



Tree Watch

Issue 25

May 2015

On 27th May we had **7163** trees in our database and **9470** photographs

Welcome to the twenty-fifth issue of Tree Watch - in which I have both good news and bad news to report. After a very successful and well attended AGM (see page 2), we had the devastating news that the iconic black mulberry in Elms Road, Wokingham had been felled (see page 7). Then more good news. We received a cheque for £430 from the green token scheme at Waitrose. This is not only very welcome, but also very timely as it will fund our website renewal (due in August).

In the last issue we wondered whether the 4 row lime avenue in Barkham (shown here) was unique. See page 3.



The next issue of Tree Watch will be August 2015 and the copy deadline is 31st July. If you have comments or responses to anything in this issue or contributions for future issues please send them to: Elaine Butler - datamanager@wdvta.org.uk

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Events - June - August 2015

- ❖ Sunday 14th June - A walk around Shinfield led by Patricia Green (WDVTA coordinator for Shinfield) 14:00
- ❖ Saturday 11th July 10:30 - Butterflies of Pamber Forest - walk in ancient woodland
- ❖ Saturday 1st August - Annual Earley Green Fair - 10:00-16:00

These are all EEG events see www.earleyenvironmentalgroup.co.uk

For up-to-date information - see the events page on our website - wdvta.org.uk/events.php

AGM

Kerry Clissold

More than 40 members attended our 8th AGM which was held in the Emmbrook Room at Dinton Pastures on the 31st March. We were also pleased to welcome representatives from the new Bracknell volunteer group hoping to follow in the footsteps of WDVTA.

After the business of the meeting was completed we moved on to a Question and Answer session with Chris Hannington, Wokingham Borough Council's new Trees and Landscape Manager. Chris was joined by Biodiversity Officer Andy Glencross and Countryside Ranger Duncan Fisher and they responded to members' questions. A range of topics including Wokingham's green routes, TPOs, Elm's Field and WBC policy were fully covered. Chris has kindly promised a FAQ sheet based on this discussion which will be added to the website for reference. On behalf of all present I'd like to thank Chris, Andy and Duncan for accepting our invitation to speak at the AGM and also for their time spent in preparation.

The meeting ended with the usual lively mix of presentations on the progress of the survey, Tree Warden activities and a review of the events programme. Angus Ross has summarised so much in his generous letter, also published in this edition, that I'll leave the last word to him but I would like to join Angus in expressing thanks for all that you contribute to WDVTA and hope that we'll see you at the ninth AGM next year.

We were delighted to receive this letter from Angus Ross, who is the WBC Executive Member for the Environment and who has been the independent examiner of our accounts since the Association's inception. His constant support is much appreciated. [His profile featured in issue 16 - February 2013.]

Dear Members of WDVTA

It was heartening to see the continued interest and support of you all at the recent AGM - 8 years have flown by! On behalf of Wokingham Borough Council, may I thank you all for your continuing interest and what is also a very useful and helpful support for the borough alongside the statutory and maintenance responsibilities of the Borough Council.

The mapping of the Veteran Trees, the work of the Tree Wardens, the help with the Diamond Jubilee Oaks (only one has died to date and that was replaced free by the Nursery) and raising the interest and knowledge about trees, in general and more especially locally, around the borough is proving a resource many other areas are very jealous of. I guess no one, including me, realised where we would be after 8 years after that inaugural meeting back then.

There is of course much more that can be done in recording, photographing and preserving our tree heritage and influencing the planting of trees as our major new developments are given detailed permission. Promotion of initiatives such as Hedge Trees, Hedge Restoration and clearing views of significant trees will provide continuing challenges. I am sure you will rise to those challenges!

You have established very good contact with Chris and Coralie at the Borough and myself in my member Executive role and I'm sure you will use these links wisely. Thanks again.

*Regards
Angus Ross*

The new committee was elected at the AGM. There were no new nominations and all members of the 2014/5 committee stood again; so the committee is the same as last year.

We have two executive officers:

Kerry Clissold is Secretary (and in the Events Group) and Alison Griffin is treasurer

Other committee members:

Elaine Butler (Data Manager; Tree Watch Editor)
Martin Haslam (Events Group)
Stephen Loyd (Tree Warden Coordinator; Ruscombe Coordinator)
Stephanie McKay (Schools Liaison)
Linda Martin (Woodley Coordinator)
Maggie Sanderson (Hospitality; Hurst Coordinator)
Fee Young (Winnersh Coordinator)

Sarah Hanson
Derek Oxbrough
Stephen Radford
Coralie Ramsey
Michael Rea
Jane Sellwood
Barbara Stagles
Liz Wild

LIME AVENUES

Thanks to Janet Firth and Steve Bacon for feedback following the query about double lime tree avenues in the last issue. The best four-line lime avenue in the country (and probably in Europe) is in Clumber Park, Nottinghamshire. Planted in 1840 by the 5th Duke of Newcastle, it contains 1,296 common limes (*Tilia x europaea*) and extends for over two miles. During the Second World War, Clumber Park was used by the army as an ammunition store with 60,000 tons kept in hundreds of stacks spaced around the park including lime tree avenue. Fortunately the avenue survived. The park was left to the people of Worksop by the Duke of Newcastle and acquired by the National Trust in 1946.

