

OAK TREE : LYING IN STATE

Obituary *Quercus robur* of Bookham Common 1889- 1989

This majestic tree stood for 100 years providing a home for many birds, animals, insects and oxygen for the village. He is Lying-in-State inviting us to pay our respects to him and his ancient predecessors who made our fossil fuels. Representing the disappearing trees of the world, we should remember them.

Double RHS Medals at Hampton Court Palace Flower Show 2009 for East Horsley Garden Designer Fiona Stephenson



Photo Jeff Higley

"Visiting the RHS show I was immensely struck by the vision of the massive oak trunk with the energy of its powerful twisted branches contained within a formal, rectangular garden structure. This visual tension drew me to the garden and to my delight I found that it was by LAN member Fiona Stephenson and had won a richly deserved gold medal."

Jeff Higley

East Horsley based garden designer and long time LAN Member, Fiona Stephenson won a coveted RHS Gold Medal for her sustainable garden entitled 'Oak Tree Lying in State' which was inspired by the Prince's Rainforest Project: www.rainforestsos.org. Stephenson was also co-designer of the garden for the Whitgift School which also scored very highly with the RHS judges who awarded it a silver gilt medal.

*Trees absorb carbon and create the oxygen needed for human life.
Do you know how many trees it takes to sustain the oxygen supply each of us needs to breathe?*

The worldwide destruction of trees is having a negative effect on the planet's atmosphere. If instead, we revere and sustain the trees of the world, then the trees will continue to sustain us, the people.

This 100-year-old, weathered, fallen oak tree is a reminder of the 'lost' trees of the world. It is presented lying in state on a flowery red carpet. Four young oaks stand guard as sentinels, symbols of new growth.

*In life, the tree provides a habitat for innumerable birds, animals and insects. In its death, it is recycled back to the earth by thousands of insects and microorganisms.
Every tree is a complete ecosystem.*

The Oak Tree: Lying in State garden seeks to focus awareness, remembrance and respect for trees, the diversity of life forms they support and their importance for the survival of mankind.

The Oak Tree is 'Lying In State' upon a red carpet of flowers with young oak sentinels standing 'on guard' on each corner. Black steps and a copper rill lead up to the body of the oak. "One of life's joys for me is the privilege of being able to walk daily through the woods of



Photos Alex Moira

our countryside. The majesty of our oak and beech trees sometimes even moves me to tears. Like many, I have become increasingly concerned about the forests of the world. Having discovered The Prince's Rainforest Project, I felt inspired to design a garden to raise awareness of the plight of the forests.

OAK TREE: LYING IN STATE
Sustainable Garden B86 Sponsored by Royal Horticultural Society
Hampton Court Palace Flower Show July 2009

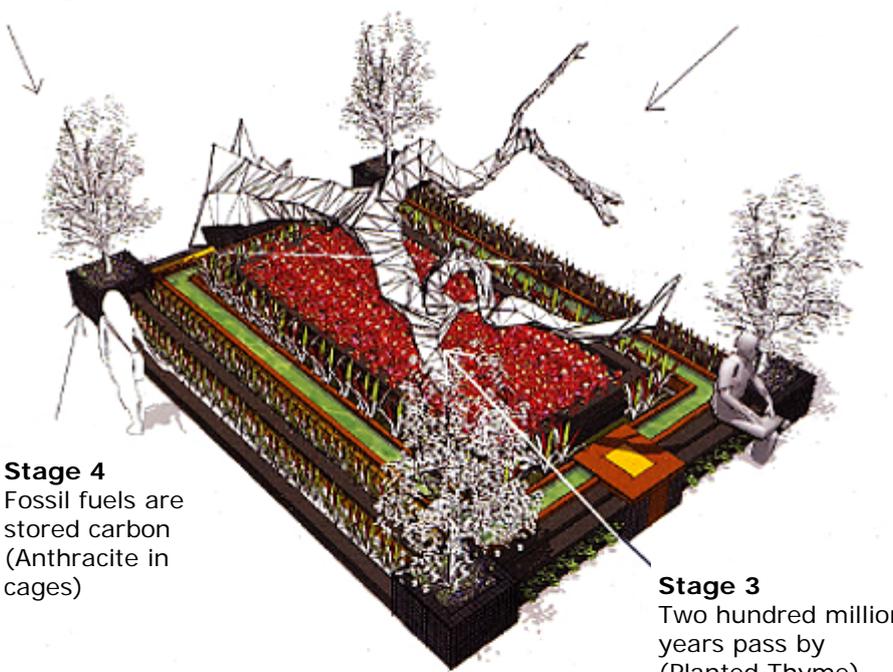
'THE CARBON CONNECTION'

Stage 1
Trees absorb carbon and create oxygen
(Young Oak)

Stage 2
Dead trees store carbon and provide home for wildlife
(Decaying tree)

Stage 3
Two hundred million years pass by
(Planted Thyme)

Stage 4
Fossil fuels are stored carbon
(Anthracite in cages)



Inspired by the PRINCE'S RAINFORESTS PROJECT

By Fiona Stephenson Dip. IGD MSGD
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"People who will not sustain trees will soon live in a world which cannot sustain people" Bryce Nelson



Photo Alex Moira

Musing on the barkless form of a fallen and weathered oak makes me think of the human form in repose. The limb of a branch without bark reveals a muscular structure not so very different from ours. And trees breathe. If trees had blood would forests be cut down quite so readily?



