



Our latest News-sheet is now available to view on the Billericay Town Council's website and back issues are listed under the header "The Town".

Vandalized Trees – Festival Gardens

Whilst arriving to water the two Pilgrim 400 Apple trees at the Festival Gardens it became evident that both had suffered damage. Both their stems had been broken halfway up but not severed. Taking professional advice from a tree nursery there is a way to repair such damage. Basically by surrounding the break with "Gorilla" glue and applying a splint with elastic bands! This operation was carried out on the 7th May. It remains to be seen if the repair is successful and that further damage is avoided. The police were informed and we were issued with a Crime Reference Number.

Fact Sheets - Help With Tree Issues

We are currently preparing a series of Fact Sheets that advise on the various complex trees issues that can be encountered. "Worried about a Tree?" is illustrated below but can be better viewed on the BTC's website.

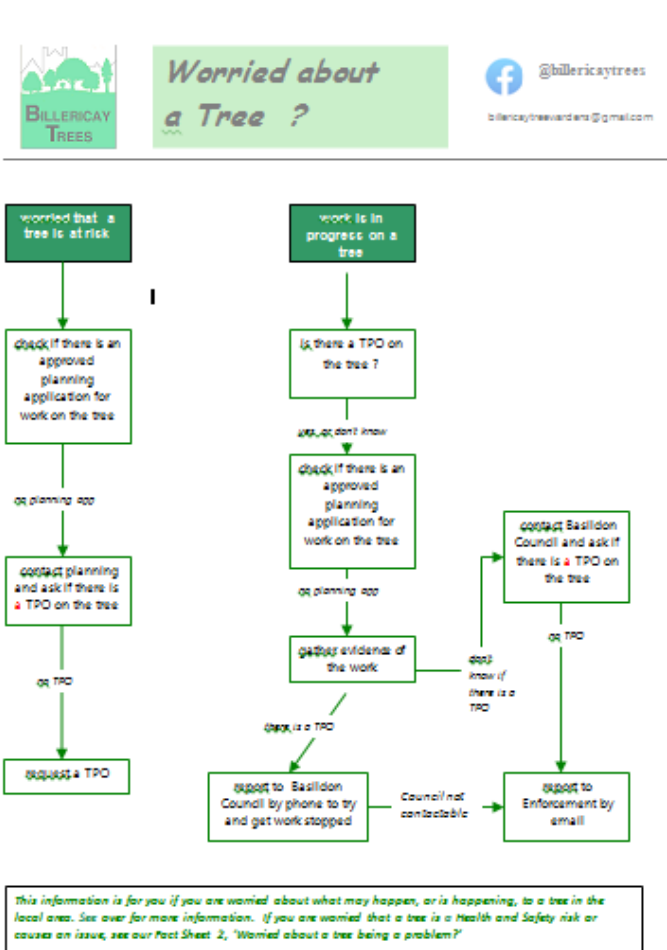
Facebook Matters

In recent months, we have been receiving a steady trickle of tree related queries via Facebook. Where relevant, we now issue a Fact Sheet (as referred to above) that should help clarify an issue on "FB Billericay Trees" and shared with "Billericay Natural History, Discussion and Impartial Discussion" FB groups.

Facebook Sites:-

Google drive:- <https://www.facebook.com/billericaytrees/posts/4193906790653921>

Google drive:- <https://tinyurl.com/3hxdy5m9>



The Bigger Picture - Woodland Creation in Essex

Commenced in 2019 the Essex County Council (ECC) launched their Essex Forest Initiative (EFI) with £1million fund for 375,000 to be planted across our county mainly as woodlands totalling 150 Hectares (371 acres). It's effectively a five year plan but it is intended to extend beyond that period. The purpose of the initiative is threefold, to improve air quality, to encourage biodiversity and reduce the effects of flooding. Thus it is a strong component for addressing the Climate Crisis situation. The tree species opted for will be native to the UK but in urban areas tree species that are highly efficient at absorbing air pollution will be chosen. Native trees will be grown from British seed stock. Newly planted woodlands will take many years to achieve a significant level of carbon absorption so the protection of our mature tree stock is of paramount importance as they already serve that purpose. Hence the EFI initiative is a long-term project. The EFI is a partnership between the Woodland Trust, the Forestry Commission and the Evergreen Fund. Woodlands will be planted on ECC land, Local Authority land, in Parishes and on farmland.

Network Rail

There needs to be a balanced view taken with the controversial actions of Network Rail and their trackside tree felling operations. Needless to say, when trees fall across a railway track they are likely to derail a train and cause loss of life. So it is a paramount Health & Safety issue. However, it was the way that they went about it by not adequately informing the press or those whose properties that back onto the track that caused the furore. And aspects of the tree work were questioned as if truly necessary. The public outcry was national and much pruning and felling work was carried out in the bird nesting season that runs from March to August inclusive which is a legalistic issue. The scale of the project is massive as there are c.20,000 miles of track in the Network Rail's five regions across the UK (excluding Northern Ireland). Network rail assess that there are c.6 million mature trees that line their tracks. The proportion of which have been removed or are to be removed is not recorded. Network Rail is Britain's fourth largest landowner.

In December 2019 the Tree Council were pleased to announce that Network Rail had funded a four year tree planting mitigation exercise to the tune of £1 million. c.80,000 trees had already been planted by December 2020 with many more thousands to follow.