Steve pointed out the significance of the Walter family: They owned huge acreages in Barkham, Finchampstead, Wokingham Within and Without, Arborfield and Newland (their mansion is in Newland, not Winnersh!), and they had a sawmill and brickworks on Nine Mile Ride, connected with the Wokingham to Reigate railway by a standard-gauge branch line using horses to tow wagons (and the materials for the Bearwood Mansion were probably unloaded in the cutting that later became Winnersh Halt). The brickfields are now better known as lakes (California, Kingsmere, Queensmere, Robinson Crusoe Lake, etc.). With the thousands of houses planned for the Garrison SDL, surely the avenue ought to feature as a cycleway and bridleway to be enjoyed by all, as well as being a safe way to get to and from work or school away from motor traffic. Come on, WBC, show some imagination! The avenue was in land bought by the County Council for its Smallholding Scheme following the First World War. What an appropriate commemoration of WW1 to make the avenue into such a feature by 2018 to mark the end of WW1.

TREE WARDEN ACTIVITIES

Planting for Earth Day

In March 2015, a resident contacted WDVTA to say that her daughter wanted to plant a tree in Wokingham for Earth Day. Earth Day Network is an International Service campaign which sought to encourage a billion acts of green across the planet before Earth Day April 22nd 2012. See www.earthday.org. The network achieved this goal and is now working towards another billion green acts.

Her daughter had been inspired by this campaign, saying that *"she wanted to plant a tree, because she cares about the environment, liked the idea of planting a tree and saw an advert for Earth Day. If a billion people all planted a tree, then there'd be a billion trees!"* Her mother said *'I like this last reason especially, because it only takes an hour or so for one person to plant a tree, but the tree could last for hundreds of years!'*

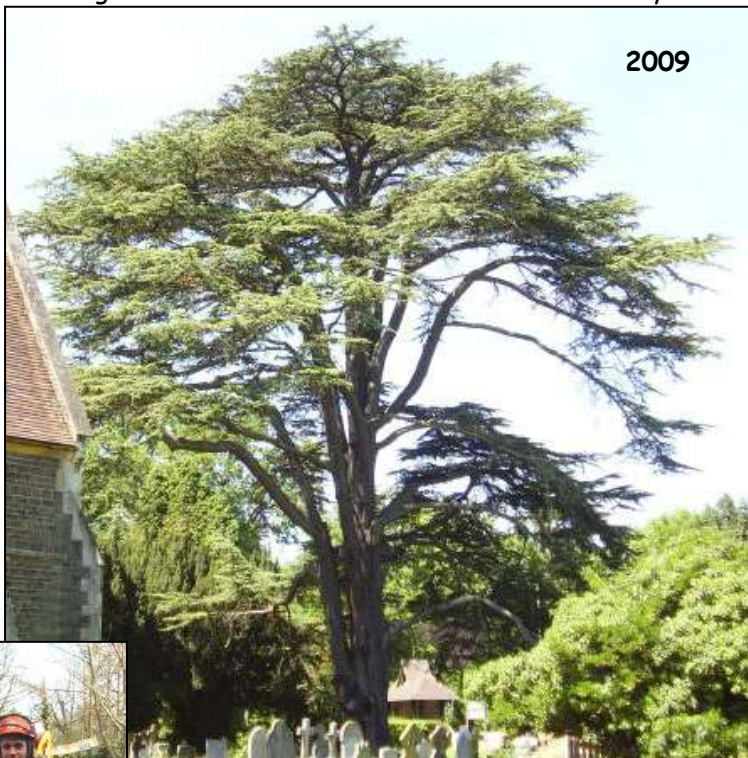
On April 4th they planted a wild crab apple tree in a hedge in Manor Road Play Area, Wokingham. It is growing amongst other hedge saplings donated by the Woodland Trust and planted by a local residents' group.

Barbara Stagles



This late-mature cedar of Lebanon (*Cedrus libani*) growing next to St Paul's Church is a distinctive feature of the Reading Road approach to Wokingham town. In 2014 church member Andy Clark, responsible for the management of the churchyard, was concerned that some upper limbs were splitting and that the tree was becoming dangerous.

