

**PRESS RELEASE:** 24th May 2010

## **Kentish Monkey Puzzle Tree Club**

Artist Bridgette Ashton is asking the people of Kent for help in locating domestic Monkey Puzzle trees in the area. She is hoping to collect snapshots of Kentish Araucaria araucana to enable her to compile a visual record of the various sizes and shapes of local trees.

The Monkey Puzzle tree was first brought to this country from its native Chile in the late 18th century by botanist Archibald Menzies. Its popular name derives from the mid 1800's, when the species was still very rare in gardens and not widely known. The owner of a young Araucaria araucana in Cornwall was showing it to a group of friends when one of them made the remark "It would puzzle a monkey to climb that".

Ashton has been locating and photographing clusters of the trees in various parts of the country for her 'Monkey Puzzle Tree Club'. She hopes the Kent search will prove even more fruitful. The findings of her Kentish Monkey Puzzle search will be presented to the public on 26th June as part of artist Nicole Mollett's Kent Cultural Baton space (a converted Airstream trailer) at this year's Whitstable Biennale.

If you have a Monkey Puzzle tree in your garden or you know of a tree in the area, you can send an image to the artist in return for a Monkey Puzzle souvenir booklet and an invitation to the day's event. Email your images and info to [monkeypuzzle@bridgetteashton.co.uk](mailto:monkeypuzzle@bridgetteashton.co.uk)

[End]

Notes to editors

For more information please contact

[nicole@nicolemollett.co.uk](mailto:nicole@nicolemollett.co.uk)

[bridgette@bridgetteashton.co.uk](mailto:bridgette@bridgetteashton.co.uk)

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

[www.whitstablebiennale.com](http://www.whitstablebiennale.com)

The Kent Cultural Baton is a high profile KCC commission, which aims to celebrate cultural excellence in the lead up to London 2012. The space, designed by artist Nicole Mollett, is constructed from a converted Airstream trailer.

The Whitstable Biennale is a festival of contemporary visual art, with a curated programme focused on artists' performances and works made for the screen. A programme of commissions running throughout the Biennale will be accompanied by events unfolding each weekend including a dynamic film programme and a varied talks and events programme.



Monkey Puzzle tree in Herne Bay