



On 10th August, we had **7,572** trees in our database and **10,834** photographs

Welcome to the latest issue of Tree Watch.

I do hope you are all enjoying our summer. It's been much too hot for me, but I know many people like this heat!

As you'll all know we have completed our veteran tree survey in many parishes, but I'm very pleased to report that we have some new surveyors who hopefully will help us complete the survey in those parishes yet to be completed. We are holding another training session for them in Charvil at the end of August.

If you aren't interested in surveying veteran trees, there are many other ways in which you can get involved in our activities. Just contact us with any offers of help or suggestions for activities or projects. You might like to take a photo of an ash tree (see page 6) or check out a local wood pasture site (see page 9).

There's quite a lot about ash trees in this issue, and so I've included three photos of ash stools here. They are MRNS 2196, 4214 & 1566 - with girths of 5.3m, 6.5m & 4.1m - in Shinfield, Wargrave and Woodley.



The next issue of Tree Watch will be November 2018 and the copy deadline is 31st October. If you have any 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 - September-November 2018

- ❖ Wednesday 12th September - 19:30 - St Paul's Parish Rooms - 'Prince Albert's Trees' - a talk by Jasper Fulford Dobson. An arboricultural consultant for English Heritage, Jasper has recently worked with the St Paul's Churchyard Tree Succession Project. £3 admission including refreshments; free car park adjacent.
- ❖ Saturday 6th October - 10:00 Visit to Wytham Woods, Oxford; email asap if you'd like to come
- ❖ Tuesday 13th November - 19:30 - St Paul's Parish Rooms - a talk by Tony Kirkham, Head of Kew Arboretum. £3 admission including refreshments; free car park adjacent.

Non-WDVTa events

- ❖ Saturday 15th September - 10:30 & 14:00 - Guided riverside walk in Reading - RTWN
- ❖ Saturday 28th September - 10:00 - TVERC Recorders' Conference - Oracle, Thames Valley Park, Reading - www.tverc.org/cms/autumn-conf-2018
- ❖ Sunday 30th September - 14:00 - Guided walk at Grey's Court - RTWN
- ❖ Saturday 6th October - 10:00 - Tree Warden Regional Forum, Lewis, Sussex - details will be published late August - www.treecouncil.org.uk
- ❖ Thursday 29th November - 18:00 - Public Lecture by Michael Keith-Lucas, RISC Reading - RTWN

Places on the above RTWN (Reading Tree Warden Network) events are limited and need to be booked - for details see their website: www.readingtreewardens.org.uk/upcomingevents.htm

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

TREE WATCHING FROM MY CHAIR

Alison Griffin

It really doesn't seem three months since I last wrote for Tree Watch. Back then both Elaine and I commented on the glorious early May weather, but more of that topic a little later! It has been a very busy three months for me with 'tree' activities. I have really enjoyed surveying again, helping Gordon in Finchampstead where we have found plenty of unrecorded veteran trees. One veteran oak had quite a crop of galls and a stump had an impressive display of turquoise lichen which Martin Haslam has identified as *Lepraria incana*. In June I spotted a 'Chicken of the Woods' fungal outcrop along Barkham Ride (thanks to Coralie Ramsey for that identification). [Photos of these three below.]



Borough map for TPOs

Wokingham Borough Council has now launched an interactive map where, amongst many other pieces of information, you can locate where TPOs have been issued. There is a link to the map on our website from the 'In Brief' section on the home page and from within the FAQs relating to questions about TPOs. It is a very useful map and several of us have been surprised how many times we have used it already.

Tree articles in the Press

There have been a few articles in the press about trees that have caught my eye or been sent to me. In June I read a report of the national statistics for council felled trees. 110,000 have been felled by councils across the UK in the last 3 years. Cities had the highest numbers, with Newcastle felling 8,414, Edinburgh 4,435 and Sheffield 3,529. Wiltshire had the highest number for a mixed rural/urban area with 4,778. Interesting that the press has made much of the issues in Sheffield, but I had heard nothing about the Edinburgh and Newcastle trees.

In May the New Scientist published a very interesting article on Tree-economics. Three parts of the report particularly interested me.

