



On 15th August, we had **7,646** trees in our database and **11,146** photographs

Welcome to issue 42 of Tree Watch. For any Hitch Hacker's fans you'll appreciate that this issue is the answer!

The photos here were taken on our very enjoyable and informative visit to Wellington College last month. The avenue leading up to the main entrance comprises alternating Wellingtonias and Monkey Puzzle trees, prompting my choice for "Species in Focus" this time. That visit and the one to Savernake Forest later this month were fully booked within a couple of days of sending out the notice to members. That's very gratifying, especially for Kerry and all the work she puts in arranging these visits. Suggestions for future visits are always welcomed.



We have records of some of the trees in Wellington College, but not all. There's a particularly nice Tulip Tree (*photos below*) that's not in our database. Was it planted at the same time as the one Sally Ballard describes on page 8? It would



be nice to complete our survey there and what a lovely place to do it. The Tulip Tree should look lovely in its autumn colours. Let me know if you'd like to be involved.



As Malcolm Inglis describes on page 4, we have estimated the tree cover for all the towns and parishes within the Borough. I was shocked to discover that Shinfield has the lowest tree cover of all Wokingham's

towns and parishes, with just 16% compared with 39% for Finchampstead and 26% for the whole Borough. The same basic method has been used to quantify the amount of land available for tree-planting, as Barbara explains on page 6.

Thanks to all the members who have contributed to this issue. It's so nice to have a variety of contributions.

The next issue of Tree Watch will be November 2019 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

Main items in this issue:-

- | | | | |
|----|--|-----|---|
| p2 | Events; Tree watching from my chair | p6 | The large oak in Redlands Park |
| p3 | The Walter and the Sindlesham Oaks | p7 | Tree Watch Index - version 2: 2009-2018 |
| p4 | Tree Cover | p7 | Did you know? Biochar; Ash die-back |
| p5 | Loss of woodland in Earley | p8 | Sadly departed; Masfield Gardens Tulip Tree |
| p5 | A sapling versus a veteran | p11 | Species in Focus - Monkey Puzzle tree |
| p6 | Tree planting in Wokingham | p12 | Where is it? Remarkable Trees |
| p6 | Tree planting to tackle climate change | p12 | Trees on the Moon |

Events - August-November 2019

- ❖ Friday 30th August - visit to Savernake Forest - *fully booked*
- ❖ Wednesday 4th September - 14:00 - Wokingham Library - Talk by Alison Griffin
'Wokingham's Trees - Visible? Valued? Vanishing?' - £3 - Book via Library 0118 978 1368

Non-WDVTa events:

- ❖ Saturday 14th September - Chimney Meadows Nature Reserve - TVERC training course - Hedgerow Surveying
- ❖ Monday 16th September 15:00-17:30 - Winnersh Community Centre, New Road, Sindlesham. RG41 5DU- Network Rail community drop-in session re: *Vegetation management on the railway between Wokingham and Reading Station*. Free car park.
- ❖ Saturday 28th September - TVERC Autumn Recorders' Conference in Reading, at Oracle 520 in the Thames Valley Park, RG6 1RA - £10
- ❖ Saturday 2nd November - South East Region Tree Wardens Forum - no details yet

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 doesn't seem three months since I last wrote a piece for Tree Watch, but in re-reading the last edition I can see how much we have been doing. So here are some brief updates on topics covered in May.

Developing a Borough Tree Strategy: Some initial steps have been made and we have a meeting with the Borough councillor executive members for the Environment this month and in September we have a meeting planned with the Liberal Democrat shadow executive councillors.

The i-Tree model has been used to calculate the canopy cover for all the towns and parishes in the borough. This information will be a valuable input to the strategy and we will be writing a brief report with a summary of the findings in the next few weeks. Many thanks to Malcolm Inglis and the other members who sat studying satellite images to gather all the data needed. See page 4.

Tree articles in the media

Climate change is rarely out of the news and the role that tree planting could have in mitigation is being widely reported too. (See Barbara's report on page 6). I read this week that **Ethiopians planted 350 million trees** on one day at the start of August. They are aiming to plant 4 billion trees between May and October to help tackle deforestation and climate change.

An alert for the **Oak Processionary Moth** was sent out by the Tree Council in July. Following several recent outbreaks, they have requested that any recently planted larger oaks, particularly if they were imported from the continent, should be checked for OPM and any outbreak reported. More details are on the News page of our website.

The Conservation Volunteers Scotland have started a new blog called **Dead Good Deadwood**. It's interesting and informative and I'm sure you'll learn something from it.

