



Our veteran tree database has **8,696** trees and **13,976** photographs

Welcome to the latest issue of Tree Watch.

If you've looked at the [map page](#) of our website recently, you'll have seen that we've finally closed our veteran tree survey. We certainly haven't managed to measure and record all the veteran trees in the Borough, but it's a fantastic achievement to have recorded over 8,000 and photographed many of them. See [page 8](#) for more about this.

In this issue there's a detailed account about removing graffiti from trees in Finchampstead. This may prove useful in the hopefully unlikely event of this vandalism occurring elsewhere, but it also shows how difficult the removal is.

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the sudden death of David Longsdale. You can read a tribute to him in the Ancient Tree Forum summer [newsletter](#).

On a more cheerful note, Kerry has an exciting initiative-see [page 2](#).

The next issue of Tree Watch will be November 2024 and the copy deadline is 31st October. If you have any comments or responses to anything in this issue or contributions for future issues please send them to: Elaine Butler - 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)

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Events - Sept-Dec 2024

- ❖ 23rd November-1st December: National Week. See below for details of a joint event with Wokingham Arts Society. Information about any events arranged will be on our [website](#) and information will be circulated to members.

Non-WDVTA events:

- ❖ Tree Council Zoom sessions:

Wednesday 4th September 14:00-15:00 - 'Trialling the Miyawaki method: the Kent experience' [Details & booking on-line](#)

Tuesday 24th September 13:00-14:30 - 'Finding places for your trees and how to connect with local tree planting projects' [Details & booking on-line](#)

- ❖ Saturday, 19th October - TVERC [Autumn Recorders' Conference](#) - The Oracle, Thames Valley Park, Reading. A varied programme including a talk by Dr Julian Parfitt 'South East Strategic Reservoir Option: Ancient and Veteran Trees, Bats, Birds and Fungi'

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

It has always been an aim to occasionally join together with another local group for an event. It broadens our reach and raises awareness of WDVTA and of our wonderful local trees. It offers possibilities for publicity and may interest new people in becoming members, which is something we hope to achieve as our current membership ages.

For some time we have been exploring the possibility of organising a 'Trees in Art' event. Quite a while ago now we put together a 'Trees in Literature' evening which drew from poetry, plays and novels. Working with 'Wokingham Literary Society' we held a really enjoyable and successful evening.

Initially we had interest from an Oxford Professor of Art who has written and contributed to several books including 'Silent Witnesses: Trees in British Art 1760-1870'; well worth a look. We had thought to have an illustrated talk but sadly she had to change her plans and so we have revised our plans.

Now a much more practical event is taking place through September and October. After discussions with 'Wokingham Arts Society' we have opened up the opportunity to submit a piece of art in any medium based on one of the trees in our veteran tree [database](#). With more than eight and a half thousand to choose from it will be really interesting to see the results. If the summer exhibition they put on every year is an indicator, there will be some inspiring submissions.

It is not only art society members who can paint, craft or draw, many of our members have artistic interests and we welcome a contribution from any of you. It may be a small sketch done standing by the tree; a painting from photos taken when surveying, a beautifully crafted piece of wood or pyrography perhaps. Pottery is another option. One 'Wokingham Arts Society' member had a special award at the summer exhibition for a seascape in porcelain. Imagine a tree, leaves or fruits created in this way or the colours and textures of lichen on a branch, a stag-head tree or the hollows of a fine old veteran.

We are not including photographs at this time as we might arrange a future event with the Camera Club.

I have spoken with our webmaster, Malcolm Inglis, who confirms that, with your permission, we can feature some of the best and most interesting pieces on our WDVTA website. The Tree Council have shown interest in this project and have offered to add pictures of a few of the most interesting and inspiring items to their social media, with a note about the WDVTA and Arts Society's collaboration. It could raise interest in a particular tree or even a particular artist, but will definitely add to the pleasure for all in seeing some of our amazing trees represented in so many different ways.

We look forward to celebrating the results in National Tree Week 23rd November-1st December.

If you might be interested in taking part, please contact Kerry for details via the [query form](#) on our website.

Art can be used to celebrate trees, but also to highlight the plight of individual ones. Various artists have joined forces to help raise £60,000 needed to protect a [London Plane](#) in the gardens of the King's School in Ely, Cambridgeshire. It's thought to be more than 300 years old and one of the largest and oldest London Planes in the UK. According to Mitchell, this species was first planted in UK in 1680, but the school thinks theirs was planted as a 10-year-old sapling in 1674.

The London Plane (*Platanus x hispanica*) is a hybrid between the oriental plane (*P. orientalis*) and American plane (*P. occidentalis*) and probably arose in southern France or Spain in the 1650s; although possibly in Vauxhall Gardens in London, where John Tradescant the Younger recorded the tree in the mid-17th century.

