



On 12th May, we had **8,552** trees in our database and **13,658** photographs

Welcome to the latest issue of Tree Watch.

The photos here were added to our database this month. Two trees had five photos each added to their record, making a total of ten photos for MRN 7941 and six for MRN 8426. The pollarded crack willow in Wargrave had fallen and re-rooted before it was recorded in 2019.



The coastal redwood in Highwood in Woodley is called "Bigwood - The Fairy Tree" and has its own [Facebook page](#), with photos showing various decorations that have been added to it. There are none of these in the photos associated with our record. It seems they are often removed.

The next issue of Tree Watch will be August 2023 and the copy deadline is 31st July. If you have any comments or responses to anything in this issue or contributions for future issues, please send them to: Elaine Butler - TreeWatch @ wdvta.org.uk

Don't forget words underlined in dark green are links to further details (obviously not when printed).

Main items in this issue:- (click on title)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| p2 Events; AGM | p10 Tree Houses at Kew Gardens |
| p3 Trees versus Development | p10 The veteran tree survey |
| p6 Did you know? Carbon performance | p11 Poems in praise of WDVTA |
| p7 Miyawaki forest in Shinfield | p11 FAQ - largest organism on earth |
| p8 Tree planting in Barkham | p12 National Tree Treasures-Sissinghurst |
| p9 Species in Focus - Black Pine | p13 Recommendations |

Events - June-August 2023

❖ No events confirmed yet. Check [website](#) for updates. Members will be circulated when any events are confirmed.

Non-WDVTa events:

- ❖ Thursday 8th June - 14:00-15:45 'Scanning ancient trees with terrestrial lidar.' ATF Spring/Summer Forum. Free webinar. [Booking essential](#)
- ❖ Sunday 18th June - 10:00-13:00 - Fox Hill Conservation Working Party - see [website](#).
- ❖ Saturday 1st July - Annual [National Meadows Day](#). Langley Mead in Shinfield usually participates, but no details yet. Check their [website](#) for details.

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

AGM

It was very nice to be able to meet in person for our AGM again.

This year Alison stood down as chairman, but fortunately she is staying on the committee. Her experience is invaluable. She was thanked for all her hard work and dedication over the years and was presented with this lovely plate, carved by Steve Radford. The wood came from MRN [184](#), a London Plane felled during the Elms Field development. (If you look at our [map](#), you'll see its marker is on top of Aldi now!) Steve carved the large chrysalis in Elms Field from this tree in 2021. See [Tree Watch #49](#). Alison's plate was carved from an offcut from that carving. A very appropriate as well as attractive item to give to Alison. The wood grain is lovely. Burnt onto the underside of the plate is the WDVTa logo surrounded by the words "London Plane Elms Field Felled 2017"



After the formal part of the meeting, we had a riveting talk from Professor Mathias Disney. See the last issue of [Tree Watch](#) page 2. His presentation is on our [website](#) as a pdf of his PowerPoint. A lot of the real content was what Mat said alongside the slides and this of course is missing from the pdf. He gave a similar [lecture](#) at UCL, which you might like to watch. Mat is involved in SCATTER (SCanning Ancient Trees with TERrestrial lidar), which aims to characterise and compare the tree architecture of the UK's ancient and veteran oaks. We have sent him a list of oaks from our database that may be suitable for this project and hope to be able to share some results with you. Scanning techniques and an interview with Mat featured in the 2015 BBC programme "Oak tree: Nature's Greatest Survivor" which is still available on the [iPlayer](#).

As well at the talk, Martin Woolner set up a fascinating display of stamps that feature trees. The photos below represent just a small sample of the stamps displayed and certainly don't do justice to the quality of Martin's large prints. The prints were accompanied by explanatory text. He's only found one stamp representing hedges (the green one below), and comments that hedges as field boundaries are particularly characteristic of Britain, knowing from experience that they are a "tourist attraction" for visiting Japanese friends. Another unique theme is the association of the social problems of alcoholism with the

state of woodlands. That stamp was issued in 1979 in the tiny islands of Wallis & Futuna in the western Pacific. Several stamps illustrated tree planting. The ones shown here are from Togo and China.



