



Tree Watch

Issue 7

November 2010

As 28th October 2010 we have **4230** trees in our database and **3855** photographs

Welcome to the latest edition of *Tree Watch*. I hope you have all found time to enjoy the lovely autumn colours. They seem more vibrant this year - especially the yellows. Around here limes are particularly good. Those in Coley Avenue, Reading were spectacular at the end of October. The ones shown here are from Spencers Wood, Shinfield.

In this issue we have an update on our website and a breakdown of the number of trees recorded for each parish. Patricia Green describes one particular surveying session, but I'm sure all surveyors will recognise some aspects of this account.



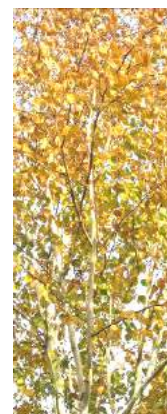
The verification pilot has just been completed. A report will appear in the next issue, but it has been very successful and we now have a protocol for verification that can be rolled out to other parishes as needed. If you'd like to help verify some of our trees please let me know.



The government has produced its plans for revised Tree Preservation Orders. A consultation document was produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) in September. Responses must be submitted by 20th December.

WDVTA will be making a submission, but you can submit an individual response as well. For details go to www.communities.gov.uk and follow the consultation links. The full address is: www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/treestreamliningconsult There is a link to this page on the Yahoo site.

The next issue of *Tree Watch* will be February 2011 and the copy deadline is 31st January. All comments and contributions please to: Elaine Butler datamanager@wdvta.org.uk



WEB SITE

Since the last issue we have made a lot of progress with our web site. If you haven't looked at it recently, then please do so. I think you will be impressed - and there is more to come. We have our own site now. The address is the same, but having our own site means that we can do so much more. You can now see the whole record for any tree, as well as the summary information in the info bubble. The mapping facility is much improved, with a Google map beside an OS map. It really is a very useful tool.

If you can locate your tree on the map, you can read off the grid reference and if the tree is near a road, you can use Google street view to look at it. We recently noticed that a tree was positioned in the wrong parish. By looking at the location description and photo, and using street view, we could accurately

locate the tree, without going out to look at it. We could also see that another tree had been felled - because the stump was visible in street view. If you aren't familiar with using maps on-line, then just click "Show instructions" and all should be clear. If you want any help then just e-mail and we'll try to answer your questions. All this is available to us because of the expertise and hard work of our systems manager, Malcolm Butler, and we really are very grateful to him.

Wokingham District Veteran Tree Survey

Location Map

ABOUT WDVTA

The Wokingham District Veteran Tree Survey aims to map as many veteran and significant trees as possible in Wokingham Borough and the immediate surrounding area. The survey is carried out by trained volunteers led by a town or parish coordinator. The data collected is recorded in a database maintained by WDVTA and distributed to regional and national environmental databases.

Please note that nothing on this page will work unless javascript is enabled. If you get an alert box at the top of the display area then you must click this and enable active content, otherwise no details will be available. If using Internet Explorer then version 7 or better is recommended.

[CLICK TO SHOW INSTRUCTIONS](#)

