



Tree Watch

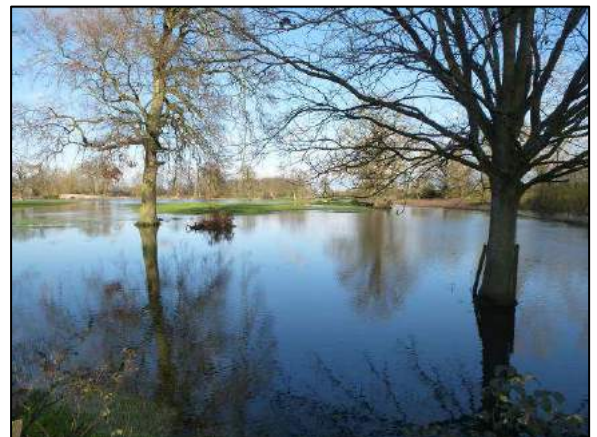
Issue 20

February 2014

On 14th January we had **6909** trees in our database and **8378** photographs

Welcome to the twentieth issue of Tree Watch. It doesn't seem that long ago that I produced the first issue, but that was in May 2009! Since then we've added 4,538 trees and 6,569 photos to our database, and records are still coming in. When we started recording veteran and significant trees in the Borough, nobody expected we'd get so many. Now in addition to our veteran tree database, we are nominating heritage trees and recording commemorative and memorial trees as well (see page 4).

In the last issue (November) it was Storm Jude. Now of course we've had floods and high winds. I don't know yet whether we've lost any of the trees on our database and if you know of any victims, please let me know (email address below). The photos on this page were taken in late January in Swallowfield Park.



Our next event is our AGM - do put the date in your diaries - Wednesday 2nd April 19:30 in the Emmbrook Room at Dinton Pastures. I hope to see many of you there.

The next issue of Tree Watch will be May 2014 and the copy deadline is 30th April. All comments and contributions please to: Elaine Butler datamanager@wdvta.org.uk

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Events March - May

❖ Wednesday 2nd April 19:30 -WDVTA AGM - Emmbrook Room, Dinton Pastures

Non-WDVTA events:

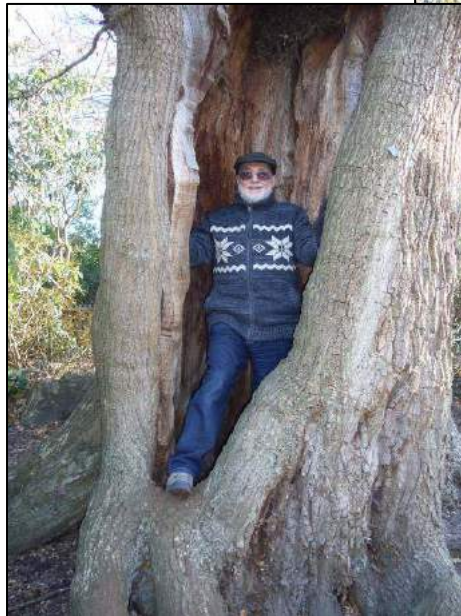
- ❖ Tuesday 25th March 18:00 - Kennett Room, Reading Civic Centre (by the Hexagon) - "Tree Diseases - How can we all help?" John Stokes - Reading Tree Warden Event (booking essential - [rtwn2011 @ gmail.com](mailto:rtwn2011@gmail.com))
- ❖ Thursday 15th May 10:30 - Woodland Walk at Englefield Park - Reading Tree Warden Event (booking essential - rtwn2011@gmail.com)
- ❖ For up-to-date information - see the events page on our website - wdvta.org.uk/events.php

EVENTS

Our very enjoyable walk in the Savill Gardens in December included this veteran - Derek Oxbrough is our scale! It was followed by an equally pleasant lunch nearby and everyone agreed we should repeat it next year.

Our AGM will feature talks on our various projects including the veteran tree survey, heritage trees, recording commemorative trees, hedge trees and tree warden activities.