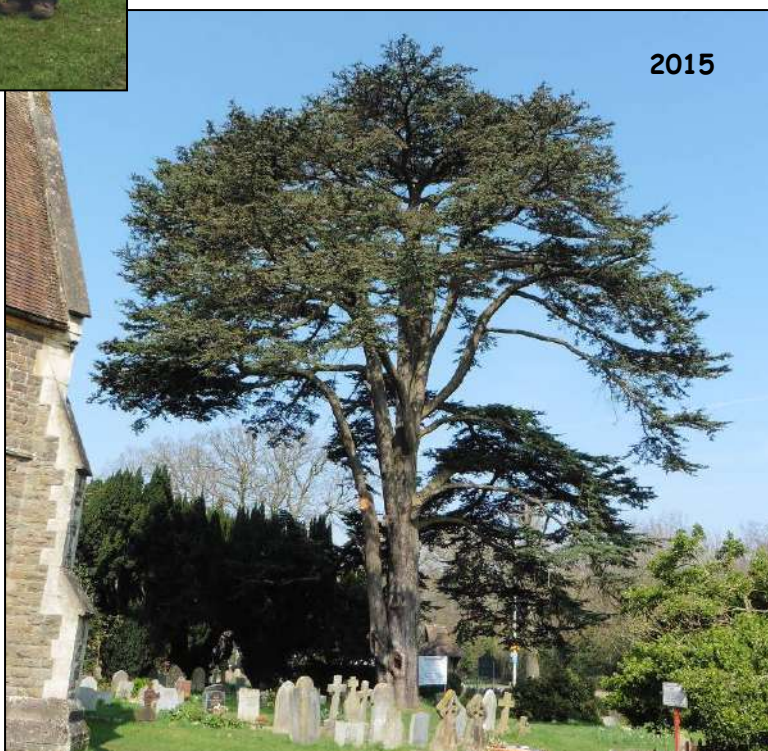
Stephen Arnold of Tree Solutions Arboriculture Ltd, who has kindly assisted WDVTA with other tree concerns, suggested the church contact arboricultural consultant Jasper Fulford-Dobson to advise whether the tree should be felled or managed. Jasper produced an excellent report recommending that the tree could be preserved for at least 15 years if some outer branches were pruned to take off the weight and the splitting limbs secured with cables.



Jasper described the tree as 'exhibiting the scars of age typical of a veteran tree. Its thick stately trunk and large crown of wide spreading horizontal branches give it an air of distinction which compliments the architecture of the church'. He confirmed that it was a tree well worth saving.

The church commissioned Stephen to organise the work, which was carried out in two days in early March by specialist tree surgeons using a Mobile Elevated Working Platform. This was an expensive task and the church was very grateful for a donation of £1,000 from the Wokingham Society towards the costs. Other donations have been made and the church is still welcoming further gifts.

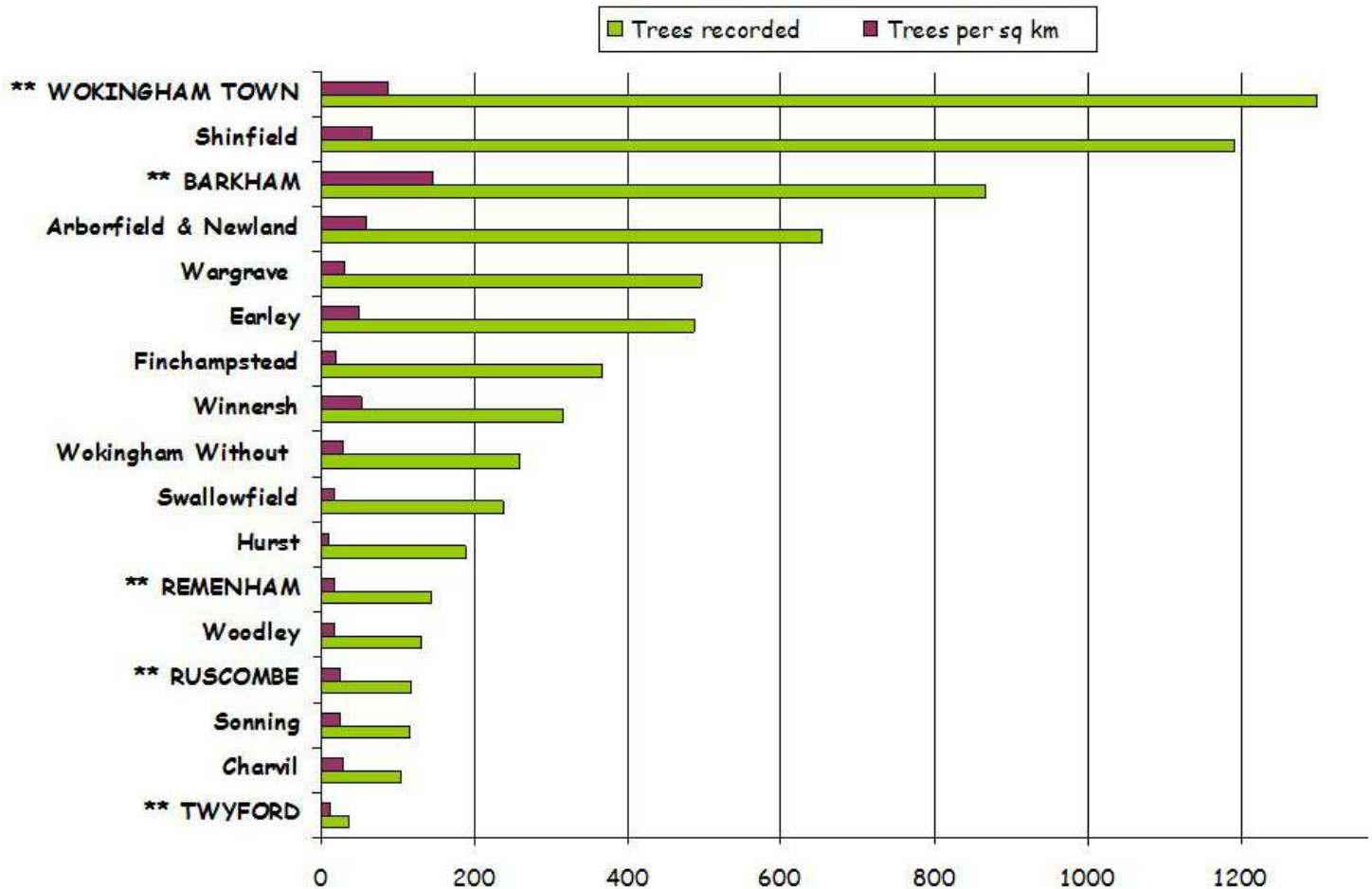
It has been generally felt that these works were very efficiently carried out and that the tree has retained its elegant shape. It will take a central place, not far from Jubilee oak tree #4, within the redeveloped churchyard being planned by the church/community Tree Succession Project team of which some WDVTA members/Tree Wardens are members.