The partridge in a pear tree from Christmas Island is one from a set illustrating the 12 days of Christmas.



The 1991 stamp from the British Antarctic Territory illustrates fossil evidence that this area was once (over 65 million years ago) forested with trees including the southern beech (*Notofagus antarctica*).

It really was a great display and there wasn't enough time to fully appreciate it.

The 2023/24 WDVTA committee

Officials:

Chairman: vacant
Secretary: Kerry Clissold
Treasurer: Derek Oxbrough

Committee members:

Barry Anderson, Elaine Butler, Alison Griffin, Sarah Hanson, Martin Haslam, Stephen Loyd, Stephanie McKay, Michael Rea, Maggie Sanderson, Jane Sellwood and Barbara Stagles.

There were no new nominations this year and three long-serving members have left - Linda Martin, Steve Radford and Coralie Ramsey. We are very grateful for all their contributions to WDVTA over the years. Although they have left the committee, they will all be available should we need to call on their expertise in the future. The other committee members were re-elected.

TREES VERSUS DEVELOPMENT - 1

Earlier this month there was much concern over a planning application ([221909](#)) submitted to Reading Borough Council involving the felling of an ancient oak. The application was for the building of a three-bedroomed house on land in Gayhurst Close in Caversham. Many objections were lodged (including a detailed response from the Woodland Trust) resulting in the application being withdrawn on 19th May. The developers had claimed the tree had little biodiversity value because it was old, diseased and in a state of decline. They'd offered to plant two new trees to replace it. A local resident is [quoted](#) as saying "An excellent report by Reading Borough Council's tree officer, Sarah Hanson, played a pivotal role in saving this 700-year-old treasure." Given Sarah's objection, it's likely the application would have been rejected anyway; but such a large number of vocal objections must have helped persuade the developers to withdraw it. Sarah is also of course, one of our committee members. Below is a description of the tree, taken from an email sent by the Reading Tree Warden Network alerting their members to the application.

'KING'S SPY OAK' IN CAVERSHAM

RTWN

The oak tree is protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and was recorded as an ancient tree on the Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Inventory (ATI) in 2009 (tree number [28954](#)). It has been pollarded in the past which has contributed to its long life and helped ensure it is alive today. The girth of the tree has been recorded as more than 8 metres, and so the tree could be 700 years old. It is also highlighted as a Tree of National Special Interest (TNSI). The tree is of important local historic interest, and is believed to be the oldest tree retained from the historic Caversham Park estate, part of which was sold to build the Caversham Park Village housing in the 1960s and early 1970s. The tree is named 'The King's Spy Oak' because of its use by Parliamentary forces in the Civil War in 1643 to spy on an approaching Royalist force. It would already have been a landmark tree even in 1643.

TREES VERSUS DEVELOPMENT - 2

The following is one of the submissions sent to WBC by Diana Thorne in response to the Hall Farm planning application. I think it's worth printing it here in full; with some photos of what might be lost.





HALL FARM - A GREEN FIELD SITE

Diana Thorne

Hall Farm is a Green Field Site. Today it boasts valuable areas of Ancient Woodland, namely Loaders Copse, Gravel Pit Wood, The Gorse, Dog Kennel Copse, Brick Kiln Copse and Furzen Coppice (also known as Parsons Coppice), as well as the recognized Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) of Loaders Copse and Gravel Pit Wood, The Holt.

As the Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association Survey Coordinator for the Parish of Arborfield and Newland, I have been overseeing the Veteran Tree Survey at Hall Farm which has been undertaken by volunteers. To date approx. 165 veteran trees have been surveyed in this specific area and there are still more to be investigated to complete the survey at Hall Farm. These veteran trees are made up of a variety of species and may be viewed on the Survey Map Page on the WDVTA Website.

