



Tree Watch

Issue 27

November 2015

On 25th November we had **7210** trees in our database and **9834** photographs

Welcome to the twenty-seventh issue of Tree Watch. What a lovely display of autumn colour again this year. The photos here illustrate the beauty of our Wokingham trees at this time of year. Arborfield arboretum (right) always puts on a good show. Here the bright red of the sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) lasted for weeks after the surrounding trees had lost their leaves. Linda Martin alerted us to the display afforded by 30 narrow-leaved ash trees (*Fraxinus angustifolia*) beside Mohawk Way in Woodley (below).



Red oaks (*Quercus rubra*) do live up to their name and here are just two examples. Below left, is the red oak (MRN 3963) next to St James' Church in Finchampstead taken by Gordon Veitch, our coordinator for that parish. Colin Melhuish had his photo of one of the red oaks (MRN 458) in Connaught Avenue (Wokingham Town) published in The Wokingham Paper. Both these trees are also in our

commemorative list, since they were both planted in 1935 to commemorate the silver jubilee of King George V.



The next issue of Tree Watch will be February 2016 and the copy deadline is 31st January. 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

Main items in this issue:-

p2	Events	p5	Profile: Dick Greenaway
p2	Woodland Trust - Tree of the Year	p6	Significant trees along Waingels Road
p3	The Veteran Tree Survey	p6	Sadly departed: MRN 2398 & 5847
p3	Commemorative and Special Trees	p7	Species in Focus - Japanese Umbrella Pine
p3	Jubilee Oaks	p8	Did you know? Oak gall ink
p3	Getting Involved	p8	Holiday trees - Dartington Hall
p4	Where is it?	p9	Fee Young's Tree Science Column
p4	Fee's Quiz	p9	Acronym - EDGE
		p10	Paradise found - Wokingham

Events - December 2015 - February 2016

- ❖ Saturday 5th December 11:00 - Winter Walk and (optional) Pub Lunch - The Ankerwycke Yew
- ❖ Tuesday 2nd February 19:30 Emmbrook Room, Dinton Pastures - "Ancient Trees & Pollards" - a talk by Helen Read of Burnham Beeches.

Book places on these events by emailing Kerry via our website.

AND

advanced notice of our AGM - Wednesday 9th March 19:30 - Emmbrook Room, Dinton Pastures.

Non-WDVTa events:

- ❖ Wednesday 2nd December 19:30 - Emmbrook Room, Dinton Pastures - Wokingham Biodiversity Forum meeting. *This group is open to anyone interested in biodiversity in the Borough. It's an opportunity to find out what's happening in Wokingham and to raise any issues you think should be considered by the WBC biodiversity team. Do come along - everyone is welcome.*

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

WOODLAND TRUST - TREE OF THE YEAR

This year's "Tree of the Year" competition was the most successful yet, with over 230 nominations and almost 17,000 votes. The short list of 10 for England included the Ankerwycke Yew, which we are visiting for our winter walk on 5th December and the 'Old Man of Calke', which featured as a 'favourite tree' in Tree Watch 21 (May 2014; p 12); but the winner, with over 10,000 votes, was the Cubbington Pear Tree, believed to be over 250 years old (*photo by Frances Wilmot - stophs2.org*). It is thought to be the largest wild pear tree in Warwickshire and the second largest in the UK. It grows on a hillside in Warwickshire, but not for much longer - it is on the proposed route of HS2 and will be felled if the project goes ahead as planned in 2017. It was nominated by the chairman of the 'Cubbington Stop HS2 Action Group', who believes the tree won because of the threat from HS2. The tree is hollow and cannot be moved, so there are plans to collect seeds, take cuttings; and move the felled tree to a newly created woodland where it will provide a wildlife habitat.



The Cubbington Pear won with 33.5% of the votes; the Ankerwycke Yew was third with 10.8% and the Old Man of Calke was fourth with 9.1%. Details of all nominations and winners for the four countries of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are on the Woodland Trust website (see page 10).

THE VETERAN TREE SURVEY

More parishes are nearing completion - watch this space! The on-going process of checking data in the veteran tree database and removing trees considered too small has continued and should be complete by the end of this year.

