

The European Champion Tree Forum
7th Meeting
England, 21st to 24th September 2017



(preliminary) REPORT

Thursday, 21st September 2017

14:00

Rendezvous in the Kew Gardens Hotel

15:00-17:00

Visit to Syon House Park (on the other side of Thames river, just opposite Kew Gardens), guided by Head Gardener Christopher Martyn and his colleagues.



Autumn colours in Syon House Park: Aesculus glabra var. leucodermis

Syon Park has 600 years of history, dating back to the time of a great medieval Abbey. In 1750, in one of his first major commissions, the landscape architect Lancelot 'Capability' Brown swept away the formal landscape to the south and west

of the House, replacing it with the open views characteristic of the English Landscape movement. Syon today is owned by Ralph Percy 12th Duke of Northumberland.

There are 23 champion trees to see at Syon. Notably; *Taxodium distichum* (bald or swamp cypress), 25m x 7.24m and *Quercus frainetto* (Hungarian oak) 29m x 5.08m.

There is also the remains and regrowth of an ancient *Morus nigra* (black mulberry) possibly the oldest surviving tree on the estate.

19:00

Casual get-together and dinner at the Tap On The Line pub.

Friday, 22nd September 2017

10:00-11:30

Visit to Burnham Beeches, a National Nature Reserve and a European Natura-2000-Site. We were guided by Helen Read the Conservation Manager for the City of London.



Burnham Beeches (Fagus sylvatica)

Burnham Beeches is a Nature Reserve and one of the best examples of ancient woodland in Britain. Famed for its beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and oak (*Quercus robur*) pollards – many of which are more than 400 years old.

It is also home to a rich variety of fungi, plants and animals.

11:45-12:15

Visit to Langley Park, Buckinghamshire. Here we saw the famous ancient yew.

Up until the mid 17th century, the park was primarily a Royal deer park in the gift of Kings. The Arboretum here includes a fine collection of specimen trees. A deer park is first mentioned at Langley Marish in 1202, continuing in use throughout the Middle Ages. The present house was finished in 1760. In 1788 Robert Bateson-Harvey bought the estate which remained in the family until 1945 when it was sold to Buckinghamshire County Council. The house is currently in commercial use.

12:45-14:00

Arrive at Ankerwyke Yew, Magna Carter Lane, Wraysbury.

This iconic 2,500 year old yew is steeped in history. According to popular belief, it was beneath this tree that King Henry VIII courted Anne Boleyn, and some reports suggest that he even proposed in its shadow.



The Ankerwyke Yew (Taxus baccata)

While Magna Carta (Great Charter) is said to have been sealed at Runnymede, on the opposite bank of the river Thames, in 1215, there are those who argue that the event actually took place under this very yew, which at the time was on an island. Originally Magna Carta was known as the Charter of Liberties but King John violated its terms and it became Magna Carta later when a smaller Charter of the Forest was issued in 1217. 800 years later the ECTF meets here to sign their Champion Tree Charter and have a glass of champagne to mark the event.

14:15-16:00

Later in the afternoon, we met with Bill Cathcart in Windsor Great Park. He took us to see the Conqueror's Oak and Offa's Oak (both *Quercus robur*).

Windsor Castle is an official residence of Her Majesty The Queen, whose standard flies from the Round Tower when she is in residence. The Great Park was a hunting ground under William I a thousand years ago. Royal connections continue to be as strong as ever under the stewardship of HRH the Duke of Edinburgh, the official Ranger of Windsor Great Park.

19:30

Casual get-together and dinner at the Kew Gardens Hotel.

Saturday, 23rd September 2017

9:00-11:00

We took a walk into Kew Gardens, before it opens to the public. We visited the Treetop Walkway and enjoyed the views 18 metres above the woodland floor.



Chestnut-leaved oak (Quercus castaneifolia)

Kew is London's largest UNESCO World Heritage site offering unique landscapes, vistas and iconic architecture from every stage of the Gardens' history. Its collection of living plants is the largest and most diverse in the world, growing out in the landscape and within the glasshouses and nurseries. Kew contains a great scientific

collection of over 14,000 trees, including rare and ancient varieties. It grows over 30,000 different kinds of plants from tropical, temperate, arid and alpine climates, many of which have a high conservation status.

