



On 19th November, we had **8,159** trees in our database and **12,354** photographs

Welcome to the latest issue of Tree Watch.

I hope you've been able to enjoy some lovely autumn colours during this latest lockdown. I've been particularly impressed by our English oaks. With the sun shining on them, the dark branches contrast with the orange leaves, and whilst other trees have lost all their leaves, many oaks are still resplendent. Beech trees have looked spectacular too - as shown on [page 7](#).

Autumn is also the time for fungi. There are two photos here of 'chicken of the woods' or sulphur polypore (*Laetiporus sulphureus*).

The third photo is an oak bracket (*Inonotus dryadeus*). Also called weeping polypore or weeping conk, it secretes an amber liquid which weeps from tubes in its upper surface.

All are on English oaks - MRNS [1971](#), [1095](#) and [8396](#).



If you haven't booked a place for Glynn Percival's on-line talk on Monday 30th November, it's not too late. Just go to our events [page](#). The link will be sent to everyone who's booked.

The next issue of Tree Watch will be February 2021 and the copy deadline is 31st January. 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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❖ Monday 30th November: on-line talk by Glynn Percival "What lurks within. The importance of endophytes for tree disease management." Book via our website and joining details will be sent to you: <https://wdvta.org.uk/events.php>

❖ January - date to be confirmed - A virtual winter walk around Charvil lead by Barry and Claire Andersen and Sarah Swatridge. Book via our website: <https://wdvta.org.uk/events.php>

Non-WDVTa events:

❖ Tuesday 8th December 14:00: Reading Tree Warden Network's public lecture is on-line this year. Glynn Percival will talk about the latest research into effective tree planting. To book a place and get joining instructions email rtwn2011@gmail.com

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

TREE WATCHING FROM MY CHAIR

Alison Griffin

I hope you are keeping well and managed to get away for a break over the summer and see friends and family members who live at some distance. I am writing in early November and have just re-read Tree Watch from August. The range of articles from members and all the links Elaine included make very interesting reading and on grey days and in the longer evenings you might like to (re)watch some of the video links.

The autumn colours have again given us much pleasure and I've particularly enjoyed watching the variation in colours across tree species and the rate at which different species lose their leaves. Although driving less, I did pass the Arborfield roundabout's liquid amber tree when it was a glorious maroon. I also caught the oak trees at California in Finchampstead when the red oaks were all scarlet and the English oaks were all still completely green, just a few days of the year when the two are so easy to distinguish. The warm spring gave us prolific oak catkins so it was no surprise that this has been a mast year. A month ago, our road was a pale brown colour from a covering of mashed acorns, now of course it is yellow as the winds bring the oak leaves down.



Thank you to all of you who have been active with surveying over the summer. As you know, we will be closing the survey in April next year and are looking for help over the winter and spring to try to cover as many of the remaining areas in the borough as possible. So please, if you have any spare time, get in touch and we would appreciate whatever help you can offer.

In the last Tree Watch there were references to weird and wonderful shaped trees. I've thought of a few, including our conjoined 'Gemini' oaks (MRNs [2814](#) & [2815](#)) in Earley. I also came across the 'Camperdown elm' in a book I was reading. This is a natural mutation of wych elm (also known as Scots elm) and its form is extremely convoluted. The trees rarely grow over 3m tall but the branches can weep to the ground and double back to create the most bizarre shapes. The original tree is on the Camperdown estate near Dundee and many cuttings were taken and distributed in the nineteenth century. One of the oddest shaped and oldest [examples](#) is in Prospect Park, New York (no, not Reading) planted in 1872. Do send us any photographs you may have of this unusual species.

Forum meeting

Both our Committee and Forum meetings are continuing through Zoom and overall it is working well, despite some inevitable occasional internet connection glitches. Our recent Forum meeting at the start of November was busy and covered numerous topics and updates from around the parishes, several of which are reported in this newsletter. We welcomed a new member, Kirsty Ross, who has just received 210 saplings from the Woodland Trust that will soon be planted around Winnersh.

We had expected to discuss plans for tree planting events in National Tree week (November 28th - December 6th), but with the new Covid-19 lockdown, planting events are being postponed until December or January. When confirmed we will publish details on the Events page of the website.

We also heard that some of the plaques for the Jubilee Trees have started to rot. If you live near a jubilee tree, could you check on the status of the plaque and send us a message about whether it is also rotting?