COMMEMORATIVE AND SPECIAL TREES

There have been no new entries since August, although Earley will be planting a second community orchard next February and details of those trees will be entered then. This orchard has been a long time in planning and it's thanks to the dedication and determination of the orchard group (including Jean Hackett, Jonathan and Patricia Brown) that the relevant permissions have been obtained. It will be planted on a strip of green space alongside the public footpath to Maiden Place from the pavilion at Laurel Park, near the football pitches. The species planted will be heritage varieties that are not generally available in shops, although they will not necessarily have a Berkshire connection. The other Earley community orchard at Paddick Drive concentrated on this aspect (W048 in our database). Recognising the fact that some interested people will not be able to help in a practical way with planting or maintenance, the orchard group has set up a sponsorship scheme, where anyone can sponsor a tree for £20-£25 each. If you are interested in helping in any way, contact Jean Hackett - email: info@earleyorchard.org.uk

JUBILEE OAKS

Unfortunately Jubilee oak #47 in the grounds of Swallowfield Parish Hall died in September. Its demise was rapid - over a two-week period, but the cause is unknown. The contractors report that there was no sign of infection in the stem or the leaves; growth had been good and the tree had not been subjected to any bending or constriction. The soil moisture content was good and there were no unusual smells. It will be replaced, but replanted a short distance away, nearer the play area.

GETTING INVOLVED

Apart from our survey, there are so many ways you can get involved with trees - here are two of the latest.

Heritage walnuts

The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) is calling for information on heritage walnut varieties in southern England. The RHS and East Malling Research Station planted trial plots of heritage walnut trees across the region between 1929 and 1935. Surprisingly they do not have records of these plantings and are now asking for information about the whereabouts of such sites or trees. If you have any information about these trees, please contact John Bilton - jnbepsom@gmail.com Incidentally we have no walnut trees in our veteran tree database.

Early warning system for tree health

Observatree is a collaborative project between various national bodies including the Forestry Commission, Defra, the National Trust and the Woodland Trust. Funded by the EU's Life programme, it aims to monitor the health of trees and identify threats to them from pests and diseases. They are recruiting and training volunteers to monitor trees for signs of damage or infection.

On their website they identify the top 20 threats - 12 pests and 8 diseases. Even if you don't want to be actively involved, their website is well worth looking at for details of these pests and diseases.

See links on page 10.

Veteran Tree Survey snapshot

90

Species in database

8

*Species with over
100 entries*

48

*Species with less
than 10 entries*

18

*Species with just
one entry*



WHERE IS IT?



In the last issue, Duncan Fisher asked if you recognised the tree in this photo. (left)

It's a sessile oak (*Quercus petraea*)

at Knole Park, a National Trust property in Kent (TQ 5421 5386). It's recorded by the Ancient Tree Hunt (#7587) with a girth of 7.02m at 1.5m (measured in 2008) and has been accorded the status of "ancient". The photo right shows more of the tree.



Continuing the theme: -

Do you know where this tree is?

[Hint: this one is within Wokingham Borough; is in the veteran tree database and has featured on one of the WDVTA walks.]

Answer in the next issue.

Following on from this **Fee Young** has devised some tree-related quizzes. Here is the first one:

Eleven Wokingham Borough schools have an oak or a part of an oak in their school badge. Can you guess the schools and in which Wokingham Parish they reside? (*Answers on the next page*)



In addition at least two Wokingham Borough schools have form classes named after trees:

At Grazeley Parochial Church of England Primary School, Shinfield Parish: chestnut, hazel, willow, cedar and oak. At Farley Hill Primary School in Swallowfield Parish: acorns, silver birch, maple, sycamore, willow, beech and oak.

ANSWERS to Fee's quiz:

