

The Tree Register



Newsletter No.27
2018/2019

- Registrar's Report
- Welsh border yews
- Tree search in Ireland
- New map for website
- Obituaries to Nigel Muir and Chic Henderson



Ancient Wild cherry (*Prunus avium*) in private parkland, North Yorkshire (Photos: David Alderman)

Report from the Chairman

Colin Hall

MBE for Owen, our Registrar

We are delighted that Owen Johnson, our honorary registrar, was awarded the MBE in the New Year Honours List for services to the environment. This is well deserved and a wonderful recognition of Owen's enormous contribution to The Tree Register and more widely, the study and taxonomy of trees. He was presented his medal by Her Majesty the Queen at Windsor Castle on 22nd March 2019.

Prince of Wales 70th Birthday

We were invited this summer to participate in the 70th Birthday celebrations of our Patron, His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales. In May a group from The Tree Register were privileged to visit Buckingham Palace to celebrate the event and in June, David and Philippa represented the Tree Register in a parade at The Royal Cornwall Show of Prince Charles's environmental charities.

New Champion Ash

New champions and rarities continue to be found and added to the Register. A highlight of the year, for me, was the discovery of a new height champion for Ash at 41m. Found by Owen in July in the valley below the pond on a visit to Workman's Wood in Gloucestershire in an area of the country already badly hit by Chalara Ash Dieback, Workman's Wood was managed as continuous cover woodland by the late John Workman (a founder trustee of the Tree Register), and was gifted by him to the National Trust.

Alan Mitchell Lecture 2018, Borde Hill

We were most grateful to Andrewjohn and Eleni Stephenson Clarke for inviting us to Borde Hill Gardens in October for the 2018 Alan Mitchell Lecture. Owen Johnson delivered an excellent lecture that our founder would have been proud of, both having that incredible encyclopaedic knowledge of trees, species, sub species, varieties and sports. The event included a conducted tour of the splendid gardens, a reception in the main house and our widely acclaimed silent tree auction of rare and unusual trees, many kindly provided or procured by Maurice Foster, Tony Kirkham and Roy Lancaster.

Volunteers

The Tree Register owes everything to our volunteers, so thanks are due to all those who have helped and supported us during 2018: to David, Owen, Philippa, Alison, the Ancient Tree verifiers, all our other tree recorders, Tim Hills and the Ancient Yew Group, Clair McFarlan, our volunteer support officer, and Pamela Stevenson, our hard working secretary; and, finally, to you, our members.

Colin Hall

Chairman of the Trustees

**We are very grateful to Sir Paul McCartney
for his continued generosity in sponsoring this
newsletter**



Top - Her Majesty The Queen pins the MBE to Owens jacket and talks trees! Bottom - Owen proudly showing off his MBE outside Windsor Castle, flanked by Colin Hall and Philippa Lewis
(Photos: PA Images and David Alderman)

The Tree Register
Registered Charity No.801565

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The Tree Register of the British Isles (TROBI) was founded in 1988
by Alan Mitchell VMH and Victoria Schilling

Ancient woodland to urban roundabout



The 13,000 record-sets which I've added to the Tree Register since this time last year have included hundreds of newly-discovered champions, something which year after year we've grown to take for granted but which continues to tell of our islands' extraordinarily rich arboricultural heritage, and the ongoing enthusiasm of our band of volunteer measurers. One of the first finds of 2019 was an 18.4m Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) in the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's Low Wood near Keighley, first recognised by Steve Spires as a special tree and confirmed by David Alderman as the tallest hawthorn recorded anywhere in Europe.

Champion discoveries

Our original partnership project with the Woodland Trust, originally as the Ancient Tree Hunt, is entering its 12th year, but 2018 was its best season ever in terms of champion discoveries, with new records for Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*) near Glenridding in Cumbria, from Mike Smith, for Exeter Elm (*Ulmus glabra* 'Exoniensis') in Nottingham's Bridgford Park, from Gordon Clarke, and for White Fir (*Abies concolor* Violacea Group) in the parkland of The Weir in Herefordshire, from Brian Jones. Awaiting confirmation are also new record girths for Downy Birch, on Bickerton Hill in Cheshire, and for Norway Maple, in Brampton churchyard in Cumbria.

