

NEWS

ISSUE 3
SUMMER
2010



Gristwood & Toms

Gristwood and Toms has been working in partnership with **Ealing Borough Council** to develop and refine our treatment of the **Oak Processionary Moth (OPM)** and a

couple of weeks ago G&T sponsored an important Seminar about tackling the spread of the OPM. The Forum was attended by more than sixty Tree Officers from all over the UK and by **Mark Townsend**, our resident OPM specialist.

After the event Mark was bombarded with questions and it looks like we may be called upon to help contain the pest (OPM, not Mark!) in many other boroughs. Mark has also travelled to Holland with Alex Austin to meet a top European OPM expert who has developed special pheromone traps that we are now using on site.

You should all familiarize yourselves with the early signs of OPM and report back to Mark if you detect it. *(Our unique OPM treatment methods appear on page 2) >>>*

Stop Press! We're in The Sun

Forget **Page 3**, if you'd turned to the jobs pages in **The Sun** you would have seen that **Gristwood & Toms** are in it, with a big recruitment drive. We're advertising in the national press for new climbers as we take on more and bigger contracts. If you know anyone who's an experienced climber and is looking for new challenges, why not put them in touch with **Karl Underwood** or refer them to our website, www.gristwoodandtoms.co.uk and apply online.



Boris helps us plant a tree

The Mayor of London, **Boris Johnson**, was joined by Jo Johnson, MP for Orpington, the Leader of the Bromley Borough Council and our very own **Mark Lovejoy** to mark the completion of the £2.2 million improvement scheme. The event celebrated the enhancements to the town centre, to create a safer and more pleasant public space, as part of long term developments within the borough. Partial funding for the initiative was provided by Transport for London (TfL), supporting the Mayor of London's Great Outdoors Project to improve public spaces and quality of life in the capital. New trees have been planted along the length of the High Street by Gristwood and Toms and to mark the occasion, Boris Johnson assisted with the planting of a tree standing 10 meters high on the High Street, at the junction of Homefield Rise. Gristwood and Toms have already planted 1000 trees in various London boroughs as a part of the Mayor's pledge to plant 10,000 new street trees by 2012. You can tell from the picture that Boris is a natural and he's got our number should he ever fancy a change of career.

BATMAN at Kenwood House

In the grounds of Kenwood House we're working on a special oak tree project that includes a bat survey, carried out by **Rob Reynolds**. The oak is going into its veteran phase (its top half is dying) so we're removing die-backs and managing the tree as a 'veteran'. This includes attaching a weather-resistant artificial lid to stop water and moisture, making the tree a perfect habitat for wildlife. This is the first time we've had our own 'batman' on site and as Kenwood House hosts many big music festivals (Blondie recently appeared there) we have to ensure the safety of the tree for visitors.



CONTRACT NEWS...

We have successfully retained our oldest standing contract at **Epping**. This was after a full tender process and against the stiffest competition we've known. The contract is for all Highways and Open Spaces but does not include the forest. **Andy Toms** is delighted; "This contract was originally awarded to us in April 1997 when we took on three of the staff working for the DSO at Epping who had the work before us. Amazingly two of them are still with us, which says a lot for their skills and their staying power!"

We've also gained a footing with **Northampton County Council** by winning a Framework Contract, which involves other firms. And we've been awarded the prestigious contract for **English Heritage**, London Regions. This includes many famous landmarks including **Kenwood House**, **Apsley House**, **London Wall** and **Winchester Palace**. As always, well done to the hard working team who get us successfully through the laborious, but essential, tendering process.



OPM *How we contain it...*

We now provide a quick response team to react within a day or two once feeding signs have been spotted. Treatment starts with an application of DiPel when the caterpillars are in instar stages 1-3. We aim to carry out two treatments within 10 days. The chemical is applied from a MEWP using knapsack sprayers with large droplet nozzles, this along with the wetting agent helps to reduce the risk of drift. Application from a MEWP also enables us to carry out an inspection of the top of the tree to assess caterpillar development and the extent of defoliation.