The suggested Hall Farm Development will, I fear, mean the loss of so much of our local countryside. We face the destruction of our precious trees and hedgerows - veteran trees cannot be replaced in a hurry even if there was a desire to do so. We must all surely acknowledge the benefit of such magnificent trees to our biodiversity? Hedgerows will disappear, LWS Sites and Ancient Woodland will be adversely affected if they survive the development of 4,500 newly built homes and all that this will entail. The habitat of the wildlife that presently enjoys the Hall Farm environment will be seriously threatened.

The local people, particularly those who live nearby in Arborfield and Arborfield Cross will also be adversely affected. The large, clean, unpolluted area of countryside with its public "rights of way" where locals are able to walk, enjoy the open views and breathe in less polluted air, will be no more. This area of Hall Farm is valued, as a place to visit and feel a sense of wellbeing. It deserves to be cherished rather than buried under houses and roads.

I hope that this special and unique area of countryside can be recognized as such and that Wokingham Borough Council will find a way to implement an aim in their 'Biodiversity Action Plan' to "Ensure policies are in place for the protection, management and enhancement of the local wildlife resource".

SOME GOOD NEWS

In the [last issue](#) (page 8), Dennis Bryant described WBC's objection to plans to build about 200 houses in Hurst and the appeal lodged by the developers. As you've probably read in a WBC [newsletter](#), their decision to refuse this development was upheld on appeal; much to the relief of everyone involved.

DID YOU KNOW?... Trees now have Tree Carbon Performance Certificates (just as electrical items have energy performance certificates).

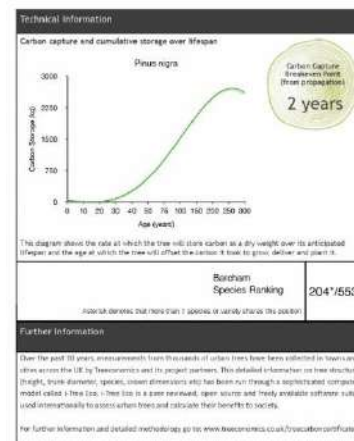


Barcham Nursery in association with **Treeco₂nomics** has applied a rating to all trees in their nursery catalogue, classifying them by their ability to absorb carbon. The labels shown here are for the Black Pine'.

[On their website, use the '>' symbol to move through the photos and display these images]. Species are given a carbon performance rating (A,B,C,D or E), based on their average carbon storage:

- | | | |
|---|--------------|-------------|
| A | Large trees | >5000kg |
| B | Medium Trees | 2000-5000kg |
| C | Small Trees | 500-2000kg |
| D | Large Shrubs | 50-500kg |
| E | Small Shrubs | 5-50kg |

Alongside this, Barcham display a "Technical Information" certificate, giving a Species Ranking;



a graph showing the expected changing rate of carbon storage as the tree grows (modelled to age 300 years) and a carbon capture break-even point (2 years for the black pine). The calculations include a deduction of 2.6kg for the carbon cost of planting the tree. Thus is the environmental cost of production in terms of carbon used for tractor fuel, water abstraction and transport (the cost of delivery of a single tree and a 350-mile return trip). It's a ball-park figure applied to all species, but something so often overlooked in similar calculations. Barcham usually grow their trees for about 7 years before releasing them onto the market. Depending on the genus, the trees break-even in terms of carbon storage by the time they reach about two years of age (see table below for some examples). There's more information about the methodology on Barchams [website](#) and the Treeco₂nomics [website](#). There's even a [carbon calculator](#), where you can estimate your carbon footprint and find out what trees are needed to offset it. Unfortunately, the performance rating and carbon break-even point are not included as search categories on their [Tree finder](#) page. You have to look at each species individually to find what they are. There are some examples on the next page.

