

Oak News & Notes

The Newsletter of the International Oak Society, Volume 8, No. 1, January 2004

Fourth International Oak Conference a Smashing Success

As everyone who reads this newsletter knows, the International Oak Society held its Fourth Conference this past September in Winchester, England. This was the first one held outside the U.S. and by all measures, it was a great success. It was attended by over 100 people from 18 countries. We not only heard some wonderful presentations on a wide range of oak related subjects, but stayed in a marvelous facility and were treated to delightful food. But most amazing of all, the weather was glorious! Having lived in England on two separate occasions, I simply was not prepared for crystal clear, warm days in late September – but I did my best to adjust.

Whilst the weather was spectacular, few were tempted to venture outside during the talks, because there was so much to learn! The planning committee did a first class job of lining up some world-class speakers for the event. We learned many things about the history of woodlands in the UK, including how oaks have been viewed in folklore and botanical literature, more about the oaks of China and Caucasia, and how oaks are being improved for commercial and ecological purposes.

Other highlights included the banquet and a trip to the truly magnificent Sir Harold Hillier Arboretum and Gardens. Our guest and featured speaker at the banquet was Lord Heseltine, the former Foreign

Minister and cabinet member. Lord Heseltine was both entertaining and thought-provoking. He clearly has a passion for trees and efforts to conserve them, but made it clear he was no expert in the field. But he delighted the audience with anecdotes about his initial foray into the world of tree planting and establishing an arboretum on his estate.

The following day we visited Sir Harold Hillier Arboretum which was literally just down the road. The staff there went out of their way to show us around and make sure that we at least saw most of the many oaks growing there. The only bad thing was the fact that we didn't have more time to spend and look around because there was so much to see! Perhaps in a week you could do it justice, but I am not even sure that would be enough time.

For all of those who could not attend in person, I am sorry. But the next issue of the Journal *International Oaks* will have the Proceedings of the Conference so you can read the papers and posters that were presented. And be sure to see the accounts of the pre and post-conference field trips in this newsletter.

Hats off to the organizing committee and all of those who contributed to such a wonderful conference. As they say in the UK, "splendid job!"-by Doug McCreary



New Book Available

A new book titled *Champion Trees of Britain and Ireland* has just been published and is available to International Oak Society members at a discounted rate. This marvelous new book was edited by Dr. Owen Johnson and has an introduction by Thomas Pakenham and a forward by Her Grace The Duchess of Devonshire. It is lavishly illustrated, is in full color, and lists 3500 trees representing over 2000 different kinds growing in Britain and Ireland. According to Roy Lancaster OBE VHM, one of the keynote speakers at the recent International Oak Society Conference in the UK, this is a celebration of our exceptional trees as well as an indispensable reference book.

Contact information is listed on the International Oak Society web site publications page at <http://www.saintmarys.edu/~rjensen/iospubs.html> or you may go directly to the Tree Register page at <http://www.tree-register.org/frames.html> and select the link in the box describing this new book.

Officers and Board Members Elected

At the 2003 Conference in Winchester, new officers were elected and committee posts were assigned.

These included the following:

President –
Eike Jablonski

Vice-President –
Allen Coombes

Secretary –
Ron Lance

Treasurer –
William Hess

Membership Chair –
Richard Jensen

Newsletter Editor –
Doug McCreary

Journal Editors –
Ron Lance
Guy Sternberg

Members at large –
Thierry Lamont
Ann Mendoza
Dorothy Holley

Two new Board members were announced, selected by the members at large from the election overseen by Rudy Light. Brief biographies for each are listed below:

William J. Hess has been a professional botanist for over 40 years, having received a Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma. He is a plant taxonomist and recently retired from The Morton Arboretum where he was curator for 25 years. During this time, the herbarium grew from 30,000 to over 150,000 specimens. His emphasis has been field work in both research

and teaching. Bill's interest in oaks goes back to 1967, and he has collected plants from all over North America. He has written approximately 50 scientific and popular articles. He and colleague Nick Stoyanoff have published on *Quercus shumardii* systematics, and have published in the Society's Journal. Bill has investigated the geographic distribution of oaks in Illinois and Tennessee. Having retired, he can devote more time to helping organizations of his interest, such as The International Oak Society.

