scale, one.



Birch
(*Betula pendula*)

Exposed bud scales two or three, twigs slender, flexible, sometimes warty.



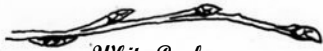
Ash
(*Fraxinus excelsior*)

Bud scales black, terminal bud the largest; twigs smooth.



Alder
(*Alnus glutinosa*)

Buds stalked, with waxy bloom, twigs reddish brown.



White Poplar
(*Populus alba*)

Young twigs covered with a white, cottony film.



Hornbeam
(*Carpinus betulus*)

Twigs as above but buds ovoid, shorter.



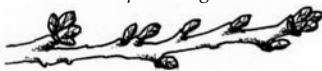
Black Poplar
(*Populus nigra*)

Buds chestnut-brown, glossy, often resinous.



Hazel
(*Corylus avellana*)

Buds pale brown, obtuse twigs often clothed with glandular bristles.



Wild Cherry
(*Prunus avium*)

Twigs not spiny, buds large, glossy, ovoid with about 6 exposed scales.



English Oak
(*Quercus robur*)

Buds clustered at tip of shoot, with numerous 5-ranked scales.



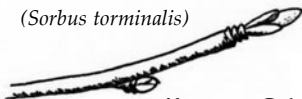
Wild Service Tree
(*Sorbus torminalis*)

Buds sub-globose, smooth at the tips.



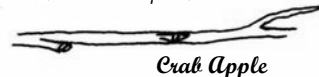
Lime
(*Tilia x europaea*)

Twigs red, zig-zag, glabrous, shining.



Mountain Ash
(*Sorbus aucuparia*)

Buds woolly, scales dark purple.



Crab Apple
(*Malus sylvestris*)

Young twigs partially hairy, short branches ending in a thorn.



Hawthorn
(*Crataegus monogyna*)

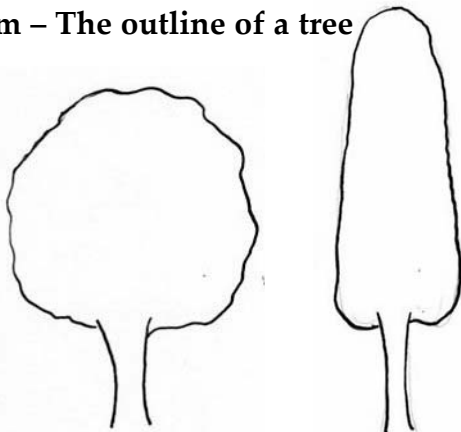
Twigs greyish, spiny, buds minute, rounded.



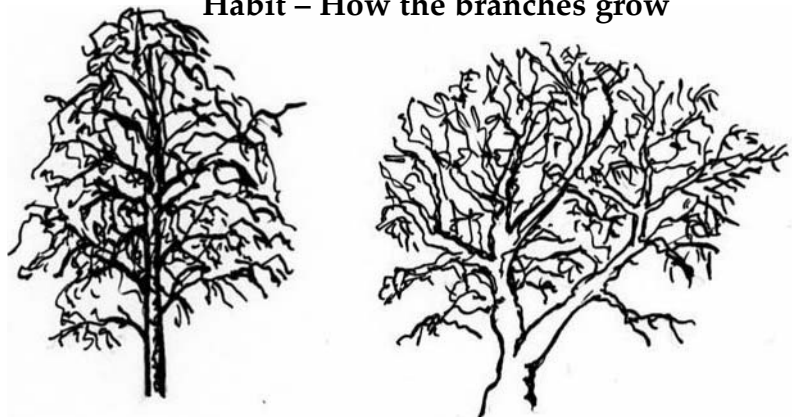
Whitebeam
(*Sorbus aria*)

Buds elongated, hairy at the tips.

Form – The outline of a tree



Habit – How the branches grow



Nicki Tullett, RHS SGM 2007, illustrations from a forthcoming book

PARKS PARTNERSHIP AIDS RECOVERY

Former Royal Parks Manager, Derek Pollack, speaking at the Greenspace Conference in November, 'Making it Safe' said the themes for tackling crime and antisocial behaviour were relevant to all parks and no agency could succeed in isolation. He told the audience a physical presence in parks which challenged people's unacceptable behaviour was necessary, and engaging with regular park users like dog walkers provided additional sources of information as did resident associations and schools and sports groups.