These collections provide a living reference library for our scientists, and a dynamic landscape in which to display the beauty and wonder of this diverse natural kingdom on which all life depends.

Starting in the late morning we heard a number of presentations in the Jodrell Laboratory Lecture Hall. With us were the trustees and members of TROBI who held their semi-annual meeting at the same day at Kew.

Please refer to Appendix 2 for presentation abstracts.

20:00

Casual get-together and dinner at the Colney Fox Pub, St Albans.

Sunday, 24th September 2017

09:30-10:00

We had a short stop at St Stephen's church in the historic town of St Albans. Here we saw a fine Cedar of Lebanon (*Cedrus libani*) and a Horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*).



Cedar of Lebanon (Cedrus libani)

10:15-12:15

Hatfield House, Hertfordshire: We had an informal walk around the ancient oaks (*Quercus robur*) in the old deer park. We visited trees called "Old Stumpy" and the "Elephant Oak".

13:00-14:00

At the West Lodge Hotel, Barnet, London we were guided by owner Andrew Beale.



Andrew Beale and his wollemi pine (Wollemia nobilis)

The arboretum at West Lodge has the national plant collections for *Taxodium* and *Carpinus*. Edward Beale took over a ten acre field previously sublet to a farmer in 1963 and began an ambitious scheme of tree planting, with professional design. Since then more trees and shrubs have been added until there are now over 500 different varieties. The arboretum has attracted considerable press publicity and is officially recognised by the National Council for Propagation of Plants and Gardens for its Hornbeam collection. Andrew Beale is a keen supporter of the Champion Tree blue label scheme promoted by the Tree Register of the British Isles.

14:00-15:00

Afternoon tea in the King Charles Room, including short thank you and farewell speeches.

At this instance it needs to be pointed out that the ECTF meeting was strongly supported by the trustees and members of the Tree Register of the British Isles. We

do thank them very much for their support, both in moral and in finances, and for their encouragement. In fact, we received quite a number of very positive comments.

Roy Lancaster (TROBI Trustee): *Congratulations for all you did to help make today's event and indeed the whole weekend so successful. Superb organisation and an excellent programme all round.*

Val Hamer (TROBI Member): *It was a splendid event. I especially enjoyed the talk on Ancient Oaks in the English Landscape – what scholarship!*

Ron Kemeny (TROBI Member): *Thank you for organising such a great day yesterday. I thoroughly enjoyed the varied presentations and meeting so many interesting people. I think it was the very first conference I've ever been to that has actually stuck to its timings. Not easy so well done on that too.*

Jennie Kettlewell (TROBI Member): *Saturday was very interesting and I came away with my head full of information.*

Tom La Dell (TROBI Member): *Thank you for a great day at Kew on Saturday. Most informative and entertaining.*

John Weightman (TROBI Member): *This is just to say how much I enjoyed the meeting on Saturday. The programme was varied and fascinating. You did extremely well to keep presenters to their allocated times.*



*The one tree we didn't see: The Royal Oak in Richmond Park
(Quercus robur, photo taken during a pre-excursion)*

For more information, please refer to the following appendices to this report:

Appendix 1: Map – west of London

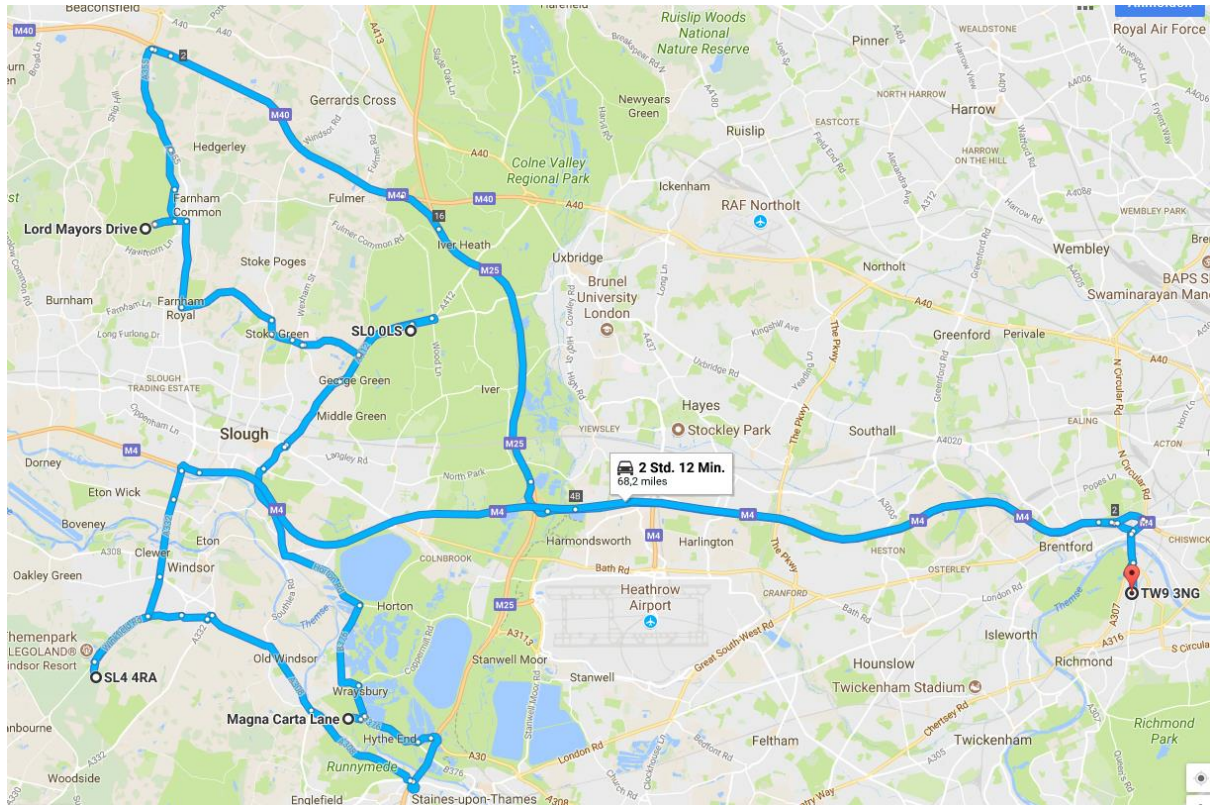
Appendix 2: Map – north of London

Appendix 3: Presentations: Schedule and abstracts

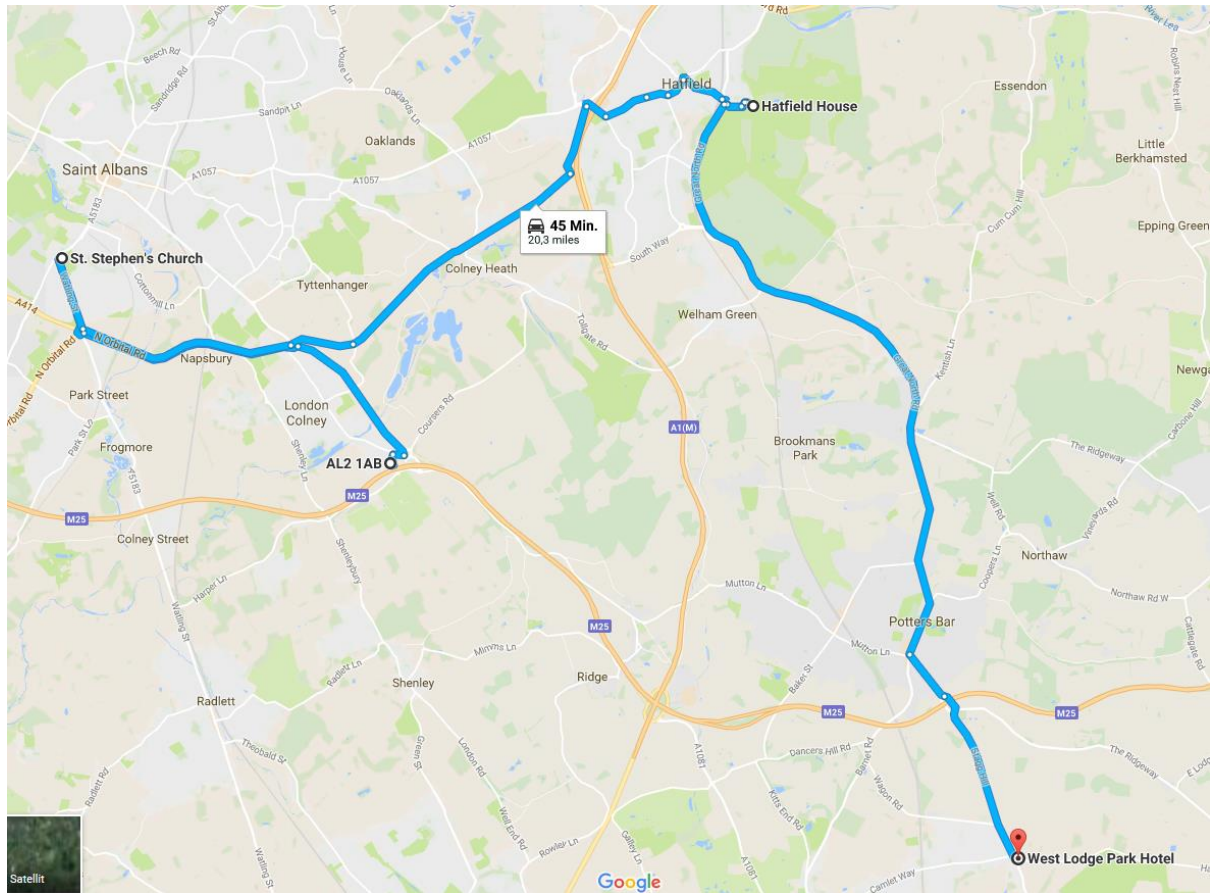
Appendix 4: ECTF Carta

Appendix 5: Measurements taken

Appendix 1: Map – west of London



Appendix 2: Map – north of London



Appendix 3: Presentations: Schedule and Abstracts

The European Champion Tree Forum 7th Meeting England, 21st to 24th September 2017

Plenary Sessions, Saturday, 23rd September 2017 Royal Botanic Gardens Kew – Jodrell Laboratory Lecture Hall

Plenary Session [1] 11:00 – 12:30

Welcome: Tony Kirkham, David Alderman, Gordon Mackenthun

Key note: Owen Johnson: The Latest from the Tree Register

Key note: Aljos Farjon: Ancient Oaks in the English Landscape

Plenary Session [2] 13:15 – 15:00

Jeroen Philippona: The Monumental Trees Website

Gordon Mackenthun: The new ECTF Website

David Mingot-Martín & Blanca Niño-Ray: Management of Champion Trees in Madrid – Spain

Peter Coles: London's Mulberry Heritage

Libor Sedláček: Monumental Trees in Czech Nature Conservation

Michael Spraggon: A View from the Treetops

Lies van Lierde: Stichting Wereldboom (World Tree Foundation)

Rob McBride: Countryfile TV programme

Plenary Session [3] 15:15 – 16:30

Gordon Mackenthun: News from the Jungle

Julian Hight: World Tree Story

Dr Owen Johnson

The Latest from the Tree Register

Honorary Registrar, The Tree Register