PARISH/TOWN ACTIVITY - MEMBER'S REPORTS

ARBORFIELD AND NEWLAND - Diana Thorne

One of the oaks in the avenue at Arborfield Park had to be removed recently, for public safety reasons, having succumbed to a fungal infection. It was the 4th tree on left side, planted for my mother (Grace Edith Prett) and opposite one for my father which had already had to be replaced. This one will be replaced once I'm sure that it is safe to plant in that same position (no remaining fungus danger!!).

The fallen tree is to have a good future. The trunk was carved into a cat by Paul Stevens, one of our Parish Councillors. It was then presented to Gary Cowan our former Borough Councillor in memory of and to celebrate his late wife who worked long and hard on our Parish Council and who helped to plant all of the recent trees and daffodils in Arborfield Park. She loved cats!!

The presentation was made when the extension to the pavilion in Arborfield Park was officially opened in May, as reported in

'[Wokingham Today](#)' and on the parish [website](#) (where you can see a photo of Gary with the cat).

[NB There's a [document](#) about this avenue in our Commemorative and Special Tree Inventory.]



The avenue at Arborfield Park in 2012

CHARVIL – Sarah Swatridge

There isn't much to report from Charvil on this occasion. However, I visited the community orchard recently and was pleased to see that the first batch of apple trees planted are now nearly all bearing fruit. In fact, five out of the six original trees have fruit, so that's good and the other one is alive. All six were sponsored and planted by residents on 28th November 2021. There have since been two further planting sessions over the last two years, adding another 12 trees, with a further six apple trees, I believe, due to be planted this Nov/Dec. The original idea was to have an orchard of 30 trees, however I've noticed that last years batch were not planted where originally planned. This could be due to changes on the parish council. Councillor Mike Heath was the driving force for all things tree related and did a superb job. Unfortunately, he has since moved back to Thailand, now that his children have finished at university here in the UK. There have been significant changes on the parish council and I'm not sure exactly what the plan is now. I also noticed blackberries in the background. They seem to be getting earlier each year. I'm sure, when I was a child, we picked them in the autumn!

Below: Charles Ross apple tree (lhs) -Beauty of Bath apple tree (rhs) - and the blackberries!



[This orchard is [W143](#) in our Commemorative and Special Inventory.]

HURST -Dennis Bryant checked the Jubilee Trees in Dinton pastures at the beginning of June. He found **#32**, outside the Coffee House, is growing strongly and is now large enough to provide shade for two new picnic tables, as shown in his photo (right).



Above left:
Being planted in December 2012

Far left:
On its 5th anniversary in 2017

Left:
On its 10th anniversary in 2012

TWYFORD - Sarah Swatridge

Twyford's new library opened in June 2024 in what was the old Polehampton Boys' School. The building is light and airy and has a spacious and welcoming children's area. There's a mural of cartoon-style trees, cushions that resemble slices of tree trunks and mats decorated with leaves. All in all, a very tree-



orientated theme. The library itself has four outdoor benches as well as some indoor seating. Whilst it is split level, there is a lift to make the higher level accessible. The opening hours have not changed and the old library car park opposite is still available for library use when the library is open. However, spaces are very limited. I understand that plans for this new library were first discussed 24 years ago, but the original architect came along to the opening and was pleased to see that his plans had been taken on-board. It is unclear what plans there are for the old library.

FINCHAMPSTEAD – Gordon Vetch

At the last WDVTA meeting, I mentioned a recent incident of graffiti spraying on some trees on 'The Ridges' in Finchampstead. The paint was eventually removed by a group of volunteers who do maintenance work on 'The Ridges'. It was thought that this might make an interesting article for Treewatch and possibly help in any future similar incidents. The following account was written by Duncan Clark and sent to me by David Hartwell.

At the end of May this year one of our 'Friends of Finchampstead Ridges' committee members noticed that vandals had spray painted graffiti over a number of Scots pines and a seat at a viewpoint on Finchampstead Ridges.

Our NT ranger Jamie Preston provided a number of suggestions for obliterating the graffiti, such as covering the paint with local London clay as at the Runnymede site or by using a lime based paint which has no biocide added and would not harm the trees or environment. He also noted that Scot's pines have a natural tendency to shed their bark so the paint would eventually disappear, but that would take a long time. On initial inspection the paint/bark was quite easy to flake off in places and some of the paint seemed water soluble, suggesting that its removal might not be quite as bad as first feared.

We managed to get most of the graffiti cleaned off with a 4-stage process. This is shown in detail using one of the trees with a distinctive graffiti spray on it.

