

Free Trees – Don't Miss Out

Frances Fancourt, a Bookham Tree Warden, has put together a very useful guide on Free Trees for Street Planting. She has published this locally in print and online, but it deserves to be shared, and acted on, with everyone in the Network.



It is now possible to apply for a street tree to be planted on your verge for FREE. As Surrey County Council want to plant 1.2 million trees, they are now offering free street trees: you just have to apply and have a suitable verge. The council will check to make sure that your verge is suitable and will ask in return that you to help water the tree. You may be able to choose the type of tree too, as long as it is suitable for the site and is available. All verges belong to Surrey County Council so the request needs to be made to them. They will plant the trees over the winter months.

If you would like a tree planted in front of your property you should complete the online form available here:

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/permits-and-licences/planting-trees>

Typically the cost of a tree is £150 plus stakes, ties, compost and manpower, taking it to around £200 per tree. So this is an excellent offer and will not last for ever. So NOW is the best time to apply. The information they require includes your name, address, email, telephone number, description of exact location.

**Tree Wardens everywhere in Surrey take note. Publicise this locally to spread the word.
Applications now for 2024 / 25 winter planting.**

Events

Book now for a guided talk and walk at one of the most beautiful gardens in Britain, the RHS garden at Wisley. It's a huge garden with much to see, but this walk, just for Surrey Tree Warden Network members, will concentrate on trees, and will be led by Jonathan Newell, Head of Public Engagement at Wisley, and a fount of knowledge.

DATE: Saturday 27 April.

TIME: Arrive by 9.30 at the main entrance. The guided walk will begin at 10.00 at the Hilltop building inside the garden, a ten minute walk away. A shuttle bus is available for those with mobility problems.

COST: If you are already a member of the RHS, Royal Horticultural Society, you can use your membership and entry will be free. If you are not a member, we have a special discounted price of £8.00 per person. All places must be booked and paid for in advance, and no later than 20th April.

If you would like to come, contact Liz Ramsay (Organiser and Committee member) lizramsay@aol.com, to book a place. The guided walk will last for about an hour and a half, and will be at a slow pace: Jonathan is entertaining and knowledgeable about all things arboreal. After that you are free to explore the rest of the garden, and enjoy a lunch in one of the many cafes.

Please note that there are serious roadworks around the M25 / A3 junction where Wisley is situated. You must allow extra time to get to the Wisley car parks. There is also a regular shuttle bus from Woking station to Wisley Garden. Please see the Wisley website for the timetable. <https://www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/wisley>

News from the Groups

This has been a record winter for tree planting and tree events.
Here are some of the stories and some of the people who made them happen.



Elmbridge

Elmbridge welcomed royalty to a tree planting event. On 18th January, her Royal Highness The Duchess of Edinburgh came to see the work that Walton Charity is doing to create and maintain green spaces for the benefit of the community. She also planted one of the trees, donated by Surrey County Council, at Burview Hall, a property owned by Walton Charity that hosts a new forest school for home schooled children.

The charity was delighted to meet the Duchess and share with her their work and passion for trees. They are hoping that her visit will encourage more people to join and grow even more trees for the borough.

..... and Putting the Elm Back in Elmbridge

Elmbridge Tree Wardens Rod Thorn and Judy Moss along with friends and neighbours joined Howard Gregory – ‘Mr Elm’ himself, to plant two *Ulmus ‘Wingham’*, a disease-resistant Elm, in Nielson’s Field, West Molesey.

Last winter the Nielson Family, who originally gave the field to the public, donated a tree to celebrate the late Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. Local residents, including Tree Wardens, wanted to add more. Rod organised a ‘Go Fund Me’ page which raised over £200 - enough for two trees sourced from Howard plus stakes and protection. In November the new trees were planted, with advice from Howard, and have joined the original to ‘Bring Elms Back to Elmbridge’.



1 photo Mick Rock



Merrow

Jane Thorp organised two winter walks for residents of Merrow to see in particular the magnificent conifers in the village. Many were planted in the 19C in the grounds of large properties whose owners would track down the ‘latest finds’ from intrepid Victorian plant hunters. On the first walk, twenty people got acquainted with *Cedrus atlantica*, *deodora* and *libani*, a dozen *Sequoiadendron giganteum* and *Pinus nigra*, Black pines, growing in formerly private gardens now accessible to the public. On a later walk, a group of sixteen walked round the village to see more *Sequoiadendron* and Cedars, along with Holm Oaks, Yews, Eucalyptus and a large *Magnolia grandiflora*. The adventures of the plant hunters, William Lobb, Robert Fortune and David Douglas, provided the entertainment on the way and the walk finished – where better to end - at the foot of an awe-inspiring *Sequoiadendron*.