I shall talk about how the Tree Register of Britain and Ireland, now thirty years old as an independent charity, is being maintained and enlarged, and some recent ideas and examples of its role. These include: providing a home for catalogues of private tree collections, so that the details of each tree are curated beyond the owner's lifetime; monitoring the success of half-hardy trees around Britain as an indicator of short-term climate change; maintaining a record of rare and unexpected trees in the public domain as a way of exploring how this legacy can be protected, publicised and extended; and following the progress around the country of the great numbers of tree species introduced in the last four decades.

Aljos Farjon

Ancient Oaks in the English Landscape

Honorary Research Associate, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

England has more ancient native oak trees than any other country in Europe. If we take the largest oaks, with a girth of >9.00 m, my investigations show there are 115 of those in England but only 98 in ALL other European countries combined, also counting those in Scotland and Wales. The two oaks concerned, *Quercus petraea* and *Q. robur*, occur all over Europe and even beyond and are among the commonest trees in the lowlands and hills. So why has England so many of these spectacular ancient trees, dating back to the Middle Ages? That is the question my research is addressing. It is a complicated story, but I can already lift some of the mystery from it. It has to do with hunting deer in forests and parks and with private landownership. It has to do with a reluctance to engage in plantation forestry on a large scale. These oaks are the most important single spot locations for biodiversity in England and must be better protected than they are. I hope to address this, too in my talk, illustrated with spectacular images of these trees.