"The Tree Council will work with Network Rail to support local councils, community groups and conservation organisations to plant trees, hedgerows and orchards across the country. The trees planted will help tackle climate change and provide community benefits such as greenery, shade, flood alleviation, wildlife habitats and improved air quality."

BTW Planting Projects

We had planned to complete the hedge planting project this spring along the field border of the Outwood Common Road that is adjacent to Norsey Wood. However, the ground conditions for planting were far from perfect because of the spring drought. This has been an adverse feature of our springs over the last few years. We had already taken possession of the 420 "whips" from the Woodland Trust plus 180 "refugee" oak trees supplied from the HS2 rail project, so we have preserved these plants until the autumn by heeling them in at the Norsey Wood nursery.

The BTW Nursery

The idea has been floated by our ecologist Nathan that as we have access to the nursery facility at Norsey Wood, we could grow our own tree and hedge plants, native and amenity species, additional to those supplied by the Woodland Trust. The nursery is secure and water is available on site. With regards native species, nuts and seeds obtained from locally sourced mature and healthy trees would provide an aspect of provenance local to the area.

Planning Application Checking Team

The monthly checks continue to throw up a variety of tree issues. Often where a new structure or an extension is proposed and excavation work will be required in close proximity to a tree and its roots. Thus there is a risk of trunk damage and root compaction by site traffic and the storage of building materials. In these situations it is recommended that a temporary fence is erected about the tree with its boundary coinciding with the overall diameter of the canopy. In English law, there is no "Right to Light" with respect trees as there is with fast growing high hedges (leylandii in particular) and where new structures are proposed to be built in close proximity to another.

Tree surgeon Advice

Thanks to our Tree surgeon member "Sid" who gave advice to a worried resident on an ivy clad tree off Perry Street.

Book Review – Around the World in 80 Trees – Jonathan Drori with Illustrations by Lucille Clere.

Published by Lawrence King Publishing Ltd (Printed on Forest Stewardship Council accredited paper). There are c.60,000 species of trees worldwide (with only c.40 considered to be native or naturalized in the UK!) whilst new tree species are still being identified in the Amazon rainforest. The author has chosen representatives from eleven geographical biomes from northern Europe to the tropics. It is aimed at the enquiring layman and avoids the academic scientific approach.

Similar to other taxa the majority of species hail from the tropics where diversity is at its greatest. The author has chosen an eclectic range of tree species illustrating cultural significance, religious beliefs, medicinal uses, as a commercial source of food, mythical connections, poisons, industrial uses and delightful strangeness! We list a few of tree species here that Jonathan chose for his book.

Intriguing facts emerge, such that Venice (the city of dreams!) has been built on hundreds of thousands of wooden piles closely driven together made of **Alder** and **Oak**. A timber foundation that when immersed below the tideline successfully resists rot for centuries as is proven. Large forests on the mainland were given over to state control to sustain the planting and production of the vast amounts of timber required.

The **Boabab** is also known as the “upside down tree” as its branches resemble a root system! A tree that is native to Africa, Madagascar and Australia. The Boabab’s trunk has evolved to swell and shrink with respect to its water content. They grow to an enormous size and live up to 2000 years of age. Older specimens become hollow and are so large that they have been used as prisons and pubs!

Frankincense resin, obtained from trees that grow in the arid deserts of Yemen and Oman with its association with the Star of Bethlehem, has been a valuable commodity since the pyramids. Along with **Myrrh**, another tree resin with a fresh balsamic fragrance, the resin is extracted from trees that have evolved to grow from rock faces to avoid the depredations of animals. Trees are encouraged to weep their resin by scraping a small portion of the trunk. A commercial product that is still transported by camel trains across a vast inhospitable terrain.

The **Banyan** tree is a strangler fig from India. It is the largest tree on Earth, not in height but in expanding outwards in plan area. It starts as a seed deposited by a bird or monkey in the upper branches of a tree and then sends down a curtain of thin roots to the ground. These take root and thicken providing structural support. And the process is repeated from the branches. Eventually the host tree is “strangled” and dies leaving the centre hollow as it rots. The largest example of the Banyan is in Kolkata where the tree covers an area of 1.8 hectares (4.5 acres) and has a girth of 0.8 kilometre (half a mile)!

The **Durian** is a fruit tree native from Indonesia and Malaysia. Each fruit can weigh as much as 6 kilograms (13 lbs!). Its four or five large internal custard-yellow segments are protected by an outer armour casing complete with thorns. The fruit is notorious for its odour and is either relished as a delicacy or avoided as repugnant. It is an acquired taste! Browsed by elephants and wild boar the seeds are distributed widely. There is a sub-culture out in the Far East that treats it as a soul-food. However, due to its obnoxious odour the fruit is banned from being brought into hotels and onto aircraft!

At the end of the book there is a list of tree related websites. Two of which are of particular interest and evokes the cliché that one needs more than one lifetime to research such a vast subject!

globaltrees.org and monumentaltrees.com

Drori’s book is a fascinating introduction as to how trees have adapted to different environmental conditions and how Man has used them throughout history for a multitude of purposes. An educational and an entertaining read that is uncluttered by technical jargon and full of surprising tree facts described by one reviewer as “An arboreal Odyssey”!

**A thank you must go to the Billericay Town Council for providing the BTW with advice,
Facilities, moral support and indemnity insurance whilst out in the field**

Prepared by the Billericay Tree Wardens [Editor JHS – 09/05/2021]

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