Photo Alex Moira

These thoughts led me to design a garden where a tree is personified and given the honour of a 'Lying In State'. A catalogue raises a fallen oak above a carpet of red flowers. The

Achilles flower represents both the weakness of an 'Achilles heel' and also its healing properties as a styptic. A copper rill not only alludes to the need to harvest rain-water, but also how the forests enhance and regulate our water supply."

Fiona and the PRP are looking into ways that the garden could be used again or re-located to continue raising awareness of The Prince's Rainforest Project.

This fallen oak has come from Bookham Common in Surrey which was bought by local residents in 1923 to save the oak woodlands and then given to the National Trust. The commons consist of grassland - wet, low-lying meadows, woodland, scrub and 12 ponds. The London Natural History Society has been surveying Bookham Commons for over 50 years, making it one of the best recorded sites for wildlife in south east England.



**'Just one day of
tropical forest
emissions from
deforestation is
equal to 12.5 million
people flying from
London to New York"**

(Mitchell, AW et al)

Photo Jeff Higley

Speaking of her RHS Gold Medal Fiona said " I have been rendered almost speechless by this accolade, I am thrilled to bits with the RHS Gold Medal, it means that all the hard work that we as a team put in was truly worth it. I just hope that the public will like it as much as the judges did as I designed it with a purpose in mind, with a message to convey....."

The key messages that Fiona wants to convey to show visitors via her sustainable garden is the extreme importance and magnificence of trees, (Very Important Trees – VIT's) and how vital it is to respect and sustain them so that they may continue to sustain us and the life of our planet. Trees create oxygen, absorb carbon and create habitats for millions of species, yet 12 million hectares of forest are destroyed each year – (10 square miles per day in Brazil alone). Our climate is being adversely affected but each of us can make a difference.

www.fionastephensondesigns.com



Fiona Stephenson was also co-designer of the garden for the Whitgift School which was awarded a silver gilt medal. Photo Paul Davis

ABOUT THE PRINCE'S RAINFORESTS PROJECT

The Prince's Rainforests Project (PRP) was established in October 2007 by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales to develop consensus as to how the rate of rainforest destruction might be slowed. Rainforests regulate rainfall, preserve biodiversity and, most importantly, store vast amounts of carbon. Tropical deforestation is a major cause of greenhouse gas emissions and without tackling this problem it may be impossible to avoid catastrophic climate change.

The Prince's Rainforests Project's campaign seeks to raise awareness of the connection between rainforest destruction and climate change, and believes that agreement on emergency action for rainforests is needed ahead of the climate change conference in Copenhagen in December. Sign up in agreement and show your support for emergency action for the rainforests at www.rainforestsos.org



ABOUT THE PLANTING

The oak represents a climax community -a biological community of plants and animals which, through the process of ecological succession has reached a steady state.

The central rectangle is studded with red flowers, loosely alluding to a "red carpet". Achillea varieties allude to an "Achilles heel" (a fatal weakness in spite of overall strength) and because Achillea's healing properties include staunching the flow of blood from wounds.

Imperata cylindrica 'Red Baron' (Japanese Blood Grass) represents the "blood" of fallen trees.

Thyme represents passing of time from living tree to fossil fuel.

Sempervivum species are succulents, naturally harvesting rainwater.

PLANT LIST

Trees: Quercus robur (oak)
 Underplanting:
 Achillea 'Paprika';
 Achillea 'Red Velvet'
 Asplenium scolopendrium
 Helenium varieties .
 Hemerocallis 'Little Business'
 Heuchera 'Obsidian'
 Imperata cylindrica 'Red Baron'
 Lobelia cardinalis 'Queen Victoria'
 Lobelia x speciosa 'Russian Princess'
 Penstemon 'Firebird'
 Polystichum setiferum
 Sempervivum varieties
 Thymus serpyllum
 Thymus serpyllum 'Minimus'

GRATEFUL THANKS TO THOSE BELOW FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS

The Tree: Thanks to the National Trust; Sitechnics for the survey; Paul Davis + Partners for the detail design & co-sponsorship; Walter Lilly & Co Ltd and Hire Direct for moving the tree.



Catafalque: Thanks to Parkrose Joinery Ltd for the construction using FSC certified timber. Black KLP Planks (100% recycled plastic) by Lankhorst Recycled Products UK Ltd.



Lankhorst Recycled Products UK Ltd

Welsh Anthracite: (95% carbon) Creates habitat holes within gabions made by Bethel-Rhodes using recycled metal.

Water: Thanks to T&P Lead Roofing Ltd for the copper rill (antimicrobial and 100% recyclable). SDCL for water engineering.



Construction: Thanks to Philipe of Handford Design for eco friendly expertise & construction of the steps and benches.

Plants: Thanks to Clarke & Spears Ltd.

Contractor: Thanks to Nigel Webb.