Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association

Tree Watch

Issue 44 February 2020

On 3rd February, we had 7,798 trees in our database and 11,546 photographs

Welcome to the latest issue of Tree Watch.

We've made a good start to the year, with Jon Banks, from Bartlett Tree Experts, giving us a very informative talk about the various threats to our trees that result, directly and indirectly from drought. Because of the talk in January, our usual post-Christmas walk and lunch was held at the beginning of February, the day before Storm Ciara. The weather was excellent, although it was very muddy under-foot. It was in Fox Hill Woods led by our Tree Warden coordinator, Stephanie McKay. The photos here were taken on this walk. There is a lot of concern about the future of these woods (as mentioned in previous issues).

The Fox Hill Conservation project is one of the three green token schemes in the Wokingham Waitrose this month. Let's hope they get a lot of support!

Our next event is our AGM on Tuesday 24th March. We are very pleased that Cllr Gregor Murray, the WBC Executive Member for Climate Emergency, has agreed to talk to us on "*The Role of Trees in the Climate Emergency Plans for Wokingham Borough*'. Do come if you can.

The next issue of Tree Watch will be May 2020 and the copy deadline is 30th April. 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:-

Events – March-May 2020

- **Tuesday 24th March – 19:30 - St Paul's Parish Rooms – AGM and talk by Cllr Gregor Murray, WBC Executive Member for Climate Emergency '*The Role of Trees in the Climate Emergency Plans for Wokingham Borough*' - Free, donations welcome. Free car park adjacent.**
- **Thursday 21st May – 19:30 – Talk: '*Managing a Woodland – Holt Copse and Joel Park, Wokingham*' - Michael Saynor and Barbara Stagles - St Paul's Parish Rooms - £4**

Non-WDVTA events:

- **4th Match – 17th May - The Hayward Gallery, London - exhibition '*Among the Trees*' exploring our relationships with trees and forests: www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/exhibitions/hayward-gallery-art/among-the-trees**

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

TREE WATCHING FROM MY CHAIR

Alison Griffin

Journalists always now report around the middle of January that we are in *"the most depressing week of the year"*. That happened to be on the radio one morning this year just as I was looking out of my bedroom and saw that the hazel catkins were fully open, a lovely golden display in morning sunshine. There isn't a 'depressing' time of year with trees, each month and season has its own delights. Winter to me means enjoying the tracery of the tree shapes, and for the last few weeks I've also spent a few moments each day enjoying watching the hazel catkins in different light and wind conditions. By the time you are reading this piece, some trees will be in blossom and spring will be following soon (we hope).

In the last Tree Watch I included a photograph of the autumn colours of a narrow-leaved ash planted near the Carnival car park in Wokingham. Sadly, most of the trees around the Carnival swimming pool have recently been felled prior to the redevelopment of the pool complex later this year. Did I jinx the tree by including it? Maybe we can see if narrow-leaved ash can be included in the planting of the redeveloped site. This possible jinxing reminded me of another pair of trees MRNs 1959 and 1960 in Matthewsgreen, Emmbrook. In August 2016 I wrote about how well some of the new Wokingham developments were protecting trees and used a photograph of these two trees. In the following issue I had to report that one of the trees had been felled. Well, now the development around the remaining tree has been completed and I've just sent this latest photograph to Elaine to update our records.

This photo sequence show MRN 1959 in July 2008 and July 2016 (right-hand tree); November 2016 and (below) February 2020.

The left-hand tree in the top two photos is MRN 1960, which was felled in summer 2016.

If there are developments near you, do send Elaine photographs of any recorded trees whose settings have changed, so we can track these changes in our database.

Ancient Woodland

Elaine and I recently had a query about whether we knew where there are areas of designated 'ancient woodland' around the Borough. The council commissioned TVERC in 2014 to undertake a review and their results are all visible on the WBC map *(as described in last February's Tree Watch #40 page 6)*. Follow this link and expand the '*Planning Constraints*' level and click on '*Trees and Landscapes*'; expand that level, then you can select the '*Ancient Woodland*' level. You may want to deselect other options as the different layers can be confusing, but you need to zoom in a few times before the shaded green areas of designated ancient woodland are shown.