When Toby Hindson led our visit to the Ankerwycke Yew in January this year he talked of his work on estimating the **ages of yew trees**. This has now been published by the Royal Forestry Society and was reported in **The Times** in June. Although thousands of years have been deducted from the estimated ages of many ancient yews, they are still ancient. The oldest in the UK, The Fortingall Yew, is now thought to be 2000 years old rather than 5000, the Ankerwycke 900 years rather than 2500 and the Llangernyw yew just 1600 years rather than 4000.

I'm always interested in good reuse of trees that have died or been felled. Earlier in the year I came across an American example of a large cottonwood tree in Idaho that had to be felled and the owner





Photo: Sharalee Armitage Howard

converted the tall stump into a **community library**. Certainly something different! 'Little Free Library' is a non-profit organization that inspires readers, broadens book access, and builds community by fostering neighbourhood book exchanges around the world. There are more than 90,000 registered Little Free Libraries in 91 countries worldwide.

News from the local paper

The Wokingham Paper also has articles or pictures relevant to our work in many issues. These are just a few of my recent cuttings. Congratulations to our lead Tree Warden, Stephen Loyd, on being awarded the Environment Award by 'Twyford Together' for his leadership of the Friends of Ruscombe Wood group.

Soon after the Winnersh fete and the naming of the two oak trees (see page 3), a reader sent in a lovely picture of The Walter Oak which was published and used the tree's new name.

In June there was a picture and an article about a **new bench** in the Old Forest Meadows SANG in Emmbrook.

It has been made from an oak tree and has a carved life-sized stag decorating one end. The tree came from the site and was probably one on our database. It would be interesting to know which tree it has come from. Can anyone help?

In the last Tree Watch I also mentioned that Jon Stokes had remarked on the beautiful tree lined roads in Wokingham, the Green Routes, and



how these are becoming increasingly rare in the UK as a whole. On Finchampstead Road several of the trees have been sporting yellow ribbons for a few months. This was a campaign by local residents against a significant planning application that would have felled several of the trees for access to a proposed housing development that is outside the SDL areas. This was also **reported** in The Wokingham Paper. The ribbons raised awareness of the risk to the trees and might be a simple action that can be used elsewhere. [Both photos from The Wokingham Paper.]



Have you noticed young dead trees?

Several of us have commented that many trees planted recently, particularly on the new developments around the Borough, have died. We decided to write a letter to 'The Wokingham Paper' and ask readers to send us details of ones they have seen. We had quite a few replies and have compiled a list which we will take to our meeting with the Borough councillors and officers. One letter talked about *The Dead Tree Roundabout*, which is an apt, if unfortunate, name. The weather conditions are not helping trees to get established, but poor planting, planting at the wrong time of year and above all not watering the saplings in heat waves are the real issues. It is not just trees planted in the last twelve months either, I'm beginning to see young trees that were fine last year and came into leaf this spring, but are now clearly failing too. Not only do we need to improve the enforcement of replacing newly planted trees that fail, but we need to find innovative ways to nurture new saplings - and we know we need to be planting a lot of them to combat climate change. *Any suggestions?*

Barbara Stagles is coordinating the list of sites with dead trees, so if you are aware of any or see them as you are driving, do let her know where they are.

Network Rail vegetation management

We have recently heard that Network Rail are planning to cut back the vegetation along the Waterloo railway line between Wokingham and Reading. Details of the planned work are on the [EEG website](#). Network Rail has arranged a drop-in session to answer any questions. It's being held at Winnersh Community Centre between 15:00 and 17:30 on Monday 16th September (address above in events section). Many thanks to everyone who replied to the request for help with this topic. Martin Haslam offered to lead on this topic and will circulate information to all those who expressed an interest in this work.

A very useful reference tool

Fi Young, who was our coordinator for Winnersh and a committee member until she moved away from the area, has recently updated an [index](#) that she created for all the articles that have been included in Tree Watch. Thank you Fi. See Fi's account on page 7.

And lastly

In the last edition I listed several areas where we really need some help. If you are able to offer to help with just one thing as a one-off or on-going, it would make a lot of difference, so please go back and review the list. Thank you.

THE WALTER OAK AND THE SINDLESHAM OAK

Linda Martin

NAMING THE TREES AT BEARWOOD RECREATION GROUND

The story so far...

When we launched our 10th Anniversary Report, Jill Butler from The Woodland Trust suggested we should give names to some of our local tree. Trees with names get better treatment - giving them an extra bit of protection.

Winnersh Parish Council were happy to get involved and generously offered to pay for name signs for the two large oak trees on Bearwood Recreation Ground (MRNS [5297](#) and [5576](#)).