The lecture is based on the book with the same title, published June 2017 by Kew Publishing.

Jeroen Philippona

The Monumental Trees Website

The Monumental Trees Website was created by Tim Bekaert, a young Belgian tree enthusiast who is also an ICT specialist and a geographer.

He started in 2003 with a website on *Sequoiadendron giganteum* but in Januari 2010 changed this to an interactive website on many tree species which are able to grow to monumental size. In the seven years since it has grown to an international interactive website with lots of photos and information of specimen of some 875 tree species and varieties. Started by Belgian and Dutch persons in the beginning most contributions were about trees in their countries but now there are some 30.000 trees included from 41 European countries as well as 1000 from 40 countries over the world. The large numbers are from Germany, Holland, Italy, France, Belgium, the UK, Austria, Spain and Hungary, with over 1000 trees for each country. At the moment there are still very few trees and photos from Russia, Albania, Biel Russia, Norway and Ukraine.

The website aims to be a very open source for all kinds of tree lovers. There is no minimum size for a tree and all species are welcome.

It is as a database of the largest, tallest and (if there is information) oldest trees of a country, a species, etc. This information can be found in tables as well as on maps.

Also the website has a lot of photographs (now over 55.000), some quite good, of many species. For other contributors it is a forum on which they can ask for information. There are discussions and there is the possibility of sending reports on trees, forests or topics.

<https://www.monumentaltrees.com/en/>

Dr Gordon L Mackenthun

The new ECTF Website

ECTF Secretary (Hon.)



<http://www.championtrees.eu/>

Preview:

Address: <https://strunk.info/Baustelle/ectf>

User name: ECTF

Pass word: 23_09_2017

David Mingot-Martín & Blanca Niño-Ray

Management of Champion Trees in Madrid – Spain

Forestry Engineer & Agronomy Engineer, Comunidad de Madrid technical assistance & consultant

Connection with champion trees since 2005. At the beginning in the Forest Pathology Department at the University, later working and consulting with trees around Spain and now working for the Madrid County Administration.

Madrid County is located in Spain, just in the middle of the Iberian Peninsula and there are some problems we have to deal with (population, pollution, climate, history, etc). Since 2015, there are 283 cataloged trees in the region. The public administration intends to keep them in a good health and also tries to connect them with the general public. The type of works carried out are: palliative and preventive treatments, scientific works (cloning trees from four species yew, elm, cork oak and London plane), legal protection (advice, benefits, law and police protection), public information and office work (searching new trees, reports, working with owners, etc).

(Dr) Peter Coles, MA, D.Phil

London's Mulberry Heritage

Research Fellow, Centre for Urban and Community Research, Goldsmiths, University of London; principal investigator and editor, *Morus Londinium*.

In Spring 2016 the Conservation Foundation launched its 2-year *Morus Londinium* project, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, to document and preserve London's mulberry trees and research their history. At the last count, our online survey had received 645 entries. About 324 of these have been added to our online map, just over 200 are waiting to be verified and 95 are duplicates. Before we started, there were barely a dozen mulberries recorded in London inside the M25 orbital road and none in the Tree ID survey. Nearly all are black mulberries, *Morus nigra*.

London's mulberry heritage dates back to Roman times. It is likely that black mulberries were grown then for their fruit, which does not travel and cannot be dried. Black mulberries were planted in medieval gardens, monasteries and on Tudor estates. There are no old white mulberries in England. While several of the mature trees in our database are between 100 and 200 years old, a few probably date back to the nationwide planting of black mulberries as part of James I's ambitious (failed) silk project in the early 17th century. And one or two, such as the Syon House mulberries and the West Garden black mulberry at Hatfield House may even be Elizabethan.

Ing. Libor Sedláček, DiS.