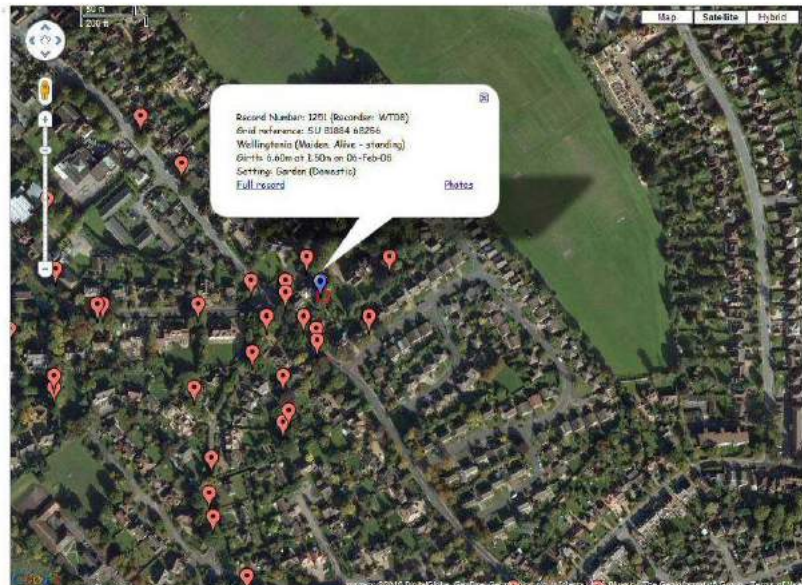


As of 28-Oct-2010 we have **4230 trees** with **3855 photographs**

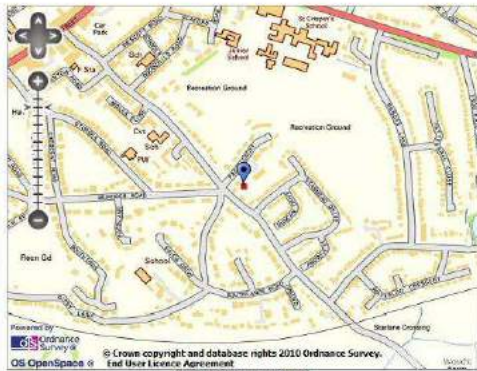
[Show All Trees](#) [Wokingham Town\(1357\)](#) [Go to...](#)
[Remove All Trees](#) [Show Parish Trees](#) ☐ Grid reference
☐ Postcode ☒ Tree Number
 [Go](#)

Get Grid Reference Controls...

[Marker Controls...](#) [UK OS Grid References...](#)
[Go To Marker](#) SU 81883 68252
[Get The Marker](#) ☒ 10m square (Red):
☐ 1km square (Blue): **SU 8188 6825**
☐ 100m square (Green):



Record Number: 1251 (Recorder: WT08)
 Grid reference: SU 81884 68256
 Wellingtonia (Maiden, Alive - standing)
 Girths: 6.6m at 1.50m on 08-Feb-08
 Setting: Garden (Domestic)
[Full record](#) [Photos](#)



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895 out of a maximum of 65000 OS tiles used today. When the maximum is reached OS maps will stop working for that day.

Thanks are due to Keith Palmer webmaster of The Bedfordshire Natural History Society who inspired the "tree grid reference" feature with his [Grid Reference](#) page. Much of the code supporting this is based on his.

The javascript in this application is released under the GNU General Public Licence Version 2. Many thanks also to Jonathan Nott for making his coordinate conversion code available!

The use of Ordnance Survey OpenSpace is subject to this [End User Licence Agreement](#).

Clicking on the full record gives you this:



Tree Record 1251

COMMON NAME	Wellingtonia	SCIENTIFIC NAME	Sequoiadendron giganteum
GRID REFERENCE	SU 81884 68256	RECORDER CODE	WT08
GIRTH [DBH]	6.6m [2.1m]	HEIGHT OF GIRTH	1.5m
TREE FORM	Maiden	ALIVE OR DEAD	Alive
SETTING	Garden (Domestic)	STANDING OR FALLEN	Standing
LOCATION	Back garden 9 Pages Croft		
COMMENTS	view from garden of Mertonford House		
ACCESS	No public access	EVIDENCE OF BATS	None recorded
		EVIDENCE OF INVERTEBRATES	None recorded
LOCAL TREE NUMBER	9	LOCAL AREA CODE	20
		LOCAL ACTION NOTE	
PHOTOS	3987.jpg	RECORD CREATED	22-Apr-08
		RECORD LAST MODIFIED	10-May-10
VERIFIED BY	WT12 WT27	VERIFICATION DATE	18-Mar-10

There's even more good news about the web site, because in answer to the appeal for a webmaster in the last issue, we've had two offers. Graham Green and Malcolm Inglis are now our webmasters. They are already working on the web pages and have produced some test pages which have been seen by the committee. They should be "going live" soon.

PARISH TOTALS

As you can see, the recording of trees is continuing with over 4,000 trees recorded so far. Some parishes are nearing completion - they have recorded all the trees which they have access to and that they consider qualify as veterans or significant. These include Wokingham Town, Ruscombe and Remenham. Unfortunately some parishes have very few photos and we really would like to have photos of all our trees. They prove very useful when confirming records, as well as being, sometimes, aesthetically pleasing, although it can be very difficult to photograph trees, especially when they are in woodland. So if you like taking photos, perhaps you could help us out with the trees that we don't have photos for. Do drop us an e-mail and we can give you a list of photos we want and you could do any that you'd like - just one would help! We even have a camera that we could lend you.