[NB: If you'd like a list of these ancient woodlands for your town/parish let me know – Ed]

Current activities

Meeting with Borough councillors and officers

We have recently had a follow up meeting with the councillors and officers responsible for the Environment. The project to produce a Tree Strategy for the Borough is being planned and funding for the resources needed should be identified in the budget process this spring.

The Borough Council has recently announced its plans to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. One of the eight key areas identified to achieve the goal is to increase the carbon sequestration through greening the environment. The plans also include planting 250,000 trees over the next 5 years.

We discussed the issue of substantial failure rates in mass tree plantings and suggested that new strategies to increase the survival rates need to be included in the more detailed plans as they are developed.

We will hear more about these plans at our AGM (see event details on page 2) as Cllr Gregor Murray, Executive Member for Climate Emergency, will be coming to speak to us about '*The role of Trees in the Climate Emergency Plans for Wokingham Borough*'.

Dead trees on developments

This project started last summer and we heard this week of at least two sites on our list where the developers have gone back and planted replacement trees. As trees come into leaf this year, please do check on new plantings to see if the trees are healthy and do let us know where dead trees have been replaced and of any new areas of 'dead trees' on developments. We are keeping the councillors for the environment and the relevant borough officers aware of our list and give them an update when we meet.

Elm Trees

You might also recall that in the November 2018 Tree Watch, Elaine included an article about the local butterfly conservation group planting some European elm saplings to try to increase the population of the white-letter hairstreak butterfly which breeds only on elm. Last winter (2018/19) we helped plant some of their saplings in Dinton, Charvil and Earley. In January this year they have planted a further 20 in four areas around Wokingham. Thank you to those of you who turned out to help. Peter Cuss from the local Butterfly Conservation group is leading this project and took this photograph of their 200th tree being planted in Kentwood Meadows off Warren House Road.

Also in January, a new sculpture was placed in the redeveloped Elms Field in Wokingham town centre, sponsored by the Wokingham Society. When they were commissioning the sculpture, they asked us about elm trees and we mentioned this now rare butterfly that is dependent on elm. We are delighted they have included elms leaves and the butterfly in the final design as you can see. Hedges within the park have been planted with wych elm too, reflecting the park's name.

In the last Tree Watch there was an interesting article by Fi Young on the beetle and virus that brought Dutch elm disease to the UK in the 1970s. In December I spotted a BBC news item on a new report sounding hopeful about bringing elm trees back to the UK. A few more mature elms that have not succumbed to the disease have been identified and research results from breeding disease-resistant elms are positive. We are still many years away from confirming that these new genetic variants will be able to grow to fully mature specimens, but meanwhile we can continue to support any research and initiatives to achieve that aim.

Trees in the media

Different 'tree' topics continue to be regularly covered in the media. As well as the elm tree research above, the Turner's oak in Kew Gardens was recently in the news again. This is the tree that was shown to us on our visit to the gardens many years ago. In the storm of 1987 it was lifted out of the ground and then dropped back into place, but the resulting improvement in its well-being led to the development of the 'air spade' to aerate compacted soil around trees. It was back in the news again as Tony Kirkham talked about it in the BBC Witness History series. *[After our visit to Kew in 2009, Ray Stagles, our founder secretary, wrote a poem about this tree - see Tree Watch # 32, p7.]*

How do Ginkgo biloba trees manage to survive for more than 1000 years?

Research published by American and Chinese scientists has reported that young and old ginkgo trees produce chemicals that fight off effects caused by pathogens, drought and other environmental stresses. They also studied the genetics of the trees and found that the genes relating to ageing do not automatically switch on at a certain point in time, as they do in most other plants. The scientists suspect these genetic factors may be similar

in other long-lived trees such as giant redwood. The media report on this work also made the very valid comment that understanding why some trees live to great ages is important as it could help to predict the characteristics that will enable trees to cope with changing conditions like climate change.