Firstly, the quantitative value of trees in London. For example, tree roots save £2.8m p.a. of drainage costs and tree canopies, trunks and branches save £260k p.a. in heating and cooling costs through shielding buildings from sun and wind.

Secondly, the relative rates of carbon storage of different tree species. For example (all figures are kg of carbon taken up per tree per year) poplars store 52kg, London plane 29kg, sessile oak 27kg but beech and weeping willow are both only 17kg. This sort of data could influence what urban trees are planted in areas of high pollution to maximise the carbon capture the trees can achieve.

The third aspect of the article that attracted my attention was a story about how a tree that a developer had damaged was valued through a process called CAVAT (Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees). The example given gave a value of about £12,000 for the tree and the developer was fined this amount by the court. I have a copy of the article if anyone would like to read it in full.

There have been some counter-articles in the press too. Clearly trying to value the natural world in purely monetary terms is not the answer, but I continue to feel that having a basis to start putting a monetary value on trees is adding a lot of weight to our arguments for why they should be protected and retained.

Another article I spotted links to the 'naming trees' idea. This one is 'The Electric Oak' which is an unusual name. A 10.5m girth tree in Gloucestershire was deliberately burned 70 years ago to enable the local power supply company to put an overhead cable line above it, but the tree was not killed and 30 or so years later had grown back into the cables and was cut back to a 4m high trunk. By last year the new lower crown was again getting close to the power lines. A request to fell the tree was refused, a TPO granted and the power company has now been requested to move their power cables. What a resilient tree! (*References on page 13*)

Tree protection in the new National Planning Policy Framework

At the end of July, the government published the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). For the first time it puts the protection of ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees in England on a par with the best of our built heritage. One specific paragraph says that "*development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees, should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists*". Clearly this will be tested, but it is a much stronger planning statement than we have had before and so is really welcome. You can read more on the Woodland Trust blog (*link on page 13*).

A tree identification quiz

Whilst reading the Woodland Trust blog I came across a quiz (*link on page 13*) and summoned up some courage to give it a try. See how well you score. I liked the way it gave helpful indicators to look out for, so was quite instructional, and no, I won't tell you what my score was!

European Tree of the Year

I know I seem to write about this competition in nearly every edition of Tree Watch, but this time the news is different. At the start of the month we had an email from the Woodland Trust asking if we would like to submit an entry for the English 'Tree of the Year'. A few years ago we discussed whether we had any recorded trees that might justify being nominated and decided we probably didn't, so we have not thought about a submission again. With literally three days to the deadline we managed to create an entry for 'The Walter Oak' in Winnersh that Linda Martin has written about on page 5. Now we are just waiting to hear if our nomination has been successful. If it is, we will need a lot of support to publicise the tree and try to get as many people as possible to vote for our tree.

Commemorating the end of the First World War

In the Autumn there will be many events to commemorate the end of the First World War. If you know of any local tree plantings as part of any of these events, do let us know so we can add them to our records of commemorative trees.

Library Talk

In July I gave a talk entitled 'Wokingham's Trees - Visible? Valued? Vanishing?' at Wokingham library. The small library room was full on one of the very hot days, but the talk was well received. A few groups and organisations have

ONLY THREE TREES A Lament For Our Lost Trees

Only three trees,
So why should we care
If leaves are forbidden
To freshen the air?

Only three trees,
Who found they were wrong
To offer their shade
And a bird's joyful song.

Only three trees.
What wealth could they bring?
Only a small patch of green
In the Spring.

Only three trees.
Who cares? Life goes on...
But drabber and sadder
Now they are gone.

asked us to give a talk, but if you belong to any groups who might like to hear this talk, do get in touch.

One of the people who came along was Clare Bevan, who lives in Crowthorne; and she gave me these two poems she has written about trees.

Finally, I have to make some comments about the weather this summer. It has certainly been one we will remember for being so sunny and hot for so long. Most of the mature trees seem unaffected but many of the trees planted by new developments and new roads have not been watered and I think a lot will be lost and will need to be replaced. I am sure we will also lose some trees that have been declining or already under stress. I am also wondering if we might see autumnal colours coming a little earlier than normal, we will have to wait and see.