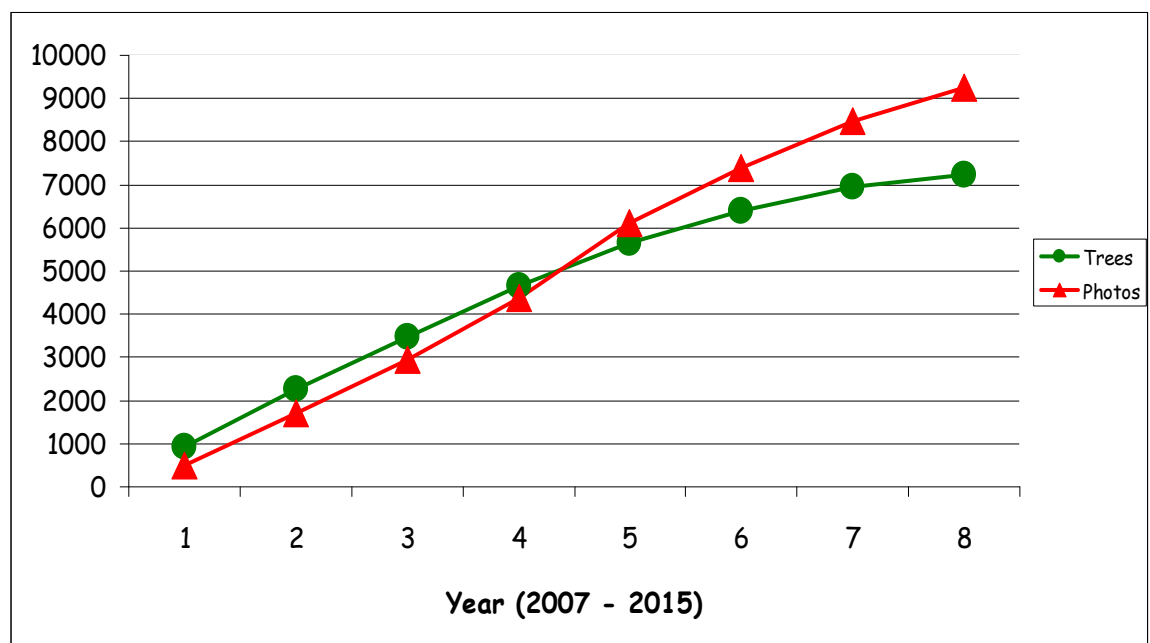
THE VETERAN TREE SURVEY

Another parish has completed its veteran tree survey - Twyford. That makes 5 - with 12 to go!

Presented at the AGM, the graph below shows the number of trees recorded in each parish (March 2015), and (since the sizes of the parishes varies) the number of recorded trees per sq km. The parishes in caps have completed their survey.



.... and this graph shows the cumulative number of trees recorded per year and associated photos:



EXTENDING OUR SURVEY....

Alison Griffin

This time last year we were contacted by Dan Carpenter, the biodiversity officer for Bracknell, asking if we would give a talk at his Bracknell Forest Recorders Day. Kerry and I went and gave a presentation about WDVTA to a small group. This snowballed into a training day on April 25th with 25 attendees from Bracknell. Many were from the Bracknell Forest Natural History Society, but others came from Binfield, Warfield and South Hill Park groups too.

Elaine, Barbara, Kerry and I were there to run the training and help with questions. We were in Braybrooke Hall in Priestwood which has a little park next to it as well as an old lane running alongside. The morning was spent with Elaine giving a presentation on what and how to survey, Dan talking about how the survey data would be collected and held and then a discussion on how the volunteers would organise themselves for surveying and they formed groups of 2 or 3 who lived in the same area. At lunchtime Janet Firth, Linda Martin, Doreen Dye and Derek Oxbrough very kindly came and we all took a group of the trainees outside to survey several trees that we'd identified for training. They included great examples of the difficulties we all encounter: trees on steep slopes, trees that had a wider girth of ivy than the trunk width, a stump that is resprouting, multi-stems that might be shoots from a very old stump etc. The photographs show one group measuring a multi-stem holly and another group looking at one of the heavily ivy-clad oak trees.

