

Report

European Champion Tree Forum 6th Meeting held in Lednice and Křtiny, Czech Republic Wednesday 24th to Sunday 28th August 2016



This was probably the most successful ECTF meeting ever. We had nearly 30 attendees from 10 countries which marks a renewed interest in monumental tree matters.

Wednesday afternoon (24th August) things developed slowly in Lednice in Southern Moravia with people arriving from across Europe. We were guests of the Mendel University and were accommodated in one of the students' halls of residence. The meeting started with a solid dinner and a welcome drink distilled from the fruits of the service tree (*Sorbus domestica*) – a local speciality.



Under a mighty lime tree in Pohansko Forest

Next day (25th August), our first excursion took us to the Cahnov Reserve near Lanžhot. In the floodplain of the rivers Morava and Dyie we saw mighty elms (*Ulmus laevis*), ancient field maples (*Acer campestre*) and a giant pear tree (*Pyrus pyraeaster*). In the afternoon we went to the northern part of the Pohansko Forest to visit old hornbeams (*Carpinus betulus*) and the

largest oaks (*Quercus robur*). In the evening the last stop was at Rybníční zámek, Fishpond Castle, near Lednice to see an amazing ancient willow (*Salix alba*).

Presentations started after dinner in the Lednice Town Hall. First speaker was our guest Marie Hrušková with an overview over the monumental trees of the Czech Republic. To give a wider view on tree matters Luboš and Gordon gave some impressions of their trips to Japan and China respectively.

The next morning (26th August) was filled with presentations. David's proposal for next year's ECTF meeting was read and discussed. His offer to host the next meeting in September 2017 was applauded and gratefully accepted. However, some more detailed planning needs to be done before a first information will be sent out.

Another main topic was the difficult situation in the Białowieża Forest. Our Polish friends warned us not to draw conclusions too quickly. It was agreed to watch the situation closely. If the ECTF raises its voice in support of one side or the other it must be based on the best information available, preferable from the National Park Administration and independent forest and nature conservation experts. The official complaint of six Polish nature conservation NGOs to the European Commission is available here: <http://www.greenpeace.org/eu-unit/Global/eu-unit/reports-briefings/2016/Complaint%20to%20European%20Commission%20-Poland%20forest.pdf>.



In the park of Lednice Chateau

In the afternoon we had time to enjoy the wonderful park of Lednice Chateau. One of the special trees is what the Americans call eastern redcedar which is in fact a juniper (*Juniperus*

virginiana). In the brochure we were given, the tree is called a "pencil cedar" because the first pencils were made using the wood of this species; the Czech company Koh-i-Noor was in its time the world market leader.

Later in the afternoon we moved on to Křtiny. There we were accommodated in the local castle, formerly part of a monastery and today seat of the Mendel University's Forestry Enterprise. After dinner more presentations were heard.



The Žižka Oak in Náměšť nad Oslavou (left) and the Singing Lime Tree in Telecí (right)

On Saturday (27th August) we had an early start to see probably the most remarkable tree of all: The Žižka Oak in Náměšť nad Oslavou (*Quercus robur*). Jan Žižka (1360 – 1424) was a military leader of the Hussites; why the tree is named after him is not really clear. The oak is hollow with two large entrances giving access to the space where the lower part of the bole once was. Also, many of the cavities of the trunk and the branches are covered with elaborate shingle roofs. We moved on to Věstoňovice to see the largest Czech sycamore tree (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). The trunk is entirely hollow with very thick living remnants of wood and bark at the base of the bole.

We drove on to visit a majestic lime tree in Telecí which is called Zpívající lípa, the singing lime tree (*Tilia cordata*). It stands next to a traditional home in the highlands style. It is one of the very few individual trees that ever made it on a postage stamp.



At dinner we were given the opportunity to sample Machandel Schnapps, a liquor from Gdansk in Poland flavoured with the cones of the juniper (*Juniperus communis*). Later in the evening we heard a set of Dutch-Belgian presentations giving overviews and outlooks on various fields of work with trees. One of the many important bits of information is that the Dutch Bomenstichting is back again, although in new shape.