As the caterpillar develops into stages 4 onwards, we use Decis Protech (Deltamethrin). We have carried out a specific risk assessment and method statement for the use of this powerful insecticide. Again it is applied from a MEWP with a knapsack sprayer. We aim to spray primary and secondary scaffold branches where the caterpillars are most likely to travel across. Using a 3 metre lance we can ensure accurate and targeted application of the chemical. The risk posed from drift is further reduced by spraying within the canopy.



Following each application of either Dipel or Decis Protech, we will return to site within 2 days with a powerful, purpose built vacuum cleaner, imported from Italy. We remove dead caterpillars with this, which has 3 stage filtration and HEPA filters to contain the harmful hairs. The caterpillars are collected into paper bags which are then incinerated. This new piece of equipment greatly reduces the risk of exposing operators to the significant health risk of the caterpillars. Our final stage of control involves removing the silk tents as they form. We have two special vacuum cleaners for this role, one of which has long attachments and is used from the MEWP. Should we not be able to reach all the nests, we also have a smaller vacuum which can be taken into the tree. Both of these collect the nests safely in paper bags for incineration.

TEAM of the Quarter

Once again there has been more than one team in the running for the crew of the quarter which has made selection difficult. In the end it was decided that the best crew for this period is **Chris Partridge, Austen Moore and Jack Gristwood**. Regardless of the weather, type of work or the problem jobs, Chris has coped well and turns out a high standard of pruning. It doesn't seem to matter to him if

there are a couple of greenhouses, three fences and someone's pride and joy of a garden beneath the trees he has to work on; he still does the work in a safe and organised way. He pays attention to the needs of the client, the future health and appearance of the tree and still seems to be able to be productive regardless of the weather. If it's lashing it down with rain or blowing a gale he just gets on with his work, without complaint and with a smile on his face. As yet I don't think Chris's rating has dropped much below 7 or 8 out of ten across the board which has made him one of the most consistent performers we have.



Judge Mick Coomber

The most improved crew goes to **Paul Dennis, John Voller** and more recently **Ben Starnes** (although Paul is never going to set the world alight with his speed he does seem to consistently turn out a good standard of work which certainly helps with our working relationship with our clients). If Paul keeps up the standard he is producing at the moment I'll have no complaints. He is meticulous and thorough and works at a steady pace – and this way he isn't forever going back over improperly pruned trees. Getting things right the first time, and leaving the working sites in a clean and tidy fashion, is what we want.

Congratulations and thanks to Chris, Paul and their teams for consistently high standards of work.

Iconic trees to be felled

Sadly, we are having to fell a number of the trees that line the beautiful Parkway in **Welwyn Garden City**. The 60-year-old horse chestnuts have the bacterial infection, *Pseudomonas syringae*, which is slowly killing the trees from the inside out. Already, branches are starting to fall off and there are serious safety concerns, whereby larger branches could injure members of the public or fall into the road and cause an accident. More than half of the 629 horse chestnuts in the Welwyn and Hatfield area are infected with the disease.





MR. JASON WARD



MR D. BAILEY



'small tree by road' - DM Gristwood

POLAROID

Photo Competition

David Gristwood. It has been brought to our attention that D Gristwood and David Gristwood have similar sounding names and might, in some way, be related. As the prize was a significant amount of cash we wanted to ensure that there was no cheating going on. We have spoken with judge David Gristwood who says that the similarity of names is probably just a coincidence. This quarter the photographs entered were of a very high standard but as our judge says, "There can only be one winner". So the prize this time goes to **DM Gristward** for his entry 'small tree by a road'. Our judge commented; "Compared to the others, this photograph stood out. This has been taken by a photographer with great talent and he deserves to collect the prize money. Well done to **DM Gristward**, whoever he is!"