1. The paint and loose bark flakes were first scraped with a cabinet scraper. This worked well on the flat areas of bark removing only a thin layer of bark and most of the paint in that area. It was almost like flaking flint and was helped immensely by the propensity of Scots pine to shed bark layers. It did not work on areas between bark flakes and may be less effective on a tree with smoother bark. However, a cabinet scraper when used in woodwork does tend to take a very fine layer of surface material without damaging the wood underneath. Sanding, on the other hand, digs little lines in the paint and bark according to the grit leaving areas of paint in-between the grit. In woodwork, one would normally go through finer and finer grits to get to a flat finish and remove all the surface paint. After this stage there were piles of coloured paint flakes at the foot of each tree. *The photos below show stages 1-3. The left photo (stage 1) shows the left-hand side of the tree scraped and the right-hand side as originally found.*



2. Scrapers wouldn't fit in the rough areas of bark or between bark plates. Sandpaper also only works on flat surfaces. Wire brushes would allow the paint to be removed from a rough surface but the conventional steel brushes would be very severe and could damage the bark. For a softer effect brass brushes were used, and these proved a more effective means of reducing (but not removing all) the paint from the rough areas of bark. This also removed any areas missed by the scraper.

The middle photo above shows the left-hand side of the tree brushed and the right-hand side scraped.

3. The two previous dry steps removed most of the paint but did leave paint dust and outlines of the graffiti on the trees. As some of the paint was soluble, we then scrubbed the bark with a wet nylon scrubbing brush. This diluted the paint colour by combining with bark dust and smeared the edges of the paint to make the graffiti marks less distinct. Some paints (especially white) were quite easy to scrub off whereas others (e.g. red) seemed more permanent. I expect a lot of the success of the removal will depend on the type of paint used for the graffiti. For small crevices a little brass brush was used (about the size of a toothbrush) to remove some of the stubborn bits of paint. Although this resulted in quite a good removal of the paint, you could still see some outline of the graffiti.

The photo above right shows the left hand side of the tree washed and the right hand side brushed.

4. The final stage was based on Jamie's recommended approach of coating in an inert clay. David Hartwell had some bentonite - widely used in civil engineering and the oil industry as a drilling mud and fluid for supporting excavations and sealing ponds. Bentonite is an inert natural clay with a wide range of uses from medicine to cat litter. So we made up a bentonite slurry which was then painted over any remaining graffiti, making it virtually invisible.

The photos left show the process completed on the tree (left) and when the bentonite had dried a bit (right).



Although one tree was left with graffiti in case any police investigation was on-going, we have been very pleased with the result.

Before and after photos are shown below.





Bentonite painting still needed on the trees below:



OTHER LOCAL NEWS

The demise of the Finchampstead Society was covered in the last issue. In June another local society, 'Hurst Village Society', announced it was winding up. It was a controversial decision and has immediately been replaced by the 'New Hurst Village Society' with a new website. In June, the old website recorded that its last major action was the production of a revised edition of the history of Hurst, an updated, improved version of Henry Farrar's 1984 book "Hurst, a new look at an ancient parish". That website no longer exists and its content has not been transferred to the new one.

The Borough has two new Local Wildlife Sites (LGSs): Winnersh Meadows and Woosehill Meadows, making a total of 112, with another six proposed. There a list of them on the TVERC website.

'Freely Fruity' has been mentioned in several Tree Watch issues. They are now one of 14 groups from Berkshire to be nominated for the 'King's Award for Voluntary Service'. The winners will be announced on the King's birthday in November.

As part of its 50th anniversary celebrations, Wokingham Town Council is reviving the ancient tradition of 'Beating the Bounds', with a walk around its boundaries on 8th September. Originally it was common for special trees to mark significant places along a parish or town boundary and we do have some of these in our database.

DID YOU KNOW?... Some common trees are proscribed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Species listed on Schedule 9 are prohibited from release into the wild. It is an offence to plant or otherwise allow them to grow in the wild. Included in this list are Turkey Oak (*Quercus cerris*), Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*) and False Acacia (*Robinia pseudoacacia*). They have the potential to be invasive and have negative impacts on native biodiversity. In addition, the Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) is listed by Defra as an "invasive plant species of special concern".

You are not committing an offence if the trees already exist in your garden (because Defra does not consider these plants "to be intentionally kept or cultivated" !!); but "you cannot intentionally plant listed species on your land, or intentionally cause existing listed plants to spread".

THE VETERAN TREE SURVEY

You may remember that the closure of the veteran tree survey was announced at the AGM in April 2022. However, as described at the time, it was not finally closed then because some data was still to be submitted and there were two areas where we particularly wanted to record the trees. These were the redwoods in Highwood, Woodley and the Wellingtonias in the avenue leading to Reddam House, formerly Bearwood College. Barbara has completed the recording of the redwoods (as far as possible); but unfortunately (in spite of repeated requests) we were not given permission to complete the survey of the Reddam/Bearwood avenue. We had permission to survey when it was Bearwood College and had recorded some trees at the top of the avenue as well as counting the other trees in the avenue and taking their grid references. Having been unable to obtain permission to measure those remaining trees and photograph them, we've input them with estimated girths and finally closed the database.