At the end of the meeting Maggie Sanderson said she had seen a horse chestnut in Hurst that briefly came into flower in October and asked if anyone else had seen unseasonal tree flowering. If you have seen any unusual sights like this, do let us know.

8000th tree

In 2011 we reached 5000 trees in the survey and celebrated this milestone. MRN 5297 was our 5000th tree. We had an article and photograph in the local press and later on, in 2018, the same tree was formally named 'The Walter Oak'. At the recent Forum meeting we considered several recently surveyed trees that we could nominate as our 8000th tree. We shortlisted these to three and had an excellent discussion about the merits of each one before reaching a (unanimous) decision.



- MRN 8670 (left) - a maiden English oak, 6.18m girth, in Finchampstead. The tree is in open land at the moment but the area will become a new SANG as the housing developments around it are built. This tree was on the front page of the last Tree Watch. We have recorded only about 20 English oaks as large as this and it is probably around 400 years old.
- MRN 8646 (centre) - a maiden English oak, 4.25m girth, in Hurst. The tree is on the boundary of the Hurst cricket club. It has a very large crack down the trunk opening into a large void. Luckily this faces away from the field so cricket balls don't get lost inside! It is a local landmark being both very central to the village and opposite the entrance to the club. Probably about 250 years old.
- MRN 8847 (right) - a multi stem crack willow, 8m girth at 0.5m, in Twyford. This is the largest willow we have recorded and, like many others, may be a lapsed coppiced tree. Wood from these was historically used in the local osier industry. It has just been uncovered during work on the Loddon Nature Reserve and there are other willows along the bank of Old River that have yet to be cleared and recorded. The two straight upright trunks in the photo are not part of the willow, but are both hawthorn trees which will be removed. Age, unknown, just very old!

Our decision was for MRN 8670 to be called our 8000th tree. Gordon Veitch will work with the site developers to arrange a publicity event for the tree in the spring when the ground will be less wet (and Covid-19 restrictions reduced). He will also discuss with them giving the tree a name appropriate to the site.

Trees in the Media

The 'Tree of the Year' competition has been held this year with the 'Happy Man Tree' in Hackney, 'The Survivor Tree' in the Carrifran Valley in Scotland and 'The Chapter House Tree' in Port Talbot being the winners for England, Scotland and Wales. Look at the [website](#), read the stories and watch the videos about these three trees. Covering an urban tree threatened with felling, the replanting of a Scottish valley and an historic tree that has featured in Dr Who, the three trees all have interesting stories, are all very different, and all very worthy winners.

Media coverage of tree planting initiatives are always numerous at this time of year. Take a look at the TCV (The Conservation Volunteers) '[I Dig Trees](#)' publicity as an example. Elizabeth French alerted me to the '[Stump up for Trees](#)' campaign to plant a million trees in the Brecon Beacons. This deserves to succeed after its organisers had their slogan cut into the bracken on a hillside to be planted this winter. The slogan is not just cut out in English, but in Welsh too. Just a shame that with Covid-19 restrictions, there will have been fewer visitors to the Beacons this autumn to see their unique hillside marketing message, but it deservedly did get very wide publicity.

Whilst our surveying activities, group conservation work and meetings are limited by Covid-19 constraints, do please continue to look at your local trees and report any issues, such as pests and diseases, that you see. If you have run out of lockdown activities and have time to offer, do get in touch, especially for help with the remaining surveying work. I am pleased that we are arranging on-line talks and events over the next few months and I hope you will join us for these. Keep safe and well and I hope we can resume our normal lives soon.

SOME GOOD NEWS

Sarah Swatridge and Alison Griffin



What is missing from these two photographs and why the 'good news' headline?

To celebrate the Tree Warden Scheme's 30th Anniversary in 2020, the Tree Council mailed all tree wardens in late September to offer thirty elm trees for planting by tree wardens in their local network areas. Sarah submitted an application with help from Barry and Claire Andersen and with the support of Charvil Parish Council. Their proposed site is near the Charvil pavilion on the top of the mound in the photograph. Alison proposed 'An elm for Elms Field' and needed approval from both the borough and town councils as one owns the land and the other manages the park. She was helped by several of the town's tree wardens and by Peter Must of the Wokingham Society. The proposed site is south of the play area in the grass in the middle of the photograph.