Fattest ivy

Ivy isn't a tree, of course, but as big ones are often noted along with the tree that supports them, this is a species which has come to feature on the Tree Register. The new champion, near Lyonshall in Herefordshire, and discovered again by Brian Jones in 2018 on an oak which is itself a veteran, has a single stem 35cm thick at 80cm from the ground.

Wine Palm on roundabout

The criteria for inclusion on the Tree Register are generally straightforward: any plant that is big enough to be individually noteworthy and that is remarkable for its rarity, size, age or historic interest. There are just a few sub-groups which I am inclined to exclude, such as trees in pots or in conservatories. These may become astonishing, like the Chilean Wine Palm (*Jubaea chilensis*) that used to dominate the Temperate House at Kew until it hit its glass ceiling, but it's more fun and more instructive to find the same species coping outdoors – such as a thriving young Wine Palm with 2m of clean bole in 2018 in the somewhat less exclusive surroundings of a mini-roundabout in East Dulwich. (I had to wait some time for a gap in the traffic before I could get to it, and even longer before I could get back again.)

Unlikely places

And what about trees which were grown under glass but which have survived the greenhouse's demolition? A Silky-oak (*Grevillea robusta*) from subtropical Queensland persisted for many years in Swansea's Brynmill Park, until the cold winters around 2010 put paid to it. The champion Golden Totara (*Podocarpus totara* 'Aureus') still grows in Swindon, of all unlikely places, on the site of a heated glasshouse in Queens Park.

Achieved great things

Another grey area came to my attention this summer after I revisited the Spa Fields Gardens in Clerkenwell – a little park in one of the most densely built and frankly greyest parts of inner London. The garden has two champions of plants which can grow into genuine trees when the microclimate is warm enough: a Mount Etna Broom (*Genista aetnensis*) 11m tall, and a Firethorn (*Pyracantha coccinea*) with a single gnarled bole 46cm thick. There are also six Olive trees, which were planted as mature features some time before 2013. Olives are particularly easy to move when big, and I generally wouldn't include on the champions list a tree which had done its growing in the warmer climate of a Mediterranean nursery, but these six have achieved great things since their move to London, reaching 9m tall and with trunks up to 60cm thick (at 60cm up); they have now comprehensively overhauled the long-standing champion home-grown Olive in the Chelsea Physic Garden.



Above left - Chilean Wine Palm, (*Jubaea chilensis*), East Dulwich.
Above right - Olive (*Olea europaea*), Spa Fields, Islington.
(Photos: Owen Johnson)

Cherry champion spotted in Walpole Park, Ealing



Reported by Hugo Egleston, this flowering cherry is the latest new champion tree, found just before going to print!



Prunus 'Shosar', in Walpole Park, Ealing
(Photos: Steve Waters and (inset) Owen Johnson)

Ancient Yew Group

Tim Hills

Welsh border yews

The border separating Wales from England runs for approximately 160 miles from the Dee estuary in the north to the Severn estuary in the south. For many miles it follows river or stream and occasionally it flirts with a section of Offa's Dyke as it winds among remote hillsides. It is never far from the site of ancient (likely age 800+) or veteran yews (likely age 500+), with no fewer than 13 ancient and 19 veterans recorded within 5 miles of the border on the Welsh side. We travel from north to south calling in briefly at each site. We also take a look at the latest developments in the management of these exceptional trees.

Graves of the dead

Starting at Gresford is a mighty ancient yew with a girth of almost 9m growing behind protective railings in a churchyard shared with 33 younger yews. Old postcards show that it has been protected in this way since at least Victorian times. When measured in 1808 it had a circumference of 'seven yards eighteen inches at 1ft and nine yards nine inches at 5ft'. At that time it was reckoned that the yew had only 100 further years of life before it would drop its 7 major branches 'amongst the Graves of the Dead'. Today it carries at least 8 major branches!



The mighty yew at Gresford today (Photo: Tim Hills) and in Victorian times.

Seven Wonders of Wales

Overton is another yew prolific churchyard, so famed in 1802 for being surrounded with 25 yew trees that it was described as one of the Seven Wonders of Wales. Only one of its yews is of great age, an ancient tree that in 1999 was supported on four props, placed to prevent a large hollow fragment from falling across the path. By 2004 railings had been placed around the tree to help further protect the ancient fragments.