Whilst waiting for these new records, the database continued to be updated with any updates, corrections or new records submitted. This has resulted in 1,018 records being added or changed, of which 184 were new trees; 167 records were updated and 667 were corrected (mainly 'cosmetic' corrections). 601 new photos have been added. Unfortunately, I'm sure there are many more 'cosmetic' corrections that could be made, and of course more photos could be taken of trees currently without them, but we've really had to stop now and can start to think about writing a final report!

At the final web update in June, 43 new trees were added:

- 13 Wellingtonias (estimated girths, no photos) at Reddam (Arborfield)
- 24 English oaks from an arboricultural survey for a planning application in Shinfield (no photos)
- 2 coastal redwoods in Woodley
- 1 ash and 2 English oaks in Earley
- 1 sweet chestnut in Barkham

One duplicate record was discovered and removed (MRN [6510](#) amended and MRN 8795 removed)

As well as the new trees, 77 records were updated; 105 were corrected and 92 new photos were added.

The English oaks in Shinfield are on a site in Tree Mile Cross to which we've had no access. Their girths range from 3m to 5.6m (MRNs 8674-9500).

The three new trees in Earley illustrate the problem of finding all qualifying trees. The survey in Earley was thorough and considered complete, but these three had been missed previously.

The sweet chestnut in Barkham (MRN [9458](#)) was the last tree to be added (although it's not the highest MRN number, because of the processing order). It was surveyed ten years ago, in August 2014, but in an area of the Coombes woodland for which permission was given to survey, but not to publish. The situation has now changed allowing it to be included in our database (photo left).



The last update to our records came via the contact form for MRN [2058](#). It was a comment about bats flying around this tree and was submitted in June by someone who is not a WDVTA member. It's nice to know that people are looking at our map and the tree details there.

*"As all conservationists know,
it is easier to start a new project than to sustain an existing one."
Oliver Rackham (2006) "Woodlands"*

".... Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association, probably the most successful local veteran tree survey project in the UK."

David Alderman, ATH Head Verifier, (27 Jan 2018), Woodland Trust blog

Veteran Tree Survey snapshot

DATA FROM
ARBORICULTURAL REPORTS

430 (5%)
trees in our database

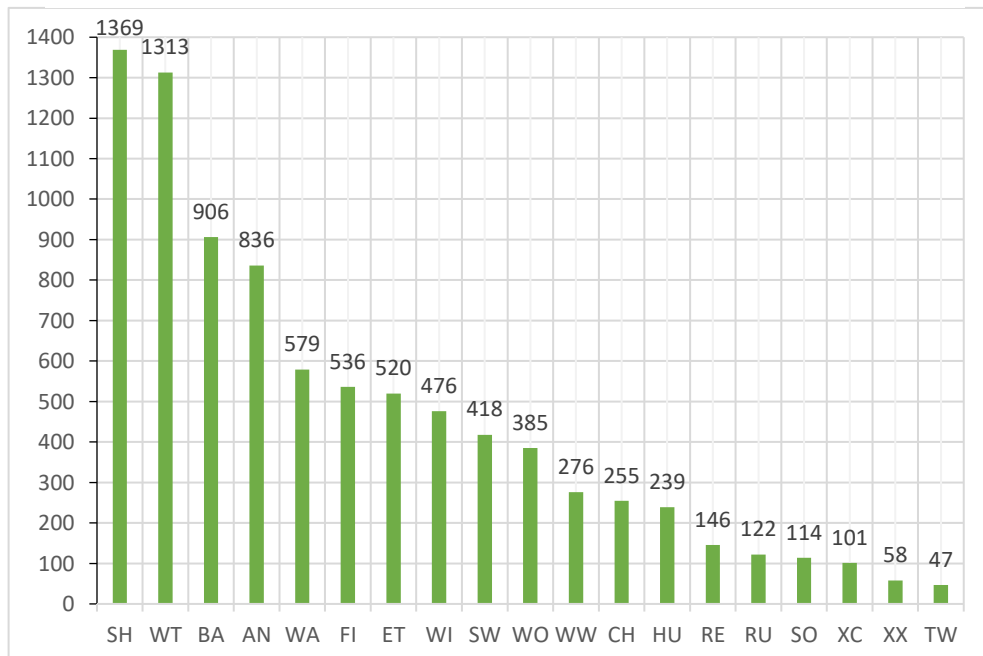
40
reports

4
parishes have none

12
reports yielded 1 tree

1
report yielded 60 trees

The number of trees recorded in each town/parish is shown below.



SH=Shinfield; WT=Wokingham Town; BA=Barkham; AN=Arborfield & Newland; WA=Wargrave; FI=Finchampstead; ET=Earley Town; WI=Winnersh; SW=Swallowfield; WO=Woodley Town; WW=Wokingham Without; CH=Charvil; HU=Hurst; RE=Remenham; RU=Ruscombe; SO=Sonning; XC=Crowthorne (Bracknell Forest); XX=outside Wokingham Borough; TW=Twyford.