Meanwhile the talk by Jon Stokes of the Tree Council that was postponed last year will now take place on 25th March. This is a Reading Tree Warden Network (RTWN) event, but I expect several of our members will want to go to what promises to be very informative as well as entertaining.



Other RTWN events include the Englefield walk (see above) and tree planting in Southcote.

HEDGEROW FORAGERS

In the last issue Janet Firth described the Tree Council's "Hedgerow Harvest History" project launched by the Tree Council and supported by a lottery grant (page 6 issue 19).

This is being followed up by RTWN who want your stories of foraging for food in the 1940s and 1950s, particularly through World War II. This oral history project will capture the personal stories of people in Berkshire, Hampshire, West Sussex and the Isle of Wight who gathered food from British hedgerows. It will then compare these with the experiences of European migrant communities who forage similarly today. To volunteer your foraging stories, contact Sally Swift [rtwn2011 @ gmail.com](mailto:rtwn2011@gmail.com).

HEDGE TREE PROJECT

We haven't made much progress with this project, and some of the hedge trees that we've tagged have been flailed, but this is an on-going project and hopefully we will make better progress this year. Don't forget to let me know how these trees are doing, especially if they have been flailed or have died.

HEDGE PLANTING

On Sunday morning 17th November members of the newly formed Evendons Area Residents' Association planted nearly 60 tree saplings provided by the Woodland Trust along one side of the Manor Play Area, off Manor Road, Wokingham. These should grow into an attractive natural hedge replacing the splendid lost veteran oak that led to the formation of WDVTA in 2006. The area had been cleared by neighbours on October 20th. Although most of the work was done by adults, a group of local children helped to plant a semi-circle of dogwood which should give fine colour to the hedge in autumn.

Barbara Stagles

And.....

Before Christmas the scouts and some of our members helped with the Rotary Club hedge planting at St George's field, Wokingham - along with the Mayor of Wokingham Town, Martin Bishop.



DEFRA CONFIRMS HEDGEROW REGULATIONS WILL NOT BE SCRAPPED

In answer to a specific question posed to the Forestry Minister, Dan Rogerson, at the National Forestry Forum on 29th January, Defra has confirmed that contrary to media reports, no cuts will be made to the Hedgerows Regulations (1997) and that the current protection framework for hedgerows remains unchanged. Under the Government's Deregulation Bill there is a proposal to amend the Environment Act 1995 in respect of consultation with Natural England before making regulations to protect hedgerows, but this does not make changes to the 1997 Regulations; it is thought that a misinterpretation of guidance documents covering hedgerows and other countryside matters may have led to misreporting. We will endeavour to inform members if any further information becomes available.

Tree Council's members' bulletin Feb 2014

In this centenary year of the commencement of World War I - do you know of any trees planted in the Borough to commemorate anyone or any event related to World War I ? If you do, then please let us know via our website (see below).

In Tree Watch 11 (November 2011) on page 7, there is a feature on possibly the ultimate use of trees to commemorate men who served in WW1 - the Whipsnade Tree Cathedral. You can read it on our website.

COMMEMORATIVE, MEMORIAL AND SPECIAL TREES

Our veteran tree database was set up to record veteran and significant trees. It currently includes several rather small trees that are considered significant and these are usually commemorative or memorial trees. It seems that there is no formal record of the many commemorative and memorial trees that have been planted across the Borough. Hence we think we should start collecting records of such trees so that they are not forgotten. In particular in this centenary year of the start of the First World War, we are particularly interested in locating any trees that were planted in connection with anyone or any event related to the First World War.



You may have seen our letter (featured as letter of the week) in the Wokingham Times. There is a special "**Commemorative trees**" page on our website, with a link to it from our home page. Do have a look at this page. You can send us any details you have via a simple contact form. There is also a link to the trees already recorded, so that you can see the details along with any associated documents and photos. We want to collect details of any trees that are considered important for whatever reason. It doesn't matter if you don't know much about the tree or the circumstances - others can investigate this - just tell us what you know.

We also want to record commemorative trees that no longer exist - such as the oak tree planted to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in Spencers Wood. It was destroyed some time before 1961 so that some garages could be built along with maisonettes on the Basingstoke Road. We have a photo of this tree and its commemorative plaque.