Jewels in the crown

More worthy of the title 'Wonder of Wales' is Llansilin, without doubt one of the jewels in the crown of Welsh churchyards. Growing here are no fewer than 6 ancient or veteran yews. There were once even more; an article in the 1871 *Bygones* telling us of 'eight of the finest' as well as three younger yews. At that time they were measured 'wherever the bulk appeared to be greatest between the ground and 4ft' and the girth range of the largest 8 was between 13' and 22' 6". Today the 6 largest yews, measured to obtain their lowest girth, range from 18' to 26'.

The two veteran yews at Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain were also mentioned in the 1871 *Bygones*. They might not have the wow factor at this moment in time but, as with all yews, they have the capacity to live for many more centuries and their appearance will be much altered by the time the year 2500 is reached. The ancient hollow yew at Buttington does have the wow factor, consisting of a thin skin for 7m of its 8m circumference, with the missing section allowing access to its interior. In the 1881 *Collections Historical & Archaeological*, its girth was reported as 23' near the ground. Today that girth is closer to 28'.



The yew at Buttington (Photo: Tim Hills)

Roman antiquity

Six more ancient or veteran yews are found at Trelystan, Churchstoke and Hyssington, before we arrive at Heyope, where one of its two veterans has a particularly impressive and striking columnar form. It was here that Ancient Yew Group member Paul Wood made an unexpected find: "I looked up inside the tree on the north side and noted something orange - a two eyed mouth end of what turns out to be a Roman period phallic handle. I am informed this dates to the mid to late 300s AD. One other example is known from a site near Wrexham which securely dated that example. How it got into the tree is a mystery. It was three quarters encased in rotting yew but I have concluded that it has been there for a considerable period of time to be firstly grown over by the tree which then rotted inside.

Could this have been a Roman site that later became christianised with the planting of the yews as part of the process? Has this piece of ceramic been brought up from the depths and placed in the tree? It is of course possible that it was bought from another site and offered to the established tree a few hundred years ago."



The yew at Heyope (Photo: Tim Hills)

Whitton is another site where records inform us of the loss of old yews. The 1970 Brecon Yew Survey reported four trees with girths of 26', 18', 13' and 10' 3". The only significant yew that remains today has a girth of about 23'.

Category of ancient-exceptional

At Discoed are three extraordinary ancient yews. Of the two growing in the churchyard, one has a girth of more than 11 metres, placing it in the category of 'ancient-exceptional' – an accolade given to only 18 Welsh churchyard yews. Yews in this category are likely to be 1000 years of age and more. The third is found 500m west of the churchyard, on the road towards Maes-Treylow. Here, a well preserved section of Offa's Dyke comes down from the hills to cross the river Lugg. The 8m girthed yew that stands by the Dyke was no doubt once a route marker.



Two of the extraordinary yews in Discoed churchyard (Photos: Tim Hills)

Majestic Wye Valley

The border now follows the Offa's Dyke path along the Black Mountains ridge. Here, nestling beneath the steep slopes, is the exceptional site of Capel-y-ffin, with its semi-circle of 7 veteran yews, each one measured in 1871 by members of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club. At Llanvihangel Crucorney, below Ysgyryd Hill, a half shell is all that remains of a veteran yew, while south of Monmouth at Penallt, a fine ancient yew with a girth of 7m stands high above the majestic Wye Valley.

Protection of a priceless heritage

For the last few years work has been under way to obtain greater protection for churchyard yews in Wales. It is fortunate that the Church in Wales has a management structure that places its churchyards under the watchful eye of a single Property Services department. This department has a record of every known ancient and veteran churchyard yew, information also held by each diocesan Archdeacon. When a church considers that work needs to be carried out on one of the named yews, they approach their Archdeacon, who consults with Property Services who, in turn, contact the Ancient Yew Group to establish the best way forward. Finding a core of tree specialists to advise on work that needs to be carried out is in progress, but we are confident that we are, at last, seeing an end to unnecessary losses of these historic trees in Wales.

