



# Newsletter May 2022

[www.californiagardenersclub.co.uk](http://www.californiagardenersclub.co.uk)



## May meeting

This most enjoyable talk by Ailsa Claybourn was both entertaining and knowledgeable. Why are Oak Trees Awesome? They are Awesome for many reasons. Firstly, many of these trees are over 300 years old, but some are even older. The Oldest known Oak Tree is the Boythorpe Oak in Bourne, Lincolnshire and is thought to be over 1,000 years old, - was in fact a young tree at the Battle of Hastings. There are 2,400 Ancient Major Oak Trees in Britain, some of these are in Sherwood Forest and are 800-1000 years old. It is thought that these ancient Oak trees survived, because of the Love of Hunting by the Normans. After Invading Britain, they changed the Laws, and Privileges, previously enjoyed by the local people of animal grazing, using the timber in the forests, to use for building and repair of their property and for firewood, came to a sudden end. Forests were fenced off to contain the Deer and Oak Trees were therefore Protected. The hard wood of the Oak trees are difficult to gnaw, so Beech and other trees were gnawed instead by the Fallow Deer.

Girth of tree in feet and inches	Girth of tree in metres and centimetres	Equals Estimated age in years	Historical connections
6ft 2ins	1m 85cm	75	1930, George V Amy Johnson's solo flight to Australia
6ft 7ins	1m 98cm	80	1926, George V Year of the General Strike
8ft 3ins	2m 48cm	103	1903, Edward VII First manned flight by the Wright Brothers
10ft 4ins	3m 10cm	138	1868, Victoria Thomas Edison patented his 1st invention, an electric voice machine
12ft 4ins	3m 70cm	181	1825, George IV Stockton to Darlington Railway opens (1st in the world)
14ft 5ins	4m 33cm	232	1815, George III British victory over Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo
16ft 6ins	4m 95cm	291	1715, George I First Jacobite rebellion in Scotland
18ft 7ins	5m 58cm	358	1638, Charles I Last year of the English Civil War
20ft 8ins	6m 20cm	433	1573, Elizabeth I The first maps in England were made by Christopher Saxton
22ft 8ins	6m 80cm	515	1491, Henry VII The future King, Henry VIII born at Greenwich
24ft 9ins	7m 43cm	606	1400, Henry IV Rebellion in Wales under Owain Glyndwr
26ft 9ins	8m 03cm	704	1302, Edward I Dante is exiled from Florence
28ft 10ins	8m 65cm	810	1196, Richard I According to legend, Prince Madog of Gwynedd reached North America
30ft 11ins	9m 28cm	924	1082, William the Conqueror Completion of Rochester Cathedral
32ft 11ins	9m.88cm	1046	960, Edgar Mieczyslaw I becomes first ruler of Poland

Dating these ancient Oak Trees is done by measuring the circumference of the tree at the height of One and a half metres from the ground. See chart to age your tree.

These awesome ancient Oak Trees, due to photosynthesis, have for centuries been improving the quality of the atmosphere. These Trees have also provided a home for 400,000 invertebrates, including Gall Wasps and galls, many varieties of butterflies

## Things to note

- Our next meeting** is on the 6<sup>th</sup> June when Stuart Slocombe will give us a presentation on the Gardens of Singapore.
- Time to renew your membership.** You can find details on how to do this in this newsletter.
- Trading Hut:** now open every Sunday 10:00 to 12:00
- Member's articles.** See newsletter for more details. If you have an interesting story, send it in.
- Remember to:** call Hermione if there is a particular subject you would like a speaker for. Hermione's number is at the end of this newsletter

and moths. Also, of course, nesting sites in the tree's canopy for a huge variety of birds such as the Tits, Nuthatch, Black Cap, Wood Pigeon, Woodpeckers, Chaffinches, Tawny Owls and birds of prey such as the Red Kites and Sparrow Hawks. Oak Trees provide a home for animals, such as the red and grey squirrels, who feed off the acorns.