TREE OF THE YEAR

It's time to vote for the [Tree of the Year](#) again. This time there are 12 trees to choose from and they are all lovely old oaks. The nearest one to us is in Hampshire. It's the 'Elephant Oak' in the New Forest and is the smallest of the set, with a girth of 'just' 3.96m; whereas the Marton oak's girth is 14m. This sessile oak is in the village of Marton in Cheshire and is one of the fifty 'Great British Trees' identified to mark the Queen's Golden Jubilee. Its trunk is not intact, instead there are three sections of standing wood surrounding a large hollow area, as shown in this photo. Another tree on the list is the 'Darwin Oak' in Shrewsbury, currently scheduled to be felled to make way for the Shrewsbury Bypass! (See [Tree Watch 59](#), p 8.) The winner of course will be entered into the 2025 'European Tree of the Year' competition; which Wikipedia describes as "an annual contest held to find the most "loveable" tree in Europe".



This year's European winner has been [announced](#). It's '[The Heart of the Garden](#)', a beech tree in the Botanical Gardens of the University of Wroclaw in Poland. It got 39,158 votes. In second place, with 24,807 votes, was another beech, '[The Weeping Beech of Bayeux](#)'. Apparently, it's becoming as famous as the Bayeux tapestry and get lots of emails! Its branches have been supported for over 100 years and it now has a 40m spread. '[The 1,000-year-old Olive Tree of Luras](#)' came third. It's one of the oldest wild olive trees in Sardinia and the citation says it's estimated to be between 3,000 and 4,000 years old. It had 13,933 votes. The UK's entry, Wrexham's [sweet chestnut](#) in Acton Park, came in tenth place with 7,180 votes. Thought to be almost 500 years old, this giant tree has weathered many storms and survived being pillaged for firewood in 1940s post-war Britain.

You can see lots of photos of the [finalists](#). Each entry has a photo at the top of the page, but do use the arrows to scroll through all the photos. That olive tree is very impressive.

ASCOTT

Ascott in Buckinghamshire is a National Trust property administered by the de Rothschild family and is definitely worth a visit. The half-timbered manor house dates back to the 16th century and was transformed by the Rothschilds in the late 19th century. The property is set in extensive gardens cleverly divided into different areas or 'rooms'; some are formal, whilst others natural. There was plenty to see, including the sunken garden, the scented walk, the Jubilee Plantation, the Dutch garden, the Chinese dell and so on. We visited in the spring and there were literally thousands of daffodils. It was stunning!

The garden boasts many magnificent trees such as a beautifully shaped Wellingtonia and an impressive *Magnolia grandiflora*.



One part of the garden hosts an enormous Topiary sundial made from very carefully clipped Yew Trees. You need to stand on the hill and look down on it to appreciate its size. At ground level you don't see the overall effect and could miss the fact that it's actually a sundial!

Another section of the garden centres around a lily pond complete with a fountain and numerous weeping willows. This was a very peaceful and tranquil part of the garden, with benches so you could pause and reflect.

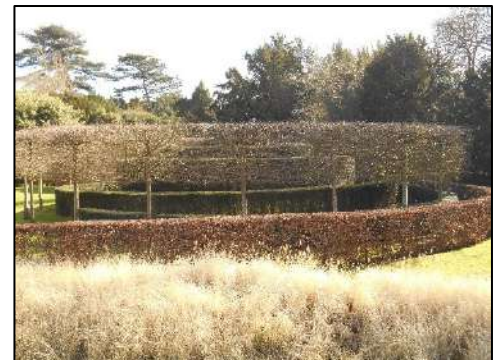


A very modern garden area features a huge circular beech hedge sculptured into tiers like a wedding cake.

It had to be seen to be believed. Ideally you need to walk around the hedge to view it from different angles.



I can't believe we've never visited Ascott before, but now we've discovered it, we'll be returning, maybe to see the daffodils and spring gardens again, or perhaps during a different season. I'm sure it won't disappoint.



THE DEATH OF AN OLD FRIEND

Derek Oxbrough

When we purchased Japonicas (our house) in 1996, it had a lovely mature Weeping Willow tree in the back garden. It was then a condition of our mortgage that I must have it pollarded every 5 years. This was because the tree was less than 10m from our house, and was considered a subsidence risk to the house. We continued to have the Willow pollarded regularly, in the autumn, even when the mortgage was paid off. The tree always amazed me with its ability to grow back 5m long branches in the first year after its pollarding.

In 2012 the Willow was surveyed for WDVTA by Janet Firth and became veteran tree [6438](#) on the database. It's classified by ATI as a veteran (ATI # [164907](#)).