Administration

Four of the churchyard sites in this article are not overseen by the Church in Wales, those at Discoed, Trelystan, Churchstoke and Hyssington. They all come under the umbrella of the Church of England and the administration of the Diocese of Hereford. The Ancient Yew Group is hopeful that a similar level of protection can now be arranged for churchyard yews in English dioceses and it plans to provide each Diocese with the information and photographs we have about their significant yews. It is hoped that they will be able to respond in the same positive manner as the Church in Wales.



Yews at Trelystan (Photo: Tim Hills)

For more information and photographs about Welsh border yews go to:

www.ancient-yew.org



The Ancient Yew website is supported by The Tree Register

The Irish Tree Society

In search of Irelands finest and...

Aubrey Fennell records trees for the Irish Tree Society, providing data for the Tree Register of Ireland (TROI), held at the National Botanic Gardens of Ireland at Glasnevin. The Tree Register works in partnership with TROI and with whom there is an annual data exchange.



Aubrey Fennell muses over the recording of this particularly tricky looking sycamore (Photo: David Alderman)

Powerscourt Estate

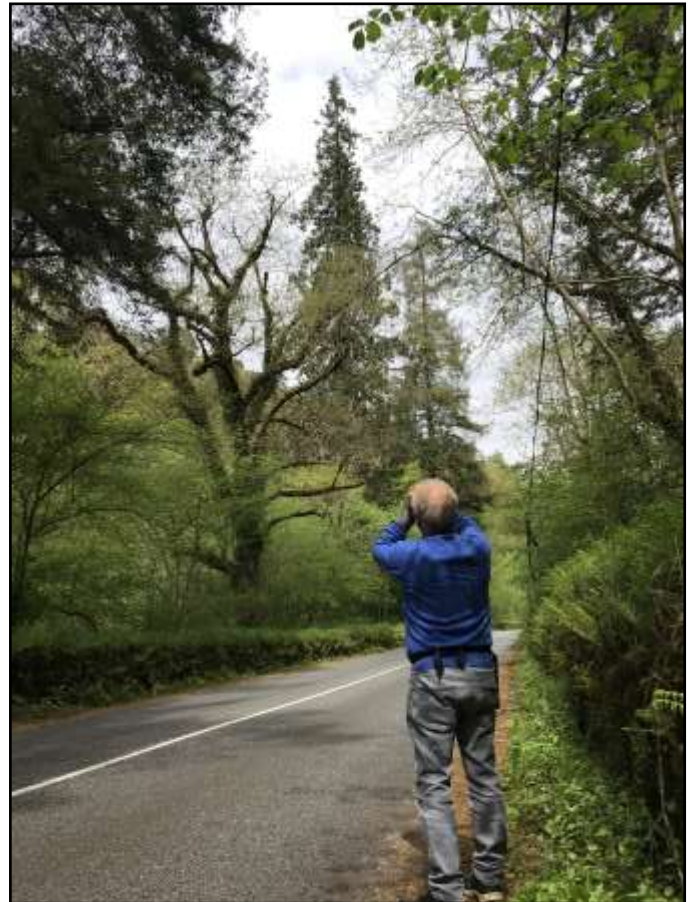
Powerscourt is always a pleasure to visit. Set within the shelter of the Wicklow mountains, it is home to 45 champion trees of all Ireland, of which 17 are champions of all Britain and Ireland. Several of these have only recently been discovered by Aubrey, exploring further into the estate than other tree recorders have gone and with the help of a newly acquired Nikon laser.

Highest Waterfall

Recently opened up walks, to see the highest waterfall in Ireland, enables visitors to see for themselves some remarkable trees. Beyond the waterfall is a stand of *Thuja plicata* (Western red cedar) that includes our tallest at 47.6m and with a trunk girth of 5.79m it is a fair-sized stick! The waterfall walk can also lead you to a Blue Atlas cedar (*Cedrus atlantica* var. *glauca*), drawn up amongst some Douglas, the laser has confirmed 41.5m and another champion. The Grove of the Giants includes other tall trees, including one Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) that was once the tallest tree in Ireland and was destined to be the first tree to reach 60m. Today the tree is wavering just short of this at 59.4m and has now been beaten by others to this title.