So successful were the walks that Jane got one email of thanks, along with a plea for more:

Hello, Jane, I so enjoyed Saturday's walks and an idea has popped into my head; could you do some Summer tree walks, looking at deciduous trees? Going further, what about next year doing a blossom tree walk (there's good ones in our close, including an old almond tree in my neighbour's front garden) and an autumn leaves walk?

No pressure then Jane!



Leigh

The John Motion Orchard is a rare, traditional orchard which was donated to the village of Leigh in 2021 by John Motion, whose family had owned it for many years. It is now managed by the Leigh Apple Group, run by Tree Warden and Orchard manager Charlotte Kinloch.

First, find out what you have got. A Bioblitz survey was carried out by two ecologists, funded by a grant from the Gatwick Airport Community Trust. Their work provided the basis for the new management plan. Incidentally, one of the ecologists proved to have an extra talent: Tom Forward was on Countryfile in February as part of his Ashdown Forest work - he's very good at bird calls!

The next stage was practical action. In January, the Gatwick Greenspace Partnership volunteers (GGP) came to labour for a day in the orchard. One of the highlights for Charlotte was building a 'dead hedge' - something she had been planning for a long time. Dead hedges are very important habitats for wildlife as well as helping with sustainable management of apple tree prunings and other woody waste. The team also cleared some of the encroaching brambles and removed blackthorn suckers with tree poppers. Kevin Lerwill, Project Manager, GGP said "Many orchards have been lost in recent years, but this one still has many heritage species of apples, some of which are 100 years old. The veteran trees provide excellent habitats for a range of species including invertebrates and micro-organisms that are not found elsewhere."



Bookham and Fetcham



Thirty one Scouts and Cubs from Fetcham joined the Bookham Tree Wardens to plant a hedgerow at the Tithe Barn in Little Bookham. A new native hedge was planted to screen off a set of solar panels, and to improve biodiversity. The plants included hawthorn, beech, hazel and rose, all of which benefit wildlife and are suitable for the horses in the fields alongside. The owners of the Tithe Barn like to share their ancient barn and allow local residents to use it in exchange for a donation to charity. As the 1st Fetcham Scouts and Cubs sometimes make use of it, they were the natural choice to help.



The hedge was made possible through a grant from The Tree Council's Branching Out Fund. Tree Warden Frances Fancourt applied for the grant which encourages youngsters to be involved. The hedgerow was finished in a few hours – the many hands making light work of it. During the afternoon sweets were provided for the few flagging youngsters. Everyone had a good dose of fresh air and exercise, whilst helping to deal with climate change, and improving biodiversity, air quality and drainage. The Cubs and Scouts will have earned new badges too, for volunteering and ecological activities.

Dormansland



Fiona French is the Tree Warden for Dormansland, a small village close to East Sussex and Kent. With the Parish Council, she has embraced the tree planting initiative of Surrey County Council and has planted several trees in and around the village. The newest batch were planted late November.

And it created some local drama. Three new trees had an unexpected overnight stay on one side of a crossroads until moved to the correct side – contractors sometimes need help with map reading! Then one tree was nearly flattened in a car accident, which demolished a road sign and bench. Luckily the tree survived and was reinstated. But another lonesome tree was not so lucky after its brush with a car. It will be replaced in spring. Elsewhere sixteen trees of different types were planted in several verge locations to add colour and greenery. With all the recent rain they are getting well-watered.

Tadworth & Walton



Tadworth & Walton Tree Wardens, Gillian Hein and Judy Lumley, have been helping with local tree planting around the Tadworth Leisure Centre. They met with the Centre manager and other volunteers to plant several Aspen and Field Maples within the grounds. Nine new street trees have also been planted on Tadworth highway verges, including several cherry varieties, some Whitebeam and a couple of fastigiata beech, *Fagus sylvatica* 'Dawyck Gold'.