Ana Mendoza received her Bachelor, Master and Ph.D. degrees at the National University of Mexico. She held a post-doctoral position at the University of Sussex in Great Britain, and is currently a researcher at the Institute of Ecology. She is involved in the demography, genetics and reintroduction of oak species to natural habitats. Her main interests are focused on the ecology, management and conservation of Mexican oaks and other plant species. She has been a member of the Society since 1997, and would like to contribute as a representative, participating in the membership committee to recruit new members in Mexico.



Oak Wilt CD Available

The US Forest Service has just published an informative and comprehensive new CD about oak wilt disease prepared by IOS member Dr. Jennifer Juzwik and colleagues. It covers background information, symptoms, management options, resource lists, and other problems often confused with oak wilt, and includes many images and printable publications. The CD also contains all software necessary to view the PowerPoint presentation. While the supply lasts, a free copy may be ordered from Donna King, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry, US Forest Service, 1992 Folwell Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota USA (telephone 1-651-649-5262).



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Increase in Membership Dues

Dear members of the International Oak Society,

As members of the International Oak Society, we all share the love and interest in oaks. And we share the ideas and stories which we can read in the Journal and Newsletter published by the Society. Many of us have already taken the chance to make contact with other members worldwide, resulting in an exchange of knowledge and sometimes acorns, and in making new friends, too! Many of us also have participated in the International Oak Conferences, or the Oak Study Days, organized by members of the Society.

The membership dues for our Society have not increased since 1992 and have been quite low, compared to other dendrological societies. At the last business meeting in England (September 2003), we discussed the necessity of increasing our membership dues. The Board agreed to increase dues for diverse reasons: first, the costs for printing and mailing of the Society's publications have increased steadily; second, the Society wants to enhance the benefits for its members, which cannot be done without substantial financial commitments. Some of new activities of the Society will include support of members or students who cannot afford to pay the (full) membership dues, support of scientific projects, such as research on Sudden Oak Death, and the protection of oak woodlands in areas where oaks are threatened, and establishment of a library with monographs and papers dealing with oaks, including scientific or technical papers concerning oaks that may be published by the Society. And, of course, we need to support public relations in order to reach more potential members, including younger ones. This includes the maintenance of a web site and related items.

I hope you agree that there is a need for the dues increases and that you are willing to continue your membership in the International Oak Society. Your membership will help guarantee the future of the Society.

The dues structure for 2004 will be as shown below:

One year: Individual \$25 US Dollars, Family \$30 USD

Two years: Individual \$45 US Dollars, Family \$55 USD

Three years: Individual \$65 US Dollars, Family \$80 USD

Life membership: Individual \$400 US Dollars; Family \$600 USD

On behalf of the Board,
Eike Jablonski, President

Letters to the Editor

In order to put together a book of tales and legends from all around the world, specifically, tales and legends related to TREES and SHRUBS, I'd like to receive copies and/or listings of books relating such stories. People who send me stories that are published will be included in the acknowledgements of this future book.

Please, send any information to:

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81300 Graulhet
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Or email me at:

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Fourth International Oak Conference Pre-conference Trip

by Barry Denyer-Green

A story is told to all children in the English-speaking world about a little Dutch boy called Jans; the moral behind the story is perseverance and thought for others. Jans was returning home one evening when he noticed a small leak in the dyke protecting his village. He plugged the leak with his thumb, and stayed all night to stop the leak from becoming a torrent and breaching the dyke. He was found the next day; although he barely survived the cold winter night (although this depends on who is telling the story), he had kept his thumb in the small breach, and saved his village and its inhabitants from being drowned. Well, when I learnt that we would visit Trompenburg Arboretum on the pre-conference tour, and noted that this world-famous dendrologists' mecca was four metres below sea level, I sincerely hoped that Jans would be on hand and check the dykes before my arrival.