Despite the Tree Council receiving significantly more than 30 applications both of our applications were successful. Reading Tree Warden Network was also successful with their application, which means that at least 10% of the 30 elms have been awarded to Berkshire.

The trees are *Ulmus* '[New Horizon](#)' and about 3m high now. They will grow to 12m in height with a spread of 4.5m after 25 years. They are an American bred [hybrid cultivar](#) from a Japanese and a Siberian elm (*U. davidiana* var *japonica* x *U. pumila*) and have a compact pyramidal form. They are 100% Dutch elm

disease resistant and suitable for all soil types, tolerant of urban conditions, a wide range of temperatures, windy sites and even waterlogging. The application form had a link to a Hillier YouTube [video](#) which describes the trees. Do watch it, we guarantee it will make you smile!

The trees were originally planned for delivery in late November for planting in National Tree Week (November 28th to December 6th this year). With the new lockdown, planting events in that week have all been cancelled and the new delivery timing won't be known until December at the earliest. Once the planting date(s) have been agreed, we'll publish the details on the website.

ELM TREES

Alison Griffin

Just as we received the good news about the elms trees (see the article above) we also heard that the elm tree (W001) we planted in Twyford in 2013 has died. The photo shows Annette Greathead, Doug Brown, Stephen Loyd and Michael Rea planting it. We bought this sapling with an award from the Tree Council and it did well until autumn 2017 when it looked sick and Dutch elm disease (DED) was diagnosed. When looked at in May and November of 2018 the tree looked healthy again. However, a local resident said it had died with mites under lesions in its bark. The tree we planted was a Field Elm (*Ulmus minor subsp. minor*), an East Anglian variety of narrow-leaved elm which, in 2013, were reported to be DED resistant.

This sent me off looking at different elm varieties and their resilience to DED. The English elm (*Ulmus procera*) has/had very little genetic variation across the UK and this lack of diversity meant that all elm trees were susceptible to DED when it arrived in the 1960s. The Camperdown elm is *Ulmus glabra* 'Camperdownii' and like all wych elm, *U. glabra*, is susceptible to DED although not as completely devastated by it as the English elm. Given the beetle that carries the fungus that causes DED does not normally detect trees until they are a reasonable height, the Camperdown elm appears to evade detection with its low and convoluted habit.

As mentioned above, the new elms are 100% DED resistant and so we are hopeful that these trees will be healthy for many years.



WHITE ELMS IN CHARVIL

Sarah Swatridge

You may recall that five European white elms were planted in Charvil in December 2018 as part of the Hairstreak Project. I thought you might be interested in a little update. On 15th October the Farming Today programme featured an item about making a fish refuge pool so that mature fish can rest and juveniles can grow. This Backwater Creation Project, is a collaborative project between the Loddon Fisheries and Conservation Consultative (LFCC), WBC, the Environment Agency, the Loddon Catchment partnership and the South East Rivers Trust (SERT). The radio programme referred to Twyford, but it is actually in Charvil Water Meadows where we have two (of the five) white elms growing. The landscape has changed completely and one



elm (#139) had been replanted. Unfortunately it was replanted only about 7 feet from a young, but established oak tree. I sought advice from Stephen Loyd, our Lead Tree Warden. He agreed we needed to move the elm. We found a suitable location nearby and needed to move it quickly as the new backwater was scheduled to be landscaped soon. Even though it is not yet finished, they have made a good job of the area (this photo of the back water was taken on 22nd October).

Elm 139 is now about 2 metres tall, and almost two years old. The other four are all fine, growing at different rates but alive. Elm 142 has been nibbled by deer and we are discussing the best way forward with this. I shall continue checking all five elms as usual.

This month's

A C R O N Y M

ELM - Environmental Land Management

This is part of the new agriculture bill and will replace the Countryside Stewardship schemes offered to farmers. It is scheduled to start in 2024, following a national pilot beginning in late 2021.

TREE WARDEN CONFERENCE

This year's Tree Warden conference was on-line, and attended by over 150 people, although 200 registered for it. It celebrated 30 years of Tree Wardening and they've produced a little 'thank you' [video](#). The conference was recorded, so if you missed it you can watch the edited 3-hour [version](#).