At Winnersh Summer Fete in 2018 we asked visitors to our stand to choose names for the trees. The result of the vote was a clear win for the names Walter and Sindlesham.

At this year's Fete we named them.

I had some unusual items on my shopping lists in the weeks before the fete. Apart from the two brass plaques, wood to mount them on, yachting quality wood stain for the mounts, and extra-long nails, I

looked for small curtain rails and curtain material which would still look good if it rained. I found a glittery shower curtain which seemed to fit the bill. Flower arrangers' ribbon is waterproof and amazingly cheap, so we had some yellow ribbon (to tie round the old oak trees!)

We were asked to fill a 5-10 minute gap in the arena programme between the Tug of War and the flying display by the Birds of Prey. The two oak trees are at opposite corners of the Recreation Ground so there was only time for a ceremony at one of them. Which tree was an easy decision to make. The Birds of Prey were resting in the shade provided by the Sindlesham Oak so rather than disturb them, Paul Fishwick, Chairman of Winnersh Parish Council, and Kerry Clissold, Secretary of WDVTA, unveiled the plaque on the Walter Oak, as shown in the photo.

Passers-by were offered nibbles, and Prosecco or non-alcoholic punch.



Those of you with long memories will remember that the two prize winning voters were to be offered the chance to help name the trees. I sent emails out inviting them to join us at the Fete. One winner replied at once that the date clashed with a school event; the other hasn't been heard from.

[See Linda's previous article about the naming of these trees in *Tree Watch* #38 August 2018, page 5]

TREE COVER

Malcolm Inglis

Wokingham is located towards the western edge of what used to be Windsor Forest and this historical link probably accounts for the town having an unusually high number of trees for an urban area. The WDVTA database shows that Wokingham Town has nearly 90 veteran trees per square kilometre and if you count trees of all sizes the number is far greater. But what do these figures amount to in terms of tree cover?

Fortunately, there's a readily accessible way of discovering the extent of tree canopy cover without getting up from your armchair. A web-based application called '*i-Tree Canopy*' developed by the US Forestry Service is free to download and uses satellite imagery combined with built-in data analysis to assess the amount of tree canopy cover over a given area anywhere in the world, including the UK.

It works like this. Having loaded the application from the [i-Tree website](#), you define the area whose cover you want to determine. You can either download the area definition in the form of a 'shape file' or you can define your own by drawing the boundary you want on an online map. For the UK, shape files for ward boundaries can be obtained from the website of [Forest Research](#). Having defined the area you want to survey you can start your assessment of its tree canopy.

The application works by presenting you with a series of randomly chosen satellite images of an 80m. square within your chosen area. In the centre of each image is a yellow cross and you then decide whether or not the cross is on a tree canopy and enter 'Tree' or 'non-Tree' accordingly.

For each point *i-Tree* displays the running percentage of tree cover and the sampling error. The guidelines suggest you continue with further points until the error reduces to 2% or less - this usually takes a few hundred individual assessments.

At this stage you can read off the final calculated canopy cover percentage for the whole of the area and print a more detailed report on the area's trees.



Left is a screenshot of the *i-Tree Canopy* satellite view, part way through the survey of Wokingham Town.

Members of WDVTA have carried out an *i-Tree* canopy cover assessment for each of Wokingham's parishes and the results are included in the Parishes and Towns section of our [10th Anniversary Report](#).

But some words of warning are needed. Firstly, our experience has shown that if different individuals carry out independent assessments of one area then the canopy cover results can differ significantly. This seems to be because people can come to different conclusions when trying to judge whether or not the yellow cross is really positioned over a tree - the satellite view is not always clear. In the WDVTA assessment we have combined the results from different assessors to give merged results for each parish. Secondly, the report also provides estimates of the monetary benefit of the tree cover which Forest Research have told us not to take too literally. This is because they are based on specific characteristics of the American environment and the US economy and are not strictly

applicable to the UK. Why not give it a try?

You can find full details and instructions on the [Forest Research](#) website.

i-Tree Survey snapshot

% TREE COVER

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH	26
FINCHAMPSTEAD	39
WOKINGHAM WITHOUT	33
EARLEY TOWN	28
ARBORFIELD	27
REMENHAM	27
SWALLOWFIELD	27
BARKHAM	26
WARGRAVE	26
CHARVIL	25
TWYFORD	25
HURST	24
SONNING	24
WINNERSH	22
WOODLEY TOWN	24
WOKINGHAM TOWN	22
RUSCOMBE	21
SHINFIELD	16

EARLEY FEARS LOSS OF MORE WOODLAND

The residents of Earley are very concerned about the future of an area of woodland known as area DD, but recently given the name Chalfont Woods. It's the triangular area of wooded land on the southern edge of Chalfont Park, bordering Rushey Way (near Asda) SU 740 698.

