

RFS

ROYAL FORESTRY SOCIETY



Inspiring passion and excellence in woodland management

Quarterly Journal of Forestry

Official Publication of The Royal Forestry Society
January 2018 Vol 112 No.1



*Southern Beeches -
Nothofagus Species
Profile*

*The Ecology of
Forest Resilience*

*The Impact of
Squirrel Control on
Non-target Species*

*Risk Assessing for
Ash Loss*

*European Policy for
Coppice Forests*

Forest Genetics

*Future Foresters,
Future Technology*

Divisional Activity

Oxon/Bucks Tusmore Park Estate

2 May 2017

After a long drive through impressive open parkland we were greeted with tea and coffee at the historic cricket pavilion in Tusmore Park. We were visiting at the kind invitation of estate manager, Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Barkas. He has overseen the many improvements that have taken place over the last 20-plus years, including extensive new tree planting.

We were greeted by Nick Evans of Pryor and Rickett Silviculture (who manage the woods and parkland). After giving a brief history of the estate, they took us off to look at the woodlands. Almost half of the woodlands have been planted in the last 30 years. The main emphasis is on providing additional game cover to improve the sporting potential of the estate, but the owner aims to do this whilst practicing good silviculture and maintaining the aesthetic appeal of the attractive local landscape.

In the morning we visited several of the more recently planted (1990s onwards) woodlands. These are mostly stocked with native broadleaves. More recently planting has been undertaken using a planting machine. There was much discussion about the problems of establishment on agricultural land, thinning options, high pruning, plantation design and ride management. The topics of deer management and squirrel control inevitably reared their ugly heads. The estate does not have a significant deer problem and squirrels were effectively controlled using warfarin hoppers until 2015. Since then the shoot have taken responsibility for control on a bounty basis using Fenn traps. This appears to be working as little squirrel damage was evident.

After lunch in the cricket pavilion we were transported around other parts of the estate to view a miscellany of forestry and forestry related practices. The management of



The new lime avenue and obelisk at Tusmore Park Estate.

an historic yew avenue, where some trees were dying, was discussed. We visited several plantations created in the 1960s with mixtures including European larch/ash, ash/sycamore and oak/ash/beechn. Most had either been recently thinned or were due for thinning.

We moved on to view the double lime avenue planted in 2012 that leads to a large impressive stone obelisk commemorating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

On our final journey back through the park where there are a large number of veteran trees. We returned to the pavilion to thank our hosts for a varied and interesting day.

Peter Harding

Home Counties Panshanger Estate

4 July 2017

With the timely appearance of a tape measure, the RFS Home Counties Division's visit to Panshanger Park descended into a battle for size – a veteran oak pollard affectionately known as 'Humphrey' after a certain Mr Repton, versus the mighty Panshanger oak, a magnificent maiden standing prominent among the extensive list of trees attributed to that champion tree planter, Queen Elizabeth I.

The supposed fruits of her labour are certainly well admired on this wonderful estate, and it was in full sun and summer warmth that we were welcomed by our host, Michael Charlton of Tarmac, and the estate's forestry consultant, Rik Pakenham. Rik's involvement with the estate extends back to the aftermath of the great storms of '87 and '90, recovering woodlands decimated by the winds through felling and replanting operations. Today many of the woodlands across the estate are even-aged so management operations tend to focus on re-structuring. Rik's role has also extended to carrying out tree safety inspections along roadsides and footpaths, and recording all of the estate's 816 veteran trees.

After an initial briefing from Michael and Rik, the tour took in various sites of interest across the estate including the location of the former manor house and the still-standing orangery, now surrounded by secondary woodlands established from formal gardens and containing an interesting mixture of ornamentals and over-mature yew and laurel hedging.

Much of the focus of conversation was about the pressures faced by managing a large estate with such rich value in so many potentially conflicting areas. The estate has commercial value for sand and gravel extraction, heritage and landscape value as a listed historic park and garden

Divisional Activity

associated with Brown and Repton, ecological value with over 13,000 records of 2,500 species on the Herts Environmental Record Centre, and recreational value with around half of the 405ha (1000 acre) estate now opened up to public access. It is a challenge for Tarmac as site owners to coordinate management of the estate to accommodate all of these interests as best as possible.

The highlight of the visit was without doubt the Panshanger Oak, now framed within a circle of immaculate black estate railing which all agreed helped to emphasise the majesty of the tree and certainly worth the investment. Some discussion was had about the tree's age, with one calculation apparently placing it between 1399 and 1450 (more Henry V than Elizabeth I). A great addition to a very interesting visit.

And the result of the grand measuring? Humphrey's girth was found to be 10cm larger than the Panshanger Oak. Well played, sir!

Jon Collins



Team photo in front of Panshanger Oak. (Photo: Tom Williams)

North Wales Dingle Nurseries and Derwen Garden Centre

6 July 2017

Dingle Nurseries is a family-owned business producing a complete range of hardy trees and shrubs for the landscaping sector. Starting 50 years ago on a single acre of the family farm near Welshpool, Andy Joseph and his wife Kathy have developed a wholesale nursery that now covers 270 acres (109ha), and a garden centre (Derwen Garden Centre) at nearby Guilsfield. Andy and Kathy's son Dafydd and his friend Chris Andrew now run Dingle Nurseries and their daughter Rachael is taking over at Derwen Garden Centre with Nev Davies as manager. The two businesses now have over 90 employees.

We were welcomed to Dingle Nurseries on a warm summer's morning by Andy Joseph, who explained that the wholesale nursery produces 1 million potted plants and 150,000 large trees (up to 10m tall) each year, and imports additional stock, particularly of unusual species, from other countries including Italy, Spain, Germany and Holland. There are no particular problems with imported pests and diseases (there are strict controls on plant trade and the nursery is inspected regularly), but pesticides and fungicides are applied every two weeks and herbicides are used with varying success. The worst pests are rabbits, which are kept at bay with electric fencing. Reservoirs provide the 10-15 million gallons of water used by the nursery each year. Timer-controlled nozzle and dropper systems provide targeted watering, and careful alignment of polytunnels and outdoor standing areas on slopes means that excess water runs back to the reservoirs, saving about 50% of the amount applied.

We looked first at the polytunnels used to provide winter



Measuring Humphrey. (Photo: Tom Williams)