This seems so like common sense that everyone can endorse and more local organizations often not associated with parks, like choirs and discussion groups, should be encouraged to make more use of the space and fresh air in their local park for it to become a focal point for people to meet up.

TREES NEED TO BE ON THE AGENDA

Trees need to be on any planning agenda for the urban environment. Not only do they help combat climate change by moderating summer temperatures in towns and help reduce surface rainwater run-offs but they also enhance the greenspace infrastructure that benefits wildlife. Martin Kelly of Trees and Design Action Group told delegates at a recent seminar that this was also essential to the well being of residents in urban areas.

The Town and Country Planning Association supported this and referred to the case study at Malmö where 'green' roofs and tree planting helped improve an area.

A cost benefit analysis carried out by New York City's parks department showed a five fold return

on investment in trees. The study looked at such factors as improvement to air quality, energy savings, flood management and property values. It has been estimated New York's 5.2 million trees provide 24% canopy cover.

Another study in Scotland focussed on the value of volunteer conservation work on a 7km green cycle path and showed health benefits, value of skills gained and better

DENDRO'S



employment prospects as well as greater use of green-space by children for play.

KEW'S FOUNDING 250 YEARS AGO COMMEMORATED

Last autumn Kew's 250th anniversary was marked by the Arboricultural Association with Henry Girling's gift of three *Sorbus torminalis* trees which were planted under the direction of Kew's Head of Arboriculture, Tony Kirkham, by a number of modern day tree influential people like Robert Hillier and Derek Honour, and also the co-founder of The Dendrologist, Merelene Davis.

YET MORE NATIVE SORBUS SPECIES

The western side of Britain, from north Devon-Somerset's steep valleys and gorges to the islands off Scotland, have demonstrated the great variability of the *Sorbus* genus in isolated areas which have rapidly evolved into new species.

Researchers from the Welsh National Herbarium, using DNA techniques, have found three new whitebeams in the Cheddar

Gorge: *Sorbus cheddarensis* with oval leaves, from the Twin Cliffs, *S. eminentoides*, with roundish leaves and, from around Gough's Rock, *S. rupicoloides* which has long narrow leaves.

HERITAGE LOTTERY FUNDS POSE PROBLEMS

Since the creation of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) 15 years ago, £500m has been awarded to just over 500 parks for projects,

have worked towards in their professional life is likely to be neglected or even cut.

More recent HLF schemes have specified the condition that the park should hold a 'Green Flag' award and in future the HLF (which holds a seat on the 'Green Flag' advisory group) has announced it will be making unscheduled visits as checks on standards.

BEECH WOODS LOSE THE GHOST ORCHID

The deep litter of beech woods of Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and some in the counties of Shropshire and Herefordshire, were once the haunt of the tiny elusive Ghost Orchid, *Epipogium aphyllum*, last recorded in Britain in 1986. Rare right across temperate Europe and Asia, the Ghost Orchid has no chlorophyll so it is of a translucent white colour and relies upon what is described as mycoheteroph, a parasite of mycorrhizal fungi.

The Plantlife organization said the problem was that although plants are protected by law, the site's habitat is not and one in five of Britain's wild flowers are threatened.

Plantlife calls for more legal protection of sites and more funding for research.

APG 111 SYSTEM : ANGIOSPERM PHYLOGENY GROUP

Taxonomists all over the world have been using DNA rather than relying on visual appearance since 1998 resulting in an improved understanding of how plants are related to one another. The majority of the new groupings appeared in Kew's 'Flowering Plants of the World' in 2007.

The latest revision is of semi parasitic plants, like mistletoe, which almost all now have a place within the plant family tree. Some

have shown unsuspected relationships such as that between Poinsettia, *Euphorbia pulcherrima* and the *Rafflesia arnoldii*, found in Indonesia. Perhaps more surprising still is that the Platanaceae genus is closely related to South African Protea.

We understand that Platanus is one of the few trees without a symbiotic mycorrhizal fungi relationship and wonder if Proteas also do not have this relationship?

TREES FOR PEACE

The olive has long been the symbol of peace but in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict both sides have used tree planting to assert their presence on disputed land.