If you are as old as me, you may well remember 'Plant a Tree in '73' followed by 'and one more in '74'. This led to the Tree Council being formed in 1974 and the first 'Tree Week'. The Tree Warden scheme didn't start until 1990.

There is yet another map of trees for you to look at and contribute to. The Tree Council has set up a [map](#) of remarkable trees. You can nominate one and search a map for trees already recorded. There's no search box, you just scan the map. I'm not sure how many people are aware of this, because there are not many trees on the map. The nearest to Wokingham are over 17 miles away - in Wraysbury and Egham (both Tree Council jubilee trees).



Jon Stokes was keen to promote two important aspects: reporting unusual symptoms on trees and the need for all parish and local councils to have a Tree Strategy.

Several speakers stressed the importance of citizen science in reporting pests and diseases of trees, whether to Forest Research, *Observatree*, *Tree Alert* or *OPAL*. Ana Perez-Sierra, from Forest Research, told us to report anything/everything of concern. They check (and reply to) every report

For the period April 2019-March 2020, the most reported problem was oak processionary moth (50% - 334 cases); with the oriental chestnut gall wasp in second place (12% - 78 reports). Last on the list was the elm zig-zag sawfly, which was only detected 2 years ago. Not surprisingly, the most reported disease since the scheme started is ash dieback followed by honey fungus.

The first reports of oriental chestnut gall wasp and of ash dieback in the wild were through citizen science; the latter to Tree Alert; emphasising the importance of reporting any unusual symptoms on trees to *Tree Alert*. Presumably you only need send your report to one of these organisations.

The need for a phone app to identify pests and diseases was mentioned, but there was no news about one being developed. Next year, the Tree Council will be launching new guidelines on tree health and a parish toolkit for ash dieback.

One of the diseases high-lighted was *Xylella fastidiofa*, a bacterial pathogen transmitted by sap-sucking insects. It's not present in the UK yet (as far as is known of course), but we need to know the distribution of potential insect vectors, to be ready if the pathogen does arrive. Several insects, including spittlebugs, which are not a problem in themselves, could become vectors.

According to DEFRA, the current outbreaks of most concern are: European spruce bark beetle (introduced

in 2018), acute oak decline (1980s) and ash dieback (2012). On the list of diseases to keep out of the UK, the top three are *Xylella*, emerald ash borer (which isn't in Europe yet) and plane wilt.

Finally, we heard about the '*TreeTalker*' scheme, which isn't about people talking to trees, but getting trees to tell us how they are doing. It monitors micro-climate, growth, quality of the foliage and water movement within the tree. A pilot was started in Norfolk at the end of September.

FAVOURITE TREES

Liz Webster, who's surveying Fox Hill Woods in Woosehill, with Stephanie McKay, posted these photos of her favourite trees in the Friends of Fox Hill [Facebook](#).

She said "This is my favourite tree. I thought it was the largest beech in Fox Hill until someone showed me a larger one. I love the way it bends and it reminds me of an Ent from the Hobbit. I have been told that a bunch of saplings may have been planted together which combined to create the tree we see today." [See Ents from The Lord of the Rings.]

It's in the south east corner of Fox Hill, near the Limmerhill entrance. As you approach the entrance from the Limmerhill road, turn right and take the perimeter path north to the Dorset way entrance. The tree can be found in the middle of the path.

The one below, posted this month, is located in the Gruffalo woods, in the north west corner of Fox Hill, just north of Rhododendron Walk.



THEN AND NOW

Diana Thorne



Tree MRN 5282 was living happily on the NW of the Swallowfield Road, opposite Arborfield Lodge. We photographed it and recorded its presence in July 2011.

Whilst driving on the Swallowfield Road towards Arborfield, I noticed that the same tree appeared to have moved itself to the SE of the road. The hedgerow nearby seemed to have disappeared although a nearby telegraph pole was still apparent. Line road markings were no longer visible and four low road barriers had appeared!

We photographed this mobile tree on at the end of August as evidence.

Of course, the line of the Swallowfield Road has been altered and it is so pleasing to see that such consideration has been given to this lovely old oak.



EARLEY COMMUNITY ORCHARD

There are several community orchards in the Borough, including three in Earley. The ones we know about are listed in our Commemorative and Special Inventory, but I'm sure there are more.