DID YOU KNOW? The headquarters of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) is in Maidenhead. A new museum (free entrance) was opened there in December. They are launching a new outreach programme this year for local school groups visiting CWGC sites across the country.

THE CHILTERN BOX WOODLAND PROJECT - *Stephen Loyd*

Our perceptions of box are very much that of the modern hedge and topiary in gardens; however, last October the Chilterns Conservation Board hosted an event in Aylesbury on box wood in history and landscape.

Box are slow growing evergreen shrubs and small trees, growing between 2m and 12m tall, and native to woodlands and thickets on steep slopes on chalk, and in scrub on chalk downland. Because of its slow growth, the grain is very hard and the wood is so heavy that of all native British timber, it is the only one that will not float in water.

There was a huge demand for boxwood in the 19th Century for the printing presses in London and this deforested many of our old box woods. Another use of the wood was for bobbins in the lacemaking industry which resulted in small scale harvesting.

A number of places are named after the tree (although not as many as named after elm), notably Box Hill, and Bexley. Closer to home, it is thought that Bix near Henley may be of similar origin, but more research is needed. The Chilterns Box Woodland project has mapped most of the surviving box woods in the area, and has produced a walks leaflet enabling people to experience the best remaining box woods in the locality. The first new box plantation by the Forestry Commission is being established at the Wormsley estate near Stokenchurch.

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*Sarah Wright, the Chilterns Box Woodland Project Officer, is currently looking for volunteers to investigate the history of box trees in general and in particular: -*

- *Hughenden (National Trust property near High Wycombe) - where two volunteer surveyors have found some really old box trees and references to an Italianate garden.*
- *Shirburn Hill (near Watlington) - local people have stories of people planting box on the hill during the war.*
- *Wendover Woods and Aston Hill (near Tring) - huge areas of box - wild, self-seeded box or planted by the Rothschilds?*
- *History of box in landscape design.*



*This month's                    A                    C                    R                    O                    N                    Y                    M                    S*

**BNCF - Berkshire Nature Conservation Forum**

**BLNP - Berkshire Local Nature Partnership**

**BOA - Biodiversity Opportunity Areas**

**CTA - Conservation Target Areas**

You'll see reference to the BNCF below. It was replaced by the BLNP following the Lawton Report "Making Space for Nature" (2010) and the Government's Natural Environment White Paper (2011). The BLNP (and other LNPs) aim to provide information and advice to local authorities for their strategic planning issues on all matters concerning the natural environment. They will also help secure funding for local groups and organisations that want to work on environmental improvement.

They aim to halt ongoing losses and to rebuild biodiversity by looking beyond protecting sites and species and moving towards an integrated landscape scale approach. To this end areas have been identified (initially by BNCF in 2008) where habitat creation and restoration would have the most positive impact. These areas are called BOAs in Berkshire and CTAs in Oxfordshire.

There are 29 BOAs in Berkshire, two of which are partly in Wokingham. *Loddon Valley South* is the Loddon Valley from Winnersh to Stratfield Saye, including the lower reaches of the Blackwater and Swallowfield Park. *Loddon Valley Gravel Pits* includes the gravels pits at the north end of the Loddon Valley between Winnersh and Twyford (including of course Dinton Pastures).

## **PROFILE - ANDY GLENCROSS**

*Many of you will know Andy, who is the Biodiversity Officer for Wokingham Borough Council. He was instrumental in the establishment of WDVTA and has been a constant support to the association. The photo appropriately shows Andy conducting a guided walk for a BNCF woodland event, with our Tree Warden coordinator, Stephen Loyd, looking on (far left).*

I started work for Wokingham Borough Council initially as a Countryside Ranger in 1993 and have worked as their Biodiversity Officer since 2001. In the last couple of years I have mostly been involved in Green infrastructure delivery on the Wokingham Strategic Development Locations applications.

