

The Billericay Tree Warden's Bi-monthly News-sheet for November 2022

Our News-sheets are available to view on the Billericay Town Council's website including back issues and are listed under the header "The Town". There are also tree related Fact Sheets included to advise residents. The Factsheets can also be viewed on Facebook at:-

<https://tinyurl.com/k8bzd772> <https://tinyurl.com/3hxdy5m9>

The Billericay Tree Wardens (BTW) are a subgroup of the Billericay Town Council



The Queen's Green Canopy tree planting initiative to mark the Platinum Jubilee is extended to give everyone the opportunity to plant a tree in memoriam as a tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Individuals: Plant a tree in your garden

Schools: Plant a tree in your school grounds with free Woodland Trust tree packs

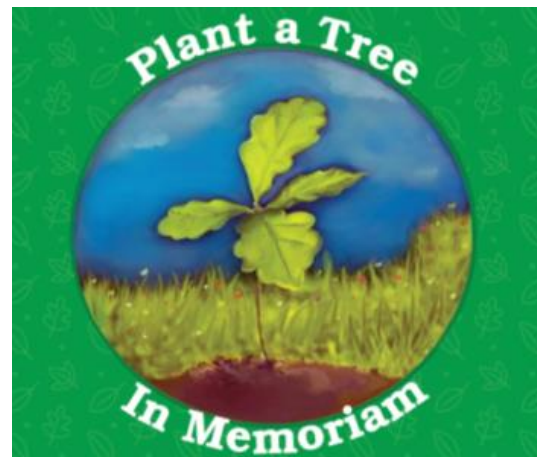
Companies: Plant a tree on your site

www.queensgreencanopy.org

New planting window October 2022 to March 2023

Billericay Tree Wardens are supporting the QGC campaign

For information e: billericaytreewardens@gmail.com



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1] Tree Planting in Billericay this December

There are to be two tree planting projects carried out by the BBC in the town this December. One at Lake Meadows and another at the Pleasant Drive recreation area off the Mountnessing Road. BTW member Nathan has been assisting the BBC's Parks and Countryside Biodiversity Officer Josh Childs with various tree planting Climate Crisis combating projects across our borough. Our volunteer group to help with the planting have been informed.

Pleasant Drive Wednesday 7th December – 400 native "whips" with cardboard tree guards, stakes and to be mulched to reduce moisture loss. All funded by the BBC.

Lake Meadows Thursday 8th December - 400 native "whips" with cardboard tree guards, stakes and to be mulched to reduce moisture loss. All funded by the BBC.

BTW members Dr Nigel Meadows and family have canvassed the local residents of **Pleasant Drive** with a view to forming a volunteer group that will look after the recreational area with recording the biodiversity increase brought about by the additional tree planting. The voluntary group will be the "ears and eyes" to check for unsociable behaviour that occurs, wildlife recording and litter picking etc. Thus making sure that the recreational area remains well-managed and a safe area. Nigel has been in contact with the Basildon Council Park Rangers and the local police and it has been arranged that two visits will be made per day at random times to check for unsocial behaviour and to act decisively if necessary. A colourful pamphlet describing the project has been prepared for local distribution.

2] Trees Highlighted at the Library

Following on from the original Library and BTW display theming trees at the Library last winter and into spring, the library currently presents a display featuring the Queen's Green Canopy for this summer and autumn. Featured on the table are various tree related items ranging from tree identification to how Essex is combating the Climate Crisis. There are also items for the young folk to engage in; colouring in the profile of leaves and learning how to plant and germinate tree seeds. The Library is the beating heart of a town and a place where raising awareness of various relevant issues are promoted. Here, young folk can be introduced to the natural world and its importance to our survival. Thank you to Head Librarian Dawn and her team for continuing the theme of trees.



3] Brightside School

The school has expressed interest in another project involving the children after the initial tree planting project carried out at the school earlier this year. The idea this time is to construct a "bug hotel" that can be sited among the line of mature oaks on the school's boundary. Our BTW Schools Team is leading the project.