The roots of Oak Trees, don't just act as anchors, they have another important role to play in the health of the tree. Under the ground, mycorrhizal fungi symbiosis increase the absorptive area of the tree by acting as extensions to the root systems, in particular helping to increase phosphorus uptake from the soil which is usually in short supply. The bark of the tree not only supports it but protects it too. When birds peck the bark and caterpillars and other insects nibble the leaves, the tree produces Tannins, this is a chemical response. Tannins are bitter and astringent tasting, not liked by these creatures.

However, recently, the Oak Processionary Moth caterpillar was discovered in Richmond Park in 2006, reaching the UK from the Continent. This raised Alarm bells, because this moth damages the trees and is a health hazard to animals and humans. It is extremely difficult and expensive to eradicate.



In late Spring, the moth lays unmistakable clusters of grey white caterpillars, suspended in ethereal webbing. These caterpillars greatly damage the bark of the tree, and thereby degrade its health. This happens in its larval stage. The larvae disrupts the food web of the tree.

This moth is massively detrimental to the environment; to the trees and to the health of us humans and animals. Each caterpillar is armed with more than 60,000 setae (tiny urticarial hairs) which it uses to defend itself against predators. These hairs contain a toxin known to cause skin

irritation in humans and animals. This can lead to dermatitis and respiratory problems if inhaled.

Oak Processionary Moth is now regarded as a growing international problem. It is a possible result of Climate Change.

The Oak Tree has played a Major role in our Maritime History from the Stone Age to the present day. The timber of the Oak has provided masts for our ships like HMS Victory launched in 1765; for fighting in many past Battles such as The Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. Metaphorically, our soldiers have "Hearts of Oak" and the Oak Tree is known as the King Saviour after King Charles hid in it to evade capture. The oak tree is the National Tree for 14 different Countries. Finally, the Oak is a significant feature in Ancient Greek and Norse Mythology and for the Celtic Druids. - Truly an Awesome Tree.

Maureen Boyington

### **Table Competition**

Spectacular table of members exhibits. Really well supported this month. Enjoyed seeing the small oak trees growing from acorns.

Joint 1<sup>st</sup> Sue Dorlow, Sylvia Hawes and C. Temperley with 10 points each.

2<sup>nd</sup> Jill Gillott with 9 points.

Joint 3<sup>rd</sup> Ian Gillott and J. Kerr with 8 points.

4<sup>th</sup> Peter Radband with 7 points.

Remember that the table competition is your opportunity to show something that you are really proud of. The only rule is that it must have been in your possession for at least three months or grown by you.

### Help with the teas and biscuits

Each club night we have a break for tea/coffee and biscuits. We need someone to manage this. All that is needed is to bring milk and make sure we have enough teabags, coffee and biscuits. You will not need to serve in the kitchen if you do not want to but just make sure there are enough tea bags, milk and coffee. All expenses, of course, will be reimbursed. We will create a rota for the coming months and ask for volunteers to help in the kitchen.

**Please let me know if you can help by replying to this email.**

### Chairman's Challenge

32 members decided to accept the chairman's challenge this year. At the club meeting last Monday, they paid their £1.50 and chose their plant. There was much discussion as to the qualities of the little geranium plants before members made their final selection.

The challenge is to bring on the geranium to its best by September (the name, colour and other details have been kept secret. The only thing that can be said is that they are all the same).

We look forward to the results at either the September club meeting or the Autumn Show (or both). Good luck to you all.

### Topical Tip – May 2022

- Repair bare patches of lawn
- Summer bedding can be planted into the garden once all danger of frost has passed.
- Keep on top of watering - it is vitally important to keep plants irrigated, particularly in pots and containers.
- Dahlias and hardy annuals that have been grown under glass can be planted into the garden at the end of the month.
- Check for infestations of aphids on roses. These can be dealt with by washing them off the buds with a hose onto the soil where they can be dealt with by other beneficial insects. A homemade remedy of soapy water (1 teaspoon of washing up liquid in 3 litres of water) will also control the problem without using harmful pesticides.
- Give evergreen hedges a trim, making sure there are no birds nesting within.

### New Bank Account

Please note that we have a new bank account. For those who have a standing order set up for their membership, the details are as follows:

**Sort Code: 60-24-21**  
**Account Number 10290311**  
**Account Name California Gardeners' Club**

### Help Required

We have a large delivery due at the Trading Hut on the 31<sup>st</sup> May around midday. We need volunteers to help unload the lorry. Please put it in your diary if you can help.