Veteran Tree Survey snapshot

TOWNS/PARISHES

17

Parishes/Towns in Wokingham Borough

6

Surveys completed: Barkham, Earley, Ruscombe, Shinfield, Twyford, Wokingham Town

7

Nearly complete: Arborfield, Finchampstead, Hurst, Wargrave, Winnersh, Woodley, Wokingham Without

3

Being verified: Charvil, Remenham Sonning

1

Hardly started: *Swallowfield*

THE VETERAN TREE SURVEY

As described in the last issue, after the decision to complete our veteran tree survey next year, there has been a very encouraging revised interest in this project, with many more trees being added to our database. The winter months can be good for surveying trees, but we are going to wait until March for the "blitz" days, when we ask as many of you as possible to join us in our attempt to complete the survey in those parishes not already completed. I'll sent a note to all members when these blitz days have been arranged. In the meantime, if you want to help us complete our veteran tree survey, please let me know (email datamanager).

REPRIEVE FOR VETERAN OAK

Anne Booth

Just before Christmas, on 18th December, WDVTA had an email from Chris Hannington, Team Leader for Trees & Landscape at Wokingham Borough Council, about a threat to one of our trees in Earley. An application to fell the oak, MRN 1664 in our database, had been submitted because of a claim that it was causing subsidence to a nearby property; planning application number 192854. The tree had a TPO which was why local councillors and the Parish Council were alerted. As it was on our WDVTA database, we were copied on the email. Attention was drawn to a previous and possibly related application (no 181259) in 2018 for side and rear extensions to the property which had been refused. Concerns were raised then over the likely impacts on trees and landscape.

As Sheila Crowson and I are the Earley coordinators, we were best placed to help the tree initially. We know it well as it is on the footpath leading from Laurel Park down to Maiden Place shops, church and community centre, and is well seen from Rushey Way, one of the main routes through Lower Earley. The tree itself is a very fine example of a mature oak, with no sign of disease. I re-measured it and the girth is now 4.05m, up from 3.93m when originally surveyed in 2008.

I sent a request to the Earley Town Council Town Clerk to circulate all councillors with an explanatory email and to ask for their help in opposing the application. Just before Christmas wasn't the easiest time to get through to people, but quite a few ETC councillors did get their objections in, well before the end date for consultation. It was hard to get information from WBC about the case because of the holiday.

I printed off the application notice with a plea for comments to be sent to WBC, and tied it to the tree. I did, after a lot of thought, put it on the Earley Environmental Group Facebook page. It was shared to a number of other sites, including the Earley Residents Discussion Group, and this generated more objections.

The application was refused! The letter of refusal by Chris Hannington is long and comprehensive and contains a very good rebuttal of the insurer's survey evidence. Here is his Summary:

'The evidence for this veteran tree being implicated in the subsidence is not full and conclusive, alternative remedies other than tree removal have not been appropriately considered, and no appropriate mitigation or compensation strategies has been suggested. The tree has enhanced visual, biodiversity and cultural amenity as discussed above.

As discussed above approval of this application would not meet Local Plan, Core Strategy or NPPF policy requirements for approval. Approval of this application would also be contrary to the Council's duty under paragraph 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.'

The number of objections from the public was noted (35 in total) with none in support of the scheme. It was stated that the tree appears on the WDVTA survey map and that many of the objectors included in their comments that it was a veteran. The decision letter, original application and arboricultural survey are on the WBC planning application website and a link to those documents is attached to our database record.

I must admit I was trying to get used to losing this tree, as this has happened before in the area, so I am thrilled at the outcome. There may be an appeal but until that happens, we can feel happy.