Since Barchams is a plant nursery, it's not surprising that the data used to model this has mostly come from trees in urban settings or trees in well populated rural locations. Trees in open countryside, with access to greater soil volumes and with greater space around them, will grow to larger proportions and store more carbon. The UK's largest trees are estimated to store about three times the volumes calculated from the Barcham modelling.

As Barchams point out, these statistics are not the main thing to consider when choosing a tree. The calculations assume a tree will grow well in its new location, which it won't if it's planted in the wrong place. The right tree for the right place should always apply; but these labels are instructive.

You may remember that it was Barchams, in 2012, that supplied the 60 standard English oak trees planted across the Borough to celebrate the Queen's [Diamond Jubilee](#). The photo here was taken on our visit to Barchams to select those trees.



"Once a number becomes a measure, it ceases to be a useful number."

Goodhart's Law

Some examples of Carbon Performance Data

Species	Ct	C(kg)	BP	Rank
Eucalyptus	A	7500	1	1
English Oak, Sessile Oak, Sycamore	A	7500	1	3
Common Beech	A	7500	2	3
Horse Chestnut	A	7440	1	20
London Plane	A	7423	1	21
Sweet Chestnut	A	6854	3	37
Hornbeam	A	6731	3	38
Coastal Redwood, Wellingtonia	A	5132	2	71
Common Lime, Large-Leaved Lime	A	5019	4	78
Scots Pine	B	3513	2	151
Silver birch	B	3224	1	161

Species	Ct	C(kg)	BP	Rank
Black Pine	B	2694	2	204
Pussy Willow, Weeping Willow	B	2680	1	207
Field Maple	B	2572	1	218
Lombardy Poplar	B	2476	1	234
Liquidambar	B	2377	2	245
Yew, Monkey Puzzle	B	2230	6	260
Holly	C	1836	4	265
Wild Service Tree	C	1409	3	297
Flowering Cherry	C	685	1	334
Judas Tree	C	601	5	376
Rowan	C	530	3	401
Acer palmatum	C	514	9	423
Hawthorn	C	509	3	430
Apple, Crab Apple	C	505	1	439

Ct=Category; C(kg)=Carbon stored (kg);

BP=break-even point (years);

Rank=Barcham's ranking out of 553 (all above, except Common Beech, Horse Chestnut & London Plane, are joint rankings).

LOCAL TREE PLANTING

MIYAWAKI FOREST IN SHINFIELD

These mini or tiny forests have been mentioned before in Tree Watch. The first one in the UK was planted in [Witney](#), Oxfordshire in March 2020, in association with [Earthwatch-Europe](#). By the year ending March 2022, they had planted 149 across the UK. Most (132) were planted in 2021/22, including eight 'Wee Forests' in Glasgow to celebrate its hosting of COP25.

The [principles and methods](#) involved are by now well established and involve careful soil preparation, choosing suitable species, planting seedlings randomly at high densities, watering regularly and keeping the site weed free for the first 2 years. [Suitable species are referred to as PNV species. PNV stands for 'potential natural vegetation' defined as 'vegetation that would occur in a specific area without further human interference' or native plants as we tend to call them.]





A Miyawaki forest of over 2,000 trees (shown here) has been planted at St Mary's Junior School in Shinfield on a long mound of soil left behind after foundations were dug for a new school building. They were planted by about 360 children and 100 adults. The Tree Council provided 1,800 trees, with 420 coming from The Woodland Trust and a few apple and pear trees from Freely Fruity. There's an aerial view in WBC's climate emergency [newsletter](#). This planting was initiated and supervised by Matt Knight, Head of Ecology and Sustainability at the school. That title alone is impressive for a Junior school and so is the 'Ecology and Sustainability' [page](#) on their website. They are a Beacon School for the Tree Council and a [Green Flag school](#). Apparently only 8% of UK schools have met the required green flag standard. St Mary's has featured at COP25, COP26, and COP27. At COP26 they presented a short [video](#) showing how they were reducing their carbon footprint; and they are one of six schools involved in the recording of "[Save the World -It's Action Time](#)", a remake of Bob Geldof's "Feed the World - Do they know it's Christmas".