THE SINGERS OF ORCHARD CLOSE (Definition: 'Orchard Close' – A Dead-End Where An Orchard Used To Be.)

"An old-fashioned Wassail! Now, that's the thing!
With costumes and tankards – and lanterns to swing,
Plus proper old carols
And tunes we can sing."

The whole crew agreed, so we jumped at the plan.
The songs were selected, we loaded the van
With fiddles and flutes
Plus a tall, scarecrow man.

We clothed him in scarlet to make him look good...
But somebody grumbled. She tore off his hood,
She yelled, "He's the Spirit
Of Forest and Wood."

So we made him a garland of pine-cones and leaves,
He wore a green jerkin with loose, knitted sleeves,
And berries like blood
For a spirit who grieves.

The night of our Wassail, the crowds came to see,
So we sang from our hearts – out of time and off-key,
But the locals all smiled,
Since the racket was free.

But just as we gathered round one, lonely tree...

A voice rose like bird-song. Such pure, liquid tones,
We froze for a moment. Grew silent as stones –
Then we followed that sound
Like a dog follows bones.

And when it was over, the people – they wept.
They filled up our cash-box with money they'd kept,
And later, they told us
That nobody slept.

But while they turned homewards, I saw – bright as day
An orchard of apple trees, misty and grey...
And a Green Man who waved,
Bowed his head,
Strode away.

OPM (Oak Processionary Moth) has been reported in Bracknell – be vigilant.

There's a description of OPM in Tree Watch issue 18 (August 2013) p9

See the Forestry Commission website for latest information.



*The Sindlesham Oak - MRN 5576
By the play area.*



*The Walter Oak - MRN 5297
The 5,000th tree we recorded.*

At our 10th Anniversary Report launch last November, Jill Butler from the Woodland Trust suggested giving names to local trees and we immediately thought of the two magnificent oak trees at Bearwood Recreation Ground. The Winnersh Parish Council members in the audience responded positively, so we just had to choose suitable names and let everyone know what they are.

We have completed the first part of the operation and are looking for the right long-lasting, vandal-proof signs to do the second part. Then we can unveil them at a naming ceremony.

An article about 'Naming Our Trees' went into 'Winnersh Matters' (the parish council's magazine) which was delivered to every home in the area at the beginning of June. We said we would be asking people to vote at the upcoming fete and were looking for names with local connections. We did receive a few suggestions - including a local resident who suggested one tree should be named after his cat as it spent so much time there!

Having spent some time looking into the history of Winnersh I prepared a backup list of names. At first I struggled to find a woman's name at all, but eventually came up with two.

At the last council meeting before the Fete the Councillors selected six possible names to be used. Anyone attending Winnersh Fete in June could vote.

If you missed it:

We offered 3 pairs of possible names with local associations to choose from

1. ***Sindlesham*** - which was rebuilt as a model village by John Walter III in 1860s & 1870s
and
Walter - the family who owned 'The Times' and over three generations acquired a huge estate, planted hundreds of trees, built Bearwood mansion, a model village, churches, and schools.

2. ***The Commissionaire*** - the Corps of Commissionaires was founded by Edward Walter to find work for veterans after the Crimean War, the first organisation of its kind and still at work.
and
The Heiress - Jane Forbes who owned Sindlesham Lodge, now Sindlesham Court, before marrying the ambitious Thomas Rickman Harman.



Kerry and Barbara waiting for the fete to open.

3. **The Fox** - a pub of this name stood at the end of Mole Road, opposite the Baptist Chapel and

The Mole - Jasper Blake, aged 15, was a molecatcher living in Winnersh recorded in the 1851 census. By the time of the 1861 census he was working for GWR as a signman. The Mole Inn was also along Mole Road.

The result of the vote was an overwhelming majority for 'The Sindlesham Oak' and 'The Walter Oak' which received 68% of the votes cast. 'The Commissionaire' and 'The Heiress' came second with 20%; whilst 'The Fox' and 'The Mole' got just 12%.