Wokingham Borough Council has agreed to exclude the site from current development plans, but that still leaves it under threat and vulnerable to future plans. A petition has been launched on the Wokingham Borough Council website calling on the council to take action to protect Area DD/Chalfont Woods against development permanently.

You can see the petition on the website under 'Council and Participation', [e-Petitions](#). It closes on 27th October.

A SAPLING OAK VERSES A VETERAN

Will Tyler

When a mature oak has been replaced by a sapling, I have often wondered how much this would affect the environment. Eventually, I was overtaken by curiosity and decided to make some observations and calculations.

To measure the effect on the atmosphere, I assumed that the CO₂ absorbed and the O₂ produced are related to the leaf area.

I decided to use tree examples in Redlands Farm Park. MRN120 was chosen as the veteran. After a lot of observation, I chose a self-sown sapling that had a typical natural shape and a size suitable for large scale planting.

I counted the leaves on the sapling and measured their average size. Counting the leaves on the veteran was clearly beyond me, so I chose a figure for a similar tree that had been counted electronically. The average size of the leaves on the veteran tree were significantly larger than those on the sapling.

The number of sapling trees required, to give the same leaf area as the veteran, was calculated as 19,000. Based on a two times height pitch, the area required for the veteran is 0.17 ha and that required for 19,000 saplings would be 5.69 ha. That means that the saplings would require an area 33 times greater than the veteran.

To maintain the same leaf area, the smaller trees could be felled gradually over the next hundred years or more, should we still have a world that sustains life, until just one tree is left.

These figures are approximate but hopefully useful. Anyone who wishes to inspect them, or make any corrections, would be welcome.

Regarding biodiversity, the WDVTA web site makes clear the importance of veteran trees. Also, quoting from the National Trust: "Trees play a really valuable role in our ecosystem. The older and more decayed they get, the more wildlife they support. Their

crevices and rotting wood become safe havens for bats, birds and insects like the stag beetle." A mature oak tree will support hundreds of species of insects, plants, fungi, spiders, lichen, moss, birds and small mammals. For this, it is important that dead wood is not removed. It is worth noting that trees with a rotted centre can last for five hundred years (the strength lies in the perimeter and this is frequently overlooked). There is a tree in Lincoln that is over one thousand years old.

TREE PLANTING IN WOKINGHAM

At a WBC council [meeting](#) on 18th July (item 25.4), in answer to a question about the replacement of felled trees, Parry Batth, the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure said:

"Outside of the context of a planning application, the Council is not able to monitor the felling of trees on private land or to enforce replacement planting, unless the trees are covered by a Tree Preservation Order.

It is very rare for the Council to grant a planning consent where the number of trees lost exceeds those proposed for planting, indeed in the vast majority of cases the number of trees planted vastly exceeds those that are lost. Whilst it would be difficult to provide a definitive answer on numbers of trees planted, it is worth noting that the Council has secured the planting of approximately 45,000 new trees on the eleven SANGs that have been completed so far in the Borough.

·	Rooks Nest Wood	10,000	Buckhurst	6,500
·	Kentwood	5,500	Old Forest Rd Meadows	2,500
·	Hazebrook Meadows	2,500	Shinfield SANGs	3,000
·	Eldridge Park	4,000	Keepatch Meadows	11,000
Altogether that is 45,000."				

TREE PLANTING HAS MIND BLOWING POTENTIAL TO TACKLE CLIMATE CRISIS *Barbara Stagles*

This striking title appeared in a [Guardian article](#) on July 4th. We know that as trees grow, they absorb and store the carbon dioxide emissions which contribute to global warming. Until now there has been little attempt to quantify to what extent global tree cover across the planet might help to mitigate this major problem.

Reporting the work on the 'Global Tree Restoration Potential Project' by ecologist Professor Tom Crowther and his team at the Swiss University ETH Zurich, the article concludes that forest restoration and planting billions of trees across the planet could remove two-thirds of all the emissions that have been pumped into the atmosphere by human activities. This would not just be one of our solutions to the climate crisis but overwhelmingly the most powerful and cost effective. Watch their [YouTube](#) presentation.

Crowther's team used a standardised photo-interpretative method to zoom in on Google Earth to analyse global tree cover. Researchers examined 78,000 separate hectares of land across the globe. The analysis found that there are 1.7 billion hectares of treeless land, excluding urban areas and land used for crops, on which 1.2 trillion native tree saplings would naturally grow. This area is about 11% of all land on the planet and is the equivalent to the size of the US and China combined.