The Parish breakdown looks like this:

Parish / Town	Trees in database		Trees without photos
	% of total	number of trees	
Wokingham Town	32.1	1357	17
Wargrave	9.8	416	257
Shinfield	8.4	357	58
Barkham	6.5	277	32
Earley Town	6.4	270	47
Arborfield and Newland	5.3	224	45
Finchampstead	4.8	202	165
Crowthorne (Bracknell)	4.6	196	34
Winnersh	3.9	165	24
Wokingham Without	3.3	141	80
Remenham	3.2	136	133
Hurst	3.1	132	71
Ruscombe	2.8	117	117 *
Charvil	2.4	103	99
Sonning	1.4	60	60
Woodley Town	0.8	32	19
Twyford	0.5	22	3
Misc outside WBC	0.4	15	9
Swallowfield	0.2	8	0

* currently being processed



Avenue of Wellingtonias at Wellington Court, Spencers Wood, Shinfield

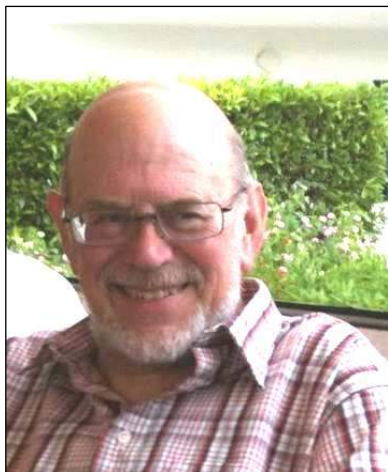


Some trees have more than one photo associated with them. Nearly 700 trees have 2 photos and four trees have 8 photos each. Some photos are associated with more than one tree, especially with avenues, where a general shot or two of the avenue is associated with all the trees individually recorded in that avenue. There are 375 instances of this.

Obviously we don't know how many trees are in each parish until we have completed the survey in that parish, but you will see that we have just 8 trees recorded in Swallowfield. This is a shame because Swallowfield has a lot of good trees. It is something of a mystery that we have yet to elicit the enthusiasm for veteran trees in Swallowfield that we have in other parishes. If you live in Swallowfield and would like to help with our survey, then do contact us.

PROFILE – IAN POTTS

Ian is a founder-member of WDVTA and so far its only Treasurer. He has also been responsible for the preparation of the Association's original constitution and its recent variations. Most members will have seen him collecting entrance fees at our public meetings or presenting the accounts at the AGM.



"My introduction to WDVTA was the result of a chance meeting with Barbara Stagles in Doles Lane where she was measuring the oak at the top of the Redlands Farm Park and I was taking the dog for a walk. As the dog was reluctant to go further that day I turned back and Barbara started to explain her interest in the tree and about the survey generally. From then on I was hooked and volunteered for the Treasurer's role as the formation of WDVTA progressed."

"My earliest tree memory is of the fully-grown sycamore that grew opposite the house where I was born and lived - keys all over the garden!"

Ian was born and worked in Liverpool, where he qualified as a chartered accountant in 1965, but moved to Chester when he married Lynn the following year. They came to Wokingham in 2003 in order to be nearer to their daughter Caroline and son-in-law Ronan in Arborfield - a wise move as it turned out with the birth of granddaughter Juliette in 2006. That move was the start of many fresh openings - new friends, new countryside to explore; their only regret is that they are further from the coast than before.

"I am also Treasurer of SEBA (the South East Berkshire Association for National Trust members and volunteers) and the Arborfield Local History Society. They all keep me busy! Other interests apart from conservation and wild life start with the daily ramble with the dog, followed by music, football and theatre."

Ian Potts

OAK PROCESSIONARY MOTH

Last month we circulated an e-mail about this pest, together with a link to WBC's "Tree health advice and information" page. That page currently has information on various topics as well as the oak processionary moth, including Dutch elm disease, honey fungus, sudden oak death, horse chestnut leaf miner and bleeding canker (both present in Wokingham) as well as ivy on trees. It gives a brief description and links to follow up for more detailed information - a very useful first stop.