Before my time in Wokingham I worked for Hove Borough Council as a tree surgeon mainly working to preserve the town's significant English elm population from the dreaded Dutch elm disease. Following two years of study at Farnborough College of Technology I secured a BTEC HND in Conservation Management in 1992 and soon after that I was employed as an Assistant Conservation Officer with Surrey Wildlife Trust for a year. I opted to undertake further studies in tandem with my working life and I gained an MSc in Integrated Environmental Management in 2009.

My interest in Wokingham's veteran trees was sparked back in 2004 through my work on the Shinfield Park Planning application helping to protect the sites ancient oaks. The significance of these trees was brought home to me by Jill Butler who reminded me that the oldest trees would have been present when Shinfield Park was one of Henry VIII favourite hunting lodges.

I supported Barbara Stagles to secure the funding for the initial Wokingham Town and Wokingham District veteran tree survey in 2006 and 2007 respectively and it has given me great pleasure to see the WDVTA emerge and flourish in the intervening years.

In addition to my biodiversity work for Wokingham Borough Council I am currently the chair of the Berkshire Reptile and Amphibian Group.



*Andy Glencross*

## **ANOTHER PHOTO TIP - SET THE DATE AND TIME ON YOUR CAMERA.**

The correct date and time is very useful when trying to identify what's in the photos. It is particularly useful when taking photos for our tree survey. If you write down the time you took the photos of each tree (on the survey form), then you can confirm which tree is which by looking at the time a photo was taken. Of course if you've left downloading your photos for a while, the date will also be very useful.

I was recently sent some lovely photos of one of our trees "taken this summer". It was obviously a bright sunny day and one of the trees was in flower. However the dates on the photos were both January and the times were 11:34 and 20:25. So obviously wrong!! But of course if they hadn't been so wrong, I might have believed them.

To avoid having to change the time for BST or when going abroad, you might prefer (as I do) to keep your camera on GMT (UT) and make the hour's adjustment mentally or note the time difference applicable for your holiday photos (when date is usually more often referred to than the time).



*If you have any photo tips to pass on, we'd love to hear them. Send them to me and I'll put them in future issues of Tree Watch.*

## **SADLY DEPARTED - The 'Duke of Wellington Cedar' at Kingston Lacy.**

A high profile 'sadly departed' this time - and rather controversial, receiving considerable press attention. Although Kingston Lacy is in Dorset, many members visit it and will be saddened to learn that the 'Duke of Wellington Cedar' was felled in December. What's worse, it looks as if there was no real need to fell this significant tree. That the National Trust should do so is both worrying and perplexing. It was planted in 1827 and was over 20m high with a girth of about 7m when it was felled; but the felling has been much criticised, especially by Jeremy Barrell of Barrell Tree Consultancy and the person behind the Heritage Trees initiative. He has issued a detailed briefing note on the felling - see suggested reading on page 11. There is also a 'You Tube' video in which he stands in front of yet another denuded trunk as it's felled to ground level and explains why this tree was one of the top five heritage trees in the UK and why it should NOT have been felled. Search on 'You Tube' for "Duke of Wellington Cedar". The National Trust video referred to in Jeremy's video was taken down by the National Trust and is no longer available.



## **SACRED TREES - Sheila Crowson**

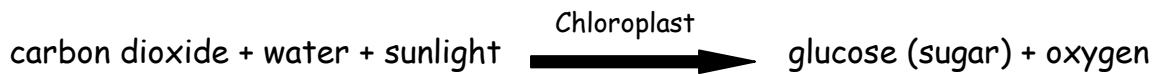


Early man, noting the seasonal changes in trees and plants around him, must have been filled with awe at the invisible power governing these changes. We had sacred groves in ancient times, and oaks were especially venerated. In numerous countries trees are still worshiped. This photo was taken in Assam, India, and trees along the roads were wrapped in cloth, signifying them to be holy, and had offerings given by local people. Many trees, like the banyan, are considered sacred by several Indian religions.

Another sacred tree is the pipal tree. One in particular is creating a furore. A village of Buddhists (who are staunch environmentalists) is caught in a quandary of choosing between religion and nature. Hundreds of storks, which have nested on the sacred pipal tree, have become a threat to the tree's survival, forcing the villagers to move the forest department to take steps to protect both the tree and the storks in Banglung village in Assam's Karbi Anglong district. The Buddhist villagers prefer to live in perfect harmony with nature. The headman, Sushen Shyam, said the villagers had thought of chasing the birds away to save the tree but decided not to do so because it went against their religion. A real dilemma!