Israel asserts that restoring mixed growth forest is a national priority and Palestinians claim olive groves are a vital agricultural resource for them. Meanwhile, the United Nations talk on, ignoring the rules of law in international affairs.

The delegates to the conference in London in November 'Trees and Conflict Resolution' (costing £220 per person) were reminded of the Chipko movement of the 1970s when women in the Himalayas successfully protected the forests by standing between the trees and the loggers.

Now again it is individual action that is making a difference for many Afghans. British businessman James Brett encouraged farmers to grow pomegranates instead of opium poppies and set up 'Pomegreat' to sell the juice in Britain. Now he has convinced the Tribal Elders of Nangarhar Province to support the switch to pomegranate farming as a priority to restore economic stability and independence.

An initiative has now been set up to plant 58.3 million pomegranate trees in Afghanistan.

Dr Vandana Shiva spoke of the need to stop 'biopiracy' when multinational companies take control of the native plants and their uses as US pharmaceutical companies tried to do with the biomedical knowledge of the Neem tree, *Azadirachta indica*. Through the organization Navdanya, she is working to protect local people's rights in India to have access to the land and water which are under increasing threat from ownership by large private and multinational companies, and warned that people are under similar threats in countries in the other continents.

RED SQUIRREL INCREASE ON ANGLESEY

Now that 3,000 grey squirrels have been culled on Anglesey, the red squirrel population has increased from only 40 in 1999 to 300. A few grey squirrels still need to be removed.

EUROPEAN PLANT SPECIES FACE EXTINCTION IN THE WILD

Researchers from Botanic Gardens Conservations International have found that 1 in 7 European plant species face extinction in the wild and this causes concerns for plant breeders who look to wild species when cultivating disease resistant plants – especially as only half the threatened species are being conserved in botanic gardens.

ALPINE WILLOWS HELPED WITH PROPAGATION

Montane willows were surveyed in 2007 and it was found that several species in isolated pockets in the Corrie Fee Nature Reserve, Angus, were not regenerating. So cuttings and seeds of the woolly downy and dark leaved willows, *Salix lantana*, *S. lapponum* and *S. myrsinifolia* were taken,

then propagated at the Royal Botanic Garden at Edinburgh.

Now 800 plants are available to be planted at Corrie Fee, Britain's largest reserve of willow scrub and other rare alpine-arctic plants.

US PUTS CASH INTO WOOD PROJECTS FOR FUEL

President Obama has put \$49m into projects concerned with turning wood into fuel including liquid fuel. The decline of growth in trees in the Rocky Mountains (Vol. 18 No. 3), due to climate change, is only one of the US nation's tree concerns.

Having already experienced the loss of the American chestnut and elm due to alien insect species brought in on timber imports, the emerald ash wood borer, *Agrilus planipennis*, that arrived only 2002 in Michigan has decimated 70 million ash trees and spread to 13 states. In the eastern United States another alien, the Woolly adelgid, *Adelges tsugae*, is ravaging the hemlock canopy whilst the gypsy moth, *Lymantria dispar*, is one of the most notorious pests of hardwood trees.

Since 1980, the gypsy moth has defoliated close to a million or more forested acres each year. In 1981 a record 12.9 million acres were destroyed.

BOREAL FORESTS POISED TO BE NEXT AMAZON

Concern has been expressed by international researchers as only 40% of the boreal forest remains in tact. The taiga, as it is also called, represents a third of the world's forested area and the fragmentation, greatest in Russia, looks to be the next Amazon in terms of the loss of tree cover – with undoubted climatic results.

KENYA DROUGHT WORSENS

With less than 1.7% forest cover, the continuing drought has led to demands that eucalyptus trees which have dried up in wetlands be replaced by less thirsty indigenous trees, and to increase forest cover to 10%.

CRIMINAL RECORD FOR FELLING FIFTEEN FOOT CONIFER

When neighbours complained that a fifteen foot conifer was blocking their drains the owner in Gloucester asked his builder son to take the offending tree down, which he did. Now he has found himself with a criminal record and a bill of £1,400 costs because he should have been aware the tree was in a conservation area. With a criminal record, he cannot take a planned holiday in America.