ORCHARD NURSERY AND MEMORIAL WOOD IN BARKHAM

Matt Knight is one of the founders of [Freely Fruity](#). Just three years ago, during lock-down, Matt and two friends "decided to follow their dream of making fruit freely available to everyone". They've been responsible for planting several orchards in the Borough, and are now establishing a tree nursery in association with [WBC](#). It will be on part of High Barn Farm (owned by WBC) in Barkham, at the end of the [California Way Greenway](#) (Greenway Route I) and alongside Commonfield Lane (beside the proposed solar farm which is also at High Barn Farm). The trees grown there will be used to create new community orchards across the Borough.

This part of Barkham is also the site for the [Memorial Woodland](#) planned to honour those people in the Borough who died from Covid. About 6,600 trees will be planted on a 7.7-hectare site in the south-east corner of Rooks Nest Farm (opposite Rooks Nest Country Park) and it will become an extension of California Country Park. Work will start in September and should be completed by early next year. It's land that had been ear-marked for 270 houses in the Local Plan Update, but in March, following strong [opposition](#) from Barkham and Finchampstead Councils and residents, WBC approved the woodland plans.

Ashenbury Park in Woodley may be getting a new woodland too, as part of a proposed [pilot scheme](#) to increase the borough's biodiversity.

SPECIES IN FOCUS – BLACK PINE (*PINUS NIGRA*)

12 miscellaneous facts about the Black Pine.

1. The Woodland Trust [describes](#) it as a "Looming, handsome, graveyard-dweller.....common in shelterbelts, gardens and timber yards alike."
2. The species is divided into two subspecies, *P. nigra* ssp. *nigra* (Austrian Pine) and *Pinus nigra* ssp. *laricio* (Corsican Pine). Each is further subdivided into three varieties; and then there are various cultivars.
3. The Corsican Pine, introduced in 1759, is native to the more western areas (southern Italy, southern France, Spain and North Africa). It has slender, more flexible needles, with 1-2 layers of thin-walled hypodermal cells. The photo top right is MRN [4867](#) in Shinfield, with a girth of 4.1m at 0.6m in 2011.
4. The Austrian pine, introduced into Britain in 1835, is native to the eastern part of the species range (Austria, parts of Italy and the Balkans). It has stout, rigid needles with 3-6 layers of thick-walled hypodermal cells. [The [hypodermis](#) is a layer under the epidermis, typical of all pines and a xerophytic adaptation.] The photo right is MRN [6388](#) in Barkham, with a girth of 3.35m at 1.5m in 2012.
5. There's a Corsican Pine in Kew Gardens that was planted in 1814 as a 6" seedling. Nearly 200 years later, in 2013, it had a girth of 3.56m (at 1.5m). During its 209 years, it's been struck by lightning twice and, in 1928, hit by a small, low-flying aircraft.
6. In the 1840s, at Cambridge University Botanic Gardens (CUBG), Professor John Henslow (a mentor of Charles Darwin) planted a collection of *Pinus nigra* to demonstrate variation within one species. Species of black pine from warmer climates hold their branches erect, whilst those from colder areas have sloping branches to allow snow to slide off them to limit the snow load on their branches and ensure the needles are free to photosynthesise.
7. CUBG was one of the sites [illuminated](#) for the coronation and a [black pine](#) was one of the trees lit up by pedal power.
8. In USA and UK, most of the specimens planted are from Austrian sources.
9. It's considered an invasive species and noxious weed in New Zealand, because, as the forest canopy develops, it shades out the native tussock grassland plant communities.
10. Checking Barcham's [website](#), it was surprising to see black pines on offer for £1,535 (discounted to £1,279 each if buying a mixture of 10 or more trees).
11. Corsican Pines were mentioned in the [first issue](#) of Tree Watch in 2009, two years into a 5-year ban on planting them because of the severity of red band needle blight, caused by the fungus [Dothistroma septosporum](#). It's still a problem and infects several pine species. Its presence in UK nurseries or garden centres (but not woodlands) must be reported to the relevant plant health authority. In USA and Canada, Black Pines were popular as a street tree because of their resistance to wind, drought, salt spray (from road de-icing salt) and various industrial pollutants (including ozone); but red band needle blight is spreading rapidly there now.
12. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the rapid growth, deep green colour and low cost of the Austrian Pine made it a popular Christmas tree, but its long needles made it difficult to decorate and it soon fell out of favour.