**Photosynthesis is fundamental for animal life on Earth**

If there is only one equation you ought to remember it is this one:



But why is photosynthesis so important? Because this process has generated the atmospheric oxygen which the majority of animals inhale.

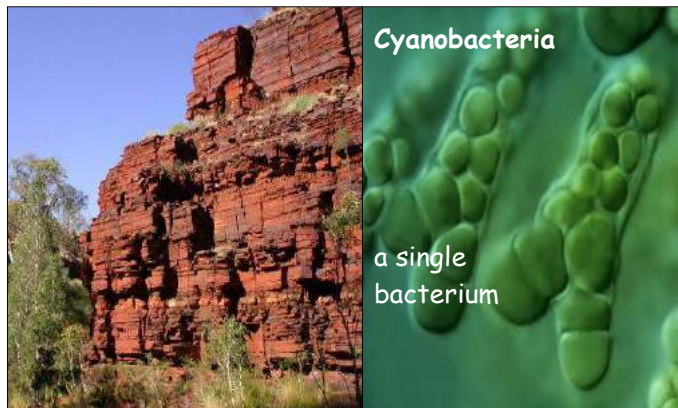
By analysing the oldest oxygen containing (rusty) rocks we know our planet has had an oxygenated atmosphere for ~3,000 Ma (million years). However plants did not appear until ~500 Ma. So what lifeform containing chloroplasts (the green part of a plant) was responsible for generating oxygen?

In 1956 stromatolites were discovered at Hamelin Pool, Shark Bay, Western Australia ([www.sharkbay.org](http://www.sharkbay.org)). Formed by single celled organisms, cyanobacteria, stromatolites grow towards the sunlight as sediment is trapped between the colonies of cyanobacteria.

Amazingly Hamelin Pool supports more than 50 species of cyanobacteria. Even more fascinating is that ~3,000 million cyanobacteria exist in 1 square metre and it takes a stromatolite 100 years to grow 5 cm!

Comparing living with ~3,500 million year old fossil stromatolites, cyanobacteria may have been the earliest known oxygen producing lifeform. One thing to remember is it took 500 million years for the oxygen to become detectable in the atmosphere. Now that is a very very very long time!

So the next time you look at a tree you can think about the humble single celled cyanobacterium and remember that we owe all plants a great deal of respect for producing the gas that all oxygen breathers require to survive.



*"The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value."*

Theodore Roosevelt - Speech before the Colorado Live Stock Association, Denver, Colorado, 19<sup>th</sup> August, 1910.

## THE MIRACLE PINE OF HOPE - Fee Young

This is the tale of a single tree that brought hope, tenacity and survival to the people of the coastal city of Rikuzentakata, Japan.

Known as the 'Alps of the Sea' 180 km of the East Pacific coastline from Kuji to Kesennuma, Iwate Prefecture has been designated as the Rikuchu-Kaigan National Park (figure 1). Its spectacular shaped rocks jutting 200 m out of the ocean, sheer cliffs and sandy beaches makes the area a major tourist destination.

Within the park at Rikuzentakata City lies a two kilometre stretch of white sandy beach behind which lies the Takata-Matsubara pine forest consisting of 70,000 trees (figure 2). Planted in the Edo Period (1603-1868) the forest was designed as a windbreak preventing sand and the saltspray from damaging the rice fields inland. These days the forest and beach are the city's main tourist attraction and has gained status as a 'National Place of Scenic Beauty'.

Then on 11 March 2011 at 14:46 Japan Time (05:46 GMT) the East coast of Japan experienced the Earth's fourth strongest earthquake (Red Star fig. 1) since records began in 1900 and the largest ever at Magnitude 9.0 to hit the country (for more detailed information - see the factfile on the next page).