### Stop Press:

'The gooseberry sawfly has arrived on my gooseberry bushes. These caterpillars are voracious feeders and 'can defoliate a bush in a week if not treated'. **Provento Ultimate bug killer**, which you can find in our Trading Hut, contains deltamethrin which will control sawfly and other caterpillars.

Ian Gillott

### **Member's email**

Interesting conversation with one of our members at the Trading hut on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> May. She was telling me about her mother visiting. They had gone out into the garden and the mother decided to do a bit of weeding (Don't we wish we all had mothers who would come and do the weeding? But wait.). When our member went out to see how her mother was getting on, she found the mother had pulled out all her lovely poppies thinking they were weeds.

### **Member's email**

One of the major pests of apples is the codling moth. The caterpillars of this moth burrow into the fruit causing extensive damage.

The main attacks occur in late June and July, although in warm dry summers attacks can occur as early as late May and early June. In commercial orchards the pest is monitored by the use of pheromone traps. These traps contain a synthetic female pheromone, which attracts the male moth.



When five or more moths are caught, the trees are sprayed 7-10 days later with an insecticide to control the emerging caterpillars.

These codling moth traps are now available in most Garden Centres and contain specific instructions for their use. The cost of the traps is between £7 and £8.

However, if you have only a couple of apple trees, catching a few moths may be sufficient to minimise and damage caused to your trees without resorting to the use of an insecticide. Spraying should only be carried out as a last resort, as any chemical spray used to control the pest may well damage any beneficial insects.

Ian Gillott  
Deputy Chairman.

### **Facebook Group News**

You are most welcome to join the club Facebook group. It is a private group which means that only club members can join and post. You can join it at: [www.facebook.com/groups/207934410581605/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/207934410581605/)

You will need to first read and agree to the group guidelines. We really would like more members in this group to make it a lively forum. We are looking for gardening related posts and club news.

### **Sad News**

It is with great sadness that I must report that we have been informed of Jean Potter's death. Jean had been a tremendous supporter of the club. She had been the club's secretary for many years making sure that everything was done correctly. She was never one to hold back if she thought there was an alternative/better way of doing things. However, when you were being told off or put right, there was always a smile on her face.

Even when Jean was unable to attend meetings, she still enjoyed reading the newsletters and keeping up to date. How do I know? Because she would phone me to talk about various bits.

A lovely woman.

Dick

## **Membership this year**

2022 subs are now due. They remain at £5 per person per year. You can either pay at the May club meeting or at the hut on a Sunday mornings.

If you would like to pay now, you can do so through BACS

**Note – we have moved bank so these are the new details.**

**Sort Code: 60-24-21**

**Account Number 10290311**

**Account Name California Gardeners' Club**

**Please use your full name as the reference.**

Once you have paid by BACS, please go to the membership page on our web site and record that you have paid (you will find the form at the bottom of the membership page).

## **RHS card**

Our club has a RHS Card. It enables two people to gain entry to all RHS gardens throughout the country (this includes RHS Bridgewater from Sept).

Presentation of this card will give you and your friend a 30% discount on the entry fee.

You can borrow the card by contacting Chris Spinks (number at the end of newsletter) and arranging to pick it up.

## **Monthly talks**

**This is a call to all members:**

If you have any ideas/requests for the subjects of the monthly talks, please let us know. Either reply to this email or give Hermione a ring (number below).

Chairman: Dick Hawes 0118 979 3730	Hon. Treasurer: Yvonne Hedley 0118 973 3852	Programmes: Hermione Lewis 0118 989 1671	Committee Member: Peter Radband 07976 640989
Deputy Chairman: Ian Gillott 0118 989 2649	Trading Officer: Stuart Slocombe 0118 973 4531	Membership: Jayne Male 07967 639808	Co-opted Member: Marise Radband 01344 774310
Hon. Secretary: Chris Spinks 0118 978 1432	Show Officers: Daryl & Katie Phillips 07980 160169	Publicity: Maureen Boyington 07919 522379	Table Competition Linda Garrett