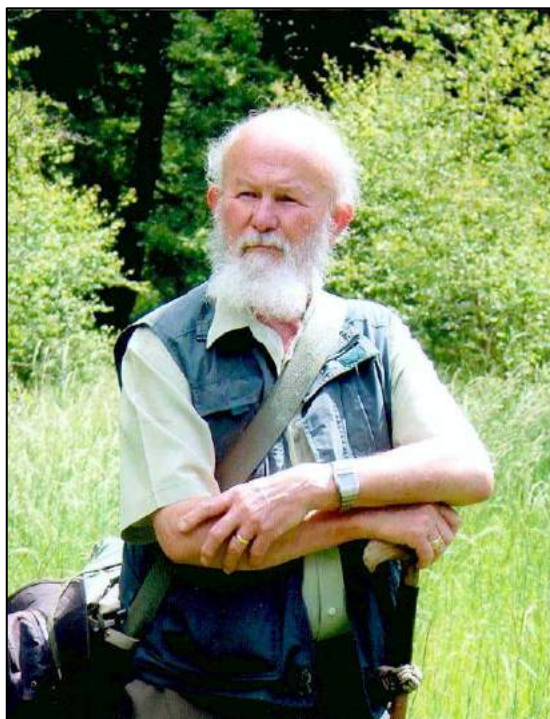
1. Aldryngton Primary School, Earley Town
2. Keep Hatch Primary School, Wokingham Town
3. Oakbank School, Ryeish Green, Shinfield Parish
4. Nine Mile Ride Primary School, Finchampstead Parish
5. St. Crispin's School, Wokingham Town
6. Westende Junior School, Wokingham Town
7. The Holt School, Wokingham Town
8. Woodley Church of England Primary School, Woodley Town
9. Waingels School, Woodley Town
10. Lambs Lane Primary School, Shinfield Parish
11. Grazeley Parochial Church of England Primary School, Grazeley, Shinfield Parish

PROFILE - DICK GREENAWAY

Many of you will know Dick from his long association with the Pang Valley. He is co-author (with Lesley Dunlop) of "Around the Three Valleys: An Exploration of the Geology, Landscape & History of the Lambourn, Kennet & Pang Valleys in West Berkshire" and has produced a leaflet on the veteran trees of Ashampstead Common. He led us on a fascinating walk in Hampstead Norreys in May this year and in September gave us an equally fascinating talk on woodland in Britain since the ice age.

I am Honorary President and ex-Chairman of the West Berkshire Countryside Society that I helped to establish when the FWAG (Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group) organisation closed in 2011. For many years before that date I was an active committee member of the 'Friends of the Pang, Kennet and Lambourn Valleys'. I was born in 1938 and spent the first 15 years of my working life as a seaman officer in the Merchant and Royal Navies. On leaving the sea I became a River Surveyor with the Thames Conservancy that eventually became part of the Environment Agency. In 2002 I was awarded an MBE for my services to surveying and the environment. I have written several books on the countryside of West Berkshire.

I grew up within a short walk of Shotover Common and Brasenose Woods on the eastern edge of Oxford. In those days parents didn't worry about their children, and my friends and I spent most of our leisure running wild in the woods. I think this is what gave me my lifelong love of the countryside and in particular of woods. When my wife and I moved to Ashampstead Common in 1971 we started to study the local history and archaeology. In the 1990s I was given the opportunity by Yattendon Estate to survey their woods for archaeology. This led to a total fascination with woods, their trees, plants and archaeology and how they are interrelated - and eventually to our walk together at Hampstead Norreys and my talk at Wokingham - both of which gave me great pleasure.



Dick Greenaway

"A culture is no better than its woods."

W.H.Auden (1953) "Bucolics"

SIGNIFICANT TREES ALONG WAINGELS ROAD

Following the article by Linda Martin in the last issue, we had several responses resulting in a delightful walk around Paddick's Patch earlier this month. It was led by Keith Boseley, who not only looks after the woodland around the scout camp, but has researched its background and is conducting on-going research into the fungi associated with trees in ancient woodland.

This area of woodland is only known as Paddicks Patch in scouting circles because Sidney Paddick (a builder, who lived in Tudor Lodge Pound Lane Sonning) donated the 3.8 acres to scouting. It is really part of Norris's Copse, designated ancient woodland of coppiced oak and hazel. In turn Norris's Copse was once part of a larger woodland, including Waingels Copse across the road from Norris's Copse, which was clear felled last century to make way for the school playing fields. These woods are all marked on old maps, some of which are displayed outside the scout hut at Paddick's Patch. The lake adjacent to Paddick's Patch, now a bird sanctuary, is the remains of old gravel workings in an area once known as Norris Green.

Looking at old maps can tell us much about the small areas of woodland that do remain in our increasingly urbanised environment and of course it is so important to record what trees do remain in such areas.