Of course, there would be enormous challenges in responding to this analysis, but Crowther notes that we do not need to wait for political leaders to be persuaded, though governments' support is hugely valuable. There are already thousands of projects in hand, some funded by private benefactors and others led by volunteers. It is vital for any tree restoration project to be informed by ecological expertise as to the right trees in the right places.

Following this article's publication, critics have pointed out that while local people would often like nothing better than their forests to be restored, the intransigence of political leaders, as in Brazil, negates their efforts. Others have commented on the time it takes for forests to regrow, the dangers of close canopy forest for biodiversity and the value of open savannah. The debate will continue but in the meantime it is very encouraging that what WDVTA is doing at the local level is very much in tune with research and developments in the global context.

THE LARGE OAK TREE (MRN 120) IN REDLANDS FARM PARK

Will Tyler

Redlands Farm Park is in Evendons, Wokingham. The main entrance is off Evendons Lane and MRN [120](#) is by the pedestrian entrance from Doles Lane. On entering the park, one day in January 2019, I was surprised and saddened to see that many branches had been cut from this beautiful veteran tree. It had already suffered much damage in the past, as has been recorded on the WDVTA record. It had since



been left alone for many years and was regrowing much of the previous damage, establishing some significant branches. I contacted Mr Vincent, the Building and Grounds Officer at Wokingham Town Council, whom I have known for many years, and agreed to meet him on site to discuss this superb tree. The following letter (agreed with Mr Vincent) summarises our meeting and is self-explanatory. I hope that henceforth this tree may have a good and undisturbed life.

Dear Rob,

Thank you for meeting me on site at Redlands Farm Park, on 9th April, to discuss the large oak tree (MRN 120).

We first discussed the natural shape of oak trees. I mentioned that when grown on open land the oak has branches low down on its trunk. These are commonly much smaller than the higher branches. The next level of branches normally bends down to the ground, finishing with beautiful feathery ends. This all helps to maximise light absorption. On this tree, all of the lower branches had been cut from the trunk leaving short stub branches. Much of the ends of the branches bending down had been cut, plus other smaller branches in other locations on the tree. Trees have evolved over a long period of time and grow in a manner that gives them the greatest chance of strength and survival. Hence, the shape that the branches, leaves and roots have.

I mentioned that the change in the appearance of the tree is immediately apparent on entering the field from the opposite corner. To me it looks sanitised and unnatural.

We then discussed cuts. Naturally, the tree tries to repair itself as well as it can, as quickly as it can, and also to regrow. The cuts are a source of infection and it tries to form a skin of bark over them. The success depends on a number of factors. Those that help are the youth and vigour of the tree, the closeness of the cut to the trunk, the amount of branches and leaves above the cut. These all help to draw the sap up and around the wound. The effects of these factors can easily be seen by looking at the many trees around.

You kindly agreed to take these points into consideration in future situations. I am grateful for this. It was also agreed that no feedback to me in any way was required.

With best wishes, Will Tyler.

New for 2019 is the Tree Watch Index Version 2 which is located on the WDVTA Publications [webpage](#). It is based on the first (2009 to 2015) version, but has some new headings as our publication has evolved to include ever more different items about trees. As this index is now 58 pages long, click on the content page number and you will be taken to that particular page.

Some articles may fail to fit nicely into one particular heading so may appear twice.

So let's look at our new headings in alphabetic order:

Originally part of the WDVTA Association newsletter (now defunct) we now have **AGM / Committee news**. This is a quick reference in case you were unable to attend the AGM, listing our current Committee Members; what happened at the AGM and information on Statutory Legislation our organisation needs to follow.

A fun item to read is '**And to make you smile...**' it includes tree puns and other tree silliness.

With the move of article hyperlinks to the end of each Tree Watch from Issue 28, I have added the **Article information sources** heading. Should I make this part of the Articles section or keep it separate? Let me know what you think please.

Events regardless of whether the WDVTA has organised them or not - are split into sub-sections: **coming up, review of indoor events, review of outdoor visits**.

Our Projects has a new sub-heading: **WDVTA 10th Anniversary Report**.

Word searches, word sudoku and Where is it? These are to be located under the **Quizzes / puzzles heading**.

Our final two new headings are **Then and Now...** displaying photographs showing how our trees have changed over time and **Tree watching from the Chair** where Alison Griffin discusses her latest thoughts on all things trees!

DID YOU KNOW?... BIOCHAR IS BEING USED AS A CATTLE FEED.

If you've attended any of Glynn Percival's talks, or even if you haven't, you've probably heard about biochar, charcoal produced from tree waste used as a soil conditioner to promote healthy tree growth. It has also been shown to [suppress ash die-back](#).