In our last Newsletter we launched our photography competition, with the prize winning photograph being entered by a certain **Mr D Gristwood**. The photo was chosen by our **resident judge**,

How to... Tie a Buntline Hitch



The **Buntline Hitch** is very useful as it simply will not come undone even when the rope moves about a great deal. In the 'good old days' it was used on square-sailed ships to secure a line to the Bunt (which is the middle part of a sail). This hitch is particularly useful in tree work in place of a Bowline, as it cinches against the Karabiner holding it in its strongest position along the length of the spine. A bowline has a loose loop in which we clip into, the problem with this is that through the constant moving around by a climber within a tree, from time to time the karabiner can move/twist about and then the rope can pull against the gate and the spine, a reduction in the Karabiners strength by over half.

The other pros to using this over a Bowline are:

- (1) the general size of the knot is much smaller and less obtrusive, than a Bowline.
- (2) There is no need to tie a stopper knot, as is required with a Bowline (you will need to leave approx a 4" tail longer than that pictured in the third diagram me above though)
- (3) It is easier when changing anchor points, to just untie and retie straight into a Karabiner, rather than unclipping the karabiner and risk dropping it.

If you are in any doubt on how to tie this knot, then don't use it. See **Karl Underwood**, who will be happy to demonstrate.

IT'S THE LAW!

There's no way round it, the forms that you are expected to complete daily and weekly are **legal requirements** and must be done promptly and correctly and handed in on time. Make sure you complete your **Vehicle Defect Sheet** every morning.

And prior to commencing work for every new job, you must



complete a site specific **Risk Assessment** form. Once a week you must thoroughly check your climbing equipment and complete the **LOLER** form.

Well Beehived

By Rob Reynolds at Shenley

Did you know we had over 150,000 lodgers here on site? Don't worry, you might not have noticed them but we have three bee hives being looked after by a local beekeeper. The three hives have been here for over a year now and have therefore seen all seasons. In October 2009 the bees were fed a winter sugar syrup which provides them with a food source to sustain them over cold season. We are pleased that all three colonies survived the winter and with spring taking longer to arrive there was a worry that the bees would not have any fresh pollen and nectar to collect to revive their winter stores. Luckily despite the late spring there were enough food resources for the bees to gather and the bees have grown in number.



Summer is a very busy time for not only the bees but for the beekeeper as well. It is a busy job keeping the bees disease-free and preventing swarms. Swarms occur when the colony is unhappy with their queen; perhaps she has slowed down laying eggs, or she is unwell. The bees therefore decide to generate a new queen and find a new home. Other reasons for swarming can be lack of space in the hive due to all the space being taken up with honey coming in, this makes the bees want to find a new home with lots of space. Our beekeeper comes in at least once a week during the busy summer period and he has already collected about 35lbs of honey with more to come.

Bees are very important pollinators and we are pleased that our site has been hosting the honey bees for the past year. All three hives are very strong and healthy and have passed the County Bee Inspectors visit with flying colours. The inspector commented how calm and placid the bees were and we would like to think it is partly due to the superb environment we are providing them!

FACT file The Old Oak Tree

The oak is generally thought of as the national tree of England. It represents the king of the English forest and its sturdy timber has been used over the years to build quality furniture, barns, houses and ships (including those for Nelson and Sir Francis Drake. The navy's official march celebrates "the heart of oak"). The tree was also sacred to the Druids and the Anglo-Saxons, and it sheltered an English king, when he was on the run from his enemies.

Did you know... We have two native oak species: the English Oak (*Quercus Robur*) and the Sessile or Durmast Oak (*Quercus Petraea*).

