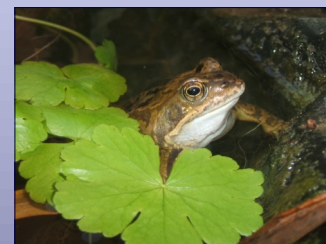


Ancient trees are an important part of the British landscape, and whilst being of historical, cultural and biological significance, they are also of immense aesthetic value. Like any old organism, they can require specialist care and treatment. See page 2 for further details.

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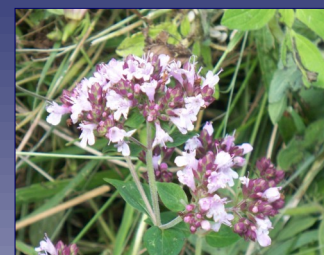


Survey season update

As we approach the middle of May, planning agents and developers should be aware that the 2008 **great crested newt** season will soon be coming to an end. Full surveys, as required by Natural England on the majority of sites, can only be undertaken between mid-March and the end of May. Data gathered after this time may be considered sub-standard, and councils have the right to request further survey in the following newt season. If you have any water bodies on or very close to a potential development site, you are likely to be asked for a newt survey as part of the planning application, and after May 2008, the next survey period will be March 2009.

The end of May sees the start of the **bat** survey season, which runs until late August / mid September. Barns are a trigger word for wildlife organisations, and most will require a bat survey to accompany a planning application. Buildings close to woodland, with hanging tiles or weatherboarding, with large unobstructed roof spaces, broken tiles and of pre/early 20th century construction are very likely to require a survey for bats. In some cases two or three survey visits may be necessary, and when applying for a bat licence, these visits should ideally be spread over the entire summer period.

Spring and summer is the time to be considering ecological issues on development sites. Be aware that **reptile** surveys can be undertaken between now and September, and following an early survey, it may be possible to complete a trapping and translocation mitigation exercise by autumn 2008.

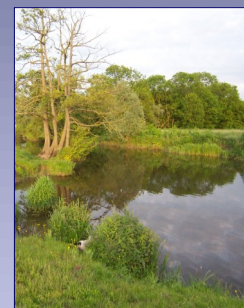


TRA training

Our Arboriculturalists, Paul Allen and Sharon Hosegood are providing occasional training to local government officers for Trevor Roberts Associates on: Rural Tree Planting, Urban Tree Planting, Materials, Method Statements and Techniques, Trees and the Planning System and Tree Hazard Awareness.

Trevor Roberts Associates are the UK's foremost provider of practitioner based training for those in planning and development fields and organises a programme of tree-related workshops on behalf of the National Association of Tree Officers.

More details can be found at www.tra-ltd.co.uk



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DF Clark Bionomique: Technical Update

Issue 2

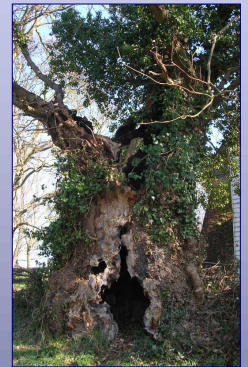
Ancient Tree Hunt Visit www.ancient-tree-hunt.org.uk for more info!

It is estimated that the UK is home to around 80 per cent of Northern Europe's ancient trees, and the Woodland Trust is asking for help in creating a register of these magnificent individuals. The 'Ancient Tree Hunt' has already recorded 6,000 such trees, and aims to reach 100,000 by 2011.

Characteristics of ancient trees, which are in the final third of their life, include a high aesthetic interest, large girth for the species concerned, major trunk cavities or hollowing, extensive amounts of deadwood, bark loss, damage to the trunk, fungal fruiting bodies and a rather short and dumpy overall shape.

Many ancient trees are found in former royal hunting forests or medieval deer parks, but scattered groups can also be found in historic parkland, urban parks, on farmland, village greens, in churchyards, in grounds of historic buildings and even in the midst of housing estates and car parks.

Unless covered by a Tree Preservation Order, ancient trees are not protected. They should however, be retained as an aesthetically, historically and ecologically important feature, which can add character and value to a site.