Haslemere – where you can't see the Ancient Trees for the Wood



This is a tale of discovery – ancient trees hidden in plain sight. Haslemere, like many towns, is currently under threat development on the protected green land which surrounds the town. Many of the roads leading in and out of the town are ancient ways and described as “sunken sands lanes” as centuries of water, animals and wheels have worn down the surfaces. They are characterised by high sandy banks, normally lined by trees forming a canopy, and so generating a perfect view and a perfect aerial roadway for mammals such as squirrels and even local dormice.

One area to the south of Haslemere town is a target for new building. A developer had remarked he wanted to remove some 100 trees in order to gain access to the Surrey Hills National Landscape (formerly AONB). But 36 of them had long standing TPOs, Tree Preservation Orders. The Haslemere Tree Wardens, led by Howard Brown, went to check the TPO trees, and in particular a row of huge beech and oaks along a raised bank on the side of an undulating curved road. They measured the tree girth based on the Woodland Trust guidelines for ancient and veteran trees. To their astonishment, two of the beech trees proved to be ancient, which is defined as having a girth of 5m to 6m, and a further three beech trees were veteran or notable. Both the veteran and ancient trees are now registered on the Woodland Trust Ancient Tree map. There were a further six trees, including native oaks, which fell under other categories and will be registered accordingly.

To preserve these wonderful specimens, the Tree Wardens invited a Waverley Borough Council tree officer to the site, and the Council have now applied statutory TPOs to all the maiden-trunked trees to protect them from unnecessary coppice, pollard or felling. Tree Wardens who attended the recent legal training will now be aware of the hefty fines for nefarious action on these special categories of trees.

The outcome of this particular planning application isn't yet known, so the Haslemere Tree Wardens don't know yet if they have saved these very special trees. But they are hopeful.

For information, to measure the girth, a ribbon tape or graded rope may be used and is wrapped around the maiden trunk at 1.5m (chest height) avoiding ivy, branching sprouts and obvious defects. The condition, genus and species also need to be recorded along with the two 7-digit OS location coordinates – available from Google Maps. The diameter of a trunk can also be estimated, by viewing the tree width (diameter) and multiplying by 3.14 (Pi * diameter) to gain the circumference (girth) but this may be inaccurate as many trees grow elliptically as they age so false measurements are possible.



News in Brief

Library Giveaway



Surrey County Council celebrated another very successful Free Tree Giveaway at selected Surrey libraries on two dates over winter. Several Tree Wardens volunteered to help with advice on species and care: Water, Water, Water.

So successful was the event advertising in **Oxted**, that a queue had formed outside the library well before giveaway starting time. The hundred or so trees had all gone forty minutes later, (*see photo*) and the queue was even longer. There were some disgruntled comments, but the trees after all were free.

Training

As part of on-going training for Surrey Tree Wardens, a Tree Law training session was held in Haslemere in February. It was led by Sam Village, National Tree Warden Coordinator. A local Tree Officer also took part in the event, and dealt with lots of questions. Most training sessions are by Zoom, but the Law module is a meaty one with lots of detail, and it was felt that the live event was a great success. All attendees received a comprehensive training guide to use as a source of future reference. Thanks to the newly formed Haslemere group for organising the venue and making everyone so welcome.



New Treasurer

Tree Warden Elaine Griffith has stepped up to be the new STWN Treasurer and is already in place. She has taken over from Dave Pope, who has done the job for several years. I am not really Treasurer, he would say, I'm Acting Treasurer! Enjoy your retirement, Dave, and many thanks from us all for all you have done over the years.

Tree Warden South East Forum

This was held at Goodwood in Hampshire, where the Chichester group are celebrating 30 years of Tree Wardening. The theme was Britain's Treescape in 2024, with a talk from Jon Stokes of the Tree Council. Network Rail were represented, talking about their projects for trees and wildlife. In the afternoon, a walk to a linear orchard and woodland with the Goodwood estate manager. On show, a fantastic selection of Cedar of Lebanon trees - never have so many been seen together in one spot before!

AGM

The Surrey Tree Warden Network will be holding a meeting and AGM in June. Watch out for the date. These are always good events, and this time, it will be held in West Surrey as guests of the Surrey Heath Tree Wardens.

Fund Raising



Don't forget. We have **Greetings Cards** for sale to raise money for the Surrey TW Network. Each pack features five each of the two photos shown. The cost £6.00 (plus postage) for a pack of 10.

Also on sale, our bestselling booklet: **Remarkable Trees of Surrey. £4.99**

Contact secretary@surreytreewardens.org.uk.



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