Monumental trees in Czech Nature Conservation

Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic, Dendrology, Monumental Trees

In the Czech Republic, exceptionally valuable trees could be proclaimed Monumental Trees according to the Act No. 114/1992 Coll. (section 46). Their status and protection is designated by the nature protection authority (regional offices, the administrative bodies of national parks and protected landscape areas) in the form of a decision of a nature protection authority. There are many reasons for proclaiming Monumental Trees, e. g. exceptional growth and age, significant landscape dominants, high biological value (environment for endangered and rare species), exceptionally rare exotic tree species or trees with historical value (remind of some historical event or important people, legends or myths). To emphasize the biological and ecological value, Monumental Trees represent integrated ecosystem with many mutual relationships and consist of many partial micro-ecosystems and they enable survival and development of many species.

Group of trees or avenues of trees could also be proclaimed Monumental Trees. Anyone could put forward proposal of new Monumental Tree to the relevant nature protection authority. Most of Monumental trees are proclaimed, registered and marked by authorized municipal authorities. In protected landscape areas and national parks belong this role to administrations of national parks and protected landscape areas. Nature protection authorities also delimit buffer zone for them, where specified activities and interventions may be carried out only with their prior approval. If the authority does not do so, every tree shall have a basic buffer zone in the shape of a circle having a radius equal to ten times the diameter of the trunk measured 130 cm above ground. In this zone, no activity harmful for the tree monument, for example construction works, terrain alterations, drainage, chemical treatment, is allowed.

Monumental Trees database is a part of the Digital Register of the NCCR. Currently, more than 5400 units and 130 various species are included in the database. These numbers don't comprise only individual trees but also groups of trees and avenues of trees. Due to this fact the database contains more than 25 500 specimens. Monumental Trees are divided into three categories – veterans, adults and juniors. The lime tree (*Tilia cordata*) and the oak tree (*Quercus robur*) have the largest representation in the database. Non-indigenous tree species (e. g. *Platanus x hispanica*, *Ginkgo biloba*, *Liriodendron tulipifera*) could also be proclaimed Monumental Trees.

Michael J Spraggon

A View from the Treetops

BEng (Mech), member of ECTF, TROBI and Treeclimbers International

In this talk I will cover how and why I started climbing trees as a child and why I never stopped!

I will also talk about how I climb and measure some of the tallest trees in Europe, and the tools I have invented to help me do it.

I will then discuss the advantages and disadvantages of climbing/tape drop versus laser/clinometer methods of measuring tree height.

Finally, I will share what it is actually like to climb to the top of a 60m tall tree.

I will include lots of photos, some of which will hopefully show the audience views of trees that most people never see.

Dr Gordon L Mackenthun

News from the Jungle – Current research changes our perception of tropical forests

ECTF Secretary (Hon.)

Tropical forests are famous for their enormous biodiversity. However, little was known about the overall number of tree species, their geographical distribution or their relative abundance. In Amazonia, only 75 % of the presumptive total of 16 000 species are known to science. Worldwide the number of tropical tree species is estimated to be between 40 000 and 53 000, mainly in Southeast Asia and in Southern America. Many species are endangered, especially when large scale clear-cuts are not limited.

Before the European conquest, Amazonia was a densely populated area with a highly productive agriculture. Archaeological research found large quantities of pre-columbian ceramic shards; Black Earth and large settlements with far-reaching road systems were discovered; obviously some tree species were cultivated for crop. All this contributes to a picture of a highly developed agricultural landscape before 1492.

A new perception of tropical forests in general and of Amazonia in particular is forming. They are not regions of pristine wilderness but the remains of an ancient cultivated landscape. The enormous biodiversity of the tropical forests requires intensive research and global protection.