Many thanks must go to the parish councillors of Winnersh for all their help and support.

With a very special thank you to Shaun Hanna for lending us his brand-new gazebo.

[Both trees are of course included in the excellent walk leaflet that Linda produced in 2011. It can be downloaded from our website (via a link from the full record for these trees or from the "Local Tree Locations and Walks" section of the Publications page) - Ed].

PRINCE ALBERT'S TREES

Barbara Stables

On Wednesday 12th September, Jasper Fulford Dobson will be giving a talk in St Paul's Parish Rooms, entitled "Prince Albert's Trees".

Jasper is based in Henley-on-Thames and for the past 10 years has acted as English Heritage's appointed tree inspector covering over 100 historic properties across the East Midlands, East of England, London and the Southern regions.

Osborne House on the Isle of Wight was the palatial holiday home of Queen Victoria and her family from 1845 to 1901. During his time there, Prince Albert planted an amazing collection of trees to compliment the Italianate garden design and wider landscape. Careful preservation has ensured the retention of many notable and veteran trees in addition to the royal commemorative specimens.

Jasper will share his experience of this wide variety of trees at Osbourne.

Wednesday 12th September 7.30 pm St Paul's Parish Rooms. Wokingham

SOMETHING FOR (NEARLY) EVERYONE TO DO

If you have a camera/phone camera and can find an ash tree, you can participate a new project. It's the **Ash Health Monitoring Project**. The Tree Council wants to create a national picture of the rate of ash



tree decline. All you have to do is take a photo of an individual ash tree (or more than one tree) in your area once a year for up to six years, recording your action on a short form. The Tree Council will then

collect and study the materials. You don't have to be a Tree Warden, anyone can take part. This is a new project and they are still ironing out the process, but obviously would like people to get started now. So you are asked to keep your data safe until The Tree Council asks for it. If you prefer you can send your photos to me to send on to the Tree Council when they are ready. Of course, if you choose one of the trees in our veteran tree database, we could add your photos to our tree record.

It's that easy but you would be making a real contribution as a citizen scientist!

There are guidance notes and a recording form and these are on our website (on the 'Tree Warden' page; 'Projects Index'), or I can forward them to you. They want you to photograph the tree in full leaf (July-August). It can be young or old. You will need to take the photos from the same spot each year and hence need to note where you are standing when you take the photo. Ideally the tree should be photographed against the sky and preferably in the same weather conditions (all blue sky or all grey sky) and approximately the same time each year. You are also asked a few questions about the tree's condition.

Now that isn't too onerous is it? The photos above (page 6) are of MRN 1619. The one on the left is from our database and was taken in July 2008. The other one was taken in August this year.

Six years ago, in the November 2012 issue of Tree Watch, we asked for photos of ash trees and ash trees in the landscape, so that we could build up a "before and after" photographic record. That request fell on deaf ears and we only had one submission. I really hope that we have a much better response this time. After all, your photos will be going to a national body and contributing to a nationwide survey of our ash trees.

I rather like this photo (taken in Feb 2011) of MRN 398 on Goat Island in Dinton Pastures. This would be a lovely subject for the Ash Tree Monitoring Project. Perhaps someone living near Dinton Pastures would like to "adopt" this ash tree and take photos of it.



ASH DIEBACK LOCALLY

The Forestry Commission website is the place to go for all information about this disease. As well as giving details about the symptoms and what to look out for, there are regular updates of confirmed cases in the wider environment (i.e. not confined to nurseries). There is a good integrative map showing infections for all 10-km grid squares. Currently (as updated on 2nd July) ash dieback has been confirmed in 959 squares in England - that's 65.2% of the country. 35 squares have been added this year, including SU96 (east of Bracknell) and SU65 (Basingstoke).

Four squares cover most of Wokingham Borough. Of those, the disease has not been confirmed in SU77 (north-west) or SU86 (central and south-east). It was confirmed in SU78 (north, mostly outside Wokingham, but including-Remenham) in 2015 and in SU76 (south-west) in 2016.