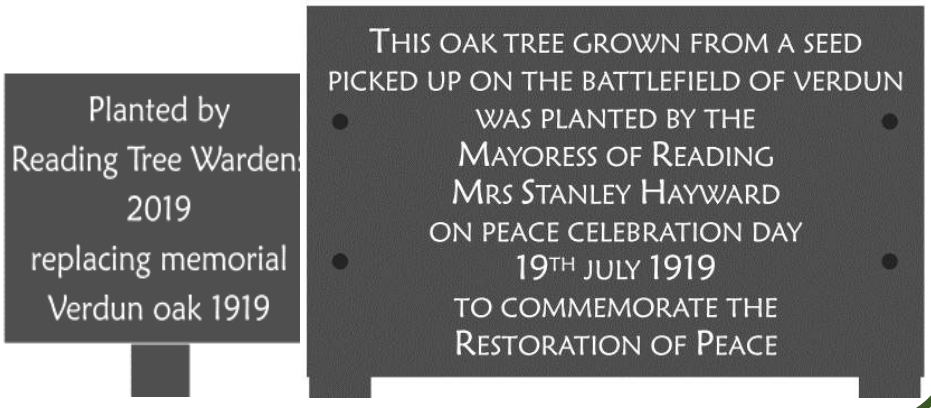
[Many thanks to Anne, who did so much to promote objections to this felling application. Do read the excellent refusal letter – it contains much that can be used to object to future applications to fell. - Ed]

Just too late for the last issue, we had another example of WBC's concern for trees. Two notable mature trees had been felled in Oxford Road, Wokingham. They had high amenity value, being viewed from the Oxford Road, associated local roads and the national train line. The Council issued TPO 1687/2019 to protect the remaining trees and preserve the amenity they offered to the road and associated area. This TPO covers 14 individual trees (nine oaks, one ash, a cherry, a birch and a cypress) and two groups. This was confirmed on 28th November 2019.

READING'S VERDUN OAKS

In the last issue *(page 12)*, I described the planting of a replacement Verdun Oak. in Prospect Park.

The RTWN have now installed plaques for this tree and for the original sessile oak in the Forbury Gardens.



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

HCCV – Holt Copse Conservation Volunteers

TDAG - The Trees and Design Action Group

RTWN – Reading Tree Warden Network

LWT – Lavell's Wetland Trust

IYPH – International Year of Plant Health *(see page 13)*

IDENTIFYING TREES IN WINTER

Sarah Swatridge

On a very wet Sunday afternoon in January, I met with a group of Reading Tree Wardens at Dinton Pastures. We were led by a very knowledgeable volunteer called Marcus Wheeler.

Dinton is an ideal choice for just such a winter's walk. There are a wide variety of trees in a relatively small area. About twenty people assembled at the Dragonfly café. Almost immediately our attention was drawn to a Sycamore. We discussed its bark and found one or two seeds hanging on as if to confirm the tree's identity.

There were numerous Ash trees and, although in winter we couldn't tell the health of the tree, we were informed that the younger trees were already showing signs of Ash Dieback, whereas, so far, the more mature trees were not.

We easily identified Silver Birch trees by their distinctive bark and to my delight later saw some Downy Birch trees, with a more orange-like wash over their trunks.

Along the banks of the lakes we found, not surprisingly, Weeping Willow and Crack Willow, as well as Alder. I didn't realise that Alder is used in boat building - because it is hard-wearing even when wet.

Dinton is home to many Oak trees, identified at this time of year by their shape and often a few remaining leaves. Interestingly we saw an example of an Evergreen Oak which didn't look very much like an oak at all. We also saw a very impressive Veteran Boundary oak *(photo left)*; recorded on our database as MRN 361.

We found Dogwood with its distinctive red twigs; pollarded Hazel with yellow catkins and a London Plane with the large circular seed heads. We saw White Poplar, surrounded by saplings, with bark that resembled a cheese grater *(photo left)*.