Now Lincolnshire tree surgeon and farmer, Richard Copley, is feeding it to his cattle in a [trial](#) to see whether it can reduce methane emissions and lock more carbon back into the soil.

ASH DIE-BACK

In last August's Tree Watch, I described the ash monitoring project launched by the Tree Council (*see issue 41 page6*). I thought this was a simple, but worthwhile and interesting project that many of our members could easily do. Unfortunately, no-one has sent me any photos. It's not too late to start. Just choose an ash tree; take a photo of it and then take another one from the same spot and on the same date next year. I've done this for two ash trees in Spencers Wood. The photos below show MRN 1619 when it



was recorded in July 2009, in August 2018 and in August 2019. There doesn't seem to be much change since last year, apart from the elderberry bush that has grown up in front of the trunk. There are slight signs of ash die-back, as shown above, but no obvious lesions. The other tree I'm monitoring is a younger one, which has grown, but otherwise not changed much. It also has some bare twigs and no lesions.

I went on the "Rewilding: ancient and modern woodlands at Clayfield Copse", one of the many interesting sessions of the "Wild about Reading" events that I circulated members in May. Many of the ash trees there are suffering from ash die-back, but it is interesting to see severely affected trees alongside healthy ones. All the trees there (including the ashes) are self-seeded. This is an area of previously arable land that has been left to itself since 1995. Today it is a well-established woodland with a variety of tree species and ages. A great example of the result of self-seeding. This excellent walk was led by Adrian Lawson.

The "Wild about Reading" (a 9-day programme of free events celebrating nature across Reading) was a fantastic series of events. I wonder if there is any chance of a similar "Wild about Wokingham" event?

SADLY DEPARTED - MRNS 2901, 2902, 3203 AND 6628

The loss of two lovely large trees in Crowthorne is described below. Both the Red Oak and the Tulip Tree had a girth greater than 4.5m. Every effort was made to save these trees.

An Ash in Barkham and an English Oak in Wokingham Town have also been felled. The photos here show the oak, MRN 3203, before and after felling.



MASEFIELD GARDENS TULIP TREE - MRN 2902:TROBI 206529

Sally Ballard
MGRA Chairman

I was very interested to read the article about Tulip Trees (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) in the last edition of Tree Watch and especially the mention of **our** Masefield Gardens specimen. We are lucky enough to live on the ten-acre Masefield site, once owned by Wellington College, where 29 of the trees were given TPOs, and we are bordered by a strip of ancient woodland.

The Tulip Tree was, we were told, the second-best example outside of Kew Gardens, but sadly some eight years ago it started to show signs of honey fungus. We have worked tirelessly to try to preserve this beautiful tree and have had experts from Kew, as well as a local arborist in conjunction with Bracknell Forest Borough Council, all doing what they could to prolong its life. Things went well for some years but as 2018 progressed, the trunk blackened and we were advised that it was becoming unstable and would have to be felled. That in itself was a major undertaking, when in February this year we had to get a very large crane, two large lorries and several arborists to remove in excess of 60 tons of wood! It was a very sad day! (Especially hot on the heels of the loss of a Red Oak (MRN 2901), 40 tons, in the previous twelve months).

So we are now down to 27 beautiful trees with preservation orders and two 'minimum sized replacement trees' as required by Bracknell Forest: one **has** to be a tulip tree, planted where the other one was felled - we remain unconvinced that it will survive!



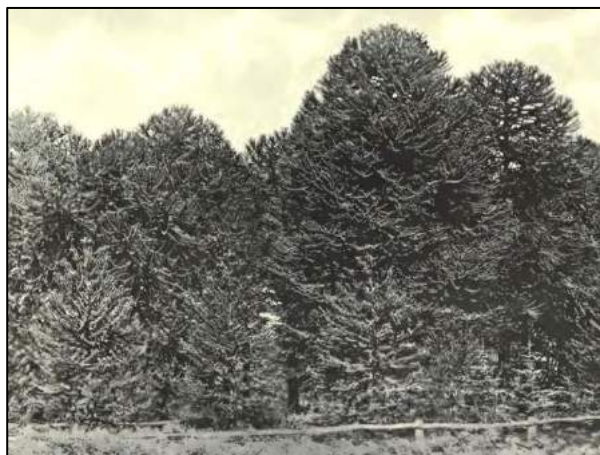
*"The best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago.
The second best time is now."*

Anon

SPECIES IN FOCUS – MONKEY PUZZLE TREE (*ARAUCARIA ARAUCANA*)