The quake and subsequent tsunami destroyed dams, devastated infrastructures and utility facilities. The power loss caused the nuclear reactor coolant pumps to shutdown at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power plant (200 km due South of the pine forest) causing three reactors to explode releasing radioactive material.

Much of the surrounding area is still off limits because of high radiation levels. Some of the 26 million tons of debris generated by the tsunami - once people's homes, businesses and schools - burned as ruptured gas lines caught fire.

At Rikuzentakata City the tsunami destroyed all but one solitary tree of Takata-Matsubara (figure 3). It is theorized that the tree survived because the youth hostel and raised roadway protected the tree from the full force of the tsunami (figure 4 below). The Lone Tree of Hope aka Miracle Pine has since become a national symbol of endurance. This trees' survival has given people the strength to battle on after that fateful day.

The 173 year old, 30 m (100 ft) tall Japanese black and red pine hybrid had survived three previous tsunamis in 1896, 1933 and 1960 but

this time the odds were stacked against it.

The East Coast has sunk by nearly one metre (3 ft) and much of the beach and forest is now partially submerged further complicating the survival of the tree.

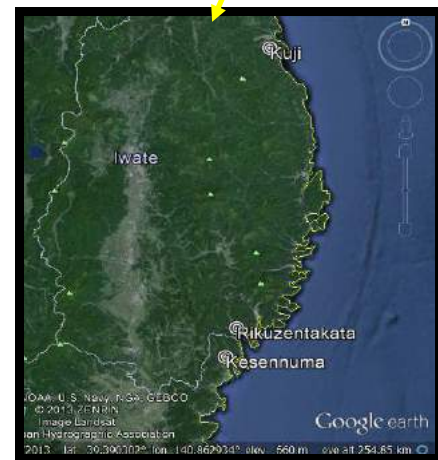


Figure 2. Takata-Matsubara Pine Forest



Figure 3. The lone pine amongst debris

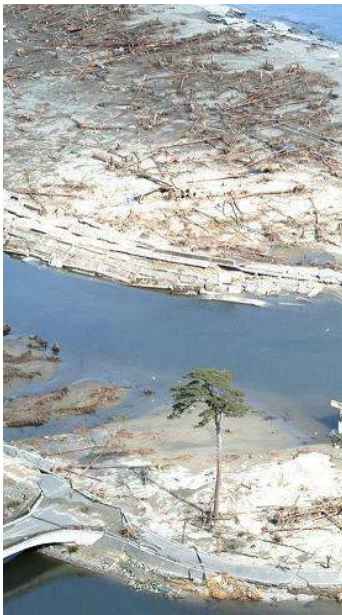


Figure 4. The lone survivor



Figure 5. APT planting the trees of the future

But the news wasn't all bad. The Japan Greenery Research and Development Centre, Toyko had previously removed four small branches and grafted them onto pine saplings with a plan to clone and replant offspring.

The Association for the Preservation of Takata-Matsubara (APT) founded in 1996 proposed that cones gathered from the forest the previous year could be used to create the forest of the future. Working with the Tohoku Breeding Station of the Forestry and Forest Products Research Institute the seeds were planted on 31 May 2011.



Figure 6.  
Reconstruction

Sprouting in late June, 600 pines began to grow. The APT wishing to grow some of the trees received a delivery of 300 saplings to manage themselves (figure 5).

As a permanent memorial to the victims 150,000,000 Yen (£960,000) was raised to restore the tree (figure 6). The trunk was cut into sections for wood preservation treatment. A metal skeleton was inserted into the trunk for reconstruction and finally the branches and needles were replaced with an exact replica made from synthetic resin, although the first attempt failed to look authentic.

Fully restored for the second quake anniversary a plaque at the tree base reads "Praying for recovery from disaster".

For many more images of the forest and the surviving tree search Google Images - use the search words: *takata-matsubara pine forest*.

