

STORM DAMAGE IN WOKINGHAM - FEBRUARY 2022

PHOTOS AND DETAILS FROM WDVTA MEMBERS

There was considerable tree loss from three storms in February 2022 - Dudley on 17th, Eunice on 18th and Franklin on 21st. Most damage was done by Eunice, which had the strongest winds.



In the **Millennium Wood** in Arborfield Park it was very sad to see the demise of a scarlet oak planted in the memory of Diana Thorne's father. Diana is our Arborfield and Newland coordinator. It did have a fungus infection, which presumably made it more vulnerable. (DT)

TREES IN OUR VETERAN TREE DATABASE:

MRN **8156** - (below left) Lower Sandhurst Road, Finchampstead (GV)



MRN **1106**: (above right) A substantial branch of this tree fell onto London Road (A329) by Froghall Drive in Wokingham Town. Photo taken after the road was cleared. (MI, MH)

MRN **3827** in Barkham - at the Stables near the junction of bridleways BA2 and BA20. (DO)



MRN **8322**, opposite Ludgrove School (Wokingham Without) was also lost, probably weakened by the *Ganoderma* at the base (recorded in 2018). (MH, MI, MR)



MRN **8181** in Barkham, close to the footpath BA4 in the Coombes Wood. This Twisted Beech had been dropping large branches for years and multiple *Ganoderma* were recorded encircling the tree in 2017. (DO)



MRN 8181 *continued*



MRN **9329** beside Bearwood Road in Barkham. This centre of trunk was rotten. (DO)



MRNs **4668** and **4669** in Barkham's lime avenue, in the field adjacent to Rook's Nest Wood Country Park (Wokingham's first SANG) on Barkham Ride. Both trunks had black diseased areas. (DO)



MRN **7676** in the grounds of Foster Wheeler adjacent to Nores Hill Wood in Shinfield. This cherry tree was "felled" when a larger oak (not large enough to be on our database) fell on it. The oak was growing on a footpath in Nores Hill Wood and fell into the Foster Wheeler part of the wood, breaking the boundary fence. (EB)



The greatest damage was caused when MRN 6954 fell onto 'Seasons Cottage' in Sandy Lane, Barkham, destroying part of the house. Fortunately, the owners were walking their dogs at the time and their daughter was in a room at the opposite end of the house, which was undamaged. The tree fell onto the main bedroom, destroying it and severely damaging the lounge below.

The insurance assessor found every one of the buttress roots had rotted off from a fungal infection. He assumed the tree had survived on the water it obtained through lots of short roots below the main trunk.

The lack of the buttress roots meant the tree rocked in the high winds and, maybe in a pause in the gusts, unusually fell into the prevailing wind and onto the house.

As of December 2023, the house had not been repaired or rebuilt. It remains empty and fenced off.

The photos here show the tree when recorded in 2013; after the storm (taken 23rd February 2022) and in December 2023. (DO)



OTHER TREES - NOT IN OUR DATABASE

The fallen tree at the entrance to Froghall Drive, Wokingham Town, blocked the road. Since it's a cul-de-sac, nobody could drive in or out of the road until it was cleared. It was just too small for our database, but still a large tree. It was infected by *Ganoderma* and had started to lean quite alarmingly in the past year. Fortunately, it fell in the direction of the lean rather than in the direction of the wind, and the adjacent house was not damaged. (MI)



Biggs Lane, Barkham: A fallen oak closed the road for a couple of days (DO, DT)



Sonning Lane in the centre of Sonning was also blocked for a while. (PE)



In Woodford Park, Woodley, two medium-sized trees (4-6m tall. 20-25cm diameter) were blown down - one near the Reading Road entrance and one by the lake. (GP)



In Fox Hill Woods, 7 sweet chestnut trees were uprooted, just off the southern end of the footpath between Highland Avenue and Limmerhill Road. (DG)



OTHER REPORTS, WITHOUT PHOTOS:

A large oak fell across the bridleway beside Barkham Manor, close to MRN 3902 (AR); a few trees in Keephatch Wood succumbed (KC); School Lane in Arborfield was closed (DO); a tree next to the Jolly Farmer's pub in Hurst fell, but a nearby veteran was unscathed; a very large conifer blocked The Street in Swallowfield (BS); a silver birch fell across Mornington Avenue, Finchampstead (VF); and several trees were reported down in Simons Wood off Wellingtonia Avenue in Finchampstead (JW),

Contributors:

- AR - Angus Ross
- BS - Barbara Stagles
- DG - David Green
- DO - Derek Oxbridge
- DT - Diana Thorne
- EB - Elaine Butler
- GP - Glynn Percival
- GV - Gordon Veitch
- JW- Jill Wheatley
- KC - Kerry Clissold
- MH- Martin Haslam
- MR - Michael Rea
- MI - Malcolm Inglis
- PE - Paul Etherington
- VF - Val Freestone

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