4] The Billericay Youth Town Council at the BTC

Our Tree Warden Neil Sumner and wildlife adviser gave a talk on trees and their relevance in today's era of the Climate Crisis to the Billericay Youth Council (BYC) at the Chantry Centre. Touching on the legal, social and ecological aspects involved. The Counsellors are elected from the local Secondary Schools with the purpose of experiencing democracy at work. The talk was also attended by our BTC Chairperson Cllr Jo Clark.

5] BTW Article Published in the BDRA

We had an article published in the BDRA Newsletter that described Lake Meadows as an arboretum with its wide variety of tree species that not only serves the recreational needs of the public but also brings in a variety of wildlife into the urban landscape. Town Planners take note!

6] TPO Applied For – "Street Scene" Amenity

The BTW has requested of the Basildon Borough Council that a mature Monkey Puzzle tree in the front garden at 29 Norsey Road be designated with a TPO. It is a well-known feature of the road and is a valuable "Street Scene" amenity tree. A Planning Application (PA) had been submitted that made no reference to the tree and its intended demise. There is no existing site plan indicating the tree on the PA – It's as if the tree does not exist. However, it would not be illegal to fell. Over the years, Norsey Road with its splendid line of mature oaks in the front gardens has been steadily losing its non-TPO mature trees due to gap-site Developers felling trees to maximize the footprint of a new replacement structure.

7] Replacement Trees at Walsingham – The Queen's Park Estate

Some while back there were two mature oaks on BBC children's play area that were removed because they were suspected as causing subsidence to a nearby property. The BBC has just confirmed that two replacement native "standard" trees with stakes and tree guards will be planted there by next spring.

8] The Day the Boys Went to Kew!

Spurred on by the recent television Series 2 of Kew Botanic Gardens that had showcased its professional curators, volunteers and its amazing collection of trees and plants from around the world, Nathan, Neil and John were keen to visit. So on Saturday 24th September we set off with Nathan at the wheel to drive to Kew Gardens.

Fortunately a sophisticated aspect of the vehicles Satnav identified alternative routes to avoid the several accidents and gridlocks!

Upon arriving we made for the Palm House completed in 1848 with its 16,000 panes of glass and there to experience the magic of a rain forest. Our camera lenses took a while to stop misting up in the hot and humid environment! A habitat where the Chinese Water Dragon “Techno” hangs out near to the papaya fruit plant. “Techno” offers his services by eating the cockroaches and bugs that can gain a hold in the Garden’s glasshouses!

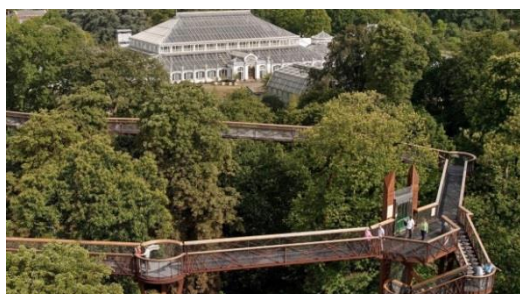


The variety of tropical plants, their leaf shape, trunk patterning, some in flower and fruiting can become overwhelming but leaves a lasting impression of their diversity. There is a species of bamboo in the Palm House that grows so tall that it is in danger of cracking one of the glass roof panels! Some of the plants that are on exhibit are species that are at risk of becoming extinct in their native home.



From there we wandered over to the nearby Waterlily House, a purpose built glass structure completed in 1852. And side by side are examples of the Giant Waterlily that grow in the lakes and backwaters of the Amazon basin. They are capable of growing to 2.5metres in diameter! There is a famous early photograph of a young girl and another of a baby placed on a waterlily at Kew which today would probably evoke critical comments from the Social Services!

The Princess of Wales Conservatory was the next port of call. Princess Diana opened the conservatory in 1987 but the glasshouse is actually named after Princess Augusta, mother of George III, who founded the Gardens in 1759. It is a very complex glass structure specifically designed to house ten climatic zones with computer controlled vents to maintain the temperature that each zone represents. Fascinating plant families are represented such as Venus flytrap, pitcher plants, orchids, cacti and bromeliads and there are also more giant waterlilies! We suspect that cockroaches are added to the carnivorous pitcher plants to provide them with a meal! Bon appétit! This conservatory would require more visits to fully explore what it has to offer.



