

National Tree Week November 2000

One hundred and thirty-three Oak trees and nearly half a mile of hedging were added to the South Norfolk countryside during the National Tree Planting Weekend in November. In all 790 trees and 2728 hedge plants, including more than one thousand Hawthorn, were ordered by 41 Parishes across the district. We hope very much that all of these are planted – more about that below.

The most trees (40) were planted in Aldeby while 30 Rowan trees will enhance the landscape in Rockland St Mary. The longest stretch of hedging was 110 metres planted in Caistor St Edmund, just ahead of Hethersett, Shotesham, Chedgrave and Tasburgh. Only native species were used, 13 tree and 7 suitable for hedging. As well as the Oaks, 63 Beech, 58 Hornbeam, 52 White-beam and 43 Limes were requested across the region.

The Tree Council's initiative to create a new World Record for Tree Planting meant each Parish was given their own registration and set of forms to return to the Tree Council. Unfortunately we have no idea how many of you did this

or what information you gave, so we are still hoping to hear from all those Tree Wardens who haven't been in touch with us yet. So far the Tree Council is still counting and plans to release news of the record bid in April.

The scheme was a first for us and setting it up relied on Tree Wardens responding to our letters sent in September and October by returning enclosed forms. As mentioned in the first paragraph, part of the process was to confirm that all the plants have actually been planted. Robin and I hope to visit all the planting sites over the next few months, so if you haven't already supplied it, we really do need the information requested as soon as possible.

The 'live' part of the process began with what seemed like a mountain of tubes and stakes delivered to South Norfolk House for us to sort into Parish orders. The plants came from Felthorpe Forest Nursery. I spent a day working at the nursery lifting plants and then very carefully putting the orders together. In large bundles identification was no problem, but

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Tree Wardens Digest

Tree line

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Christmas Past

Now that Christmas is past, things can get back to normal and the tree disposed of. Many of these trees are purchased with roots and often an attempt is made to grow them on in the garden. Because so many fail there is a tendency to plant them in some out-of-the-way corner so they won't look too bad if they die.

One household had been planting theirs in an old filled in ditch behind the garden and when I went there two trees remained from recent Christmases, neither was more than four feet high, the one nearer the field was dead and brown but the other, squashed between the dead one and the hedge, was still green. Not an uncommon sight until I looked closer when I noticed some small dark cones on the uppermost shoots.

The Norway Spruce, *Picea abies*, the usual species grown for Christmas trees is a tree of the European conifer woodlands and takes several years if not a couple of decades before it starts to produce cones. Then the cones are long, 12-15 cm, and pale brown not small, 3cm and dark purple brown like those on this tree.

Once the tree had captured my attention I could see that the branches and twigs were finer and more pendant than the normal stiff spreading trees cultivated for holding the many-coloured decorations. Then as I twisted a twig to see the cone better two white lines were clearly visible on the underside of each needle. The Norway spruce; although the

undersides of the needles are paler than the top they are not so clearly made.

With this information and the way the needles stuck out all round the twigs I was able to consult my books and discover the tree was *Picea mariana*, the Black Spruce. A Canadian species not suitable for forestry use in Britain but occasionally found in gardens. Whether these plantings are conscious introductions of a scarce tree for aboriginal effect or remnants of other Christmas throw-outs we might never know.

Unfortunately this unusual tree may not be able to grow and grace our district with another example of the diversity of plants as it may find the waterlogged bottom of the ditch too wet for its roots and is exposed to the sprays from the adjacent field. Moving these trees is fatal for many of them as we all know, so a second move might not be advisable.

When checking the identity of my find for this article I had to use a microscope to check for fine pubescence on the twigs as another confirmatory feature. While I was doing this I noticed the white lines on the back of the needles were comprised of five or six lines of minute white dots. R. Maidstone



Chedgrave Oak – see article page 3

National Tree Week cont'd

small numbers of several species mixed together, mostly leafless, must have sorely tested the winter identification skills of Tree Wardens everywhere! Labelling was not an option this time - it would be useful to know how important this is for the future.

Collection day at South Norfolk House was pleasantly social as many of you enjoyed steaming cups of coffee in bright sunshine and crisp temperatures.