Veteran Tree Survey snapshot

BLACK PINES

41

trees in our
database

61%

Austrian pines

39%

Corsican Pines

18

most recorded in a
parish - Barkham

4m

largest girth

65%

of towns/parishes
haven't recorded
any

TREE HOUSES AT KEW GARDENS

Another Black Pine at Kew Gardens features in a Tree House design competition. Kew launched the competition for tree houses designed around seven of its trees; with each of these trees having a separate theme assigned to it. The design for the Black Pine was to highlight nature's architecture and biomimicry. [CGLA](#) submitted the lovely [design](#) shown below.



Unfortunately, it didn't win. The winning designs are larger constructions, but I much prefer the simplicity and elegance of this one. The winners and runners up were [announced](#) by the Museum of Architecture. Scrolling down that page, there's a video of each of the seven trees. The Black Pine is Tree 2. It started its life in a pot akin to a bonsai tree, before being planted in the pinetum in the 1800s. It was later moved to its current position in the southern end of the pinetum under the supervision of William Dallimore, Kew's first appointed arboriculturist.

The three winning designs, along with another four specially commissioned ones, were planned to form an exhibition at Kew Gardens between April and October this year, but it's been postponed and a new date hasn't been confirmed yet.

THE VETERAN TREE SURVEY

No new trees were added this month, but one duplicate record was deleted and some updates and corrections were applied. Twenty new photos were added.

Please do let me know if you spot anything that needs correcting in our records, including spelling errors. You can use the contact form below each full record on the website to tell me about them.

If you can take a photo of any tree that doesn't already have one, that would be very useful.

Select Parish ▼

Show Parish Trees

☐ Show Parish Boundaries

Just have a look at our [map](#), select your Town or Parish from the drop-down list and click on "Show Parish Trees".

Click on any icon and the pop-up box will either say "No photo for this record" or will have a (blue) link to the photos.

Quite a few records have been input from arboricultural surveys associated with new developments. They did not have photos and we couldn't take photos at the time because there was no public access.

IN PRAISE OF WDVTA

You must all have heard of ChatGPT. GPT stands for 'Generative Pre-trained Transformer' and it was released last year by a company called 'OpenAI', founded by Elon Musk. Google has produced a rival called Bard. Both are described as artificial intelligence chatbots, although whether these apps are really artificial intelligence or merely an aspect of machine learning is a matter for debate. Both have severe limitations; with Google warning that Bard could share misinformation and OpenAI admitting ChatGPT sometimes writes answers that are incorrect or don't make sense! Those limitations can be very serious if you ask them to write what you hope is an authoritative account, but perhaps don't matter so much if you ask them to write poems. The quality of the poems produced is subjective. Malcolm Inglis, our webmaster, has asked them to produce sonnets about WDVTA.

What do you think of the results?

From [ChatGPT](#), given the remit to write a Shakespearean sonnet extolling the WDVTA.

*Oh Wokingham, a place of ancient trees
Whose trunks bear witness to the passing years
And shelter creatures great and small with ease
A treasure trove for all who hold them dear.*

*And in this district, there is a band
Of guardians, who seek to protect and save
The veteran trees that grace this land
From age-old oaks to beeches by the glade.*

*The WDVTA, a name to know
Their work to survey, record, and promote
These ancient trees that have withstood the blow
Of time, and still provide a vital note.*

So let us honour those who guard this land

[Bard](#) was asked (twice) to describe the work of the WDVTA in the form of a Shakespearean sonnet.