The afternoon was shorter and much more discussion about all sorts of topics around surveying trees, with lots of questions. The training had always been planned as two dates with the intention that the volunteers would go out and survey trees between the two dates, so a key part of the discussion was what should be covered in the next meeting already booked for June. Our intention was to get the group to organise this second date for themselves, with WDVTA attending just to help with all the questions they have from their initial surveying and questions and advice about setting up a group of tree surveyors with the necessary data management to support their own survey data.



The current plans are that the group will use a 'Bracknell' version of our handbook, recording form etc and their data will be collated into a Google Drive area accessible to members of the new group.



Here is the feedback from a couple of the people who attended:

I so much enjoyed yesterday's event and thought your presentations were so interesting, informative and inspiring. You managed to convey an awful lot of information in a short space of time. The association and website you have all created is really impressive.

Many thanks for a very interesting and enjoyable day. WDVTA seems to have created a lot of enthusiasm in those who attended.

The proof of the pudding will be seen on June 20th when we see how many of the group come back and how much surveying they have been able to do, but we all feel that we created a lot of interest and enthusiasm.

Watch this space - we may be able to tell you how many trees and photographs have been added to the Bracknell Forest Veteran Tree Survey later this year!

SADLY DEPARTED - MRN 2039 - Black Mulberry in Wokingham Town



This very special tree was felled on Good Friday.

It was a TROBI (Tree Register of the British Isles) County Champion for girth (TROBI # 206558)

The management company responsible for it, said it had to go because it was overhanging a path and thus preventing the collection of rubbish. It's outside the Elms Road flats and if you know the site, you will not begin to comprehend this explanation !!!!

It had a TPO and WBC is investigating its demise. Under the TPO legislation, it will have to be replaced.

We wait to see whether the management company will be prosecuted.

With a girth of 2.8m (at 1.5m) when upright, it was 250-300 years old. It fell over in 2007 and a successful campaign was mounted to save it. It is featured in the WDVTA report on Wokingham Town Veteran Trees as an example of good management prolonging the life of an important tree.



Whilst not felled, this veteran oak in Earley is hardly being treated with respect, despite having a TPO! These photos of MRN 698 in Maiden Place were taken by Anne Booth last year. See the document "*Maiden Place trees now marooned in a public car park*" associated with this tree on our web map page.



PROFILE - JANE SELLWOOD

Jane surveys veteran trees in Shinfield and is a WDVTA committee member. She is also involved with the Reading Natural History Society and the Ramblers, as well as working on the Environment section of the Shinfield Neighbourhood Plan.

Shinfield parish has many fine trees and a few areas of woodland that contain varied types of interesting trees. It is only since helping out with the Vet Tree recording that I have really been able to visit areas of the landscape off the beaten track. Although I have lived in the area for 40 years and walked dog and children for years there are still places that it has been a pleasure to discover and explore. I am happy to do the GPS reading and tape measuring and learn from Patricia, Elaine and Mike, the experts on the trees and local history.

I have walked in mountains and hills in many parts of the country but particularly enjoy woodland landscapes. Linking landscape, geology and archaeology is always fascinating and I love looking out from the hill forts that crown the Wessex Downs with their sense of long history. After a working life in a laboratory often looking down a microscope it is so nice to be outdoors with a view into the distance! After taking a degree in Biological Science and a short time in the pharmaceutical industry I worked for the Public Health Laboratory Service (re-branded over the years as Health Protection Agency and now Public Health England) based in the Microbiology laboratory, part of Pathology at the Royal Berkshire Hospital. Clinical virology and human environmental virology then formed my professional life.



Trees that have impressed me over the years include those that fell in 1989 during the second great storm in the area around the RBH. The landscape had changed completely in just hours. The giant Redwoods in California seemed so abused with the tunnels that had been cut into them so that cars could be driven through. Tāne Mahuta 'Lord of the Forest' is a Kauri tree that grows in the far north of New Zealand. It is an ancient conifer *Agathis australis*, one of the largest trees in the world and one that took my breath away when I saw it. When we moved into Three Mile Cross two large old diseased elms had just been cut down in the garden. Over forty years successive generations of saplings from those remains have thrived -- for a while.

We are trying hard to preserve and protect the landscape of woodland, hedges, waterways and green open spaces in Shinfield so that the expanding communities living there can continue to enjoy and benefit from their surroundings.

Jane Sellwood

This month's

A C R O N Y M

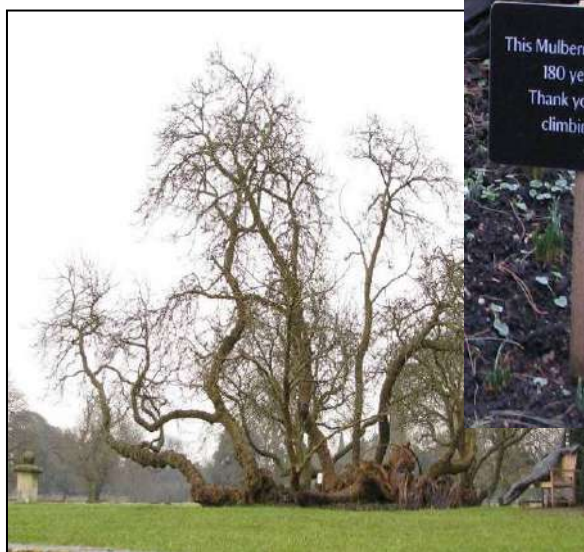
VETree - Vocational Education and Training on Veteran Trees