- 1 These species have been here since the end of the Ice Age when the climate warmed. They spread from mainland Europe, crossing the land bridge that is now the English Channel.
- 2 Britain's oldest surviving oak tree is believed to be the Bowthorpe Oak, in Lincolnshire, which is over 1000 years old.
- 3 In the past, the oak's bark was used for tanning leather, and its branches turned into charcoal for iron-making. Oak apples (galls made by wasps) were turned into black ink, and acorns fed pigs in the forests throughout the winter.
- 4 The Royal Oak is the second most popular pub name in the world.
- 5 Allegedly The original Royal Oak in Boscobel was named because King Charles II hid in it to escape from Cromwell's soldiers during the English Civil War. And the first Royal Oak pub still exists nearby.
- 6 The fruit of the oak, the acorn, gets its name from the Anglo-Saxons – 'ac' meaning oak and 'corn' meaning seed.
- 7 The biggest surviving oak in Britain is the 10 metre-wide Major Oak in Sherwood Forest, thought to be where Robin Hood camped with his merry men.
- 8 The oak supports at least 350 varieties of insect - more than any other tree – and they are a vital food source to other wildlife, including small mammals and birds, which in turn attract birds of prey like sparrow hawks, owls and buzzards. The tree itself is home to many mammals and birds.
- 9 Tie a Yellow Ribbon round the Old Oak Tree is a crap song sung by a band called Dawn in the seventies. Irritatingly, it stayed at number One for weeks.
- 10 The hollow provides a roosting place for owls in daytime, and a home for colonies of bats, which hibernate there in the winter, protected from the cold.
- 11 At the final stages of its decline, an oak tree continues to support life. More than 200 varieties of fungi live on the decaying wood, which is also eaten by woodlice and other insects. They break down the oak tree's nutrients, which return to the earth, to feed new oak trees.

SUMMER FACTS

It's worthy of note that many of London's street trees are suffering due to lack of watering. Many trees are falling (though not in our boroughs) as a result of the fine summer weather and are showing signs of drought stress. Keep an eye on your own trees while the rain stays away. We are very reluctant to work on **London Plane** trees during the summer as sawing and chipping creates dust allergies (running nose, coughing, even vomiting) caused through the dust on the leaves.



Honey, We're Home!

This is the first jar of honey made by the Bees at HQ and it could be yours. To win it all you have to do is write/ email in with a witty ending to the following sentence; **"I want the honey because..."** using no more than 25 words.

Send your answers to: rob.reynolds@gristwoodandtoms.co.uk



BEE FACTS:

1. The honey bee has been around for 30 million years.
2. The honeybee's wings stroke 11,400 times per minute, thus making their distinctive buzz.
3. A honey bee visits 50 to 100 flowers during a collection trip.
4. Worker honey bees are female, live 6 to 8 weeks and do all the work.
5. The male honey bees are called drones, and they do no work at all, have no stinger, all they do is mate.
6. Only worker bees sting, but only if they feel threatened and they die once they sting. Queens have a stinger, but don't leave the hive to help defend it.
7. It is estimated that 1100 honey bee stings are required to be fatal.
8. A honey bee can fly for up to six miles, and as fast as 15 miles per hour, hence it would have to fly around 90,000 miles - three times around the globe - to make one pound of honey.

Support for Wildlife

Gristwood & Toms are giving their support to wildlife conservation by joining the **Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT)** this summer.

Judy Adams, Chief Executive of HMWT said, "Without the support of local organisations, many areas of our work would be impossible. We are delighted



that Gristwood and Toms have joined us as a member of Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and look forward to developing our partnership.

There are plenty of opportunities for corporate members to get involved with our projects. The key is finding the activity which suits each company the best - from participating on one of our corporate work parties to funding a specific activity or event - with the main aim of helping us to protect wildlife for the future."

Improvement Drive

As we have to drive our lorries and cars through the lanes going to and from our Shenley site it is essential that we cause minimum disruption and noise to our neighbours. Obviously the faster we drive the noisier we will become and therefore we are introducing a new, self imposed, speed limit along Black Horse Hill and Harris Lane of 20mph. Please all ensure that you do not exceed this speed.