We came across many Limes easily identified by their seeds and leaves still on the trees. There was an example of a Cherry, identified by its bark and a Horse chestnut with large, sticky buds on the ends of the branches.

Despite being cold and dripping wet by the end of the walk, I was pleased to have learnt a few things and delighted to realise that all my efforts over the last year to learn more about trees is paying off. I certainly felt more confident. I would definitely recommend having a look at the Reading Tree Warden website. They seem a very active group with at least four walks a year.

TREE WALKS FROM RTWN

This seems a good time to remind you of the Tree Walks leaflets that the Reading Tree Warden Network (RTWN) have produced. They can be downloaded from their website (select "Walks"). They have just produced a new one: *"Winter Tree Walk in Prospect Park"*. The others are: *'Caversham Tree Walk'; 'Coley Park Meadow Walk'; 'Palmer Park to Redlands Walk'; 'Reading Town Centre Historical Tree Trail'; 'Tilehurst Old Village Tree Trail' and 'Town Boundary Riverside Walk'*. I hope we can produce some more walks leaflets like these for Wokingham.

A GREAT READ — 'Wilding' *by* Isabella Tree (2018) — *Barbara Stagles*

Many people will have heard about the ground breaking 'rewilding' project at Knepp in West Sussex where Isabella Tree and her husband Charlie Burrell have allowed their 3,500 acres farm to *'go back to nature'*. What they may not know is that a major influence in the Burrells making this leap of faith was a 550-year-old oak tree that may have started life during the Wars of the Roses.

In the opening chapter of her eminently readable and engaging account of the 20-year-old project, Isabella Tree describes a meeting with a *'Remarkable Man under a Remarkable Tree'*. This man was none other than Ted Green of the Ancient Tree Forum who inspired us in the early days of WDVTA and was with us when we celebrated our ten- year anniversary.

Whilst the Burrells wondered how long the old oak whose *'gigantic out-stretched limbs were threatening to tear it apart'* could last, Ted was optimistic: *'A bit of a haircut should do it – a little at a time over the next few years…….this old soul could see another four centuries'*. Ted explained how the apparent decrepitude of the oak was related to what was going on in the soil and how vulnerable the trees' roots were to ploughing and compaction from cattle.

The Burrells realised that this was a symptom of what had happened to the soil all over their farmland. Intensive farming over the years had taken its toll – no wonder the crops were failing. The following chapters describe with honesty and sharp detail how the Knepp wilding project developed – set-backs and opposition as well as successes. Now it boasts a fantastic increase in biodiversity including rare species such as the purple emperor butterflies, peregrine falcons and turtle doves (as depicted on the cover of the book). They have developed the site for visitors – see their website.

TREE COVER

In the August 2019 issue of Tree Watch, there was an article about using *iTree* to calculate tree cover *(page 5)*, with the resultant tree cover calculated for Wokingham's Towns and Parishes *(page 6)*.

There's been a lot of interest in these figures and I thought you might like to see some comparison of Wokingham with other local towns. The data below, for 2016, were calculated by Treeco$_2$nomics and are displayed on the 'Urban Tree Cover' website.

Town	% tree cover	area (hectares)	population
Bracknell	27.6	1,019	60,805
Wokingham	**27.4**	**1,435** *	**30,895**
Newbury	22	1,164	42,180
Reading	18.4	3,286	196,187
Maidenhead	17.8	540	41,957
Windsor	15.8	608	32,039
Basingstoke	15.8	1,618	73,103
Slough	13.8	2,807	154,969

** The area of Wokingham Town given on the Urban Tree Cover site is actually 435ha but this is presumably a typo because Government neighbourhood statistics for 2011 give the area of Wokingham Town as 1,427ha with a population of 30,690. The tree cover calculated by us in 2019 for Wokingham Town is 21.9%.*

This tree cover data is available as a map – you click on icons to get the stats – or as a table in a report on the 'Canopy Cover of England's Towns and Cities' (appendix A).