As far as I can see the best run orchard is the Laurel Park one in Earley. They have their own [website](#) and management committee, with their chairman, Jean Hackett, producing annual reports. This year, a particularly good display of blossom during the spring was attributed to remarkably good weather. All the trees except the greengage bore fruit, but this fruit did not survive the subsequent heat and drought of the summer; despite the efforts of some orchard volunteers to keep the trees watered. Their efforts did of course help the trees survive. Volunteers have pruned and weeded as necessary, but there is no need for regular work parties, which is just as well given the restrictions this year. Unfortunately, they are still experiencing vandalism, with one newly-planted tree being removed, and some of the fences and fence posts damaged. As some of the damaged fence posts had rotted after only three years, they were given 30 replacement posts by the original supplier, and some small socially-distanced working parties have now replaced or reinforced them.

DID YOU KNOW?... There are more trees in towns

There's allegedly a greater [tree cover](#) in towns and cities compared with the countryside, thanks to trees in gardens. Another national [tree map](#) has been published. This isn't the iTree one described in previous issues of Tree Watch. The top 20 areas for tree cover include Bracknell. It comes 3rd after Surrey Heath and Waverley.

WELLINGTONIA AVENUE SURVEY

Alison Griffin

Wellingtonia Avenue is one of the finest avenues of Wellingtonia trees in the UK. Over the last couple of years, the health of some of the trees has become a concern. Last year Finchampstead Parish Council approached the owners of all the trees with a proposal to commission a survey of all 112 trees in the avenue to assess their health and status. During lockdown in March, eight of the Wellingtonia trees



in the avenue were surveyed as a pilot and the report of this pilot has been sent to the parish council, with the owners of the 8 trees receiving a copy of the results for their specific trees.



Some of the trees in the pilot were ones that have not looked healthy and indeed 3 of the 8 were found to have honey fungus. The owners of these infected trees have been given advice on measures they can take to manage the infection. One visual clue to ailing trees is that their canopies look sparse and this was borne out with the density

of the tree canopies for the infected trees measured at 45-60% whereas the uninfected trees had crown densities of 65-90%. The efficiency of the photosynthesis was not different for the infected trees and the range for this across the 8 trees was 69-84%.

Other measurements included not just height and girth, but also the trees 'contribution to the environment' with water absorption, carbon dioxide uptake and carbon storage. The ranges of these across the 8 trees were:

- height 33-39m
- girth (at 1.5m) 5.8-7.2m
- water absorption 43-86 l/hr (this is part of the water cycle and also cools the air)
- carbon dioxide uptake 43-60 kg/year (humans produce about 1kg of CO₂ per day)
- carbon storage 3.4-4.9 mega tonnes (a car exhaust produces about 4.5 Mt per year)

However, the figures that hit me the most were the valuations of the trees. There is a methodology called CAVAT (capital asset value for amenity trees) and for these trees their individual values are £30,000 to over £500,000. How many millions of pounds will the total CAVAT valuation for the whole avenue be?

The parish council is now planning a full survey of the remaining 94 trees and this should hopefully take place next year.

THE VETERAN TREE SURVEY

We've had another successful few months of tree recording. Since the August issue, we've added 191 more veteran trees and 450 photos. Barbara and Cathy have been particularly active in Swallowfield, recording 71 trees, which is very gratifying, since we've been unable to recruit surveyors there and they do have some good trees. Charvil have almost completed their re-survey of that parish. As well as checking the trees already recorded and taking photos of them, they've found and recorded some more (43 since August). Arborfield and Finchampstead have also been active, with 20 and 23 more trees added in the latest database update. We still have more surveying to do in Finchampstead, Wargrave and Woodley and if you could help in any of those parishes it would be much appreciated.

As well as new records, we've enhanced 81 records, often by adding a photo or updating the status. The updated status includes felled trees (see next page).

SADLY DEPARTED



MRN 87 was one of the trees recorded in the initial Workington Town survey in 2006, but was felled this month and reported to us by a concerned neighbour who heard the sound of a chain saw one Sunday afternoon. We very unfortunately lost this oak tree, but we did welcome a new member.



This lovely Purple Beech in Charvil was not on our database. It wasn't a veteran, but it was a much-loved tree and an asset to the treescape of Park Lane in Charvil. Sarah Swatridge took this photo in May 2019 - and the one above this month.