ANCIENT TREE HUNT / INVENTORY

The Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Hunt has a new website and a new name. It's now the Ancient Tree Inventory (ATI). The website, launched in June, has a more modern look and some very interesting pages. There's an extensive list of 169 publications that can be downloaded. The information about recording and finding their trees has been revised and they have introduced some more tree forms. Of particular interest to us are the pages giving details of what constitutes a veteran or an ancient tree for the their

ten most frequently recorded trees: oak, ash, beech, yew, sweet chestnut, alder, hornbeam, Scot's pine, hawthorn and field maple ([link on page 13](#)) - and there are some superb photos on those pages too.

There's also a new interactive map, but although it does look nicer, unfortunately it has lost some of the functionality of the previous map. In particular you can't include a recording organisation in the search filter (as you could with the previous version). The organisation is displayed in the full record of a tree, you just can't use it as a search term. This means we can no longer restrict a search to those trees recorded by WDVTA, making it even more difficult to check whether our trees are on their site. You can also no longer search for a tree by its name (although again it is quoted in the full record). On the old site I could have searched for "Quarry Oak" (see below) or restricted my search to trees over a certain girth, but not now. For some inexplicable reason the drop-down lists are double spaced, requiring more scrolling; and when you select a county or a specific tree number, the map does not zoom into that area. When I was using it this month, it always centred on Sheffield Parkway!

It can be rather slow to load and when using it this month I've found it rather "flaky", with several "not found" errors and "Sorry, something went wrong. Please try again" messages. Sometimes the postcode search didn't work, and on a few occasions when using filters "Pedunculate Oak" and "Restricted Access e.g. National Trust", I got "No results found." [I know I hadn't unintentionally invoked more filters because it very helpfully tells you the number of filters you are using.] Hopefully these errors will become less frequent, and it's such a useful resource, so do be patient and try another day if you run into any of these problems.

A new designation has been introduced. - 'Tree of National Special Interest' (TNSI) and trees can be starred too. I haven't found out what these categories mean. On the website it says that TNSIs can be



defined as Ancient, Veteran, Heritage, Notable or Champions trees, but not all trees in these categories are so designated and it doesn't say why.

Not all the records that we've sent them are on their map and of those that are, not all have had our photos uploaded. Our MRN 4415 is ATI 163183 and they've classified it as ancient and a TNSI, but the photos that were taken when the tree was recorded ([see photo left](#)) are not there, which is a pity. The Woodland Trust is aware of these gaps and would like to recruit a verifier to check our records on their site. Do let me know if you are interested in becoming a verifier.

THE QUARRY OAK AT CROFT CASTLE

Barbara sent me this photo of a massive ancient oak in the National Trust's garden at Croft Castle near Leominster, Herefordshire (SO 4474 6533). It had a girth of 10.97m @ 1.8m when measured in 1992. That would make it about 1,300 years old, germinating around AD700, long before the Norman Conquest!

It's number 157 in the Ancient Tree Inventory, and if you go to their website ([link on p13](#)) you can see a series of seven photos of this tree taken between March 2007 and July 2017.



USING COMPUTER MODELLING TO FIND OLD TREES.

With lots of ancient trees still unrecorded, the Woodland Trust is sponsoring a PhD student to create a computer model, based on current ATI data, to predict new locations where ancient trees might be found.

This month's **A C R O N Y M S / I N I T I A L I S M S**

This issue contains rather a lot of acronyms and initialisms - here's the list!

WT - Woodland Trust (*not to be confused with WT = Wokingham Town as used in our survey*)

ATI - Ancient Tree Inventory; TNSI - Tree of National Special Interest

NE - Natural England (previously English Nature)

AWI - Ancient Woodland Inventory (compiled by NE not WT)

ASNW - Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland

PAWS - Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites

OSNW - Other Semi-Natural Woodland

NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework; NPPG - National Planning Policy Guidance

PTES - People's Trust for Endangered Species

and finally.....

csv - comma separated value - a file type that can be opened in a spreadsheet

WOOD PASTURE - AND ANOTHER PROJECT FOR YOU

Wood Pastures are often derived from medieval hunting forests or old wooded commons used for grazing, and are characterised by veteran or ancient trees growing in open pasture-land. One of the most famous Wood Pastures is Windsor Great Park. The photos here were taken during our guided walk there in July 2007 (note the browse lines of the trees).

