

## TLC Day: Morningthorpe

To mark the start of the Trees Love Care (TLC) season on 18 March 2000, Mrs Sargent, who is Tree Warden for the Parish of Morningthorpe, and her husband kindly offered to give Tree Wardens a guided walk through their private woodlands and to talk about some of the maintenance issues.

Approximately a dozen of us met at 10 o'clock at Mr & Mrs Sargent's cottage on Fritton Common. The sky was overcast and the chilly breeze quickly cleared any imagination of a warm and sunny March day. The hot tea & coffee and the biscuits were understandably a very welcome start.

We then proceeded through the garden onto the pastures. There, an avenue of mature oaks instantly caught our eyes. They are likely to be several hundred years old and lead to Morningthorpe Hall. It is unclear, whether they were intended merely as a vista from the Hall or to frame an access that was never built. Beyond the oaks to the north we saw a small pine wood. It was one of the first plantings the Sargents carried out, to provide shelter and screening, in anticipation of woodland clearance beyond.

From there we walked southwards across the meadow to look at several other mixed woodlands that the Sargents have planted over the years. After the gale of 1987 the need for new tree planting was immense. In wide areas only a few trees were left, which also had an impact on the water table. The Sargents created extensive ditches to drain the land.

Mrs Sargent explained that when they set out to plant the new woodlands, they decided to plant them in grid-systems. The distance between the rows allows access for machinery which makes the maintenance a lot more manageable. This is a very important factor, as only Mr and Mrs Sargent and one helper, who is over 90 years old, look after the many acres. 10 – 15 years after planting, the young woodland is in need of thinning. Mrs Sargent said that it is best done systematically, e.g. every fourth row of trees is removed. Of course, nature applies her own selection process, which over time leads to the less regular pattern, that most of us connect with a mature woodland.

As a number of the woodlands were planted in annual succession, large areas are now at the stage to be thinned out. Mrs Sargent said that if she could start all over again, she would leave intervals of about five years between planting up different patches, to spread out the work more evenly for the years to come.

After having talked about maintenance and care it was time for a little practical demonstration. Mrs Sargent had brought along an extendible saw and encouraged us to have a go. Anthony Florance and myself could not shy away. Mrs Sargent will probably laugh at me, when she reads this, but I found it a lot more difficult than it looked. It is quite a task to balance this device and to fiddle it through the crown to the desired branch. Once the teeth of the saw have created a groove, the trickiest part is over and all is down to muscle work. I was

# Tree Issue No.3 April 2000 line



# Forthcoming events 2000

24 May	Evening Walk around Wacton lead by Robert Maidstone. Please register with Wendy Saunders (01508 533818) if you plan to attend this. The event will start at 6ish, however full details will be sent to those interested nearer the time.
16 June, 18.00hrs	Visit Long's Wood, Wreningham. Rendezvous at Fir Grove for an evening stroll.
5 July	Annual South Norfolk Forum at South Norfolk House
18-22 September	Ten Years of the Tree warden Scheme Exhibition at South Norfolk House.
23 or 24 September	Regional tree warden Forum in Suffolk
22 November to 3 December	National Tree Week, including World Record tree planting attempt. <i>All subject to confirmation and details will follow.</i>



## . . . TLC Day . . . continued from page 1

very impressed how clean the cuts, that we ended up with, were. A great tool, much easier to carry than a normal saw & ladder, but it does require some practice.

We continued our walk passed the ditches. Meanwhile the sun had come out and the sky was brightly blue and white. After climbing a couple of fences (for once without having to feel guilty), we reached the common. Fritton Common is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and provides the local wildlife with a number of ponds. Mr and Mrs Sargent are also looking after these. We had the chance to take a closer look at some of them. One rather large pond has just been cleaned out. The mud and earth have been piled onto the bank to form a gentle gradient into the water. We all were fascinated, when a pair of Bean geese gracefully descended into the pond. In the mud, which was very soft beneath our feet, we found some interesting fresh water Mussel shells. Robert Maidstone took a sample with him in order to ask a specialist to identify them.