*Oh, mighty trees, so tall and strong and proud,
Whose roots have held this land for centuries,
Your branches spread to give us shade and food,
Your leaves to fill the air with sweet perfumes.*

*Yet all too often, you are left untended,
Your beauty marred by careless hands and feet.
The WDVTA works tirelessly to tend
To you, our precious trees, and keep you safe.*

*They plant new saplings, water those in need,
And prune away the dead and dying limbs.
They educate the public about the need
To protect our trees, our natural heritage.*

*Oh, mighty WDVTA, how thou dost inspire
With thy work to protect our trees so dear.
Thy members are so dedicated and true,
They give their time and energy so anew.*

*Thou plantest trees and tendest to their needs,
And when they fall, thou dost replace their seeds.
Thou teachest others of the importance of trees,
And how they are a part of our history.*

*Thou art a voice for the voiceless,
And thou dost fight for what is right.
Thou art a beacon of hope in a world of darkness,
And thou dost make our world a better place.*

*Thank you, WDVTA, for all that you do.
You are a true asset to our community.*

FAQ: WHAT IS THE LARGEST ORGANISM ON EARTH?

Since the end of the last century, certain fungi have been recognised as the largest (and oldest) organisms alive. In 1992, a report in [Nature](#) described a method by which individual fungi can be unambiguously identified within local populations. An individual *Armillarias bulbosa* (later renamed *A. gallica*), growing in a forest in northern Michigan, was found to occupy a minimum of 15 hectares, with a total mass over 10,000kg. It has remained genetically stable for more than 1,500 years. In the following years larger specimens were discovered. In [2003](#), another *Armillarias* species, *A. ostoyae*, growing in the Blue Mountains of Oregon, was found to cover 965 hectares (that's nearly four square miles).

SISSINGHURST

Graham and I recently spent a few days in Kent. We visited Sissinghurst Castle Garden - a property once the home of Vita Sackville-West but now cared for by The National Trust.

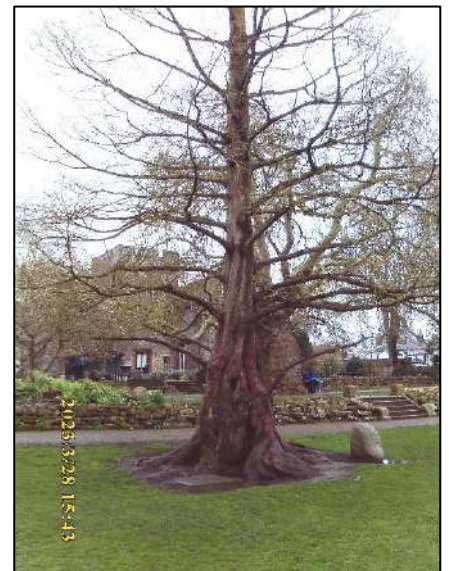
The spring garden was particularly lovely at the end of March. I liked the avenue of lime trees and was interested to see postcards in the gift shop of what they look like in leaf. In winter you really get to see how knobbly the branches are and it never ceases to amaze me how they change over the year!

However, the real 'Tree Prize' was in Canterbury itself near the cathedral. Here we found an enormous Oriental Plane - Graham estimated 9m girth! Sadly, there was no plaque and I watched someone walk past without even stopping to admire this beautiful tree. I can only assume they are local and walk this way each day? We then found another, similar Oriental Plane, looking equally as huge in Westgate gardens in Canterbury. In fact it's girth was actually 'only' 7.5m (25 feet). I could only identify them as Plane trees because of their distinctive round female flowers/seeds, their bark was so distorted.



I have since discovered the story behind the Canterbury's Oriental Planes. There are, in fact, seven of them, planted across the city of Canterbury in the shape of a crucifix. They were planted 150 to 200 years ago (depending on which source you read) but are now known as the 'Baobabs' because of a viral infection which has caused the trunks to develop into bulbous shapes. At first, they appear to have been planted randomly, until you get a bird's eye view and notice they form a crucifix.