New Irish record

Leaving Lismore Castle, in Co. Waterford, the road bends gently up the Owennahasad Glen and passes a group of tall Douglas and the shapely spire of a Giant sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*). Aubrey has been keeping his eye on these for some years and, with the added help of his laser, has now confirmed a new Irish record for the Giant sequoia at 56m. The Douglas are up to 58m.



By measuring to a marker on the roadside wall, Aubrey measures 56m for the tallest *Sequoiadendron giganteum* in Ireland (Photo: David Alderman)



Access to some of Ireland's notable trees can be challenging but the Harley Park Oak (*Quercus robur*) in Co. Tipperary is well worth it!

At 8m in girth it is one of Ireland's finest old pollards (Photo: David Alderman)

Avondale Forest Park in Co. Wicklow, is open to the public and managed by the Irish forestry service Coillte. It is referred to as the birth place of Irish forestry and pre-dates the UK's Forestry Commission, being purchased by the state in 1904. Its forest trial plots of conifers were planted between 1904-1913. It is currently undergoing major redevelopment to create a new visitor attraction, with access and viewpoints through towering stands of many different species of conifer planted down the steep slopes to the Avonmore river. The combination of close planting, without thinning, and a steep sided valley has created a collection that includes many of the tallest trees in Ireland. It is fitting that the first tree to be recorded reaching 60m in all of Ireland, was here. This has since been overtaken by a 61.3m Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) at Glendalough but laser measurements in 2017 suggested that a couple of Douglas fir at Avondale were back in contention!

Edwardian planting

On a windless sunny May day in 2018 Aubrey was checking heights of known trees with David Alderman but they failed to record anything topping 60m. At the very bottom of the Douglas stand, by the river, they gazed across the clear flowing waters to a group of Douglas on the opposite bank. Without being able to see the base of these trees it was impossible to be sure, but the laser was consistently displaying 62-63m for one particular tree. These trees had never previously been recorded but were clearly part of the same Edwardian planting and Aubrey's pulse rate rose with anticipation that this could be a new tallest tree in all Ireland.

It was early evening and with plenty of daylight left they attempted to wade across the river. But the water was cold, clear and deceptively deep so the attempt was abandoned. Checking maps, Aubrey confirmed that their best access would be via a farm on the opposite side. They would now attempt this in the morning.

Getting the best view

The excitement was mounting as they followed the farm track and then trekked down through some beech towards a railway track. Carefully crossing this they scrambled down an embankment and finally came out amongst the Douglas on a boggy area of land that pushed the Avonmore river around them in an arc. Initial laser shots showed several trees to be around 59m. But they had to get to the riverbank opposite, where they had been the day before, to confirm which tree they needed to measure. Once located and identified they then spent the next hour getting the best views to see its base and top. They created a marker for the tree at 1.5m to clear low vegetation and, using this as a target, they both recorded and finally agreed on a height of 61.3m. Exactly the same height as the current champion Sitka at Glendalough!

Aubrey was still very pleased to have found and recorded Ireland's tallest Douglas and the joint tallest tree in all Ireland. A return within the next five years may well confirm one has outgrown the other!



Champion Douglas fir on the east bank of the Avonmore River (Photo: David Alderman)

Blue Labels

David Alderman

Promoting our champion trees



John Moffat (above left) receives a Tree Register Blue Label from David Alderman for one of the Cheshire champions in the Flaybrick Memorial Gardens, a weeping American Lime (*Tilia americana* 'Pendula').

(Photo: John Moffat)

Tregrehan

Tom Hudson is creating a champion tree trail at Tregrehan, St. Austell, Cornwall with 100 of his champion trees identified by our blue labels.

Dyffryn Gardens

Rory Ambrose, Senior Gardener at Dyffryn Gardens, Glamorgan, Wales, has recently had new blue labels engraved including the Tree Register logo (right) and will soon be attaching them to their champions.

Described as being "A peaceful oasis on the outskirts of Cardiff, the gardens feature the best woody collection in the National Trust."

Dyffryn is home to the largest Paperbark maple (*Acer griseum*) in all of Britain & Ireland with a trunk girth of 2.68m. Fittingly this is an original Wilson collection planted in 1911.