Following the Planting Weekend we had some initial feedback, mostly was very positive and just a couple of grumbles. More comments please. We plan to repeat the scheme this autumn and want to make it better in anyway we can.

A final note: please come to the South Norfolk Tree Wardens' Annual Forum in June - the theme will be 'Planning your Tree Week Planting'!

Lastly, to those Tree Wardens who didn't take part this year please start thinking about planting for this autumn. To all those who participated, a HUGE 'thank you' and congratulations on a great result.

Tina Gray



Interview with Tree Wardens

Ken talks to Frank & Diane Mitchell, Tree Wardens for Shotesham

The Shotesham area has not suffered too badly from hedge or tree removal but this particular hedge bordering the north side of the road from Shotesham up to Stoke Holy Cross had a number of gaps and the farmer was willing for someone to refurbish the hedge. The Parish Council had done some planting in this hedge about 4 years ago but lack of maintenance meant that not much had survived.

Tree Week gave Frank and Diana an opportunity and they were able to call on 20 people to help in the task, which only took 2 days as a result. If you'll pardon the pun, Frank says that these helpers now have a 'stake' in improving the local environment!

The local landowner, Chris Bailey, helped out by providing the straw for the mulch for the new hedging. He owns a fair acreage in the area and had recently planted a 'Wedding Wood' by the A140 near Newton Flotman in honour of his daughter's marriage.

Frank and Diana have only been in Shotesham for 4 years and only as Tree Wardens for the past 2 years. The previous Tree Warden had left and Frank and Diana were 'volunteered' for the role having raised their heads above the undergrowth (or was it grassroots?) by speaking on environmental matters at Parish Council meetings. However, in that short time they have fired up 30 local people to take part in a Millennium Year project to record as much as possible of the local natural history. A booklet detailing their findings is due to be published in the next couple of weeks and hopefully we can print some excerpts in *TreeLine*.

The area in and around Shotesham is a good subject for such research as the Common contains an SSSI with plants such as Saxifrage, Meadow Clary and other wetland vegetation. There are some roadside nature reserves where some form of subsidy calls for field margins to be left uncultivated and unsprayed.

Frank's interest in Natural History began with bird watching and ringing whilst Diane's subject is wildflowers (she used to teach Science) and Frank has learnt a good deal from her. They don't see their role in the community as teachers but rather to foster an interest. Among other activities they have already led 4 themed village walks – one on winter tree recognition (which this Tree Warden would find invaluable!). Having told them of problems I had experienced propagating Field Maple from seed Diana offered some advice on the use of sandpaper to break into seed husks, and the loan of an RHS book on Propagation Techniques.

As part of the local Natural History project they had hoped to map the local trees and hedgerows but found this a daunting task and have completed just 10% so far, so they have much to keep them busy. One ambition is to gradually replace former field-margin oaks providing they can convince the landowners. Despite all this activity Frank insists that their approach is 'laid back'. That's probably what they do after they've been planting, surveying, talking and walking!

Ken Grayling

Jubilee Oak, Chedgrave

This landmark tree, known locally as the Jubilee Oak, stands in a very prominent position in the village of Chedgrave. The tree was planted to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1887 by the then Rector's wife, Mrs. Barrett.

Originally the tree had iron railings around it, presumably to afford some protection from the horses being watered at the adjacent pond as well as sheep and cattle being driven from the marshes at Haddiscoe to market in Norwich. The drovers would refresh themselves at the local inn, The White Horse.

In later years the pond dried up and, for a while, a horse trough stood in its place. This has since been removed and unfortunately the area is now used for parking cars.

The photographic record of this corner of Chedgrave shows clearly the development of the tree over the years. A recent picture is reproduced here.

Recent threats to the tree have included a proposal for road widening but public opinion has favoured the tree so far. A few years back it was used to demonstrate tree surgery for local tree wardens and is currently in very good health. In recent years the tree has been decorated with tiny white lights each Christmas.

On June the 21st, 1997, a plaque placed by Chedgrave Parish Council and the Loddon and Chedgrave District Society was unveiled to mark the importance of the tree and inform passers-by of its origin.