In Westgate Gardens we came across a second tree which caught my eye because of its interesting trunk. This one was a dawn redwood (*Metasequoia*).



RECOMMENDED READING, VIEWING AND LISTENING *Just click on the green links*

BRITAIN'S CHANGING FLORA - A 'Summary of the Results of the Plant Atlas 2020'. You can download the report, and the on-line atlas allows you to search for details on particular taxa. If you type 'Quercus' into the search box, you get a list of oak species, from which to choose. Summary graphs show the level of decline or increase of the species. You can zoom into a map to see local detail. As well as a general overview, you can choose details about five different year ranges between 1887 and 2019. There's a good photo gallery too.

BARKHAM'S SOLAR FARM - won't be connected to the National Grid until 2037. This was reported in the local press on **April 4th** and **April 5th** - not April 1st !!

WOODLAND TRUST:

ANNUAL REVIEW **NEWSLETTER** - several articles of interest **FIRST MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER**

CAMBRIDGESHIRE 'FOREST' DIES AFTER NATIONAL HIGHWAYS BLUNDER

INJUNCTION HALTS TREE FELLING IN PLYMOUTH CITY CENTRE

['Private Eye' published a photo of Plymouth centre after the tree felling alongside one showing the devastation caused by the Luftwaffe during WW2.]

SQUIRREL DAMAGE TO TREES - The Exmoor Squirrel Project wants grey squirrels culled and on menus.

QUEEN'S CANOPY MAP - The location of the trees on this map have been "randomised within a 1km radius of the submitted location. This is to protect the privacy of our users." Most of these are not recorded in our Commemorative and Special Inventory because we don't have sufficient details.

WILD HIGHWAY - An episode of Radio 4's "Costing the Earth" about the European Greenbelt, running 12,500km from the Arctic Circle to the borders of Greece. One of the most ambitious conservation schemes ever devised, the idea was to use the no man's land of the Iron Curtain that divided Communist East from Capitalist West as a wildlife corridor to allow rare and endangered species to travel unimpeded across the continent.

SHERWOOD FOREST - An episode of Country File including the veteranisation of oak trees (at 22min-30min with more trees 30-34min) and the restoration of heathland (at 43-46min); followed by the exploitation of oil reserves in Dukes Wood within Sherwood Forest between 1939 and 1966 - the first major on-shore oilfield in Britain.

HEDGE HUB - the 'go to' place for hedgerow knowledge and learning, including over 400 searchable resources.

LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY STATUTORY GUIDANCE - What a local nature recovery strategy should contain.

CLIMATE CHANGE: TREES GROW FOR AN EXTRA MONTH AS THE PLANET WARMS

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



The children of St Mary's Junior School call this stylish bug hotel "Buckingham Palettes". It's just another of the many ecologically-friendly resources at the school in Shinfield.

"We haven't surveyed any of these"

That was the subject of an email Kerry sent me some time ago.

There followed a link to "[Trees That Refuse To Die No Matter What](#)".

There are 40 examples of trees growing into odd shapes and in various precarious situations, on other trees, in buildings and around objects. Do have a look.

Some sources used in this issue: all web pages accessed 25-05-2023 (unless stated otherwise) Links embedded in the text are not repeated here. Email me if you want a list of them.

p9-Species in Focus: Mitchell, Alan (1974) 'A Field Guide to the Trees of Britain and Northern Europe' ISBN 0 00 212035 6

https://www.monumentaltrees.com/en/gbr/england/cityoflondon/965_royalbotanicgardens/13333/

<https://www.botanic.cam.ac.uk/the-garden/gardens-plantings/main-walk/>

<https://www.botanic.cam.ac.uk/the-garden/gardens-plantings/trees/black-pines/> https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pinus_nigra

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 has recorded our trees.
We wouldn't have a database without you.