Further along we saw another pond that had been cleaned last year. It was amazing, how quickly the vegetation has fully covered the soil again. The disruption was hard to tell. Robert Maidstone caught a special little grasshopper, that lives at the edge of ponds and when in danger escapes into the water. After showing it to us he set it free again.

This concluded our walk and we arrived back at the Sargents' cottage. It was an enjoyable and informative morning and on behalf of everybody present I would like to thank both Mr and Mrs Sargent again for making it happen.

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## Tales from the Backwoods

A friend has acquired a patch of ground in Eire, some ten miles from the Atlantic coast and with a thin soil composed mainly of peat. Planning regulations demand he screens any building with trees and the suggested variety was Douglas Fir.

Whaaaaat!!! was my considered response. I asked him what, if any, tree was brave and hardy enough to survive there at the moment and he told me, not much, just a Mountain Ash.

Well, your suggestions on a postcard, please. My reaction was to suggest he stick with the rowan and maybe have some alder. Another friend suggested willow and birch.

Question: Where do the planners get this fixation on huge trees ? Or are they simply trying to nobble an Englishman ?

Woodentop o\_+o

# Hedging Your Bets.

Time for a diatribe. You will have seen the RHS-derived leaflet entitled 'the right hedge for you' that has been published by DETR and was sent out with one of Robin Taylor's recent mailings.

I thought, great, something I can show to parishoners that has a cachet of 'official' about it, that will point them in the right direction when they are thinking of working on an existing hedge or planting a new one.

Then I read it. (Always a good idea, that.) Seventeen species, only six of them native. And they've included Lawson's Cypress and Leylandii. OK, it says large tree and fast growth rate but you'd think by now that the RHS of all people would realise what a problem these trees are becoming. And Western Red Cedar ! (Why not Douglas Fir while they are about it ? Or even Sequoia ?) I thought we were talking hedges.

It is true I have seen a Leylandii screen that has never been allowed to get above 2 metres and which is cut regularly and almost resembles yew for its compactness and colour. But low-maintenance it is not and, at the very least, these things need a warning about how much and how frequently they must be trimmed to keep them from becoming a problem.

I wondered, why no Blackthorn or Field Maple; but then I realised. The RHS is a middle-class, suburban type of organisation (I

warned you about the diatribe). Not only do they not know hedge trees from tree trees but they are biased in favour of pretty or fast-growing garden-centre type plants. And they forgot Box.

Having vented my spleen, I'd like to be constructive and ask you, dear reader, (assuming you haven't screwed this up and thrown it across the room), what your hedge listing would include and how you would let people know what they might be letting themselves in for. Imagine the Kennel Club lumping chihuahua and rottweiler together as suitable for an elderly lady who would like some company and lets do something better.



## *A Millennium Celebration of Trees at Staverton.*

A two day event is being organised jointly by the Owners of Staverton in Suffolk and Suffolk County Council on 19 & 20 May. An invitation to this has been extended to Wardens from outside of Suffolk and details can be found on a sheet enclosed with this issue.

South Norfolk Council have offered to pay for one Warden to attend this (subject to booking availability) in return for a report for inclusion in a future edition of Treeline. The place will be allocated by picking a name from a hat. To include your name in the draw, please contact Robin, Issy or Wendy at South Norfolk direct. The draw will take place on 2 May - so register your name right away!

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### TENTH ANNIVERSARY

To celebrate the tenth anniversary of the scheme in September we will be putting up a display in South Norfolk Council's foyer. For this it would be great to have a selection of photos, press cuttings etc. to illustrate the work that you have done over the years. Please send anything of interest, clearly marked with your name and a description, to Robin & Issy at South Norfolk Council, Long Stratton, NR15 2XE. All material will be returned.

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### RECYCLING SUCCESS

*The tree guards offered for re-use by Costessey Parish Council have all been claimed. Please let us know of any other offers that can be advertised in Treeline.*

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY ERIC!

Eric Wilkinson, the Warden for Chedgrave, celebrated his eightieth birthday on 22 February.