NHS FOREST

A plan was launched at Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Liverpool, to plant 1.3 million trees, one for every NHS employee. It is hoped that patients will contribute to the fund as a thank you for their care, and staff, too, will want to commemorate loved ones and events such as a baby's birth, or on retirement.

TALLEST EUROPEAN TREES

Two Douglas firs, *Pseudotsuga menziesii*, one on the Lake Vyrnwy Estate in North Wales and the other near Dunans Castle, Argyll, Scotland both at 63.79m are the tallest trees in Europe. The Lake Vyrnwy one is 122 years old.

LOG PILE CONTRIBUTIONS

If you find anything interesting in your journals about trees please send it to us, or write a précis, for inclusion in Logpile!

Dear Dendrologists,

IN MORE PRAISE OF CONIFERS

I applaud Esmond Harris for speaking out in defence of conifers and their many values to man and the environment (Dendrologist Vol. 18 No. 4 Autumn 2009).

I am constantly torn between supporting the views and wishes of conserving woodlands and practical forestry/wood product demands, when it comes to the planting of conifers in the UK. My personal view is that benefits can be obtained by careful management within both schools of thought.

The idea that we should let much of the UK return to mixed native hardwoods only, is crazy given our large population, crowded island and massive demand for timber products. Most of our more decorative flowering trees are of course foreigners too! The fanciful ideas that open moor land (never was before man appeared), or majestic parkland spaced oak woodland (never was before man appeared), or even the policy of planting only native trees should be the norm in urban areas (our major forest trees are just that and should stay in the forests not in the streets) are all going too far. Crazy too that Forestry Commission policy seems to be to replace conifers when felled with native hardwoods in many situations.

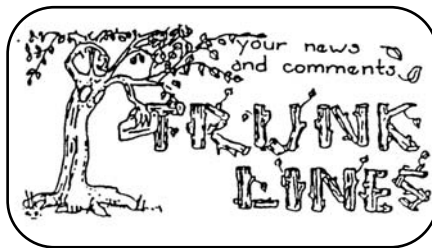
Where do the critics of conifer woodlands think we are going to obtain our construction timber, paper pulp, fencing, chip board material etc? The much slower growth rate of native species can rarely compete with that of introduced conifers, particularly on our northern and western acid soils or our drier eastern ones.

Some native species such as hazel, willow and poplar when managed correctly can produce a considerable bio-mass potential for wood chips but not large dimension or very strong lumber for construction.

It is, of course, the serried ranks of conifers or indeed any tree growing in large areas of plantations that many object to. Much of this effect can be ameliorated by more planting of native hardwoods to screen the plantation blocks and mixing species where possible. The latter policy should also be used perhaps in broken up sections along river courses and other dominant and obvious topographical features observed from the motor car!

Indeed, many members of the

public do not look closely at the tree species but “fall” for the large huggable trunk in a large clearing within which they can picnic, play ball etc. Large conifers that are left beyond their economic felling age, well spaced out allowing sunshine to dapple the ground around them, are often revered by many as much as native hardwoods.



An important point that EH makes is that of plantations of young trees being able to “sink” more carbon than old oak trees! Indeed some climate based studies indicate that the cold northern conifer forests of Siberia and Canada may be sequestering more carbon than tropical ones.

Many birds of prey use conifer woodlands to nest and seek cover in whilst hunting over different forms of vegetation. Many forms of fungi are specific to conifer dominated woodland.

There are also important industrial and pharmaceutical substances obtained from the resinous contents of several conifer species, e.g. turpentine and pitch.

Do the critics of planting conifers wish to close their eyes to the destruction of tropical rainforests whilst protecting the UK's native hardwood forests, in order to feed one of the UK's largest import bills, namely timber products? Due to the lack of saw mills and young round timber we are now importing wood chips in container ships from abroad to fuel our need for paper pulp and other wood chip demands.

How can this be truly economic yet alone sustainable? Growing trees in our climate is almost as easy as growing grass. Both are perfect low input sustainable systems requiring little energy apart from the sun and some careful experienced management. We should be planting more trees than we do, not just for their beauty but for their many uses and for future generations. In return they can give us so many benefits.