This oak is now at least 113 years old and hopefully will grow to be a Veteran tree, given the right protection.

Eric Wilkinson

Forthcoming events 2001

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|--------------|--|
| 4 April | Tree Survey Training: Identifying important trees in your Parish
– 7.30pm at South Norfolk House |
| 6-8 May | Tree Council "Walk in The Woods" Bank Holiday Weekend |
| 27 June | South Norfolk Tree Wardens Annual Forum. Theme: Planning your Tree
Week Planting. 7.30pm at South Norfolk House |
| 30 September | Regional Tree Warden Forum – Sainsbury Centre, UEA, Norwich |

Tree Warden Hellos & Goodbye

New Tree Wardens have been appointed in Wymondham and Deopham.

Mov Smythe has bravely stepped in to fill the void in wardenless Wymondham which is a massive Parish including Spooner Row, Sutton, Silfield and Wattlefield. We are looking for other volunteers in these areas. Let us know of any likely candidates! John Chilvers has volunteered to be the Warden in Deopham and Hackford. We welcome both to the scheme!

Keith Weeks, the Warden for Great Moulton, is moving from the area soon. We thank Keith for his work and wish both him and his wife a happy future in their new home.

There are now 92 Wardens in 90 of the district's 118 Parishes.

Best Value

Over the coming year the Planning Department of South Norfolk Council will be undertaking its "Best Value" Review. Best Value, devised by the present Government, is concerned with the continuous improvement of services. We are required to consult widely on what we do and how we do it. As part of this process you may be asked to provide comments and suggestions, in fact you may have been involved already with one of the other Departments' Reviews.

Unfortunately, as the Review itself is likely to take up much of our time, it may be that Tina and I are unable to devote as much time to your individual concerns as we would wish. The silver lining to this, however, is that the Review will hopefully enable us in the future to concentrate on what really is important to you. *Robin Taylor*

TPO News

Three new Tree Preservation Orders have been served to protect trees in Easton, Loddon and Brockdish.

The Easton TPO seeks to ensure that a maturing Beech tree is retained and given the space it needs on a proposed infill development site. Young trees are the subject of the Loddon Order also. Two Horse Chestnuts, which were planted as semi-mature specimens as replacements for trees felled in the Conservation Area in 1997 on safety grounds, had become under threat. It was decided that in the interest of the amenity of the Conservation Area, the TPO should be served.

In Brockdish, a mature Cedar of Lebanon has been protected. As part of property repairs, a drain company has recommended that the tree be felled. South Norfolk Council is not convinced that this is the only option and has therefore served the Order to allow more time for discussion of the issues.

The Orders served last year in Pulham Market and Hethersett have been confirmed i.e. made permanent. In the case of the Hethersett Order, objections to the TPO were considered by a meeting of the Planning Sites Sub-Committee. On a frosty January morning, Members voted unanimously to retain the Oak tree (estimated to be 300-350 years old) and rejected the suggestion that it should be removed to make way for a new farm access. *Robin Taylor*

NEWS FLASH!

Sisland Wood has gained 300 metres of hedging and 60 trees, planted by Eric Wilkinson during the current season. The first hundred metres was part of South Norfolk's Tree Planting scheme, the second from the Parish Council and the third from the Loddon & Chedgrave Society.

Carol Carpenter, Tree Warden for Langley & Hardley, worked with Eric to plant 60 trees in the wood. Most of these had been grown in their own nursery, but three prize specimens have gone into the wood, a Black Poplar, a Red Alder and a replacement Larch.

A grand total of 628 plants - is this a South Norfolk record for the season?

Access to South Norfolk Tree Wardens

Tree Wardens and the Internet/
World-Wide Web

E-mail addresses are given for those Tree Wardens and organizers already on the web. If in doubt visit Ian's woodland web site: <http://www.ibdigital.co.uk/woodland>
... and let us know when you get online!



Write to us

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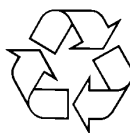
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It's all about sharing information and best practise so please contribute any item of interest, local or national activity. Your news and views will be most welcome.



...see all issues in colour @

<http://www.ibdigital.co.uk/woodland>

Any ideas -put them in the (e)mail.