Wood Pasture is specifically mentioned in the latest NPPF and given the same protection as Ancient Woodland. The low tree density of many Wood Pastures means they do not register as woodland on historical maps and have not been included in the Ancient Woodland Inventory.



As with other woodland, Wood Pasture can only be protected if we know where it is. In 2014 Natural England published an inventory of Wood Pasture sites, based mainly on old maps and aerial photography. PTES has launched a project to ground-truth this data and provide condition assessments for all the sites mapped. They are inviting people to check out these sites. You may have participated in their Traditional Orchard Survey some years ago.

[See Tree Watch 18, p6 (August 2013).] This is similar. On the PTES website (*see page 13*) there is a map of possible sites and you can choose which you want to check. There are many sites within Wokingham Borough. I'm doing four in Shinfield. They send you a map of the site, with a suggested 'W' transect route. You just have to walk this transect, making a note of what you see, and fill in a short survey form. It's

quite simple and should be an enjoyable task. There's a video on their website explaining what's involved and they give you detailed guidance in the survey pack, making it easy for anyone to do.

FAQ: WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF AN "ANCIENT WOODLAND"?

This was raised at the WDVTA Tree Forum meeting in July.

Ancient Woodland in England is defined as ***an area that has been wooded continuously since at least AD 1600***. Continuously wooded does not require a continuous physical cover of trees and shrubs across the entirety of a site because open space is an important component of woodlands. In most, if not all ancient woods, the trees and shrubs have been cut down periodically as part of the management cycle. Wood-pastures, even if there is only a thin scatter of trees, can be a distinct form of ancient woodland and may be included on the ancient woodland inventory. Provided the area has remained as woodland, the stand is still considered ancient. Since it may have been cut over many times in the past, ancient woodland does not necessarily contain very old trees. For NPPF purposes, ancient woodland includes both ASNW & PAWS (*see below*). If current woodland was open and cleared of trees for a long period in the last 400 years, it is classed as recent woodland. It may still have high value for nature conservation, but it is not ancient woodland.

Why 1600? Simply because before that date, planting of new woodland was uncommon, so a wood present in 1600 was likely to have developed naturally.

There are four statutory woodland types:

Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) - continuous woodland cover since at least AD1600; predominantly trees and shrubs native to the site, not obviously originating from planting. They may have been managed by coppicing or pollarding in the past or may have grown up by natural regeneration and do not necessarily contain very old trees. They are generally the most valuable for biodiversity.

Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) - also known as "Ancient Replanted Woodland"- continuous tree cover since AD1600, but the native trees have largely been replaced through felling and replanting (often by conifers but also sweet chestnut and by beech in the Chilterns). They retain some ancient woodland features such as characteristic soils, ground flora, fungi, and woodland archaeology; and they can respond well to restoration management.

Other Semi-Natural Woodland (OSNW) or Secondary Woodland - this is woodland developed by regeneration on land which is no longer cultivated or grazed. Although not as rich as ASNW, it can support a wide range of species.

Plantation Woodland - deliberately planted, often in recent times, mainly for timber production and usually with non-native coniferous species with limited biodiversity value.

The 'Ancient Woodland Inventory' has been completely revised and was published by Natural England in May this year. As of July 2018, there are over 53,000 ancient woodland sites in England (38,914 ASNW plus 14,262 PAWS = 53,176 sites). If you go to their website (*link on page 13*) you can download the list as a csv file or view the sites on an interactive map. You can also download their handbook which describes the methods used to identify Ancient Woodlands.

NE want to know if you know of a site that should qualify, but isn't on their list. Their database is not definitive and very much a work in progress.

"Ancient woods are not the place to look for ancient trees, apart from coppice stools. Indeed the presence of ancient trees, unless they are boundary pollards, indicates that the wood is not ancient, but has grown up around free standing trees (infilled savanna)."