FAQ: WHAT TREE SPECIES SHOULD BE PLANTED

With greater emphasis on planting trees, it's important to choose species suitable for their future environment. Not all species make good street trees. This was one of the questions asked at the end of the talk by Jon Banks. He directed us to '*Trees and Design Action Group*' (TDAG) website. It has several guides, including methods of valuing trees and Tree Species Selection for Green Infrastructure. As well as the report, you can download a useful spreadsheet of species classified by potential tree size, crown characteristics, environmental tolerance, ornamental qualities and use (eg park, paved, transport corridor).

TREE WEEK PLANTING

During Tree Week last November (too late for the last issue), Shinfield Parish Council planted a replacement oak for MRN 1091. It is a 15-year-old, 6m tall tree. These photos show the official planting. It's W109 on our Commemorative and Special Trees Inventory. The left-hand photo, published in the Wokingham Paper, shows some Parish staff and councillors along with 4 and 5 year-old children from the adjacent Shinfield Infant School.

Jess Warren, Wokingham Paper, 17-Dec-2019

I haven't heard of any other Tree Week plantings in the Borough.

THE IMPORTANCE OF OLD TREES

In the August issue of Tree Watch *(page 6)* Will Tyler posed the question "*When a mature oak has been replaced by a sapling, I have often wondered how much this would affect the environment.*" An article in Nature goes some way to answer this important question. It set out to resolve the question of productivity of individual trees. Previous data had not determined whether absolute tree growth (and thus carbon accumulation) decreased, remained constant or increased as a tree aged. The authors of this paper analysed 403 tropical and temperate tree species, and showed that for most species mass growth rate increases continuously with tree size. This had not been previously assumed because increasing tree age is usually associated with declining leaf-level, and productivity is usually associated with leaf area. Large, old trees don't simply act as senescent carbon reservoirs, but actively fix large amounts of carbon, much more than smaller trees. The paper concluded that "*… a single big tree can add the same amount of carbon to the forest within a year as is contained in an entire mid-sized tree.*"

"I think there's a lot you can learn from a tree."

Stephen Cottrell, next Archbishop of York, BBC Radio4 *'PM'* 21-Feb-2020

KINGSTON LACY AVENUE

Linda Martin

A beech avenue, over two miles long, leads to the National Trust property of Kingston Lacy. It was planted in 1835. Replacements have been planted on both side. The beech trees were a birthday present from the owner of the estate to his mother. They were planted along a two-mile stretch of the newly built turnpike road which is now the B3082. There are 365 trees on one side of the road and 366 on the other, to represent a leap year. When I visited there was no one else there!

The photos below show the view driving along road between Wimborne Minster and Blandford Forum.

Above: View of the double avenue from the car park at Badbury Rings

New trees are being planted on both sides of the avenue:

In the gardens there is a cedar walk, a lime walk and an arboretum, as well as bluebell woods elsewhere on the estate.

[See last February's Tree Watch #40, page 12 for some photos of the spectacular lime walk.]

SPECIES IN FOCUS – LUCOMBE OAK - *QUERCUS x HISPANICA* 'LUCOMBEANA'