Downloadable information (documents & videos including 2 lectures by David Lonsdale). Mainly management, but the one on "Aging processes in trees" will be of special interest. www.vetree.eu

SPECIES IN FOCUS – BLACK MULBERRY (*MORUS NIGRA*)

10 miscellaneous facts about the Black Mulberry

1. Originates from Western Asia, but cultivated for so long that its original range is unknown.
2. They are usually monoecious (male and female flowers separate, but on the same tree), but can be dioecious (male and female flowers on separate trees); and sometime a tree will change sex.
3. Leaves of red, white and black mulberries are generally unlobed, but can be variously lobed on the same plant (as shown here for MRN 6554 in Earley).
4. Introduced into England in the early 1500s. Thousands of trees were planted at the insistence of James I to initiate a silk industry; but silk worm larvae prefer white mulberries (*Morus alba*)! One of James I's original plantings is extant at Charlton House.
5. There's a black mulberry growing at Eton College that was there when Joseph Banks attended in 1756. It had a girth of 2.5m in 1907.
6. Black mulberry fruits are delicious; but the plant is also used to produce paper and cloth and is used in folk medicine – in the treatment of ringworm, urinary disorders and diabetes.
7. The national collection of *Morus* is held by the Royal Household, mainly at Buckingham Palace, but also at Kensington Palace and Marlborough House, with a mirror collection at Windsor.
8. Black mulberry was historically planted in prison yards and the nursery rhyme '*Here we go round the mulberry bush*' is thought to describe the daily exercise undertaken by inmates.
9. Well known to the Romans: "A man will pass his summers in health, who will finish his luncheon with black mulberries." Horace (65-8BC)
10. We have 10 in our database (plus one White Mulberry).



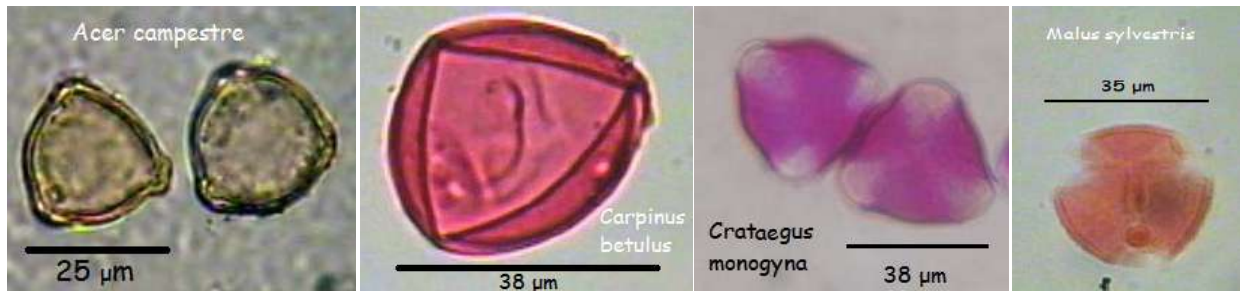
Black mulberries were often planted in country homes – this one at Charlecote Park (a National Trust Property) is reputedly over 180 years



MRN 4790 – Wargrave
Probably over 100 years old.

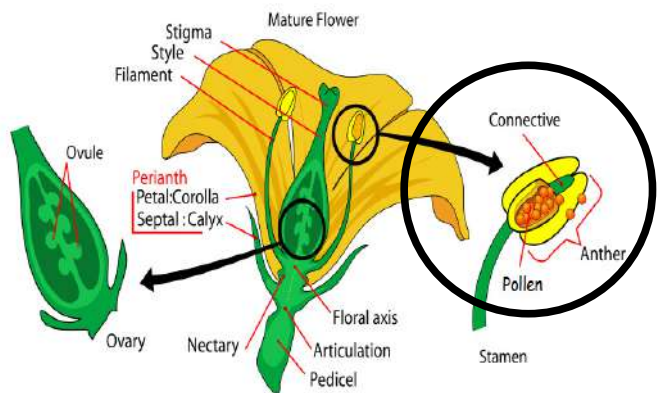
FEE YOUNG'S TREE SCIENCE COLUMN - POLLEN

Did you know that tree pollen is unique to each tree species with the exception of those genera where speciation is currently occurring (but that's another story).



To examine pollen any dirt and the outer coating must be removed using the process of acetolysis. Briefly this process requires grinding up anthers (male reproductive organ of the flower) then added to various acids: acetic (vinegar), sulfuric (car battery acid) and acetic anhydride (used to make heroin) then heated to 90 degrees Celsius for three minutes. Once washed with water, the cleaned pollen is stored in ethanol (pure alcohol) until placed on a microscope slide for examination and identification. The pollen slides above are colour dyed for ease of identification.

We also examine pollen in drilling cores taken from sedimentary rocks and soils. Here we grind up the rock and sieve out the pollen.