Acer griseum at Dyffryn Gardens

(Photo top: Rory Ambrose)
(Photo bottom: Owen Johnson)



Champion Tree Blue Labels are available for £3.55 each. For more details please contact info@treeregister.org or Tel:01234 768884

8th Meeting of the European Champion Tree Forum

This will be taking place on Thursday 23rd - Sunday 26th May 2019, in Potsdam and Berlin, Germany. As founder members of the ECTF we are pleased to confirm that representatives from at least nine different countries are expected to attend this event. Organised by ECTF Secretary Gordon Mackenthun, the event is being supported by the University Botanical Garden of Potsdam and the German Dendrological Society.

For the first time we will be hearing from our friends in Italy with Andrea Marò giving a presentation on the Giant Trees of Italy. A full report will be available on our website, where reports from previous ECTF meetings can also be found.



The University Botanical Garden of Potsdam (Photo: K. Klaring)

Updating records David Alderman RHS Garden Wisley

The RHS Garden Wisley, Surrey, is home to over 50 British champion trees. Something the Curator, Matthew Pottage and his enthusiastic staff are very proud of. However, they are keen to ensure these trees are updated and added to during 2019.

Following some initial training and now with their own laser measurer, expect to see numbers rise this year. The wealth and history of planting at Wisley will, undoubtedly, see this realised and Matt has his heart set on a target of 100 champions. Julie Kilcher is responsible for Battleston Hill and already has her eye on a number of potential champion trees.



David Alderman (far left) with the Wisley recording team, from left to right; Julie Kilcher, Adam Alexander, Dan Kitching and Gill Skilton
(Photo: Matthew Pottage)

Wisley specials

Wisley has created a number of its own champions! A few of its recently identified selections include:

Eucalyptus 'Wisley Ghost' (6.5m x 103cm girth)

Taxodium distichum 'Wisley Flame' (13m x 154cm)

Liquidambar styraciflua 'Wisley King' (14m x 200cm)



Matt Pottage with the tallest Stone pine (*Pinus pinea*), in Britain & Ireland, standing 20.5m by the recently opened Stone Pine café (ex Woodside House) at RHS Wisley (Photo: David Alderman)

Invaluable knowledge

Looking after the rockery and Oakwood areas at Wisley is Adam Alexander, who will be competing with Julie for the discovery of their first "new" champion! Dan Kitching of the Arb. Team knows the arboretum well and his knowledge will be invaluable. The laser will take the fun out of climbing trees to confirm their heights but will save a lot of time. Completing the team is record keeper Gill Skilton who compiles and maps the records and keeps our Tree Register up to date.

Matt expects the team to be spending a number of days recording trees and will plan for regular updates.



The champion *Magnolia* 'Peter Dummer' in Oakwood, RHS Garden Wisley, was selected and named by Jim Gardiner. Peter Dummer was propagator at the Hillier's nursery in the 1970's. (Photo: David Alderman)

Obituary of a great plantsman

Dr Owen Johnson MBE

Nigel Muir

Eventually, only the trees they planted, measured or bred may remain to remind us of lost friends. Just after Christmas of 2018, the death was announced of Nigel Muir, a dendrologist with a special interest in limes and evergreen oaks. Among the hybrid limes he raised by open pollination in west London, *Tilia* 'Harold Hillier' and 'Alan Mitchell' have achieved a small presence in the nursery trade, but there are several others which I think are just as ornamental. One such was planted by Nigel in the National Lime Collection at Peasmarsh Place in East Sussex and was an open-pollinated hybrid of *T. japonica* (in the clone 'Ernest Wilson') and *T. maximowicziana*, two Japanese species which also cross in the wild to produce a hybrid called *T. x nozircola*. This clone was never named by Nigel but has become as shapely and floriferous as any; it is now due to be propagated by Nick Macer of Pan-global Plants, under the name 'Nigel Muir'.

You can find Nigel's plantings in all sorts of strange places, including the arboretum he planted between the Chichester bypass and Ivy Lake, and the original and champion *Tilia* 'Hanwell', on a trading estate on that city's outskirts.