Ian Gourlay

Former Wood Anatomist, Dept of Forestry, University of Oxford

Dear Dendrologists,

I always find The Dendrologist a lively and sometimes thought provoking read. The item ‘Tax Havens and Aid’ highlighted the worrying hypocrisy of the Department of International Aid and CDC Plc. It does seem it is a good idea to encourage private giving to overseas charities rather than allowing so much taxpayers’ money to be mis-directed. I urge caution though about to which charities to give and refer to what Foreign Secretary David Miliband said when he introduced the bill to ratify the Lisbon Treaty: “The NSPCC pledged its support, as have One World Action, Action Aid and Oxfam.” He failed to mention that between them these had received €43,051,542.95 from Brussels so the handsomely remunerated executives cannot be seen as objective in this matter.

Ministers have also announced £40 million for the “voluntary sector” to aid their campaigning. This is not good but a further step in the politicisation of many major charities who are no longer being independent or actually doing what their volunteer supporters want them to do. When selecting to which charity to give, be careful to make sure it has not become a quasi-arm of government.

A N Boddy

Watford, Herts.

FORESTRY INDUSTRY CRITICAL OF LEGISLATION

With more than 3,600 pieces of new legislation since 1997, forestry has had more than its fair share of them, creating more and more bureaucracy and deterring timber production. This has driven forester Arwyn Morgan to refer to the bible: Matthew 23:4 (“For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne and lay them on men’s shoulders but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers”) to condemn them in a leader in Forestry Journal.

He quoted the response of the Forestry Commission given to the new president of the Royal Forestry Society, Anthony Bosanquet: that it was the forester’s job to do what Parliament wanted them to do. If they were told to plant conifers, they would do so. Thus we have a system of grants and initiatives to do things the government thought popular, rather than a well thought out long term strategy for the benefit of the nation. A current example, Morgan cited, is that there is ample funding for heathland restora-

tion but not for halting oak decline.

The south east of England is one of the most wooded areas in the country yet only 10 per cent of its resource is used. With the need for more energy, even the poorest quality of wood could be utilized yet the latest forestry bill fails to emphasize this although production is compatible with recreation, wildlife habitats and combating climate change – it is not an either/or scenario.

KEW GOOGLE GUIDE

You can bring a bit of arboreal fantasy into the winter gloom thanks to Google Street View as last spring their Street View Car spent an hour and a half touring Kew gardens taking thousands of pictures which have been stitched together so when you follow a path at each arrow mark you can look around in a 360 degrees view. If you see something you want a closer look at, you can also zoom in and out and go on your journey. If you have not been to Kew then it gives you a real feel as to what it is like and if you have visited, you will be looking out for the landmarks – but these are trickier to find.

Other visitors to the site have downloaded photos which provide even more views.

NATIONAL TREE ORGANIZATION IN TROUBLE WITH MEMBERS

Founded in 1922 as 'The Men of the Trees' the organization, perhaps misguidedly, thought the name deterred women members and this was the major reason it was renamed in the UK as the 'International Tree Foundation' in 1992. About this time the much loved quarterly magazine was dropped and instead a yearbook was produced, and two or three newsletters. The appointment of a Chief Executive was controversial and newsletters became less frequent, and recently the Yearbook has not been circulated. This disappointed members but several lively branches produced programmes of events for the members and continued to plant trees whilst there was mounting concern about how funds were being eaten up by overheads. Then some members found that they were now classified as 'supporters' and had no voting rights which became more relevant when a restructuring of the charity was proposed last year, and was passed.

Now several branches have closed, like the formerly very active Sussex one. Others have left to form their own organization, like Dorset which has become 'Trees for Dorset', and the former Shropshire and Montgomery branch which has become the 'Severn Tree Trust'. Whilst it is good to see the enthusiasm thriving in the new clubs, it is sad to see the former national charity no longer leading Britain's tree interested people. For the benefit of our woodlands as well as treescapes in our towns and countryside, we can only hope that some national forum will develop for all tree groups and individuals to come together.

Recent changes in charity laws have allowed for so many government bodies to register as a charity

and some charities to be established with no intention of having members at all. It is not known how much these changes influenced the International Tree Foundation to remove voting rights of some members making them into mere supporters or, indeed, for whole branches to leave, but it does seem that ordinary people are being sidelined and made unimportant by bodies whose success now is being dictated by grants and corporate sponsorship. Charities should surely be about people's aspirations for a common good. Now very slick websites often imply activities which are, in fact, several years old and out of date, or misleading links to sites which are actually totally independent and have no formal ties with the organization itself.