Managing ancient trees - the law

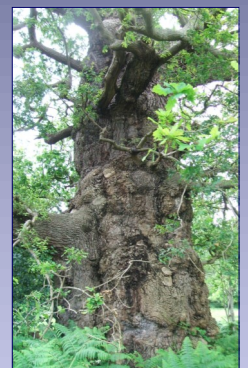
A range of legalities applies to those who own, manage or work on ancient trees. These include Tree Preservation Orders, designated conservation areas such as SSSI's, Wildlife and Countryside Act - predominantly bats and birds, Hedgerow Regulations, Health and Safety Acts, and owner/occupier liability.

Note that the Habitat Regulations (Aug 2007), which will apply to bats and dormice, state that there is no longer any defence where a protected species is harmed or disturbed as an incidental result of a lawful activity. Landowners and tree contractors should be more aware of the presence of protected species.

The law requires that owners identify sources of possible foreseeable danger, and remove them as far as reasonably possible. Where there is risk of harm, trees should be inspected at regular intervals, dependent upon the number and frequency of people and vehicles passing by - legally or otherwise.

In the case of ancient trees of aesthetic and historical value, taking measures to reduce the risk posed is preferable to removing the tree. Signs warning of dangers, zoning, re-routing of pathways and changing ground vegetation can be acceptable in some cases, but in others more active management measures are required.

Landowners are not expected to carry out detailed tree surveys themselves, but where a 'prudent non-expert landowner' has identified that a tree poses a risk to others who may enter the land, remedial action needs to be carried out promptly. In the case of ancient trees, an expert should be consulted to determine which actions should be taken to reduce such risk and prolong the life of the tree.



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Case study - Arboricultural method statement in action

In central London where space is at a premium, bespoke technical solutions are required where existing trees are close to where new buildings are to be constructed. Our client, Barratt Homes East London, had permission to construct a 3m deep basement on the outside edge of the root protection area of four mature London Plane trees in south London. Barratt Homes East London recognised the importance of the trees to their development and commissioned a method statement to ensure that minimum impact occurred to the trees and the arboricultural consultant implemented the method, working with the ground works team.

The method involved use of an air spade to blast away soil at high pressure to reveal the structure of the roots. **Air Spading definition** 'Air is supplied by a compressor and emerges from a specially engineered nozzle. The air jet enters soil pores, where it rapidly expands and slows, blowing the pores apart (Harris et al. 1999). The system allows very rapid exaction and is supplied commercially for applications. There is increasing interest in its use for exaction around tree roots when trenching for utility installations and also for investigations of root systems for tree management.' Tree Roots in the Built Environment TSO June 2006.

In this instance, there were very few roots, presumably due to the very heavily compacted nature of the soil. Those roots that were uncovered were carefully pruned and the crowns reduced to compensate for the root—shoot ratio. Air spading is also very useful of identifying underground services not previously highlighted on plans. The method has ensured retention of the trees and sheet piling to be installed without root tearing. See photos on the right hand side.

Air spades are useful in the following situations:

- Establishing the actual extent of rooting areas of trees to inform site layout
- Laying underground services by revealing a tracery of roots and feeding services underneath
- To carry out root pruning without tearing and shattering of roots
- To de compact the soil
- To establish the extent of roots to enable foundations to be constructed to avoid roots. This method has been used by D F Clark to ensure a new wall was constructed avoiding the main roots of trees by means of piers and lintels.

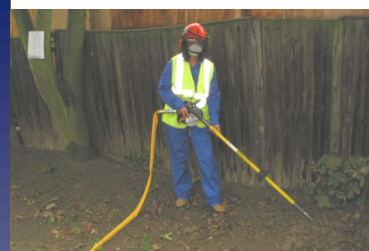
Air spades are, however, noisy and messy and do not work successfully on heavily compacted ground. In hard areas, a combination of tools is required, with the air spade finishing off the finer excavation.



Tree root running parallel to pipe



Sharon Hosegood establishing rooting area to facilitate design of a walls foundation



Paul Allen establishing rooting area of trees on a future development site



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