SADLY DEPARTED - MRN 2398 & 5847

MRN 2398 - This much loved English Oak (*Quercus robur*) in Croft Lane, Shinfield has been felled. It's now just a pile of wood chips!



In 2011 two large branches fell across the road and the tree was heavily pruned under the 'dead/dying/dangerous' TPO exemption - as described in Tree Watch 11 (November 2011). The tree was very carefully pruned as a pollard, in the hope that it would survive; but it didn't really recover, just producing a few leaves in the years since then.

MRN 5847 - This beautiful Copper Beech (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Purpurea') in the Old Vicarage, Wargrave will be felled on H&S grounds because of infection by the decay fungi *Meripilus giganteus* (Giant polypore). It is in the Wargrave Conservation Area and under TPO legislation must be replaced by a fern-leaved beech (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Asplenifolia') before 30th November 2017.



SPECIES IN FOCUS – JAPANESE UMBRELLA PINE (*Sciadopitys verticillata*)

10 miscellaneous facts about the Japanese Umbrella Pine

1. Although now endemic to the mountains of Japan and the sole living member of the family *Sciadopityaceae*; this species was once widespread throughout the northern hemisphere. Fossil records date to 230 million years ago.



2. It was native to Britain some 4 million years ago. Its pollen has been found in Pliocene deposits at Orford, Suffolk; along with pollen from Wellingtonia, oaks, elms, birch and hornbeams.

3. It has been planted at Sutton Knoll, Suffolk, as part of the 'Pliocene Forest' project. This aims to reproduce the original plant mix found in the Orford deposits.



4. It is not a true pine – not a member of the *Pinaceae* family.

5. It was introduced into Europe by John Gould Veitch in September 1860. The illustration shown here is

from '*Flore des Serres et des Jardins de l'Europe*', published in 23 volumes from 1845 to 1888.

6. The shoots bear whorls of long flexible green cladodes resembling an umbrella. They are 7-12cm long and look like and function as leaves, but are actually modified stem tissue.

7. Alternatively known as 'Koyamaki' this tree was chosen as the Japanese Imperial crest for Prince Hisahito of Akishino, born in 2006 and currently third in line to the Chrysanthemum Throne.

8. Infrared microspectroscopy has identified conifers of the family *Sciadopityaceae* as the principal source of Baltic amber rather than (as previously thought) members of the families *Araucariaceae* and *Pinaceae*.

9. A Koyamaki tree at the Jinguji Temple in the Kyoto Prefecture of Japan is claimed to be over 700 years old.

10. We have just one in our database – MRN 6470 (shown here) – and unfortunately it's dead; but it is on the TROBI list (# 67257) as county champion for girth and height. It's in the grounds of Bearwood College, Arborfield.



DID YOU KNOW? *We wouldn't have the Magna Carta without the oak tree?*

That's probably not quite true, but it is one of the points made in a BBC4 programme "*Oak Tree: Nature's Greatest Survivor*". It was broadcast in October and Kerry sent a note to all members beforehand. It's so nice to have a 90 min programme devoted to a tree. Unfortunately it's not now available on the BBC iPlayer, but there are a couple of clips, including one about oak galls. Oak gall ink is indelible and hence long-lasting. It was the standard writing & drawing ink from the end of the Roman era until C19th, and is still used today. Almost all our important historical documents were written with it - including the Magna Carta and the American Declaration of Independence, as well as Darwin's letters, Leonardo da Vinci's drawings and Mozart's manuscripts.



Another interesting snippet - the oak tree is responsible for the flavouring of Scotch whiskey - apparently barrels produced from oak with 12-16 rings per inch is particularly good !!!

HOLIDAY TREES - DARTINGTON HALL

Penny Miller

These trees are on the Dartington Hall estate which has been occupied for over a thousand years and the current house has been there since 14th century. The first tree is not so old, a swamp cypress planted at the end of the 19th century; the second is a Lucombe oak. Then a yew in the churchyard which is 1500 - 2000 years old, and a sweet chestnut which is one of several that are 500 years old. The grounds are about 1200 acres and you can stay in the house, which we did. I expect people will know of it as it's run as an educational charitable trust pioneering new ideas, specialising in the arts, farming, forestry and rural initiatives.