Man of the Trees – Richard St. Barbe Baker

Dr Richard St. Barbe Baker was a government forestry official in Kenya, when he was convinced of the need to plant new trees to maintain the world's ecology. In North Africa he saw the effects of centuries of land mismanagement, first from wheat farming in the later days of the Roman Empire and after that from the grazing of goats first introduced by Arabs. Immediately concerned with these deforestation problems, in 1922 he set up a tree nursery and founded an organization with Kenya's Kikuyu people to carry out managed reforestation in the region, utilizing native species. In the regional dialect the local society was called 'Watu wa Miti'; it was a foundation stone for what became an international movement, The 'Men of the Trees'.

Born in 1889 in Hampshire, Richard St. Barbe Baker had gone to Canada where he studied at Saskatchewan University. Whilst there, he became first concerned about the wasteful use of timber resources, and about prairie farming practices which created dust-bowl conditions. He returned to Britain to study and at outbreak of the First World War he immediately enlisted and later when he was commissioned saw action in France where he was seriously wounded twice before being invalided out of the army in April 1918.

St. Barbe Baker soon resumed studies in forestry at Cambridge. He had realized through observation that deforestation, resulting from the removal of trees without sufficient reforestation, results in soil-loss problems, in declines in habitat and biodiversity, declines in availability of wood for fuel and industrial use, and reduction in quality of life. Claudia Stewart Coles introduced him to the Bahá'í Faith; St. Barbe Baker studied the religion and embraced it in 1924 and, shortly afterwards, he began work in earnest to alert nations to the importance of caring for their forest cover.

He worked in Nigeria, The Gold Coast, and in Palestine where he was able to get the backing of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian leaders for a programme to reforest Palestine. He travelled to Canada and America where he started the 'Save the Redwoods' campaign and helped President Roosevelt to establish the American Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

After World War II, on a lecture tour into Austria, Germany and other countries, he launched his concept of an international Green Front to promote the idea of reforestation worldwide and through his contacts in over 24 countries, established the 'Men of The Trees' societies all using the original Swahili slogan 'Twahamwe' meaning 'all pull together'. Through their efforts, it is estimated these societies have been responsible for planting at least 26 trillion trees, internationally.

His autobiography entitled 'My Life, My Trees' was published in 1970 and he was awarded with the OBE in 1978. Still travelling the world, St. Barbe Baker died at the age of 93 on 9th June, 1982, whilst visiting his old university at Saskatoon, where he had planted a tree.



THE DENDROLOGIST'S DIARY



Please phone the contact name to check details of events.
Where there is no fee, please remember an offer of a donation is always welcomed.

Friday, 12th FEBRUARY (Oxford Tree Club)

Talk on the proposed NHS Forest. Meet 8pm, the Coach House, Quarry Road, Headington, Oxford.
Contact Henry Marriot 01926 422413 or Ian Gourlay 01993 773921

Saturday, 20th FEBRUARY

(Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh)

Winter Tree Identification with Max Coleman 10am–4pm. £45 (£40.50 members).
Telephone 01312 482937

Monday, 22nd FEBRUARY (Claremont Tree Society).

Talk by Dr Edward Eastwood 'The Natural History of Tree Trunks'. Meet 7pm at The Mansion, Claremont Fan Court School, Esher.
Contact Nöelle Leigh 020 8398 8746 or Ken Allen 01932 224423 or email treeleighs@waitrose.com

Friday, 5th and Saturday, 6th MARCH

(Chiltern Woodland Project)

Choose which date to attend a 'Woodland Archaeology Day' Workshop Day 10.30am–4pm led by John Morris at Piggotts Wood, North Dean near High Wycombe, Bucks. Grid Ref SU 853990. Bring packed lunch and warm outdoor clothing and footwear. Cost £40 (tea and coffee provided).