I hope all surveyors have read the Forestry Commission advice note and noted the serious hazard to humans of the nests. The irritant hairs can cause skin rashes, conjunctivitis and respiratory problems. Abandoned nests must be treated with extreme caution. So do be careful out there - and report any sighting.

These photos from the FC advice note show what you should look out for. The white larval nests, typically the size of a tennis ball, but sometimes much larger, are present between April and September. The right-hand photo shows the larger, abandoned nests - the ones you are likely to find now. They contain shed skins, pupal cases and the irritant hairs. [See reading suggestions below]



Photos by L. Moraal, Wageningen URC, Netherlands

Oak Processionary Moth originates from the Mediterranean regions, but has extended its range northwards and is now well established in Holland, Belgium and Germany. In parts of Europe, forests are closed during summer and early autumn to protect the public. It is believed that eggs or caterpillars arrived in Britain on trees imported from mainland Europe. It was first reported in west London in 2006 (at a local landscaping project) and spread to the Kew Botanic Gardens that year. A monitoring and disposal programme was implemented immediately, but its range has increased. This pest has now been found in Pangbourne on recently planted trees (so perhaps imported from an infected region, rather than natural spreading from London). The vigilance of the public is needed if this pest is to be controlled. All instance of this pest should be reported to the Forestry Commission.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why are trees so important?

This isn't a question that we ask, but one which is frequently asked of us as we go about surveying trees. There are of course many reasons as everyone reading this knows. Well here's another one.

We all know about the problem of algal blooms and the various efforts to reduce them. Climate models predict that the problem could become much worse in the coming decades, prompting research into the relative importance of nitrate, phosphorus, light and temperature in phytoplankton growth.

A well-established river model and data from the River Ouse network has been used to investigate various scenarios, including controlling sewage, agricultural inputs and planting trees on riverbanks. The conclusion - light levels encouraged algal growth much more than nutrients. Specifically, for the River Swale, reducing phosphorus (from sewage) could limit algal growth by 11%, whereas planting trees along the riverbanks reduces it by 44%. Likewise reducing nitrate (from agriculture) in the River Ure is predicted to cut algae by 10%, but planting trees would cut it by 47%. Tree planting is also a cheap option. Estimated costs over a twenty-year period for the River Ouse network are £28.1M for cutting phosphorus from sewage; £20M for limiting nitrogen from agriculture; but a mere £270,000 for appropriate tree planting. The River Ouse may not be as prone to climate change as rivers in the south of Britain and the next task is a similar study on the River Thames. *[Reference available on request.]*

RECORDING TREES CAN BE COMPLICATED

It sounds very straightforward "pick out a tree which looks about the right size, and proceed" BUT - what about getting to your tree in the first place? Joan and I are two of the recorders in Shinfield where there is no difficult wild terrain. Nevertheless there are many steep banks which may be interesting historic boundary markers but which can be slippery to climb with no real footholds and barbed wire fencing behind. Even worse is when there is a steep ditch in front of the bank, full of rank water of uncertain depth. There are several "estimated" readings on our records!

Recently we surveyed along a footpath - no worry about traffic, the route signposted and clearly shown on the map. The first section was easy and we congratulated ourselves on progress. Then came a stile - OK to get up, although the hand post was covered with ivy, bramble and wild rose, so no help there. Getting down was different. The soft ground had been worn away to one side where people had jumped to avoid a mass of nettles, and it was a big drop. On we went, at one stage having to go almost on hands and knees under a recently fallen tree. Joan usually went first with her secateurs, cutting out the prickly stuff. Later she found that she was covered in bites from the midges she must have disturbed.



Then we came to the railway level crossing, with its fine new gates and fencing. The first gate worked splendidly. The second was jammed - so we had to climb the gate itself, moving as quickly as possible on its rather flimsy cross-rails.

After a fairly productive time recording trees in a small copse on the next section of the path, we reached the final stretch which crossed a field. The farmer had ploughed it completely, obliterating the route and cutting hard into the headland where the path was meant to be. At least the footpath signs could be seen in the distance so we trudged slowly over the great clumps of soil. It was a relief to finish in long grass that took some of the mud off our boots.

Fortunately, in Shinfield we have a good contact with the WBC footpaths office which responds, even if remedial work cannot be carried out immediately. We wait to see how quickly the farmer and British Rail respond.

