

## Programme Update 2

## 25 April 2018

Oak processionary moth larvae (caterpillars) were first spotted emerging from their egg plaques in London on 16 April - later than usual because of the cold weather. A big thank you to the Royal Parks' team for monitoring plaques.

Accordingly our contractors began treating known affected oak trees this week (w/b Monday 23 April). From our surveying and monitoring over the past two years, we have identified more than 600 sites for treatment in the [Control Zone](#). (A 'site' can comprise one or more trees.) Trees to be treated are those which were known to be infested with OPM last year and in 2016 and, on the precautionary principle, other oak trees close to them. We expect that partners in the [Core Zone](#), such as local authorities and other managers of large landholdings, are also starting their operations about now.

### **New team member**

I am delighted to introduce Millie Toft, who has joined me as a full-time member of the Forestry Commission's OPM team. Millie is supporting me on most aspects of the OPM programme, and can deal with most enquiries if I'm not available. She can be contacted on the details below.

### **Communications**

We expect to start alerting the public to OPM presence early in May, when the caterpillars will be large enough to be visible and recognisable by the public, and when they descend the trees towards the ground. This is also when they develop the hairs which cause irritations in people and animals who come into contact with them.

Now is therefore a good time to sign up, if you haven't already, to 'follow' our [@treehealthnews](#) account on Twitter in preparation for retweeting our OPM awareness-raising tweets to your followers. Twitter is one of the most effective tools for raising awareness of OPM.

We are pleased to welcome back Charlton Clark, who has returned part-time to help us with tree health communications. Charlton will be in touch with press officers and communications staff in our partner organisations to offer support in terms of timetabling, common messages, imagery, draft press releases and tweets which partners may use or adapt. He can be contacted on [charlton.clark@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:charlton.clark@forestry.gsi.gov.uk) and 0300 067 5062. He usually works on Thursdays, and will indicate any variation to this in his out-of-office email message.

Meanwhile our survey and control contractors should by now have received bundles of explanatory leaflets which they can give to householders and property owners whom they visit on OPM business. Any contractor who has not received leaflets can let me know at the

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contact details below. A PDF of the leaflet is available in the right-hand column of [www.forestry.gov.uk/opm](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/opm).

Partners are reminded that there is also a public-information poster PDF available from the same place. Please do print and deploy these posters.

And I remind our longer-standing local authority and other partners that they should still have a set of pull-up banners for use in public places, such as reception areas and events. Their messaging remains fit for purpose, so now's the time to pull them out and get them working. We have been unable to produce any more for new partners, but please let [Charlton](#) know if you would like to buy a set. Again, a PDF view is available [on the website](#).

Finally, if you're new to OPM, please note that we have an OPM 'manual' on our website full of guidance on all aspects of surveying for, recognising and managing OPM in your trees. See [www.forestry.gov.uk/opmmanual](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/opmmanual).

## Training events

There are still places available at our one-day training events in Richmond Park on 29, 30 and 31 May. These events will develop the OPM-management skills of managers of oak trees in affected areas, such as tree officers, arborists, foresters, ground-care professionals, green-keepers and estate managers.

Topics covered include the OPM life cycle, identification, surveying, control measures, monitoring and pheromone trapping. I recommend them particularly to relevant people, especially in the newly affected areas, who have not had previous OPM experience. Please book a place by emailing [opm@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:opm@forestry.gsi.gov.uk). Tea and coffee will be provided, but bring a packed lunch and outdoor clothing.

## Pheromone trapping – can you help?

We are still keen to hear from people who can help with our pheromone trapping programme. We can supply the traps, but we need offers of sites with oak trees in which to erect them, particularly outside the known affected areas – see the map at [www.forestry.gov.uk/opm](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/opm).

Although pheromone trapping itself does not occur until about late July to early September, when the adult moths are emerging from pupation, it takes time to erect and bait the hundreds of traps we need over a wide area. So the earlier we receive offers of sites, the more effective a programme we can mount. If you can help, please contact us on [opm@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:opm@forestry.gsi.gov.uk).

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[www.forestry.gov.uk/opm](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/opm)