Willow in Summer of 2012



Willow in Winter of 2009



We became very attached to the Willow tree, as not only was it a pleasant feature of our back garden, it also provided much needed shade in the summer for our conservatory, patio, gazebo and BBQ area. It also had a very convenient low branch for a children's swing which was well used over the years, by the grandchildren and eventually our great-grandchildren. In more recent years we have had birdboxes on the tree providing a nesting site for many bluetit families.

The Willow thrived for many years until the spring after it was pollarded in the autumn of 2022. In the spring and summer of 2023, the Willow grew back some short branches, about 2m long, that were very sparse of leaves. In the autumn of 2023, I noticed some fungi at the base of the tree and wondered if this might be honey fungus, so I sent my tree surgeon this photo. He confirmed that it probably was honey fungus and that the tree was unlikely to survive.

However, I decided to give the Willow tree a second chance and left it over the winter into the spring of 2024; but in that spring virtually no leaves grew and the honey fungus reappeared, this time in greater numbers.

Also, this spring the tree bark was becoming detached, particularly on the buttress roots, signalling that the tree was now dead. It had to be felled because if it fell down in the prevailing wind, it would most likely fall onto the conservatory and house roof.





So, the sad decision had to be made to have our Willow tree felled, but we decided to turn it into a "Monument Tree," by cutting it down to about a 3m height. There were two reasons for this, firstly we were very fond of the tree and secondly, we wanted to retain the bird box on the tree, in which we had a camera. For the past 10 years we had monitored the nest building, egg laying, chick development and eventual fledging of baby bluetits.



From
Japonicas
Birdbox
Camera



We asked our tree surgeon to create the Monument Tree on the 28th May, when we had calculated that the birdbox would have been vacated as the chicks would have flown. Below is a photo of the tree surgeons at work and the final Monument Tree.



SPECIES IN FOCUS - LAWSON CYPRESS (*CHAMAECYPARIS LAWSONIA*)

10 miscellaneous facts about the Lawson Cypress

1. Native to small coastal areas of NW California and SW Oregon, it was introduced to Britain in 1854 by William Murray (who discovered it growing in Port Orford in Oregon) and first propagated by Charles Lawson at 'Lawson & Sons' nursery in Edinburgh.
2. Its official name in the USA is 'Port Orford Cedar', although occasionally called Port Orford Cypress. It isn't a cedar! Cedars belong to a different family (Pinaceae instead of Cupressaceae). It's also called false cypress, white cedar and ginger pine (although not a pine of course).
3. Its thick bark provides resistance to wildfires and it regenerates well on disrupted land. It grows best in moist but not waterlogged soils, is shade tolerant, but has a shallow root system making it susceptible to windthrow in very exposed locations and is palatable to deer.
4. It has become naturalised in lowland UK, growing from seed on banks, walls and woodland margins; and is extensively planted in parks and gardens. There are several hundred ornamental cultivars with varying crown shape, growth rates and foliage colour. At least 24 have been awarded Royal Horticultural Society's 'Award of Garden Merit'.
5. The Karuk people of N California used its branches to make brooms and to build sweat lodges (low, humped buildings where they took ritual steam baths to purify themselves).
6. The wood is light, but strong and rot resistant, even after long exposure to salt water, making it ideal for boat-building. It's also fragrant, with a ginger aroma from an oil that inhibits decay and insects, including termites; perhaps the reason it's used to make Venetian blinds. The oil has been used as an insecticide. The wood is fine-grained with good tonal qualities, and prized for making arrows and guitar soundboards. It's also used for storage battery cell separation.
7. Until the 1950s, it was an important part of Oregon's lumber industry. There was a major export market in Asia, especially Japan, where its light weight and aroma makes it popular for coffins, shrines and temples. Then it was devastated by disease (caused by *Phytophthora lateralis*).
8. The wild populations have been severely affected by this root-rot pathogen and in 2011 the species was classified as 'near threatened' by the [IUCN](#). It is also susceptible to other root rots, including *Phytophthora cinnamomi* and *Armillaria* (honey fungus). *P. lateralis* was assumed absent from Britain until discovered in Scotland in late 2010.
9. We have six in our veteran tree database, two maidens and four multi stems. The two shown here are in the grounds of St Anne's Manor in Wokingham Town. MRN [1695](#) (top) is a maiden with a girth of 4.4m at 1.5m when measured in July 2008. In May 2013 it was registered by TROBI as a 'County Champion for Girth' (TROBI #206567). MRN [1697](#) (right) is a multi stem with these amazing daughter stems surrounding the main trunk. Both trees are on the ATI register as 'notables' ([#45581](#) & [45582](#)).
10. There are two TROBI 'Britain & Ireland Champions for Girth'. Both have a single trunk. TROBI #11047, in Co Wicklow in Ireland, had a girth of 5.4m (at 1.5m) in 2000, and was possibly planted in 1869. The larger one is in Dumfries, Scotland (#221180). In 2013 its girth was 7.54m at 1.2m.