Chedgrave Parish Council marked the occasion by asking him to arrange the planting of a "Millennium Tree" in the village. Eric choose a Pin Oak (*Quercus palustris*) and arranged for its delivery as he has done for so many other commemorative trees over the years. It was only then that he discovered that the tree was not for the Millennium, but for him, and

that its purpose was to commemorate his eightieth birthday!

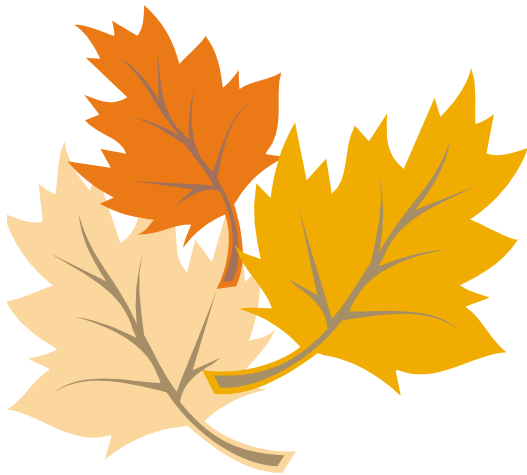
The tree was planted by Eric on Saturday 4th March in a ceremony attended by a large group of villagers. The site for the tree at 3 Norwich Road was donated by Authur Cornford.

Eric has been a Warden since the scheme started 10 years ago. Together with Carol Carpenter, he has worked tirelessly to plant and

maintain trees in their Parishes. Avenues of Beech and fine specimen trees or various species are starting to make their mark on the landscape thanks to his persistence.

Eric is also involved with the management of Sisland Carr. Hardly a week goes by when he cannot be seen with a group of helpers working to preserve and enhance the woodland.

CONGRATULATIONS ERIC!



# Interview with a Tree Warden

*Carol Carpenter, Tree Warden for Langley with Hardley, talks to Ken Grayling.*

Carol has already made her mark on this publication as its title, *TreeLine*, was her idea.

Maybe it's because she was a Londoner - born in Southgate and lived for a while in Dartford - that Carol is so enthusiastic about trees. It's not that they don't have trees in London, it's just that they are ordered and regimented and not allowed to step out of line.

Anyway, Carol made a break for the outside with her husband Michael about 20 years ago and came to live in Hardley near Loddon. She started as a Tree Warden in 1991 and the first project was to plant some trees opposite her house on the rough patch of land which served as a kind of common for the neighbourhood.

She soon teamed up with Eric Wilkinson (Tree Warden for Chedgrave) to form the double act that wowed us at the last South Norfolk Tree Wardens Forum. Together they established a nursery in a friendly resident's garden in Chedgrave which was initially stocked with end-of-season job lots from commercial nurseries. They rapidly moved on to self-set donations and the nursery has prospered to the extent that they have to give away plants (see 'Lonesome Pine' - *TreeLine* 2) as they have more than can be accommodated locally.

In conjunction with Eric, Carol also gained access to Woodland Trust-owned woods at Sisland Carr outside Loddon, from which they get leaf mould for planting. In fact, the leaf mould spawned so many interesting plants that Carol simply pots it to see what develops - alder and beech are the most common cuckoos.

The Langley Playing Field, that belonged to the school until the school was closed and was then bought by the parish council, has been provided with a new hedge under Carol's direction, and local children and parish councillors were involved in the planting.

Two parish Millennium trees were planted last November (Carol recalls it snowing at the time), one in Langley and one in Hardley so neither village would feel left out. However, the high-profile projects, while serving to raise public awareness, are only a small part of Carol's work and much hedgerow and verge planting has gone on.

We all know that willow and poplar will take if a freshly-cut branch is stuck in moist ground. Carol is attempting the same with Plane tree cuttings (you can take the girl out of London but you can't entirely take London out of the girl!). She read somewhere that this was possible. Who knows if it will work, but it's worth a try.

Carol's philosophy is that trees are not the be-all and end-all of Tree Wardenry but simply a link in a chain that includes hedges, wild animals, birds and wild flowers. As living things they should be interfered with as little as possible once planted, beyond essential maintenance to prevent choking with weeds, protection from rabbits or becoming too large for their situation. 'Roundup' and strimming as methods of weed control feature in her demonology, not her armoury. The emphasis is on the natural.