The 18 metre high Treetop Walkway is an intriguing experience where one can walk through a woodland’s leafy canopy. Breaks between the trees reveal the skyline of London. We were not deterred by the lift being out of action and resorted to the 118 steps to reach the top! The structure is designed to slightly sway in windy conditions! In the



photographs above the renovated Victorian built Temperate House can be seen that was opened in 1863.

There is a 17 metre high contemporary art installation in the Gardens called The Hive; constructed out of 170,000 (one hundred and seventy thousand!) aluminium parts with 1,000 LED lights. It had been an installation that was originally shown at the UK pavilion for the highly controversial 2015 Milan Expo. Not surprisingly, it took four months to reconstruct! In the background there is music that electronically responds to a beehive situated in the



wildflower meadow nearby. All in the key of “C”, the key that bees buzz at! It is as a symphony composed by the vibrations of bees and the LED lights flicker to the beat! The installation is a reminder of the threat that bees and our food security face today.



The photograph was taken looking vertically up.

The stunningly designed and spacious refurbished Victorian Temperate House was partially closed when we visited but is home to c.1,500 species of plants from Africa, Australia, New Zealand, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific Islands. This structure is a cathedral of wrought-iron and glass to the botanic world! It is twice the size in area of the Palm House. A plant collection on a scale that would require a further visit or two to do it justice!



We went on to visit the Great Pagoda with its eighty refashioned and beautiful brightly painted gargoyles and then onto Kew Palace built in the seventeenth century illustrated left in the background where the reclusive King George 111 was educated and lived in during the eighteenth century. Guides dressed in period costume were on hand to describe what life in the royal household would have been like.

Whilst strolling between these highlights we often stopped to admire the various mature specimen trees on either side of the flower-lined wide avenues. The identity of many, had they not been labelled, would have been a mystery. There is a Cedar Avenue and an Oak Avenue with mature specimen trees from various parts of the temperate world. An added entertainment was the many highly vocal and mobile Rose-ringed Parakeets raiding the fruits and seedpods that the trees had to offer. They were as bright green flashes dashing between the trees! They have become used to the stream of human visitors and on one occasion landed undeterred and highly vocal in the canopy immediately above us, feeding on the fruits of an exotic tree.

No Kew Garden visit should miss out on the pilgrimage to see the Pagoda tree planted in 1762; a tree of Chinese origin. With its propped branches, brick strengthened trunk, its amazing blossom and its fissured bark patterning, is the very essence of arboriculture. Seen here in the photograph below with Nathan and Neil looking on. Sadly, there was a much younger but mature specimen in a Billericay front garden down the Tye Common Road that failed to qualify for a TPO and was felled soon afterwards by the property owner who failed to realize the tree's importance to our town's tree heritage.



After a welcome visit to the café, we explored the gift shop and found that the book section, if that is one of your interests, is akin to literally entering a literary heaven! There were books on trees, plants, art illustration and how plants have fashioned human culture throughout the centuries plus many other kindred subjects. Not only were plants and seeds for sale but so were Kew beers, Kew honey, jams, scented herbal soaps and all manner of well-designed merchandize! Self-discipline with respect the plastic was required! London has been always been a draw for foreign tourists and Kew on that day was no exception. Although a long drive home, thankfully the Satnav with its updates directed us again through the worst of the daily gridlocks!

We would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to various BBC and BTC Councillors who support our aims along with those local experts with specialist knowledge that have advised the BTW on various technical matters

A thank you must go to the Billericay Town Council for providing the BTW with advice, a meeting room at the BTC's Chantry Centre, moral support and Personal Liability and Personal Accident insurance, for BTW members and their volunteers, whilst out in the field with no geographic restriction

The Billericay Tree Wardens are a voluntary group and all information contained therein is not legally binding and is provided as a source of advice and information only

**The BTW's next members' committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 7th December 2022 at 6pm
Unless otherwise stated, we are to opt for a Zoom meeting**

Prepared by the Billericay Tree Wardens [Editor JHS – November 2022]
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