SADLY DEPARTED

Unfortunately, we've had reports of the demise of several of our recorded trees. There is insufficient space to feature all of these, but you can follow the links to see the details.

Trees felled:

MRNs [8505](#) in Wargrave, [2473](#) in Wokingham Without, [1907](#) in Earley and [8178](#) in the Coombes woods in Barkham.

MRN [8178](#) was just one of two Wild Service trees in our veteran tree database. It was a multi stem with a girth of 3.32m at 0.1m when measured in August 2013. The reason for felling is unknown, but it was recorded as having cubical rot when surveyed. The other one is in Arborfield, mrn [5914](#), recorded in 2011, with a girth of 1.8m; also a multi stemmed, measured at 10cm above ground level. There are three smaller ones, with girths less than 1m, in our 'Commemorative and Special Trees Inventory': two in Nores Hill Woods in Shinfield and one in a hedgerow in the grounds of Hawthorns School in Woosehill.

MRN [8505](#) was felled in March prior to a planning application. This felling, together with other trees being cut down, caused a lot of local concern, with one worried person sending [photographic](#) evidence to the Borough Council and her local councillors, as well as us; including one of the felled timber being loaded onto a truck.

MRN [1907](#) (photos left) was a Lombardy Poplar and a TROBI 'County Champion for Girth' (with a girth of 5.1m in 2012). Our record mentions it could be affected by any development nearby by Reading University. We don't know when it was felled or why. Anne and John Booth came across the stump in March.



Dead trees:

Dead, but still standing, are MRNs [6943](#) in Barkham; and [6701](#), [4830](#), [6717](#) & [6718](#) in Shinfield. The last three, alongside the quiet Ryeish Lane in Spencers Wood, were in an area used for vehicle and equipment storage whilst building new housing estates either side of Ryeish Lane. MRN [4830](#) is shown here when recorded in February 2011, with an open field behind.

MRN [3305](#) fell dramatically across Honey Hill Road in Wokingham Without,



during bad weather in January. It had a TPO and a planning application ([240040](#)) was required to remove it. The application was granted under the "Dead/Dangerous - 5 Day Notice" provision and a suitable replacement (defined in the permission) must be planted between November and March. I hope to be able to report on the replacement next year.

ALMOST DEPARTED !!

Mrn **180** is the iconic Cedar of Lebanon in front of St Paul's Church on the Reading Road in Wokingham Town. The photo here was taken in June this year.

Ten years ago some extensive (and expensive) work was done on this tree when velvet-top fungus (*Phaeolus schweinitzii*) was detected. Some of the lower limbs were removed and others were braced with cables. The arboricultural **report** hoped that this would extend its safe useful life expectancy by more than 15 years. Recent inspections revealed that the fungal infection has spread and a split in an upper branch is in danger of shearing off and causing damage to the graves below and of course to anyone nearby at the time. The church authorities decided it had to be felled and notified WDVTA of this decision. It was reported in '**Wokingham Today**' on August 15th, but on 24th it reported a possible **reprieve**. Borough councillor Jordan Montgomery, who is the executive member for environment and climate emergency, is quoted as saying *"Felling a tree is irreversible. When a tree is as prominent as this one is, we want to make sure that felling is the only viable option. We have been working with the landowner to understand their proposals, and to agree the right decision for the tree. We have agreed that the tree should be reduced rather than felled, which will allow for appropriate risk management, and to maintain some of the biodiversity of the site and the environmental value of the tree."*



Many of you are familiar with the lovely veteran trees at **Burnham Beeches**. In late April one of their ancient beech pollards growing on the Mendelssohn's slope had fallen. It was expected to die; but by summer, green shoots had appeared. To encourage this new growth, the exposed roots and tears in the trunk were covered with well-rotted wood chip. Let's hope it survives.

A POSTCARD FROM SWANAGE

Anne Booth

We have been visiting Swanage for many years and felt we knew it rather well. However, in May on our usual visit to the Tourist Information Office, I picked up a leaflet I hadn't seen before, 'Some notable trees of Swanage'. This folded A4 sheet listed 10 trees including, to my amazement, three mature English Elms in full view dominating one side of the gardens on the seafront. How could I have missed seeing these for so many years having walked past them on numerous occasions?

A few of the trees on the list were veterans but most were not, including a small street hawthorn 'hanging on tenaciously'. We had an enjoyable morning or two following the trail and whilst doing so discovered an entire park with tennis courts, putting green and café, that we had no idea was there.

It was thrilling to be shown some large elms of a maturity I have not seen for decades, and to feel the enthusiasm for these and others by the group of volunteers who wrote the leaflet.