A Drilling Core

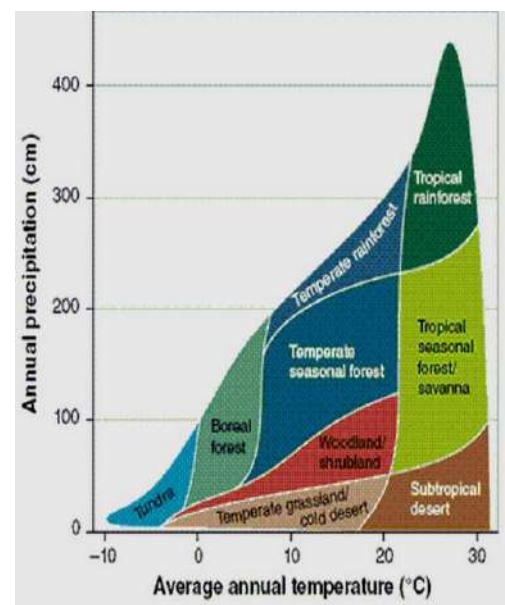
To visualise the vegetation types we construct a pollen diagram (see next page). This diagram shows the middle section of the geological epoch of the Holocene. We are currently living in the Holocene which started 11,700 years ago at the end of the last ice age.

Starting at the bottom of the diagram and concentrating on the 'trees' section, 8,000 years ago *Pinus* (pine) and *Corylus* (hazel) were prevalent (about 60% of pollen). This would suggest that the vegetation types would be boreal (pine) forests and temperate seasonal (hazel) forest / woodland & scrub respectively (as shown in the 'Vegetation change' area). Using the climate vegetation graph (right) implies a cool, dryish period.

Moving up to the middle of the diagram (~5,465 years ago) we see that the tree pollen plummets but the herb(aceous) grassland plant pollen has increased at the same time. For grassland to occur the climate has warmed but become drier. This region of warming is known as the Mid-Holocene climatic optimum and can be seen in Holocene pollen diagrams constructed from drilling cores across the globe. Finally the

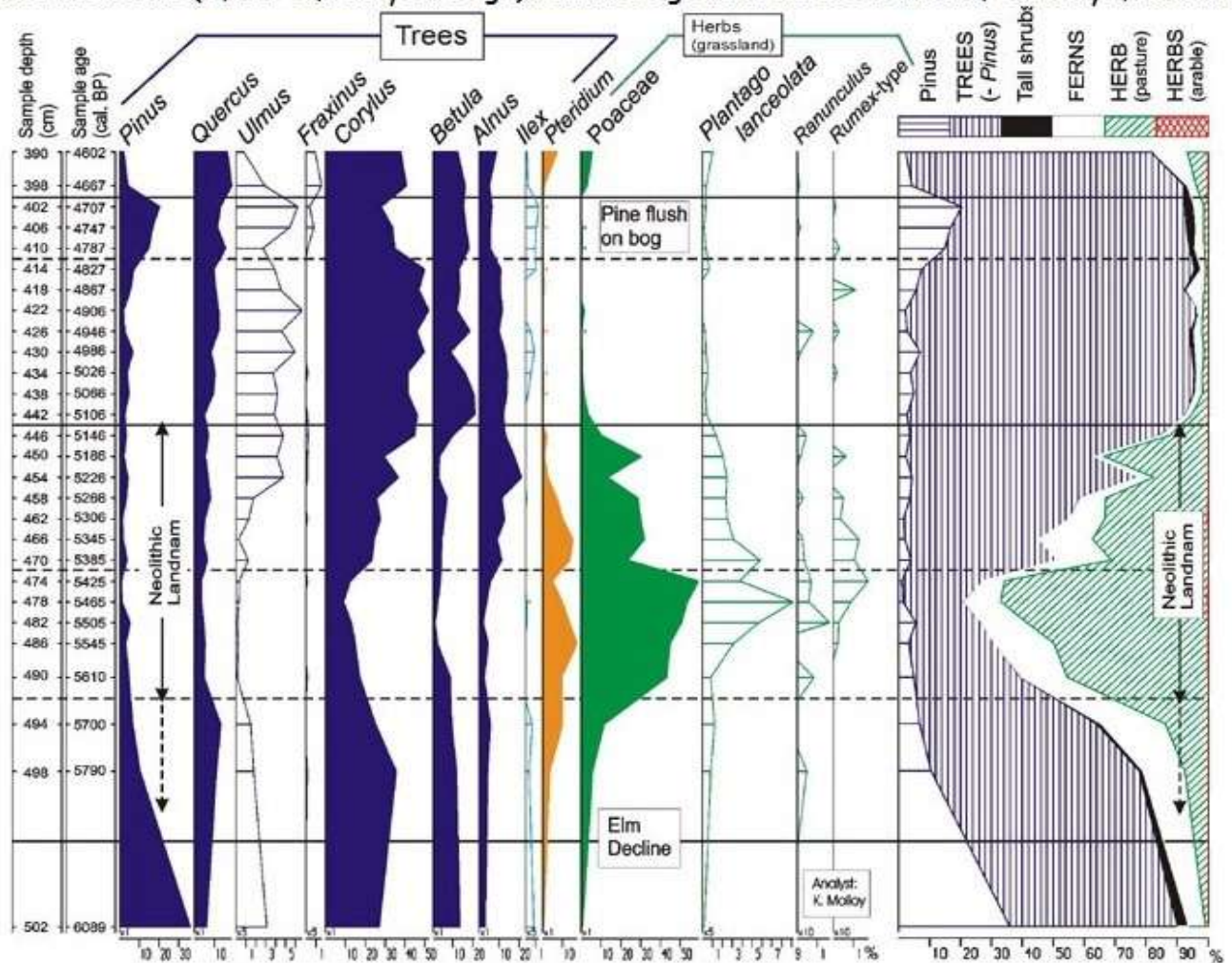
Why is pollen important to science?