One intriguing result of our session was the recognition of an avenue of oak trees beside the parish (and unitary authority) boundary. Some of the oaks are veterans, and some are younger, too small for WDVTA records but obviously planted at the regular intervals to retain the avenue structure. Could this imply that the veteran trees were similarly planted as replacements, some two hundred years ago? Also there is now no obvious reason for the avenue, and no 'place' where it begins or ends. I need to do some research!

Patricia Green



DEAD TREES ARE GOOD

In August the RSPB launched an initiative to encourage gardeners to retain dead and decaying wood as a source of food and shelter for invertebrates, fungi, mosses and lichens, and directly or indirectly for birds (and other vertebrates). They suggest creating a feature by placing logs upright in the ground or in a tub - *"fill a large plant tub with wood chippings and soil, and part bury a small log upright in it"*. Not surprisingly this was endorsed by the People's Trust for Endangered Species. Andy Glencross (WBC biodiversity officer) had been doing this on a larger scale for years - as appreciated by Jill Butler of the Woodland Trust.



When the Black Boy roundabout was re-modelled in 2005 several trees had to be felled. As many trees as possible were retained, and more trees were planted on the adjacent site, so that

there is now more woodland than before. Andy decided to take an innovative approach to those trees that were felled. All the substantial trunks were retained in 3-4 metre sections and re-erected next to the roundabout, where they provide a vital home for local bats, woodpeckers, fungi and insects, such as stag beetles. The photo shows Shinfield's "Wood Henge" in 2008 with the newly planted trees. If you are in the area, have a look at it now and see how it has progressed.

Dead trees are important too. This landmark in Woosehill is another tribute to Andy's far-sightedness - MRN 3593 in the WDVTA database. It was much appreciated by John Stokes of the Tree Council, when he caught sight of it through a window during our meeting at The Acorn Centre in June.



"Trees (God knows why) have evolved in favour of longevity. Decay is not a disease, but is part of that evolution and part of normal development."
Oliver Rackham (2006) "Woodlands"

DID YOU KNOW? *about the great oak change.*

Before about AD 1900 oaks germinated and grew quite well within woodlands, but not outside them. Since then oaks have germinated almost anywhere *except* within woods. They have changed into a pioneer species. The reason was much debated at the time and a 1919 paper discussing possible causes is still frequently quoted. It seems that the most plausible reason is the introduction from America of oak mildew (*Microsphaera alphitoides*). This fungal disease was first noticed in 1908 and spread rapidly to deciduous oaks throughout Europe. It had little effect on oaks growing in the open, but infected oak seedlings growing in the shade of a wood often died. In effect, the infection made the oak a more light-demanding tree. Palaeoecologists should find this change in behaviour disconcerting because it violates their 'Principle of Uniformity', which presumes that trees today behave in the same way as always and hence that current behaviour can be used to interpret the past.



Some recommendations from the Yahoo site:

WEBSITES:

Links to useful mapping sites are in **Links > MAPS and on-line MAPPING**, but our own website is also useful - the maps cover the whole country and so you can use it to compare the Google map with the OS map anywhere in Britain - just enter a grid reference or post code. It also accepts tetrad references if you're doing bird or other surveys - although it doesn't display the 2km square.

- ① www.wdvta.org.uk - our web site.
- ① "where's the path" - <http://wtp2.appspot.com/wheresthepath> - this is a good route planning tool, but can display 1930s and 1940s maps on their own or alongside modern maps - showing lots of changes in our area!
- ① WBC have an interactive map on their site that shows current and planned land use designations - including land liable to flooding and planned development. It's rather slow and only works in Internet Explorer www.wokingham.gov.uk/environment/planning/localplan/local-plan-proposals-map/ click on Local Plan Proposals Map

READING:

The Forestry Commission produces advice notes on tree diseases. Some are available in the folder **Files > Useful Files > Forestry Commission documents**

- ① Oak Processionary Moth
- ① Acute Oak Decline
- ① Horse Chestnut Leaf Miner

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Don't forget: The latest database and all the latest files relating to the survey are on the Yahoo site:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WDVTA>

The maps on our web site are updated each time the database is updated

www.wdvta.org.uk

Finally, and most importantly,
THANK YOU to everyone who is out there recording our trees.
We wouldn't have a database without you.