10 miscellaneous facts about the Lucombe Oak

1. The Lucombe Oak is a cross between Turkey Oak *(Quercus cerris)* and Cork Oak *(Q. suber).*
2. Turkey and Cork Oaks both grow wild in SW Europe, where they hybridise naturally, the hybrids being known as Spanish Oaks (*Q. x hispanica).*
3. The Cork Oak is evergreen and the Turkey Oak is deciduous. Except in harsh weather, the hybrids keep their leaves through winter, dropping them just before the new growth appears. Like Turkey Oak, the Lucombe Oak has leaves with pointed lobes and acorns with mossy cups. Lucombe Oaks produce fertile acorns and the resultant plants show considerable variation, making identification difficult in some cases!
4. In spite of its natural hybridization; in England it was originally raised by William Lucombe at his Exeter nursery in 1762. Although true Lucombe Oaks (or Exeter Oaks) are clones of the original tree, the name is generally used to refer to any hybrid between Turkey Oaks and Cork Oaks, and backcrosses of Lucombe Oak with Turkey Oak. However, other types are recognised, including *Q. x hispanica* 'Fulhamensis' – the Fulham Oak, which was probably "discovered" independently at Fulham soon after the Exeter one. In addition, there are two types of true Lucombe Oak, types A and B. Type A is more common around Exeter, and these trees are probably descendants of the first crosses of 1762; whilst type B is more common elsewhere, and may well relate to six seedlings that were selected for further propagation in 1789.
5. William Lucombe liked his oak so much that he felled the original tree in 1785 and kept the boards under his bed so his coffin could be made from them. By the time he died, aged 102, the planks had decayed and an alternative Lucombe Oak, from one of his early graft propagations, was used instead.
6. The most venerable Lucombe Oak, about 245 years old, is in Kew Gardens. It stands on a mound beside the Syon Vista, behind the Palm House. It was originally planted 20m to the north of its current site, sometime around 1773, but spoilt William Nesfield's design for the Syon Vista, and so in 1846 it was moved to make way for new plantings of Holm Oaks *(Quercus ilex).*
7. The champion Lucombe Oak (as recorded by the Tree Register) is in the grounds of Powis Castle.
8. Until February 2009, the largest Lucombe Oak in the world was in Phear Park in Devon. It had a girth of 8m and was 200 years old when it was blown down.
9. We have just four Lucombe oaks recorded in our database – two in Wargrave (MRNs 1642 *(photo top)* & 5834); one in Arborfield (MRN 5611) and one in Earley, on the Whiteknights campus of the University (MRN 5714 and #14 on their tree walk).
10. The Arborfield & Newlands Lucombe Oak is in the grounds of Redham House School (formally Bearwood College) and is particularly interesting because it has a very corky bark – much more corky than most specimens. With a girth of 5.7m at 1m, it is the largest of our four recorded Lucombe Oaks. The photos below show this Lucombe Oak and its corky bark.

Remarkable Trees

Anne Booth sent this photo of the Fingringhoe Oak.
"My brother is standing well back in case I push it over!"

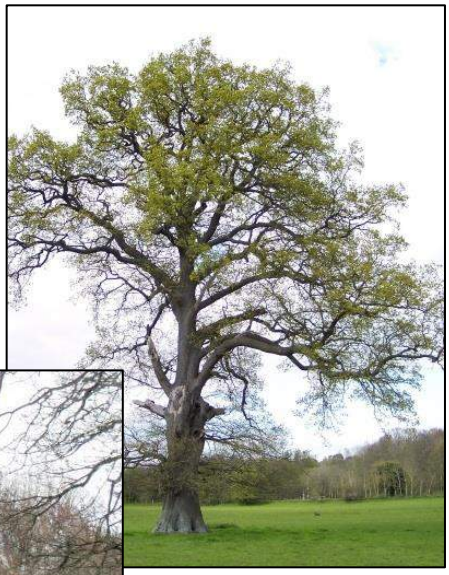
We visited my brother in Essex last summer and were just returning from a day at Fingringhoe Wick, the Essex Wildlife Trust bird reserve, when we stopped in the village to look in the church (locked). My disappointment soon vanished when we looked down the slope below the church and were amazed to see this wonderful oak tree *(Quercus robur)* in an idyllic position on a small green, next to the village primary school, with a large pond on its other side. As the closest thing to a tree expert in our party I answered the question *'what's the girth?'* with a tentative guess of 7 metres. I was surprised to find, on checking the Ancient Tree Inventory, that this was correct! And pleased that someone had recorded it in 2008. A note in that record states that the exposed roots were once covered by gravel which was removed for use in building many years ago. Because of this, the girth measurement was made at 2.5m. The record includes an extract from *'The Book of the English Oak'* by Charles Hurst (1910) in which the unusual amount of root exposure is attributed to the village poultry scratching away the earth which was then washed down into the pond by rain storms. He paints a vivid country scene of the pond as a *'muddy weed-grown pool where harvest-tired horses splash in cool summer evenings.'* He rated the tree very highly - *'Save the Major Oak I know of no tree whose wintry aspect is finer than the Oak of Fingringhoe'*. It still does have a large crown but several of its massive branches have been lopped, probably for stability.