Contact John Morris 01844 355503 or email woodlands@Chilternsaonb.org

Sunday, 7th March

DENDRO DAY

(Always the First Sunday in March,
the start of everyone's tree year)

Do any late planting, if ground is not frosty or waterlogged
Examine tree ties, loosen or remove them as necessary
Note tree work you cannot complete today to finish later
Damaged branches after winter weather should be pruned
Remedy any loosening of soil around trees caused by winter winds
Organize your calendar to enjoy, care and learn about trees

Tuesday, 9th MARCH (Severn Tree Trust)

'Dr Livingstone's Trees, I presume?' a talk by member Dr Graham Pearce. The talk will cover aspects of his travels and forestry researches in Africa and will include his tracing of the remnants of trees associated with the life and explorations of Dr David Livingstone. Meet in the Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury 7.30pm.
Contact John Tuer 01952 727642

Saturday, 10th APRIL (Severn Tree Trust)

Visit to Winterbourne Botanic Gardens, Birmingham.
Contact John Tuer 01952 727642

Monday, 12th APRIL (Claremont Tree Society)

Talk by Edward Parker 'Ancient Trees that Live for 1,000 Years' at 7.30pm at The Mansion, Claremont Fan Court School.
Contact Nöelle Leigh 020 8398 8746 or Ken Allen 01932 224423 or email treeleighs@waitrose.com

Saturday, 8th MAY (Claremont Tree Society)

Visit to Westdean Gardens, self-guided – bring your tree books! Meet 11am in Westdean car park.
Contact Nöelle Leigh 020 8398 8746 or Ken Allen 01932 224423 or email treeleighs@waitrose.com

Sunday, 16th MAY (Beale Arboretum)

Arboretum Open Day. In the grounds of West Lodge Hotel, Enfield, North London (junction of Cockfoster and Hadley Road). Begun in 1963 it now has over 800 trees and well worth a visit from 2–5pm. Cost £4, children free.
Contact 020 8216 3900

Saturday, 22nd MAY (Severn Tree Trust)

Visit to Richard Mayall's collection of birches and Brownhill House Gardens, Ruyton XI Towns, near Shrewsbury.
Contact John Tuer 01952 727642

Sunday, JUNE 6th

(Friends of the Trees Priestfield Arboretum)

Open Day 10.30am–4.30pm, Little Kingshill, near Gt Missenden, Bucks.
Contact Hon Curator, Barbara Rippington 01494 564019

Wednesday, 9th JUNE (Cambridge Botanical Gardens)

Summer Tree Identification Course with Pete Michna 6.30–9pm. Cost £25.
Contact Education Dept 01223 331875 or education@botanic.cam.ac.uk

JUNE date to be announced (Claremont Tree Society)

Visit to Maurice Foster's tree and plant collection at Ivy Hatch, Kent. Date and details to be advised.
Contact Nöelle Leigh 020 8398 8746 or Ken Allen 01932 224423 or email treeleighs@waitrose.com

Saturday, 12th JUNE (Severn Tree Trust)

Guided visit to Ness Gardens on the Wirral.
Contact John Tuer 01952 727642

Saturday, 10th JULY (Claremont Tree Society)

Visit to see the trees of Claremont Fan Court School. What has the Society achieved since 1985? Meet 10.30am in front of the Mansion.
Contact Nöelle Leigh 020 8398 8746 or Ken Allen 01932 224423 or email treeleighs@waitrose.com

Saturday, 10th JULY (Severn Tree Trust)

Guided visit to The Hollies Agroforestry Farm, nr Wem.
Contact John Tuer 01952 727642

Wednesday, 14th JULY

(Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh – Dawyck)

Around the World's Trees in 80 Minutes. Guided walk 2pm–4pm. Normal admission price but booking essential.
Tel 01721 760254

Saturday, 7th AUGUST (Claremont Tree Society)

Visit to The National Pinetum at Bedgebury, Kent. Meet 11am in car park.
Contact Nöelle Leigh 020 8398 8746 or Ken Allen 01932 224423 or email treeleighs@waitrose.com

Remember to look on our website where we will be adding the latest diary dates as we receive them.

Details of Forthcoming Events are welcome and published without charge as THE DENDROLOGIST seeks to bring together tree clubs, tree groups of amenity and conservation societies and individuals to share mutual interests and concerns.

Send in your Events for this Diary page and for the website www.dendrologist.org.uk