Lord Rosse, Tree Register Trustee, said;

"We had so much admiration for Nigel's skill in propagating, and producing cultivars, especially *Tilia*, and he contributed much to the botanical community. Not only we at Birr, but also at Nymans gardens, have benefitted from his skill. We have here at Birr the tree named after Alan Mitchell, (co-founder of the Tree Register), and another named after my wife, Alison Rosse. He was an amazing man and will be greatly missed by many who worked with him in the botanical world."

Right - Typical features of *Tilia* 'Alan Mitchell' by botanical artist David J More
Far right - *Tilia* 'Alan Mitchell' at Birr Castle, Co. Ofally, Ireland
(Photo: Shane Hollywood)



Far left - *Tilia* 'Hanwell' growing in Chichester, West Sussex
Left - *Tilia* 'Nigel Muir' at Peasmarsh Place, East Sussex
Below - Nigel also measured and sketched the champion Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) which grew in a back garden in Westgate in Chichester. Sadly, this tree, like its discoverer, died in 2018.



Obituary of a Scottish tree recorder

Pamela Stevenson

Charles “Chic” Henderson

I first met Charles “Chic” Henderson at a Trustees meeting held at Crarae, Argyll, in 1993. And it was a great shock to hear the sad news that Chic had died earlier this year after a short illness. At Crarae, he was acting as “chauffeur” to Scottish tree recorder Jim Paterson. They had met following a letter Jim had published in the Scotsman, seeking information about an estate with a historic tree he was trying to track down. Chic’s great fascination was castles and he had travelled extensively, recording and photographing Scottish castles, tower houses and Victorian fortified houses. Chic knew the estate Jim described and they soon met and became friends. Their trips combined both their passions but Chic soon became interested in the history of the trees and particularly the big conifers of Scotland. So, on a sunny April morning, while the Trustees were deliberating over the business of the then young charity, Chic took their partners and friends on a, never to be forgotten, tour of Inveraray and Loch Fyne. Filled with history, anecdotes, laughter and songs, it really was a guided tour never forgotten!



Chic Henderson with a Douglas fir, his favourite tree.

Favourite trees

Chic was a keen photographer, talented guitarist and, later, a woodturner. He self-published a number of CDs of Scottish folk music, his first, as the “Rockin’ Ceilidh Duo”, with accordion player Bob Aimer, was called Wood and Stones, and included a photograph he had taken of the Darnley Yew at Whittinghame. Yews were certainly one of his favourite trees but his most favourite were big Douglas firs, particularly those rugged-barked and big-branched originals, with their individual characters. He often recalled his first visit to the once tallest tree in Britain, a Douglas fir at Dunans Castle, at a time when the castle was still habitable and the laird invited him in for tea and cake.

Woodland Elves

Chic was an early convert to laser technology and took much pleasure in measuring tall trees. In more recent years he updated many of our records with the help of the enthusiastic Kerry-Anne Campbell and Sue Asher, the “Woodland Elves”. He also took over some admin jobs for the Tree Register including uploading images to the Tree Register website. Last year he had begun scanning a large collection of historic postcards of trees, to help create an online archive of historical tree pictures. His own extensive catalogue of slide transparencies and digital images were meticulously catalogued.

Considerable contribution

Whilst his working life had seen him travel widely, in retirement he focussed on Scotland making a rare trip south of the border in 2017 when he attended the Tree Register, Alan Mitchell Lecture at Savill Garden, Windsor. Chic’s contribution to the Tree Register has been considerable, as has that of his wife Sheila, who so kindly fed and watered fellow tree recorders, who often found themselves staying over-night at their home in Auchtermuchty.



An ex-motorcyclist, Chic was never one for walking, if he could get closer to a tree by other means. Here he is seen measuring at his most effective in Drummond Castle park, with the help of an off road 4x4, thanks to Head Gardener Edith Barnes!

Recording trees

Chic was always happy to chauffeur other Tree Register volunteer recorders around Scotland, no distance too far! He once travelled over 1,000 miles in three days recording trees, ensuring he got his passengers to the right places and as close to the trees as he possibly could! An Aberdonian who moved to Perth and then Fife, Chic will be missed by so many people. Our weekly chats were always filled with laughter – Chic RIP!