Luboš proposed a publication project which might be called "genus monographs". It aims at collecting all data available on one genus at a time. It was agreed to start with lime trees. Whether this is going to be a printed book or some digital publication is as yet unclear. Gordon will try to empower the existing ECTF website so that digital material can be published there.



In the Lužánky Park in Brno

On Sunday (28th August) we had again an early start to visit Lužánky Park in Brno, a delightful and well-kept city park. After a quick look at the Mendel Museum and a quick lunch it was time to go for those of us who had trains or flights to catch.

This packed and demanding schedule gave a lot of pleasure to us tree lovers and provided a treasure of new information. Contacts were newly made, friendships were refreshed. All this took place under a cloudless sky, Wednesday through Sunday.

Special thanks go to the Prof. August Bayer Endowment Fund of the Department of Forest Botany, Dendrology and Geobiocoenology at the Mendel University in Brno for supporting the ECTF meeting.

List of measurements
data provided by Andreas, György and Jeroen

| Species | Girth at 1.3 m | Height | Place | Location |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------|--------------------|---|
| Acer campestre | 460 | 11.0 | Pohansko | Floodplain forest (oak - elm - ash); Stopp 2. |
| Acer pseudoplatanus | 728 | 16.7 | Vestonovice | |
| Carpinus betulus | 425 | | Pohansko | Floodplain forest (oak - elm - ash); Stopp 4. |
| Carpinus betulus | 463 | | Pohansko | Floodplain forest (oak - elm - ash); Stopp 4. |
| Fraxinus angustifolia | 300 | 38.0 | Pohansko | Floodplain forest (oak - elm - ash); Stopp1. |
| Ginkgo biloba | 446 | 25.0 | Brno | Mendel Museum. |
| Gleditsia triacanthos | 371 | 29.2 | Lednice | Park; Meadow north of Růzový rybník. |
| Juglans nigra | 371 | 26.2 | Brno | Luzanky Park. |
| Juniperus virginiana | 273 | 18.4 | Lednice | Park; In front of the greenhouse. |
| Metasequoia glyptostroboides | 300 | 34.8 | Lednice | Park |
| Pterocarya fraxinifolia | 488 | | Lednice | Park; North below the terrace near the greenhouse. |
| Pyrus pyraeaster | 290 | | Pohansko | Floodplain forest (oak - elm - ash); Stopp 2. |
| Quercus cerris | 492 | | Lednice | Park; West of the hedgerow garden. |
| Quercus frainetto | 540 | 22.0 | Brno | Luzanky Park. |
| Quercus robur | 629 | 25.0 | Lednice | Park; Northeast of harbour. |
| Quercus robur | 1030 | 24.0 | Náměšť nad Oslavou | Žižka Oak |
| Quercus robur | 537 | | Pohansko | Floodplain forest (oak - elm - ash); Stopp1. |
| Quercus robur | 539 | 33.2 | Pohansko | Floodplain forest (oak - elm - ash); Stopp1. |
| Quercus robur | 817 | 27.0 | Pohansko | Floodplain forest (oak - elm - ash); Stopp 4. |
| Salix alba | 779 | | Lednice | Rybniční zámeček; Little park. |
| Sorbus latifolia | 255 | | Lednice | Park; East shore of the Zámecký rybník. |
| Styphnolobium japonicum | 581 | 19.0 | Lednice | Park; In front of the chateau. |
| Thuja plicata | 467 | | Lednice | Park; East of the chateau. |
| Tilia cordata | 1170 | 21.0 | Teleci | The Singing Lime Tree |
| Tilia petiolaris | 446 | | Lednice | Park; Next to the footpath, north of Růzový rybník. |
| Tilia platyphyllos | 796 | 13.4 | Pohansko | Floodplain forest (oak - elm - ash); Stopp 5. |
| Ulmus laevis | 650 | 21.5 | Pohansko | Floodplain forest (oak - elm - ash); Stopp 6. |