15 miscellaneous facts about the Monkey Puzzle Tree

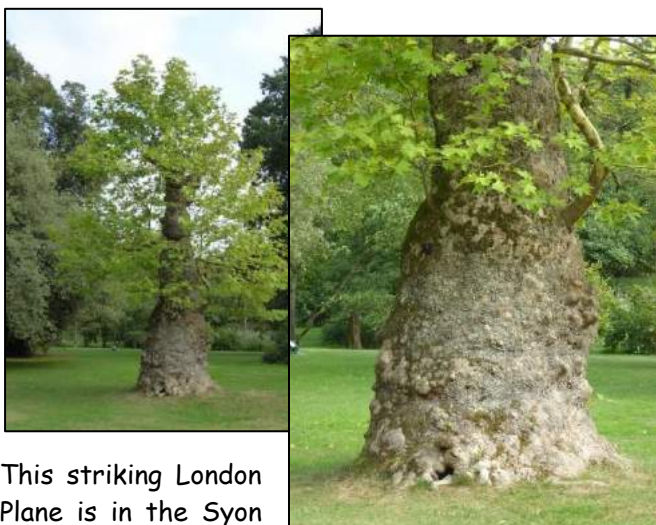
1. This conifer is a native of south and central Chile and adjacent areas in Argentina. It is the national tree of Chile.
2. Alternative common names include Chile (or Chilean) pine, monkey tail tree, Pehuén and Piñonero.
3. Although usually dioecious, with male (*shown here*) and female cones on separate trees, both sexes do occasionally occur together on the same tree.
4. Considered a 'living fossil', it pre-dates monkeys in South America by 120 million years. It was once widespread across large areas of the globe. Fossil trees have even been found in Antarctica.
5. An extremely long-lived species, surviving for up to 2,000 years in Chile, its estimated live expectancy in Britain is only 100-150 years.
6. In its native environment its maximum girth seems to be less than 5m, but the TROBI champion, growing in Ireland, had a girth of 4.3m in 2000, whilst one specimen in the Beauport arboretum in Sussex had a girth of 5.2m in 1905.
7. Its ranked 'Endangered' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Remaining populations are small and fragmented, vulnerable to persistent threats from grazing, logging and fire.
8. They were first described by Europeans in 1780, and introduced into Britain in 1795; although they may have been discovered by a Dutch expedition in 1643.
9. Much loved by the Victorians because of their bizarre appearance, the famous *Araucaria* grove at Beauport (*shown here*) was visited by Princess Victoria (eldest daughter of Queen Victoria) in 1868.
10. Branches occur in whorls, each whorl usually representing one (or possibly two) year's growth.
11. The leathery, spiky leaves may have evolved to deter dinosaurs. They are one of the longest-lived leaves of any plant species, with a **mean life** of 24 years.
12. They are being considered as a potential food crop for western Scotland. The seeds (piñones) are edible (similar to large pine nut), harvesting is easy (the cones drop to the ground) and just one male and six female trees could yield several thousand seeds per year. However, seeds aren't produced until the trees are 30 to 40 years old.
13. Whitby Jet is derived from fossilized Monkey Puzzle trees (and similar species).
14. There are two rows of six *Araucarias* in Wellington College (MRNS 2921-2931) with girths of 2.4m in July 2009, suggesting they are about 120 years old and nearing the end of their lives (*photo right*).
15. There's a '**Monkey Map**' website, with a gallery of **photos**. It includes four smaller trees in our area, as well as the ones in Wellington College. (The project closed in 2016.)



I'm not sure how interesting members find the "Where is it?" feature and so it's being replaced by "Remarkable Trees", starting this month with a splendid lime. If you have a photo of a special tree, please send it to me, along with a brief description. If you want to do a longer piece that will be equally welcome. We do have occasional features on "Holiday Trees".

WHERE IS IT?

From the last issue:



This striking London Plane is in the Syon Vista in Kew Gardens.

REMARKABLE TREES



One of our members, Chris Jones, took this photo of her friends in front of the **Holker Great Lime**, when they visited Holker Hall and Gardens in Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria. It's one of the Tree Council's 50 Great British trees and was planted in the 17th century.

TREES ON THE MOON!

Fi Young

Very apt for the anniversary of the Apollo 11 Moon Landing - Trees went to the Moon! Yes really, well actually it was 500 seeds packed into five small canisters - one for each tree species: Loblolly Pine (*Pinus taeda*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), Redwood (*Sequoia sp.*) and Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*).