The parish clerk had applied for a TPO on it, making it clear that the tree was at risk. The application was

refused. Now work has been done on the house and the tree has gone. There is another beech tree in the same garden and this time the TPO application has been granted.

Also felled were MRNs 352 and 3371.

MRN 352, in Earley, was dead, with cracks along some of the larger branches and was probably felled for safety reasons.

MRN 3371, in the University's Harris Gardens, was felled several years ago, but has just been reported to us. If you look at the [photos](#) on our website, you'll see it was leaning rather ominously. The trunk has been left on the ground and is quite a feature in itself, and often used as a seat.

Veteran Tree Survey snapshot

SPECIES

110

*species in our
database*

23

*species with only
one record*

50%

species <10 records

12%

*species have 100-
500 records*

1

*with >4000 records
(English oak)*

7

*lowest number of
species recorded in
a parish/town*

REMARKABLE TREES

Maggie Fletcher came across this magnificent oak in Elan Village in Powys.



CITIZEN SCIENCE

You may have taken part in one of the citizen science projects run by OPAL (Open Air Laboratories). It was launched in 2007 and has involved more than 650,000 people in a range of environmental surveys. The "OPAL Tree Health Survey" was launched in May 2013 as an experiment to see whether the public could contribute effectively to tree health surveillance. In the early 2010s, the need to monitor, identify and eradicate pathogens was recognised, but was under-funded. Could the public be encouraged to take some responsibility for the nation's biosecurity? Over six years, an estimated 39,000 people took part. The data submitted has now been analysed and a [report](#) issued. More than 80% of the participants said they had no previous experience of working with trees. Nearly 60% of the trees surveyed were in streets, parks, gardens or schools, suggesting that most people decided to do their survey close to their homes. The project was considered successful in terms of public engagement, but generated little useful data on specific tree pests and diseases. The data contained errors and was not verified.

It is important to define the reasons for any citizen science project. Is the aim public information, public engagement or surveillance and science? The report concluded that if future citizen science projects wanted to gather meaningful data, it would be better to target the time and the skills of people who had experience or expertise in the areas being considered. If lay people are to be involved, they need to be trained for a specific pest or disease, involved for only a time-limited period and required to submit photographs for expert verification. Apparently, the government has set an ambitious target to train at least two per cent of the UK population (1.3 million) as biosecurity volunteers.

SPECIES IN FOCUS - WILD SERVICE TREE (*SORBUS TORMINALIS*)

10 miscellaneous facts about the Wild Service tree.

1. This native tree is considered an ancient woodland indicator, but is also planted in gardens, as these 2 photos show. The top one is about 30 years old and the lower one, 18 years old. [Perhaps in the future these gardens will be considered sites of ancient woodland!]
2. Native to Europe, parts of northern Africa and western Asia, it hybridises with other *Sorbus* spp. The rare endemic Bristol whitebeam (*Sorbus bristoliensis*) is a cross between *S. torminalis* and *S. eminens* (round-leaved whitebeam).
3. Not to be confused with other service trees, such as the True Service tree (*Sorbus domestica*), the Service Tree of Fontainebleau (*Sorbus latifolia*) or the curiously named Bastard Service Tree (*Sorbus thuringiaca*). It has been suggested that it should be put in a separate genus or sub-genus.
4. Apparently they are considered 'difficult' trees and hence are seldom included in the Woodland Trust's native species planting schemes.
5. The fruit is patterned with small lenticels giving them a chequered appearance and an alternative name for both the fruit and the tree. Sold as chequers 100 years ago, it tastes like dates and was given to children as sweets. It's usually too astringent to eat until over-ripe and 'bletted' (or frozen).
6. Before the introduction of hops, chequers were used to flavour beer; which may be the origin of the pub names and why the ancient symbol of a pub is a chequer-board. It can also be used to flavour other alcoholic drinks, such as whisky.
7. The latinised name, *torminalis* means "good for colic".
8. The fine-grained wood was used to make musical instruments, screws for winepresses and billiard cue sticks. Today, it's mainly used for decorative veneers, but seldom in the UK.
9. Locally, there's a cluster of wild service trees on the southern edge of the Montague Park SANG in the linear patch of woodland adjoining the railway line; and a small copse along the Binfield Road has about half a dozen wild service trees mingled with some oaks.
10. We have two in our veteran tree database, both multi stems measured at 10cm height. MRN 8178 in the Coombes, on the Barkham-Arborfield border has a girth of 3.32m. MRN 5914, in Pound Copse in Arborfield has a girth of 1.8m. There are also three smaller ones in our Commemorative and Special inventory: 2 trees in Nores Hill Wood in Shinfield (W069) and W068 in the grounds of the Hawthorn School, the fruit and leaves of which are shown here. It is the only *Sorbus* with a maple-like leaf.