Local volunteers initially constructed a sandbag and timber barricade around the rootball to enable the flushing of the roots with freshwater. The gashes in the bark were treated with an antibiotic salve and the trunk was wound with straw and green plastic for protection. However, the root barricade did nothing to reduce the soil salinity which was three times the survivable limit of the species *Pinus thunbergiana* x *P. densiflora*. Specialists were employed to construct a steel barricade 5 m (16 ft) deep to allow for pumping out the saltwater whilst pumping in fresh water. But with all this artificial assistance the tree alas succumbed 18 months later - the needles had yellowed and an exploratory dig uncovered dead roots.

### The Great East Japan Earthquake

**Fact file** (as of 12 Sep 2012)

*Magnitude:* 9.0 (previous record 8.4)

*Duration:* 6 minutes (usually 1-2)

*Depth:* 30 km (19 miles) [shallow]

*Epicentre:*

130 km ESE of Oshika Peninsula, Miyagi Prefecture,

Tohoku Region, Honshu Island

*Major aftershocks:*

Magnitude 7.0, 7.4 and 7.2 occurred 14, 9, and 11 minutes later. ~10,000 smaller aftershocks followed the main event.

*Tsunami:*

Speed: 800 km/h (500 mph), arrived 20 minutes after quake; 38 m (124 ft) maximum height; travelled 10 km (6 miles) inland; total flooded area 560 km<sup>2</sup> (220 square miles)

*Landshift:*

400 km (250 miles) of coastline vertically dropped by 1 m (3 ft). The seabed moved 50 m (165 ft) ESE and vertically about 7 m (23 ft) along a 180 km fault.

*Human cost:*

15,883 dead 6,145 injured

2,654 missing

*Infrastructure damage:*

129,225 totally collapsed buildings

254,204 partially collapsed buildings

691,766 partially damaged

## Survey snapshot

|     |                                                                                                           |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 142 | Records with updated status<br>(with significant changes to the tree or its setting)<br><i>Including:</i> |
| 51  | - felled                                                                                                  |
| 47  | - damaged in some way                                                                                     |
| 11  | - re-pollarded                                                                                            |
| 7   | - died                                                                                                    |
| 1   | - stump re-sprouted<br>(previously assumed dead)                                                          |
| 1   | - changed setting (we'll be<br>getting a lot more of those!!)                                             |

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### *WHAT IS THE LARGEST.....?*

*What is the largest tree in our database; the largest cedar in Earley; the largest maiden oak in Hurst or the largest pollarded willow in Wargrave?*

Malcolm Inglis, our webmaster, has enhanced the search facility on our website so that answers to these questions are now readily available to everyone. Go to the **Survey>Database** page and select your criteria. You'll get a list of the top ten trees that meet those criteria, along with photos and links to the full records. These largest trees are of course our Local Champions!

[Home](#)[About  
WDVTA](#)[Map](#)[Survey](#)

Some recommendations from the Yahoo Group:

### WEBSITES & READING

- ① [www.chilternsaonb.org/box](http://www.chilternsaonb.org/box) - The Chiltern Box Woodland Project.
- ① <http://berkshirelnp.org> - Berkshire Local Nature Partnership (including a map and details of BOAs).
- ① [www.youtube.com/watch?v=BypBkilAHcI&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BypBkilAHcI&feature=youtu.be) - Felling of the Duke of Wellington Cedar (video).
- ① [www.barrelltreecare.co.uk/pdfs/BTC88-BriefingNote-Complete-080114.pdf](http://www.barrelltreecare.co.uk/pdfs/BTC88-BriefingNote-Complete-080114.pdf) OR [www.barrelltreecare.co.uk/resources.php](http://www.barrelltreecare.co.uk/resources.php) - Briefing note on the felling of The Duke of Wellington Cedar.
- ① [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-north-west-wales-25479920](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-north-west-wales-25479920) - Freak storm destroys trees.
- ① <http://tinyurl.com/special-trees> - Our infant commemorative, memorial and special trees archive.

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The views and opinions expressed in Tree Watch are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor or the official policy or position of the Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association.

Don't forget: The latest database and all the latest files relating to the survey are on the Yahoo site: [groups.yahoo.com/group/WDVTA](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WDVTA)  
Details of all trees in our database are available via the web map pages: [wdvta.org.uk/WDVTS](http://wdvta.org.uk/WDVTS)

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