Then and Now

You've probably seen this lovely photo of Corsican pines in the snow taken by Malcolm Inglis in 2010.
He went back to take one at the end of last year. At least they have survived and I hope they will be much appreciated by the children.
They are on the Montague Park estate in Wokingham Town (SU 82880 68660).

Sadly Departed – MRN 7370

The only victim of storm Ciara reported to us so far (by Michael Rea, who took these lovely photos) is this "battle-scarred" veteran in Wokingham Without. The trunk was snapped, leaving a 4m stump, which will hopefully re-sprout. With a girth of 6.6m when it was surveyed in April 2016, it's the sixth largest maiden oak in our database, with an estimated age of 500 years. It stands in an open field owned by Ludgrove School and used by a local farmer for grazing some 30 head of cattle.



According to a video clip on BBC News, trees don't tend to break until wind speeds reach 150 kph (94mph) and apparently this was known by both Leonardo da Vinci and Galileo. By combining Hooke's Law, Griffith's criterion and tree allometry, research has concluded that in winds of this speed 50% of trees will be damaged. This applies to all trees, both softwoods and hardwoods.

If you know of any of our trees that succumbed to either Storm Ciara or Storm Dennis, please let me know, including some photos if possible.

When Tree Planting is not good

On 21st February, Radio 4's *"Farming Today"* reported the planting of 1,800 trees on an area of species-rich grassland on a farm near Cumrew in Cumbria. The planting was instigated by Nestles and the trees were supplied by the Woodland Trust. Apparently, steps are being taken to remove the trees and repair the damage to this vitally important habitat.

Did you know?

The United Nations has declared 2020 as the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH)

…. And to make you smile:

THERE'S A YEAR 2020 BUG !!!

I'm sure you remember the Year 2000 bug. Apparently, it may be back. A lazy fix 20 years ago means the Y2K bug might be resurfacing in 2020. Tens of thousands of parking meters in New York City declined credit card transactions because of the date glitch and thousands of cash registers manufactured by Polish firm Novitus were unable to print receipts. The Y2K bug resulted from older systems using two digits for the year (to save memory) and 00 was interpreted as 1900 rather than 2000. Some lazy programmers fixed the Y2K bug by choosing 1920-2020 as the standard window (partly because its midpoint is 1970, and seconds from 1970/01/01 is known as Unix time). The assumption of course was that no-one would still be using old computer systems in 2020.

Another date storage problem also faces us in the year 2038 (but I won't be here to worry about that!).

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES – *LOCAL PARKS AND NATURE RESERVES*

http://keephatchfriends.blogspot.com/ Friends of Keephatch Local Nature Reserve

http://hccv.org.uk/ - Holt Copse Volunteers

http://lavells.org.uk/ Friends of Lavell's Lake

https://www.earley-tc.gov.uk/maiden-erlegh-nature-reserve/ - Maiden Erlegh Nature Reserve

https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/countryside-parks-and-conservation/country-parks/ - Country Parks in Wokingham Borough

https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/countryside-parks-and-conservation/country-parks/parks/ Map of local parks and play areas in Wokingham Borough

Some sources used in this issue: *all web pages accessed 22-02-2020 (unless stated otherwise)*
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p14: https://www.newscientist.com/article/2229238-a-lazy-fix-20-years-ago-means-the-y2k-bug-is-taking-down-computers-now/#ixzz6AdlIqLTT

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.