New mapping facility

Alison Evershed

Highlighting our top tree collections

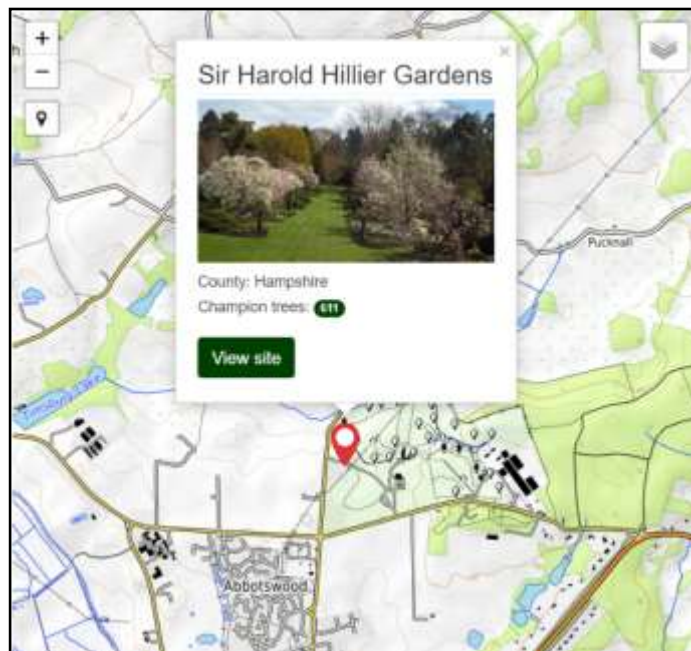
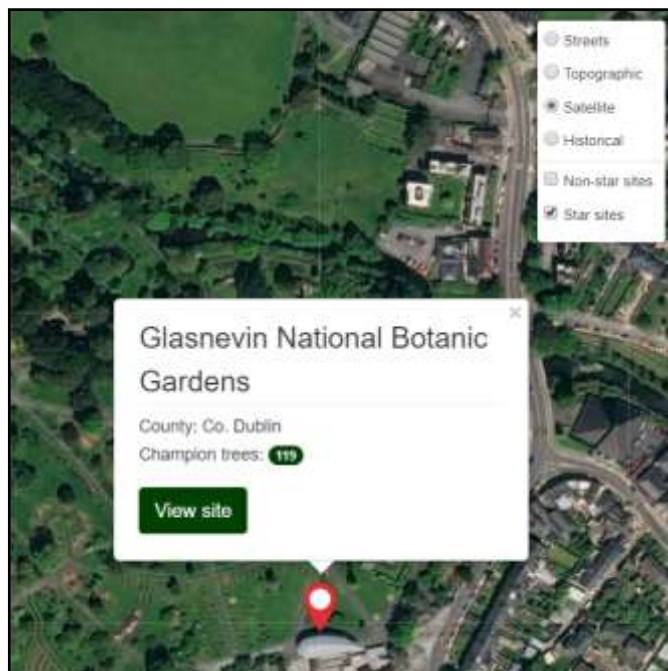
At the end of March 2019 we launched a new interactive map on our website, displaying over 800 parks and gardens, where you can find trees that are champions of Britain and Ireland, plus other sites worthy of inclusion with botanical interest.



The map can be viewed with different overlays including topographical, satellite or historical (1919-47). The site icons are colour coded with the top “star” sites, those with 50 or more champions (Britain & Ireland) are displayed in red.

Sites can be searched for on the map or by using the browse page. With a simple word search facility, it makes this very user friendly on a smart phone too!

Site information can be viewed with more detail, including whether the trees are comprehensively labelled, or have our champion tree blue labels!



We will be adding photos to these records, so if you have a favourite place listed and have a suitable photo to illustrate it, please do send it to us!

At the time of going to press the following collections are recorded as Star sites

Star site = 50+ champion trees of Britain & Ireland

 Star sites Top tree collections	No. of Champions
Sir Harold Hillier Gardens	611
Kew Gardens	333
Tregrehan	160
Westonbirt Arboretum	140
Glasnevin National Botanic Gardens	119
Bedgebury National Pinetum	100
Wakehurst Place	95
Tresco Abbey Garden	93
Edinburgh Royal Botanic Garden	91
Caerhays Castle	83
Borde Hill	70
Hergest Croft	70
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On our website look for “Where to find Champion Trees”
www.treeregister.org/map/