Within 20 minutes of arriving at Trompenburg, I had the feeling that I was indeed four metres below sea level. It was not Jans' thumb we needed, it was his umbrella, for the heavens opened and we were drenched as we sloshed around paths that fast disappeared under ever widening pools of water. But the rain did not drench our enthusiasm and interest in a wonderful place. Guided by Dick van Hoey Smith who, with his family before him, developed the gardens, and the curator, we saw many of the oaks that Dick himself has introduced to Holland; these included *Q. x libanerris* 'Rotterdam', *robur*

'Cristata', *robur* 'Pendula', *lamellose*, *ilicifolia*, *macrolepis*, *imbricaria*, *dentata* and *pontica*, to name but a few. And if you happen to be interested in *acers* or *fagus* species, magnolias, conifers or even *hostas*, and missed Trompenburg, you missed a treat.

Trompenburg was preceded by another garden, the Von Gimborn Arboretum, near Utrecht. It had some great oaks, including the largest *Q. dentata* in Holland, and a fine *Q. petraea* 'Mespilifolia', to name but two. But it also had a wonderful collection of both *acers* and *betulas*, of which our guide, Dr. Piet de Jong, a former director, is a world-renowned expert. The labelling of the oaks was, as is often the case on these oak trips, controversial, with rival contentions never fully resolved; was it really a *Q. bicolor*? It occurred to me at the time, and was later raised at the plenary sessions, that a few DNA tests would settle these disputes. But then where would be the fun in piling out of a coach to see a purported *Q. robur* *robur*, the product of doubtful and promiscuous parents, with much fingering of leaves and discussion of its private parts, such as whether its peduncles have whiskers or not, when the DNA tests say it is a simple *Q. robur* with two respectable parents of the same name?

After the beauty and intellectual interest of the arboreta, our second day in the low countries was spent in the commercial wholesale nursery of Jo and Maarten Boemer and at Arboretum Hemelrijk. The former was of great interest to many English members of the trip, as most of the better plants we obtain from retail nurseries are from the Boemers. And what a huge variety of stock they had, including a compact variety of *Q. robur*

'Haaren', a *Q. risaphylla*, with reddish castanea-type leaves, and a *Q. cerris*, with deeply incised leaf form. Although Hemelrijk was described as an arboretum, and indeed contained a rich collection of trees and shrubs, the life-time work of Jelena and Robert de Belder, it was more of a small country estate with densely planted parkland surrounding the most perfect complex of farmhouse and accompanying buildings. The de Belder family insisted we came, notwithstanding the sudden death of Mrs. de Belder the week before. Yes there were oaks there, such as *Q. ellipsoidalis* and *liaotungensis* (an upright form not yet named), but I was much taken by an *Ilex verticillata* with very pretty red berries, and the parterre hedging in the walled garden that looked like box, but was *illex*. A wonderful and very hospitable visit.

Lastly, we made a quick dash down through Belgium to the ferry to England, stopping at Arboretum Waasland. In comparison with the other arboreta we had visited, this was tiny. But what a place! Commanded by Michael Decalut (there is no other way of describing our host) and with the rain pouring down again, we were led around a garden containing a rich display of oaks, such as *Q. x hispanica* 'Waasland' and *Q. trojana* 'Franjo', that even someone only doubtfully interested in the genus would have been hooked. The visit ended in a glasshouse in which several dozen different *quercus* species were alphabetically lined up in pots ready to be inspected, their labels checked and their faces photographed. Each little tree said 'you must have me in your collection'.

A wonderful time, and so well planned and guided by Eike Jablonski, to whom the participants owe many thanks.

UK Oak Tour 16-20 September 2003

Following the Winchester Conference, many of us assembled for a great tour of oak sites and related horticultural highlights of southern England. The luxurious pink tour bus was driven by convivial Dave Logan, the owner of the coach company, because he loves to drive horticultural tours himself! Dave filled us with priceless anecdotes along the way.

We spent the first morning at Windsor Great Park, seeing the arboretum and some magnificent ancient oaks (such as the William the Conqueror Oak, dating back to the 1200s). Following a picnic lunch beneath the statue of King George III, we went to the famous Royal Botanic Garden Kew, where we spread in all directions trying to make the most of the afternoon.