ANCIENT REDWOODS SURVIVE CALIFORNIAN FIRES

Whilst large areas of forest in California were destroyed by the fires that raged in August, many ancient redwoods **survived**. In the 'Big Basin Redwoods State Park', the headquarters and other infrastructure were destroyed, but not the ancient coastal redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*), some up to 2,000 years old, with girths of 15m, including on enormous tree called the 'Mother of the Forest'. This '**Mother of the Forest**' is 329' (100m) tall, with a girth of 16.5m at 1.5m and 21m at ground level. There are other trees with this name. The most famous is a **Wellingtonia** (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) in 'Calaveras Big Trees State Park', which died around 1860. **Big Basin** is California's oldest State Park, established in 1902, marking the beginning of redwood conservation in that state.

We have our own mini redwood forest in High Wood in Woodley. So far Linda Martin has recorded 45 coastal redwoods there, the largest of which, shown here, is MRN **8127**. It's a multi stem with girth of 10m at ground level.



RECOMMENDED READING AND VIEWING

"FARMING FOR WILDLIFE" -

I know many of you are interested in the natural environment as well as trees. I think you'll enjoy this zoom talk by Des Sussex from Natural England, given to the BOC (Berkshire Ornithological Club) in October. It includes an interesting consideration of hedges.

"SOME LANDSCAPES SHOW RESISTANCE TO ASH DIEBACK"

A report on a study that suggests some types of environment help block the spread of ash dieback.

"GROWING TREES FROM SEED"

In September, the Tree Council published a webpage "*Growing trees from seed*", with fact sheets on 12 native species. Although it's rather late to gather seeds now, I think it's worth checking out. The fact sheets are interesting.

"WHY SHOULD TREE LOVERS CARE ABOUT BEAVERS?"

Another Tree Council webpage. The Tree Council is a partner with the Beaver Trust, working to make beavers a recognised native mammal in Britain. This discusses their relationship with trees.

"THE MOST IMPORTANT ACTION YOU CAN TAKE NOW: HELP PLANT THESE TREES"

Linda Martin suggested these links. There's a request for donations on every page, but it is an interesting project - to clone ancient redwoods. Four years ago 40 of these redwoods were planted at the Eden Project as described in a Guardian article "**EUROPE'S FIRST REDWOOD FOREST**"

"TREE WARDEN CONFERENCE"

An edited version of the Tree Warden Conference held in September (3 hours) - see [page 6](#).

The recent TVERC Recorders Conference was also recorded, but hasn't been posted on the web yet.

*"If people understand trees, they'll appreciate them.
If they appreciate them, they'll protect them"*

Jonathan Drori (Tree Warden Conference "Taking Action for Healthy Trees" - 26th Sept 2020)

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



This tombstone formed part of an elaborate Halloween display in a garden in Spencers Wood.

Weird and Wonderful

Angus Ross sent this link to "The Tree Painter"

The captions aren't very interesting, but in case you want to know what they are:

Mermaid caption:

今夜我又來喝醉 Tonight I got drunk again.

Soldier caption:

我最愛的人

哪裡有需要

哪裡流淌你的深情

你把熱血融進對人民的摯愛

對祖國的忠誠

你用生命奏響時代

The one I love the most

Where is your need

Where does your affection flow

You poured your life blood into your love for the people and
loyalty to the motherland

You use your life to play the sound of our age

Some sources used in this issue: all web pages accessed 24-11-2020 (unless stated otherwise).

Links embedded in the text are not repeated here. Email me if you want a list of them.

P12:-Species in Focus: Mitchell, Alan (1974) 'A Field Guide to the Trees of Britain and Northern Europe' ISBN 0 00 212035 6: <https://www.ipni.org/>

Malcolm Inglis (personal communication), Barbara Stagles (personal communication);

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

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

<https://avongorge.org.uk/wildlife-and-geology/rare-plant-fact-files/bristol-whitebeam/>

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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.