Unfortunately, the seeds did not get the chance to land, but instead orbited the Moon in the February 1971 Apollo 14 Command Module 'Kitty Hawk' piloted by Stuart Roosa. The story goes that Stuart, a forestry smoke jumper, was contacted by the Chief of US Forest Service Ed Cliff and asked to take the seeds in his personal kit and return them to Earth for germination. Once back on Earth the canisters burst open during decontamination procedures mixing them all up. 420 seeds germinated and the saplings, now 50 year old trees, are known as 'The Moon' trees.

Some saplings were kept and compared with the growth of seeds that remained on Earth. The experiment discovered no significant differences between the saplings after 20 years. Most of the seeds were given away to forestry organisations in 1975/76. However, records are sketchy about where they all ended up. The majority were grown in the US, and one, a Loblolly Pine, was planted in the grounds of the White House on 19th January 1977. It is known that a Sweetgum and a Redwood definitely made the journey safely to Brasilia, the Capital of Brazil, and the IBAMA Institute.

And were the trees successful? Well, yes and no! Of the 91 trees listed 26 are now dead including the White House tree. However, it's good to hear that a second generation of 'Moon Trees' has been grown from seeds or taken as cuttings. According to Dr David Williams at NASA Goddard Space Flight Centre, the latest second generation planting, a sycamore, was on 13th July 2016 at the Paper Products Company in Fairfield, Ohio, USA.

It's a fascinating story and if you should find a 'Moon Tree' on your travels do contact NASA and let them know!

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

When replying to an email from CleanerandGreener@wokingham.gov.uk, my spell checker wanted to replace 'CleanerandGreener' with 'Great-grandchildren'.

Thanks to The Wokingham Paper and The Little Free Library for permission to use their photos.

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES & READING

www.earleyenvironmentalgroup.co.uk/News/RailwayWorks.asp - detailed plans from Network Rail

www.vdberk.co.uk/trees/ - details of 1600 trees & shrubs, with a good search facility; you can download information on any particular tree as a pdf

www.wokingham.gov.uk/council-and-meetings/ - links to e-petitions, videos of council meetings and much more

www.forestresearch.gov.uk/research/i-tree-eco/urbancanopycover/ - UK urban tree cover and interactive map

www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk/parks/ - parks in Wokingham Town

www.youtube.com/watch?v=BsG88orHAfA - Glynn Percival describes biochar and ash die-back

Some sources used in this issue: all web pages accessed 25-08-2019 (unless stated otherwise)

p2-Tree-watching: www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/29/ethiopia-plants-250m-trees-in-a-day-to-help-tackle-climate-crisis

<https://blogs.tcv.org.uk/tcv-scotland/uncategorized/2017/01/13/dead-good-deadwood-blog-whats-good-deadwood/>

<https://littlefreelibrary.org/librarian-transforms-110-year-old-tree-into-jaw-dropping-little-free-library/>

www.wokinghampaper.co.uk/yes-deer-new-bench-sculpture-unveiled-in-matthewsgreen-farms-old-forest-meadows/

p4-Tree cover: <https://wdvta.org.uk/report10.php> ; <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/research/i-tree-eco/urbancanopycover/>

p5-epetition: <https://wokingham.moderngov.co.uk/mgEPetitionDisplay.aspx?ID=87&RPID=4137057&HPID=4137057>

p6-Tree planting: www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/jul/04/planting-billions-trees-best-tackle-climate-crisis-scientists-canopy-emissions ;

www.youtube.com/watch?v=BsG88orHAfA

p7-Did you know?: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BsG88orHAfA> ; Farming Today 23/08/2019 (www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0007rmq)

p11-Species in Focus: Mitchell, Alan (1974) 'A Field Guide to the Trees of Britain and Northern Europe' ISBN 0 00 212035 6; White, John (1998)

'Estimating the Age of Large and Veteran Trees in Britain' Information Note 12 pub Forestry Commission129; Tudge, Colin (2005) 'The Secret Life

of Trees' ISBN 978 0 14 101293 3; Arboricultural Association Tree Management leaflet no 4); www.treeregister.org/ (database accessed May 2013)

www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/17123#/summary ; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Araucaria_araucana ; <https://globaltrees.org/threatened-trees/trees/monkey-puzzle/> ;

http://rchn.biologiachile.cl/pdfs/2001/3/Lusk_2001.pdf ; <https://monkeypuzzletrees.wordpress.com/> ;

<http://monkeymap.blogspot.com/?view=mosaic> p12-Remarkable trees: www.holker.co.uk/holker-great-lime

p12-Moon trees: https://nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/planetary/lunar/moon_tree.html ; https://nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/planetary/lunar/moon_trees/univ_florida_tree.html

https://nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/planetary/lunar/moon_trees/cincinnati_tree.html ;

https://nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/planetary/lunar/moon_trees/second_gen_moon_tree.html ;

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: 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.