By analysing the percentage of pollen of specific plant species at multiple layers within a drilling core we can demonstrate how the climate has changed. The basis of this assumption is that vegetation types are related to annual temperature and precipitation values (shown in the graph below).



vegetation reverses with a return to forests as the grasslands recede from the increase in precipitation and fall of temperature.

Mid-Holocene (8,000-6,000 years ago) Pollen Diagram from Ceide Fields, Co. Mayo, Ireland



Currently our planet is warming and with this comes increased water evaporation leading to increased rainfall as we have seen in the U.K. We can already detect shifts in vegetation types northwards and upwards (mountains) meaning that boreal forest and grassland types will become rarer. Depending on how much warmer and wetter the U.K. climate becomes our vegetation type may shift to temperate rainforest provided the annual temperature does not fall below 10 degrees Celsius.

Image sources: Pollen: Science & Plants for Schools pollen image library at <http://www.saps.plantsci.cam.ac.uk/pollen/index.htm>;
Pollen diagram: http://www.nuigalway.ie/pru/images/ceide_eight.jpg; Flower diagram:
http://www.wpclipart.com/plants/diagrams/Mature_flower_diagram.png; Vegetation relationship diagram; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biome>;
Drilling core: http://www.nz museums.co.nz/account/3309/object/68543/Drill_core

DID YOU KNOW? One third of the UK population will develop an allergy to pollen at some time in their life.

Published this month, "To Sneeze or Not to Sneeze" by Eric Caulton and Gina Angus [ISBN-10: 0722343957] is a concise guide to pollen, covering the structure of pollen grains and pollen dispersal from prehistoric times to the present, as well as its importance in the human diet and of course the problem of hay fever. With humorous cartoons and topical pictures throughout, information is given in bite size chunks, and should appeal to a wide readership, from biologists to nutritionists and anyone who suffers from hay fever.



WDVTA now has a presence on Facebook. There's a WDVTA Facebook page. You don't have to register/join Facebook to see the page. Just use the link from our website or Google "WDVTA Facebook" and you'll find it. Experience with other societies suggests that Facebook reaches people who are unlikely to find our website and hence it will hopefully increase awareness of our association. This most definitely does not replace our Yahoo group, which is a closed group and cannot be accessed by non-members. Our Yahoo group holds a lot of information and although you can upload files to Facebook, there is no folder structure and it is not suitable for all the files we have on our Yahoo Group. Many of our members don't want to join Facebook and that's fine because it's not being set up as an alternative to the Yahoo Group or to our membership distribution list. It's just there to provide an additional way for our members to communicate with each other and with the general public. We're not on Twitter yet!

WOULD YOU LIKE HELP WITH YOUR COMPUTING?

Have you just acquired a tablet and want to know how to get the best out of it?

Do you have problems with email or the web?

Do you want to manipulate your photos or create attractive documents?

Do you want to use Facebook or Twitter - without revealing any personal information?

Various places, including the Crescent Centre in Earley, offer courses on particular programs or packages; but many people want help specifically tailored to their problems on a one-to-one basis. You can get this for a very minimal fee in Wokingham and Shinfield.



The "Understanding Computer Club" will show you how to use your computer for what YOU want to do with it. Lessons are on Tuesdays at 10:00 and 11:00 in Spencers Wood Pavilion in Clares Green Road, Spencers Wood.

To discuss your requirements and book a place call Kerry on 0118 988 2250 or Ian on 0118 988 2459. Leave a message mentioning the Computer Club if there is no reply.

Seen this month when surveying in Shinfield - not a mangrove --- but an alder rooting in the River Loddon.

MRN

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RECOMMENDED WEBSITES & READING

- ① www.shinfieldparish.gov.uk/Pages/155/Understanding%20Computers%20Club - Understanding Computers Club
- ① wdvta.org.uk/WDVTS/suppdoc/mulberrysilk.pdf - Mulberry Trees and Wokingham's Silk Industry
- ① www.joseph-banks.org.uk/archive/ - Sir Joseph Banks Society - visit to Eton
- ① www.vetree.eu - Vocational Education and Training on Veteran Trees
- ① en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clumber_Park - limetree avenue at Clumber Park
- ① www.facebook.com/pages/Wokingham-District-Veteran-Tree-Association-Wokingham-Tree-Wardens/1536518829938610?ref=profile - our Facebook page

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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:

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/WDVTA/info>

Details of all trees in our database are available via the web map pages: 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.