Julian Hight

World Tree Story – History & Legends of the World's Ancient Trees

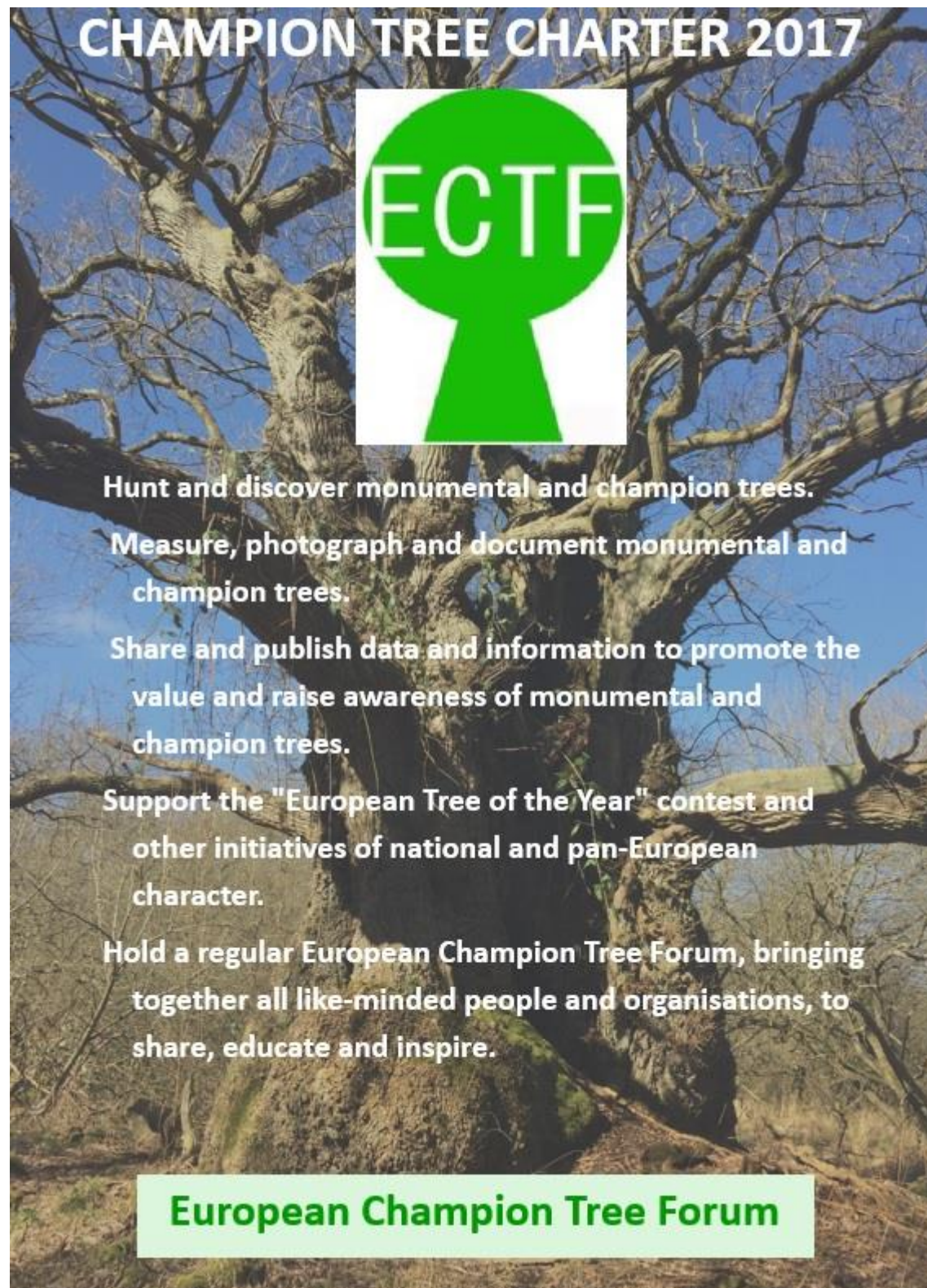
An illustrated talk

Following his travels around Britain looking for some of the country's oldest heritage trees for 'Britain's Tree Story' (National Trust – 2011), Julian set out to capture 100 ancient, historic trees across 39 countries around the world, sourcing the subjects from archive engravings and photographs, and re-photographing them in the present day to add historic context.


The resulting 'World Tree Story' (self published 2015), celebrates some of the world's oldest, largest and most famous trees (and sometimes not so famous), while also telling the human tale, and ultimately calls for their preservation.

Julian will present an illustrated talk on some of the world's most majestic trees, their history and legend, including anecdotes from his travels.

www.worldtreestory.co.uk



CHAMPION TREE CHARTER 2017



Hunt and discover monumental and champion trees.

Measure, photograph and document monumental and champion trees.

Share and publish data and information to promote the value and raise awareness of monumental and champion trees.

Support the "European Tree of the Year" contest and other initiatives of national and pan-European character.

Hold a regular European Champion Tree Forum, bringing together all like-minded people and organisations, to share, educate and inspire.

European Champion Tree Forum