Oliver Rackham (2006) "Woodlands"

SPECIES IN FOCUS – ASH (*FRAXINUS EXCELSIOR*)

12 miscellaneous facts about the Ash Tree

1. Common Ash is a native tree and widespread across Europe, from the Arctic Circle to the Mediterranean, extending into Asia Minor and Africa. It is the third most common tree in Britain and the second most common in our veteran tree database. The one shown here is MRN 1368 in Remenham.
2. Most Ash trees are dioecious (male and female flowers on separate trees), but gender in Ash is a continuum, with some single trees having male and female flowers on different branches or even hermaphrodite flowers. They can also change sexuality with age, from predominantly male or hermaphrodite to female.
3. Ash trees are seriously at risk from the emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) as well as ash dieback (caused by the fungus *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*, previously known as *Chalara fraxinea* and *Hymenoscyphus pseudoalbidus*); leading to a recent BBC headline "Ash tree set for extinction in Europe".
4. Easily identified in winter by its distinctive black buds, which are opposite each other.
5. The name, "Ash", traces back to the Old English *æsc*. Both *æsc* and *Fraxinus* mean "spear"; and ash wood was favoured for spears by the Anglo-Saxons.
6. Ash trees may live for 350 years, but 200 years is more typical. They are considered ancient when they reach 225 years, although many have ancient characteristics from around 175 years. Typically, a veteran ash is 100-200 years old.
7. Ash leaves are used as food plants by the caterpillars of at least 29 different butterfly/moth genera.
8. Once thought to have medicinal and mystical properties, the wood was burned to ward off evil spirits. In Cheshire it was thought to cure warts and rickets, whilst in Sussex, ash and elm trees were known as "widow makers" because large boughs would often drop without warning.
9. The wood is tough and absorbs shock without splintering, making it an ideal choice for items demanding high strength and resilience, such as tool handles, bows, spears, hockey sticks and oars. It was widely used to make the frames of early cars and aircraft; and the Morgan Motor Company still manufacture sports cars with frames made from ash.
10. The wood has very limited use outdoors because the heartwood has a low durability to ground contact, and will typically rot within five years.
11. The largest Ash tree in our database (MRN 4987) is a coppice with a girth of 7m @ 0.5m; but is only classified as "Notable" by ATI (163535). Unfortunately, it was felled to make way for a new road and the record cannot be independently verified. The magnificent MRN 2199 (photo right) in Pearmans Copse with a girth of 6.53m @ 0.3m definitely qualifies as a Champion. With an estimated age of 650 years, it could have been planted in the 1360s.
12. Ash trees were frequently coppiced (to provide firewood and charcoal) and most of the old Ash trees are now lapsed coppices or multi stem. In our database 70% of the Ash trees recorded are coppices or multi stem, whereas for the rest of the trees it's less than 20%.



Veteran Tree Survey snapshot

ASH

498 (7%)

trees in our
database

35%

in Shinfield

1

recorded in
Wokingham Without

18

have a girth $\geq$ 6m

5m

Largest recorded
maiden (MRN 3521)

5 (1%)

pollards

TREE RESCUE FOR VETERANS

Do you know of a significant veteran or ancient tree that is stressed, declining, diseased or dying? If you do, you could nominate it for free revitalising treatment. Nominations close at the end of October.

"Tree Rescue" is a national campaign to save (a few) veteran trees. In November at least five trees will be chosen from the nomination list and they will receive free enriched biochar treatment and deep root-zone soil decompaction.

To nominate a tree, go to www.treerescue.org.uk and click on "nominate a tree", then scroll down to complete a short form and submit a few photos. They want to know about the condition of the tree and why you think it should be rescued. Some of the trees already nominated are featured on the website, so you can read what other people have said about their tree. Anyone can nominate a tree, but it would be nice if WDVTA officially nominated one (or more). If you have any suggestions send them to Alison or me and let us know if you've submitted any nominations.

DID YOU KNOW?.. The Fortingall Yew has changed its sex.

Well, not completely; but this male yew produced female berries on one of its upper branches in 2015. That's not unique; yews and many other dioecious conifers have been known to switch sex in this way, affecting part of the crown, rather than the entire tree.