The next morning was spent at beautiful Westonbirt Arboretum, where our tour chairman, Phil Morton, is headquartered. We were hosted by Phil and by our old friend and fellow Oak Society member Hugh Angus. After lunch there, we walked through part of the Forest of Dean. There we saw a working forest, and stopped to pay tribute to the ancient Verderer's Oak following a presentation by an ancient Verderer himself.

Two great historic estates followed the next day. At Tregrehan we were shown many rare trees, as well as some giant old specimens planted in the 1840s, and had a wonderful lunch. Then we enjoyed a guided walk through the plantings on the hill above Caerhays Castle, along the Cornish coast. It is amazing, as Dan the Oakman would say, how many tender species can survive in the protected climate of Cornwall.

The following day we found the warm hospitality of my friend, International Oak Society member and benefactor Michael Amory and his wife Arabella at their arboretum, Chevithorne Barton. They have a relatively young oak collection that already might be the most complete in England. Following a wonderful lunch provided for us in their home, we visited Melbury Estate in Dorset. We saw some fine old trees here (including the Billy Wilkins Oak, one of the oldest in England) and discussed management options for monumental trees. The group found their way back to Winchester on the final day, via the New Forest.

A few days after completing an exhausting schedule of events, I think all of us were rested and eager to sign up for the next conference. Ya'll come to Texas in 2006!

by Guy Sternberg

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Old Dickory Saved From Destruction

In December, 2002, Coleen Perilloux Landry, chairman of the Live Oak Society, learned that one of the Society's members was to be destroyed to make room for a state highway, a United States Army Corps of Engineers drainage project and a housing subdivision. Landry took her plea to save one of her oldest members directly to Louisiana Governor Mike Foster, even though all plans had been finalized. The State Department of Transportation and Development, in a costly move, modified its plans to curve away from the tree's western canopy, and the Corps of Engineers developed a new way to install their drainage project so as not to hurt the tree's roots. Finally, in June, 2003, the land developer, who planned a 50-home subdivision on the eastern side, donated

the land beneath *Old Dickory* to public trust.

Old Dickory, thought to be 600-800 years old, has a 25-foot girth and a 150-foot canopy and stands proud today because of these actions. On a beautiful autumn day in October, the tree was dedicated to public trust in a ceremony under its branches. Jefferson Parish Sheriff Harry Lee, who donated the bronze plaque, was master of ceremonies; retired Congresswoman and former Ambassador to the Vatican Lindy Boggs unveiled the plaque and Fr. Randy Roux, a Catholic priest who had played in and under *Old Dickory* as a young boy, performed the blessing.

The plaque reads: "SAVED FROM DESTRUCTION IN 2003 by Coleen Perilloux Landry, Chairman, Live Oak Society, Louisiana Garden Club Federation, Inc. This magnificent live oak (*Quercus virginiana*), which

was here when Columbus arrived in America, was to be destroyed to build a highway, a drainage project, and a residential development. It was saved with the cooperation and assistance of Governor Mike Foster, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, Jefferson Parish Tim Coulon, the Jefferson Parish Council and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. Sincere thanks go to the hundreds of citizens worldwide who campaigned for the salvation of this ancient oak. Special appreciation goes to the developer, Mr. Cocie Rathborne, for donation of the land on which *Old Dickory* lives. As a public trust, this tree will survive many more years as a symbol of beauty, wonder and enjoyment for all. This memorial plaque was donated and erected by Jefferson Parish Sheriff Harry Lee."

International Society of Arboriculture Credits Still Available

For those Certified Arborists and Tree Workers that attended the Fourth International Oak Society Conference in Winchester last September, it is not too late to obtain continuing education credits (CEUs) for the meeting. Just go to the following web site: (<http://www.isa-arbor.com/certification/ceus.asp>) and click on the CEU Post-Approval Form. Print it out, fill it in, and return it ISA's office at the address listed at the top of the form.

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