It was compiled by volunteers of Greening Swanage - part of **Sustainable Swanage**. The tree trail is not on the website, but I can scan and email it to anyone interested.

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

THE ARBORICULTURAL ASSOCIATION FREE WEBINAR ARCHIVE

WOOD WISE WEB - Back issues of this Woodland Trust magazine - each issue concentrates on a specific theme -and all are downloadable as pdf files. Examples: **Creating tomorrow's woods** (Dec 2021); **Life in deadwood** (Autumn 2019); **Iconic oak** (Summer 2019); **Trees for water** (spring 2022)

RESTORING RESILIENT ECOSYSTEMS - A project to "unpick and examine the essential elements required for ecosystem restoration, focusing on UK woodlands and grasslands".

THE-MIYAWAKI-METHOD-OF-PLANTING-TREES-HELPS-PREVENT-VANDALISM-IN-URBAN-AREAS

SYDNEY'S TREE WARS: Greed and harbour views fuel vandalism.
Apparently legal protection is difficult to enforce and penalties are low compared with UK!

TREES THAT SYNCHRONISE REPRODUCTION AROUND SUMMER SOLSTICE

SAVING THE SECRET FOREST - video (26 mins); plus 5min radio programme and news report
There are still places on earth that scientists have yet to explore. One of those is the centre of Mount Mabu in central Mozambique. In early June 2024, a team of British-led, international scientists trekked into that part for the forest for the first time.

PAVEMENT TREES - their interaction with concrete and asphalt.

KATE HUMBLE'S OLD TREE - Listen to Kate Humble at the Hay Festival talking about an old tree on her farm (at end of programme - about 21 minutes into programme).

THE WONDER OF TREES - with Judi Dench, Tony Kirkham and Tristan Gooley
An episode of radio 4's "The Infinite Monkey Cage" 12-July-2024

MANGROVES IN UAE - How mangroves play a crucial role in climate preservation.

COFFEE WASTE USEFUL?
Researchers dumped tons of coffee waste into a forest. This is what it looks like now.

A V-SHAPED FOREST IN SUSSEX - it was planted for Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee.

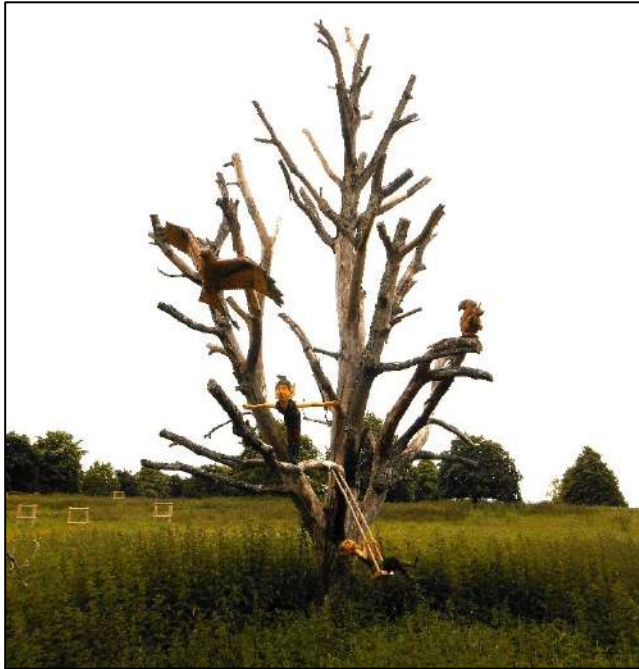
Tree planting in **CORNWALL** and **LINCOLNSHIRE**
Anger at proposed felling in Essex - **OAK TREES**, **THUNDERSLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL**
ILLEGAL FELLING of lime trees in Northamptonshire.

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

From Sarah Swatridge:

Graham and I recently stayed in the Wiltshire village of Stanton Fitzwarren. In the grounds of Stanton House Hotel, just north of Swindon, we came across this dead tree. I often think trees that have been struck by lightning have a beauty about them. Someone has given this one a new lease of life with these fun wooden carvings.

The tree is beside the perimeter path and so many people will stroll passed and hopefully it will bring a smile to their faces.



Some sources used in this issue: all web pages accessed 25-08-24 (unless stated otherwise) Links embedded in the text are not repeated here. Email me if you want a list of them.

p2-Mitchell, Alan (1974) 'A Field Guide to the Trees of Britain and Northern Europe' ISBN 0 00 212035 6

p12-Species in Focus: Mitchell, Alan (1974) 'A Field Guide to the Trees of Britain and Northern Europe' ISBN 0 00 212035 6

<http://www.treeregister.org/> (database accessed May 2013)

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/trees-and-shrubs/lawson-cypress>

<https://americangardener.net/lawson-cypress/>

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/a-z-of-british-trees/lawson-cypress/>

<https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/tree-species-database/lawson-cypress-lc/>

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

<https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/34004/2840024>

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