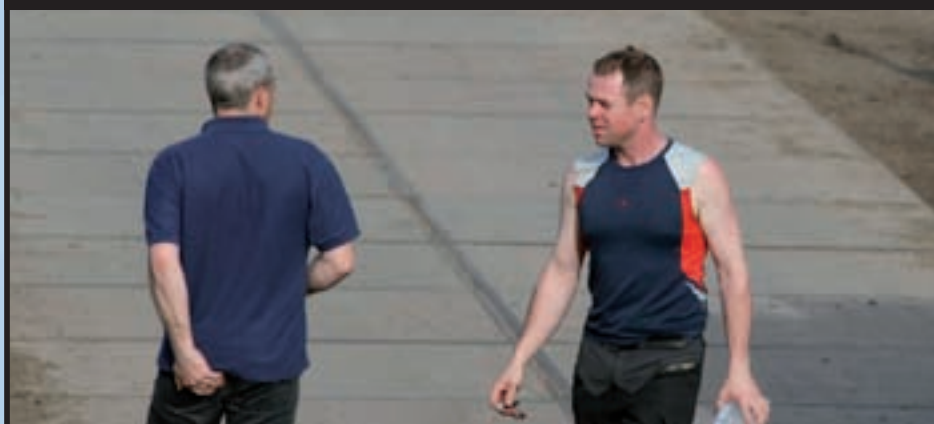
Bear in mind that when driving company vehicles you are representing the company and are therefore expected to drive carefully and with due consideration to others on the road. Let's be known for our good driving practices.

It is your responsibility to keep your cabs tidy. Whilst the condition of most cabs has improved since our last notice, there are still some that are coming into the workshop messy and dirty. We will be carrying our spot-checks to ensure that all vehicle interiors are kept clean, don't let us down!

Dave Gristwood.

G&T Caption Competition ...

Can you provide a suitable caption for this picture? Most of you will recognise James 'hips' Harris but who's the guy walking away from the picture and *what* is he doing?!! The best reply will be published in our next edition so get your thinking caps on.





Champions by 2012?



GEOFF PUGSLEY CAUGHT SPEEDING

Two climbing talents are emerging from the ranks of Gristwood & Toms. Team leader **Geoff Pugsley and Luke Butler**, both from our Basingstoke division, have been **speed climbing** in competitions for little more than a year and yet they're hot on the heels of many of the more experienced climbers. In fact, at the last meeting, Geoff clocked 18 seconds to climb a 50ft tree – which is just 4 seconds off the world record! "We only did this for a bit of fun originally" says Luke, "we saw an advert for a competition locally and decided to enter. In that competition, run by the ISA, we came in near the bottom out of about 50 entrants, but we got the bug and started practicing. And when we entered the Welsh Open last year, we came 12th and 10th out of a field of international competitors". Sponsored by G&T, Geoff is aiming for a top 5 place in the Scottish, Irish or Welsh Opens for 2010 and then who knows? We could be looking at the world's top two speed climbing champions in a couple of years.

Congratulations!

Degrees in Arboriculture have been awarded to **Simon Smith and Jim Mead** (pictured below), having studied a three year online course through the University of Lancashire.



The degree course has covered plant science, principles of arboriculture, pests and diseases, business planning, saw science, landscape design, woodland management, tree biology and legal issues. They have also gained in depth knowledge of Dendrology (plant classification and recognition).

and Fingers Crossed...

The following have all sat their Certificate of Arboriculture exams and are waiting for the results later this month: **Gary Cooke, Andy Hall, Kit Johnson, Paul Jones, Mick Kane, Mark Lovejoy and Chris Partridge.** **Good luck to you all!**

Hello & Goodbye

Welcome to...

- Steve Chapman **Southwark**
- Paul Davids **Southwark**
- Richard Eggleton **Southwark**
- Simon Glassbrook **Birmingham**
- Chris Hunter **Ealing**
- Peter Kidd **Hampshire**
- George Rockell **Southwark**
- Dean Sellman **Southwark**
- James Shaw **Ealing**
- Rob Titheradge **Shenley**
- Martin Wisson **Southwark**

And to a few who are leaving us, and the industry, to pursue new careers

- Billy Burgess Shenley** who is now working as a tattooist
- Charlie Reynolds Shenley** who is emigrating to live in Australia
- Carl Russell Shenley** who, we think, has gone to be a plasterer

HOT off the Press!

We have been successful in our endeavours to achieve ISO 18001 so a big thank you all of you boys out there who made this possible. Oh, and Tim as well....



Q: Can you identify these five winter tree silhouettes?

ANSWER TO LAST ISSUE'S QUIZ QUESTION: All the celebrities names are trees! **Rowan Atkinson/Nigel Hawthorne/Lesley Ash/Holly Willoughby/Neneh Cherry**