

Trimblings

News from Tree Maintenance



Welcome to our newsletter, the first in an occasional series bringing you news and views from our wonderful world of trees.

I hope you enjoy it.

- Geoff March

TM news in brief

- *Geoffrey March has recently been accepted on the Arboricultural Association's list of Registered Consultants - one of about 30 in the UK.*
- *Nick Organ, our Health and Safety Manager and long term foreman, recently passed the Arboricultural Association's Technician's Certificate after attending a specialist course once a week at Westonbirt Arboretum. He is now working with Geoff March on several consultancy issues.*
- *Last summer climber Rob Andrews was rock climbing in Yosemite National Park, California! This follows similar trips to Scotland and France by Andy, Pete and Rob. As if our work wasn't a challenge...*

Top of the tree!



This little logo means a lot. In October 2003 we had an all-day visit by two assessors from the Arboricultural Association, as part of our re-inspection for their prestigious 'Approved Contractor' status. We'd had several weeks to prepare for the big day, making sure everything was in order - health and

safety documentation, certificates, insurances, office systems and a myriad of other items – the list ran to 219 bullet points, covering six closely typed sides of A4! Times have certainly changed since we were first approved way back in 1985.

After a few hours in the office, Geoff and Steve then took the assessors to a private garden in Amberley to see one of our teams in action (fortunately the weather was fine!), followed by trips to several other sites to cast a critical eye on a wide range of recently completed work.

After a couple of weeks of somewhat nervous delay, we finally had the good news - we had passed with flying colours. The time, effort and money involved had all paid off!

So what does this mean to our customers? They can be sure that they are getting the very best in up-to-date tree care, from a fully verified and professional company. The Arboricultural Association's approved list is *by far* the most stringent in the country – and wouldn't you want the best for your trees?

Consultancy success



Perfectly re-laid slabs couldn't hide the evidence!

Last year Geoff March was commissioned to report on a large Cherry tree in London, the scene of a nasty accident due to a paving slab that had

been lifted by the tree's roots. The local authority had rejected the client's claim, producing as evidence a report form showing that the

slabs had been inspected four months earlier and found to be satisfactory. By the time of Geoff's visit the whole pavement had been re-laid to billiard table-like perfection! Fortunately cut roots were in evidence, and by drawing on published research a compelling case was built up, showing that the lifting must have been in place for several years.

We finally heard from the client that she had received a substantial settlement "...and I am sure your report was a major contribution to the success of the case".



This huge but much loved Beech in Woodchester was in danger of splitting apart. Lightning the left stem and fitting supporting braces enabled its safe retention. Julian is up there somewhere!

Hedges – problems of another sort

If you are the owner of a closely trimmed Leylandii hedge (kept at a reasonable height of course!) you may be unlucky enough to have noticed brown patches appearing on the sides.

This is almost certainly the Cypress Aphid, *Cinara cypressi*. This little beast is brown, a little larger than a greenfly, and can be quite hard to spot, lurking a short way back from the tips. It is only a real problem on Leylandii, when *tightly trimmed*, and including the golden 'Castlewellan' variety. Unfortunately the inability of Cypress to regrow from

old wood means that badly-affected patches will not recover, and hedges can be completely ruined.

So - can anything be done? Provided it is caught at an early stage, spraying with a suitable insecticide is very effective. Nick Organ is certificated for spraying and is rapidly building up a good case history, so we may well be able to help.

Cypress Aphid seems to be a quite recent and erratic problem (we referred an early case to the Forestry Commission about fifteen years ago). God's answer to Leylandii?

High hedges – the latest

You may have heard that help is at hand for those whose properties are blighted by giant hedges – usually Leylandii – that blot out the light. Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 will allow local authorities to adjudicate if all other reasonable efforts have failed.

The hedge in question must be '*comprised wholly or predominantly of a line of two or more evergreen or semi-evergreen trees or shrubs; over 2 metres high; acts, to some degree, as a barrier to light or access; and because of its height, is adversely affecting the*

complainant's reasonable enjoyment of their domestic property (that is their home or garden)'. That seems to allow plenty of scope for interpretation, and the poor local authority officers may well have a nightmare on their hands. Clearly the owners should have called Tree Maintenance round years ago!

Much more information on this and many other tree issues is available on the superb *Arboricultural Information Exchange* website, www.aie.org.uk

Meet the staff – No. 1



Abi Fisk is our long-suffering office manager and all-round star. With us since 1997, she likes to overwinter her cacti collection upstairs at work!

Jamie Davis has been with us since 1999 and is an expert groundsman to the climbers in his team. In his spare time Jamie is a demon on the dance floor (you have been warned!)



The things we get up to...

Can you guess what is going on here (and no, it's not a badly cut-out photo)? The developers of this valuable new residential site in Cheltenham had permission to fell these Birch trees, but could not act until the nesting season – when wildlife legislation could forbid it. Before nesting started we covered the trees head to toe with netting to keep any birds out. This operation was a success - for the developers if not the birds or the trees - and the new building started on time. This was a highly awkward job (you've probably never tried it...) but we got there in the end!