Carol plans ahead; after all, trees are a long-term investment for future generations. Even in the short term the plants she acquires are ear-marked for specific locations. She says that if you

have an idea - even if it will take years to achieve - start work now so that you have the plants ready when the ground is ready and the time is right.

She stresses the importance of recording one's work and having 'before-and-after' photographs as there is no better way to show people what has been achieved - especially useful when reporting back to our parish councils or those who have sponsored the work.

Sometimes significant trees have plaques to tell interested passers-by the reason for their presence. Carol recalls having to pose for a photograph with a strategically-placed hand covering the incorrect date on one occasion. It's important that records are correct - the plaque was subsequently recast.

Having benefited greatly from the BTCV training courses under Kate McKenzie a few years back, Carol laments their apparent lapse especially as new recruits to the ranks will miss out on essential training.

Sir John Mills planted a Millennium Oak with Carol and Eric last July at the Annual Speech day at Langley Park where he used to go to school, but apart from this Carol's work is away from the limelight. However, Eric and Carol won first prize in a local fancy dress contest several years ago - he as a lumberjack, she as a tree!

When she is not caring for trees she finds some time for her local History Group called, aptly, 'Before Your Time' which produces booklets on Loddon and Chedgrave. A calendar was produced last year and slide-shows are organised. If there's any time left she is a keen potter.

# SOUTH NORFOLK COUNCIL PLANNING NEWS

## MYSTERY TREE PLANTING - SOLVED!

Carol Carpenter phoned SNC recently to report that 27 large Oak trees had been planted on her patch - did we know about it? This took me by surprise as we are more used to getting calls saying 27 trees have been felled!

This pleasant phenomenon is a result of the new electricity pylons and overhead wires that have been installed across the East Area of the District. The tree planting was required as a condition of the permission for the new route after consultation with the Broads Authority's Landscape Architect.

The trees are subject to a maintenance contract but please let me, Robin Taylor, or Isolde Cutting know if any die.

## GRANTS

Details of the new grant schemes should be available very soon. Watch out also for details for free trees and sundries for Tree Week projects.

### *Two new wardens have joined the ranks.*

Stephen Dalliston has taken Pulham Market out of the "Wardenless Wilderness", whilst in Fornsett, John Webster has kindly agreed to replace Christine Knights as the Parish Warden. Christine, like so many of us, had pressure from other commitments which prevented her from continuing as Warden. We thank her for her work over the past few years for the scheme.

We welcome Stephen and John to the scheme.

## BROOME - PLANNING PERMISSION REFUSED FOR DWELLING ON TPO SITE

A proposal to build a new dwelling in amongst an area of maiden and coppiced trees was given the thumbs-down by the East Area Planning Committee on 30 March.

The proposal (Ref. E07/00/0087/F) suggested the removal of 19 trees to make space for the house and drive. The main concern of Officers, however, was the effect of the remaining trees on the dwelling. It was considered that the shadowing effect of these would have made the TPO untenable.

The Committee reached their decision following a site visit and lengthy debate.

## 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!

Contact address and Telephone:

Co-ordinator: Robin Taylor 01508 533813

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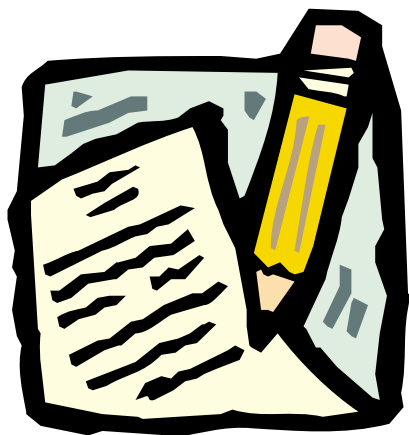
Email: [ian@ibdigital.co.uk](mailto:ian@ibdigital.co.uk)

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 Issue 3 in colour @

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

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



## Write to us

## TREE COUNCIL SURVEY

Thanks to all of you who returned the questionnaire detailing the time you spend on tree-related activities. These have been forwarded to Jon Stokes at The Tree Council for analysis and inclusion in the prize draw.