Three seeds were collected, to be grown on and planted in a yew hedge at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. Planting of this 'conservation' hedge started in 2014 and when complete will contain yews representing over 2,000 individual trees from across its range of Europe, North Africa, the Caucasus and Western Asia.

WHERE IS IT?

Do you know where this tree is?

This one is in our database and is featured in this issue!!

Answer in the next issue.

From the last issue:

The Ankerwycke Yew (*below*) in Wraysbury, Berkshire, on the opposite bank of the Thames from Runnymede.



.... *And to make you smile:*

Notice seen at The Vyne this summer.

Harry Potter fans will recognise the term. In the eponymous novels, the 'Whomping Willow' is a large tree located on the Hogwarts grounds. It can move its limbs, and, if threatened, does so with great speed and violence. Apparently, it can only be stopped by pulling a knot in its roots. In the films, it was "played" (with a bit of CGI tweaking) by the 'Queen Beech', a 400-year-old pollard on Berkhamsted Common. (Although in some reports it's referred to as a yew!). Unfortunately, the trunk split, mainly under its own weight, in 2014.



RECOMMENDED WEBSITES & READING

www.wokingham.gov.uk/roads-and-outdoor-maintenance/trees-hedges-and-grass-cutting/tree-preservation-orders/ - WBC TPO information and interactive map

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2018/07/summer-tree-identification-quiz/ - Woodland Trust quiz

<https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/> - Ancient Tree Inventory - new website

<https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/how-to-record/species-guides/> - veteran criteria for 10 species

<http://chalaramap.fera.defra.gov.uk/> - map showing extent of Ash dieback

<https://ptes.org/campaigns/wood-pasture-parkland/> - Wood Pasture survey details

Some sources used in this issue: all web pages accessed 21-08-2018 (unless stated otherwise)

p2/3: <http://proarbmagazine.com/saved-chop-800-year-old-oak-tree-wickwar-quarry/>; www.ancienttreeforum.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Old-Electric-Oak.pdf;

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2018/07/nppf-impact/

p6: www.forestry.gov.uk/ashdieback#Distribution

p7: www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/our-campaigns/vi-trees/trees-of-special-interest/

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/croft-castle-and-parkland/features/ancient-trees-at-croft-castle-and-parkland

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/croft-castle-and-parkland/trails/croft-castle-ancient-tree-walk; <https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/tree-search/tree?treeid=157&from=3523&v=1414415&ml=map&z=15&sp=36&vs=1&vs=2&s=14&cn=47&nwLat=52.29248144075221&nwLng=-2.8430912918825735&seLat=52.27444515424702&seLng=-2.770993513562261#/>; www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2018/07/on-the-hunt-for-ancient-trees/?utm_campaign=2149191_D01_11188_July18ATIEnews_20180724&utm_medium=email&utm_source=woodlandtrust&dm_i=2D76,1A2BR,4VS5ML,447U0,1

p10: www.wokingham.gov.uk/_resources/assets/attachment/full/0/219855.pdf; [http://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets?q=ancient%20woodlands%20\(england\)](http://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets?q=ancient%20woodlands%20(england)); <http://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/ancient-woodlands-england>;

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_woodland

p11: <https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/how-to-record/species-guides/ash/>

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/native-trees/ash/>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fraxinus>; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Lepidoptera_that_feed_on_ash_trees

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-35876621>; <https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2018/top-trees-so-far/>

p12: <https://stories.rbge.org.uk/archives/17622>

p13: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_fictional_plants; www.berkhamstedtoday.co.uk/news/end-of-an-era-whomping-willow-of-harry-potter-fame-splits-in-half-1-6115452; www.newstatesman.com/culture/nature/2015/11/queen-beech-ruled-land-even-when-she-fell

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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: You can download a pdf version of our 10th anniversary report from our website - but you can also access an extended version of it, with links to the trees mentioned:

wdvta.org.uk/report10.php

Details of all trees in our database are available via the web map pages: wdvta.org.uk/WDVTS

The inventory of commemorative and special trees can also be accessed via our website:

wdvta.org.uk/commem.php

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