FEE YOUNG'S TREE SCIENCE COLUMN

GLOBALLY THERE ARE 3,040,000,000,000 (3.04 TRILLION) TREES! HOW DO THEY KNOW THAT?

Actually they don't precisely because they have not physically gone out and counted every single tree! If it took 10 minutes to survey every tree or 600 seconds it would take 58 million years! So how have the scientists come up with this figure? It's described in an article in Nature (see below).

In this article a tree is defined as a woody stemmed plant with a minimum trunk diameter of 10 cm. This measurement is taken at breast height - 1.40 metres from the ground

Across the globe scientists have established plots for long term studies in order to quantify how the environment works and report on those findings. A few projects to mention: in South America RAINFOR <http://www.rainfor.org/en/map>, in the USA: USDA Forest Inventory <http://www.fia.fs.fed.us/> and in the UK we have the Forestry Commission <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/inf-d-67mevc>. I believe the closest plot to us is Wytham Woods an ancient semi-natural woodland run by the University of Oxford <http://www.wytham.ox.ac.uk/>. WDVTA members really should visit this amazing place!

Just to digress a moment the article includes a tree count for each country. For U.K. there are 3,004,205,568 trees in other words 47 trees for each person. It is a fascinating database: <http://rghost.net/64vblvZtC>

In every continent, excluding Antarctica, tree density was measured in each of the 14 biomes. A biome is a particular community of plants and animals - for example deserts, tropical coniferous forest, flooded grassland. (See Tree Watch 25: Tree Science - Pollen, page 10 for a biome graph: <http://wdvta.org.uk/pdf/Treewatch25.pdf>

With 429,775 tree observations, figure 1 (link below) shows biome tree density including error bars. Deserts as expected have the lowest tree density but most unexpected is that boreal forests, montane grasslands, tundra and Mediterranean forests have higher values than the tropical moist biome although they do also have the largest error bars. Why is this? Because of tree size (height and width) is reduced with decreasing temperature and moisture and the size of each biome: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biome#Map_of_biomes

By using a mathematical regression model the authors established that their predicted tree density was related to measured tree density (figures 2 & 3). Only then could they go on to extrapolate the total number of trees on Earth. See Wikipedia for an explanation of regression model analysis: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regression_analysis

On a final note, by combining their tree density map and forest loss maps the authors suggest that 15,300,000,000 (15.3 billion) trees are being chopped down every single year and 45.8% of trees across the globe have been removed by humans since the last ice age - 12,000 years before present.

It is a really fascinating article which you can read for yourself - Nature, Vol. 525, issue 7568 - <http://tinyurl.com/treescience27>

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

EDGE - Evolutionary Distinct and Globally Endangered

EDGE is part of the ZSL (Zoological Society of London) conservation programme aimed at protecting those species on the edge of existence. Evolutionary distinct is described as dealing with the branches rather than the twigs of the tree of life. Of course, being a zoological society they only include animals. There are evolutionary distinct plant species that need special attention too.

You are probably more familiar with EDGE in other contexts - such as the EDGE programme at Reading College or Microsoft's new browser, replacing Internet Explorer within Windows 10.

Paradise found: It's Wokingham

This headline appeared in 'The Metro' on 22nd September this year.

The short article began by asking "Do you spend your nights dreaming of beginning an exciting new life in Wokingham? Maybe it's time to start."

Apparently Wokingham is "No 1" based on its schools, low crime rate and high average salary (that's £27,362). This is the conclusion of a survey conducted by a finance firm called OneFamily.

The village of Winscombe in Somerset came second and the Oxfordshire market town of Faringdon was third.

Now you know how lucky you are!!

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES & READING

www.westberkscountryside.org.uk - lots of information about West Berkshire, including a veteran tree walk on Ashampstead Common

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/tree-of-the-year - information about all the trees in the top 10 lists for England, Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland

www.observatree.org.uk/tree-health/pests-and-diseases - details of the 20 priority pest and disease threats to trees

www.observatree.org.uk/about/volunteers - volunteering for Observatree

wdvta.org.uk/WDVTS/record.php?mrn=6470 - our Japanese Umbrella Pine & link to a fact sheet produced by Bedgebury arboreteum

www.edgeofexistence.org - ZSL's EDGE page (see page 9)

Images may be subject to copyright, so please do not reproduce any without checking first.

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.