

The Tree Register



**Newsletter No.28
2019/2020**



- Registrar's Report
- Dawn redwood at 70
- The widest pear tree
- Search for Bill's Maple
- Vicky Schilling tribute and Bursary

Cover photo - Raywood ash (*Fraxinus angustifolia* 'Raywood') at Anglesey Abbey, Cambridgeshire

Report from the Chairman

Colin Hall

Our unique database and new website

We were all delighted to learn that Tony Kirkham, Head of the Arboretum and Gardens at The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and a trustee of the Tree Register was awarded the MBE in the New Year's Honours list. Tony's knowledge of trees and tree management is formidable and we have been very fortunate to have his guidance and enthusiasm available to the Charity.

Unequaled contribution

We were very saddened by the death, following a relatively short illness, of Vicky Schilling in November. I remember Vicky excitingly telling me back in 1988 that she and Alan Mitchell intended to form the Tree Register to hold Alan's and her tree records for posterity. Vicky subsequently became the pivotal figure in the growth and development of the Tree Register and her contribution in the early years of the Charity was unequalled. Our tribute to Vicky is on page 5.

New Trustee

In the summer we welcomed Jill Butler as a new trustee. Jill has recently retired from The Woodland Trust where her major role was the conservation of ancient and veteran trees. Jill was heavily involved in the Ancient Tree partnership between The Woodland Trust, The Tree Register and the Ancient Tree Forum, of which she is a board member. Jill's knowledge of ancient and veteran trees and the biodiversity associated with them will be of great value to The Tree Register.

Climate change

The growing awareness of the potentially disastrous effects of climate change has led Governments and other public authorities to declare climate change emergencies and to resolve to plant or encourage the planting of millions (or billions) of trees. The unique database of the Tree Register is likely to prove invaluable in helping to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places.

New website

I am very pleased to announce that our new website has just been launched and hope that you enjoy using it. Many thanks to our supporters who have helped fund this. We are excited at the prospect of future developments planned to provide you with even more information about our champion trees!

Hard working

The Tree Register owes everything to our volunteers, so thanks are due to all those who have helped and supported us during 2019: to David, Owen, Philippa, Alison, the Ancient Tree verifiers, all our other tree recorders, Tim and the Ancient Yew Group, Clair, our volunteer support officer, Pamela, our hard working secretary and, finally, to you, our members.

Colin Hall

Chairman of the Trustees



(inset) Tony Kirkham and family after receiving his MBE at Buckingham Palace.

(above) Tony, in more typical dress, inspecting a veteran Sweet chestnut in Kew Gardens, with new Trustee Jill Butler and Colin Hall.

The Tree Register

Registered Charity No.801565

Patron

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Hon. President: Tony Schilling VMH

Hon. Vice President: Philippa Mitchell

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

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

Registrar's Report

Dr Owen Johnson MBE

A constant privilege to see breath-taking trees



2019 saw 720 new or updated champion trees for Britain and Ireland. Nearly half of these have been recorded within arboreta established through the last years of the 20th century and where a multitude of introductions from Mexico, the Himalayas and the far East are just now reaching maturity: Alan Hunton and John Killingbeck remeasured the Yorkshire Arboretum and Ray Wood at Castle Howard in Yorkshire, while I undertook thorough surveys of the Marks Hall Arboretum in Essex, the Bodenham Arboretum in Worcestershire, Howick Hall in Northumberland, Maurice Foster's White House Farm in Kent and Thenford House in Northamptonshire, which are some of the best places to see this exhilarating wealth of new trees.

Cherry Tree Arboretum

Even collections not begun until the new millennium are now mature enough to include some champions. In Shropshire, our volunteer John Weightman is partway through a survey of John Ravenscroft's Cherry Tree Arboretum (with a champion oak and a hawthorn as well as cherries); on one particularly bleak day in June I was shown around Grange Farm Arboretum in the Lincolnshire fens by farmer Matthew Ellis, who is specialising in the rich variety of disease-resistant elm species recently introduced from China.

Hottest ever

Even if they remain proof against pests and diseases, these trees are going to grow up in an increasingly uncertain climate. *Podocarpus salignus*, a broad-leaved conifer from the cold wet Chilean Andes, has as its UK champion a gorgeous but improbably located tree in a sheltered valley very near my home in Hastings, on England's south-east coast. I arranged to revisit it last July on an evening which, at 34 degrees, was possibly the town's hottest ever. The *Podocarpus* – a tree to confound expectation if ever there was one – actually seemed to be enjoying this more than I was.

Mysterious survivor

Meeting and learning to recognise new tree species, just as they reach tree-size, is a constant privilege for the dendrologist in an age of gardening as exciting as ours. It is much more special to come face-to-bark with a magnificent, century-old tree which is also 'new', in the sense that no records existed to indicate its species' cultivation in the country. Tree of the Year, for me, was a bird cherry which I encountered last June in a private part of the Lochinch Castle estate in the far south-west of Scotland and which, at 24.5m tall and with a columnar trunk nearly a metre thick, becomes the largest planted cherry found in Britain. It is closely flanked by two whitebeams, which I recognised with fair confidence from a couple of other arboreta as George Forrest collections of *Sorbus coronata* from far south-west China, giving a hint to the likely origins of the mystery cherry. *Prunus perulata* is a very likely identification for this discovery, which with its domed crown and elegant drooping leaves is one of the most breath-taking trees I've been privileged to find.

Another mysterious surviving Forrest bird cherry at Caerhays in Cornwall, previously recorded as perhaps *P. perulata*, is different, and seems likely to be *P. buergeriana*, more widespread in the wild.

Exploring Norwich

Trees like this may come as a total shock, but wily tree-hunters will spot patterns of growth and distribution that can help them to home in on any district's finest specimens. In July I stayed in Norwich for several days while exploring gardens and arboreta in the area which were mostly new to me (and to the Tree Register). Evenings I spent exploring the city, and once I realised that each of its medieval churchyards seemed to have one really good tree I was ready to tick them all off: at St John Maddermarket, a mature *Celtis occidentalis*; at St John the Baptist, one of the very biggest *Ulmus* 'Sapporo Autumn Gold'; at St Michael at Pleas, a tall *Koelreuteria paniculata* 'Fastigiata'; at St Clement's, Colegate, a fine *Phellodendron*; at St Martin at Palace Plain, a spreading *Styphnolobium japonicum*; at St Lawrence's, a good *Tetradium*; at St Peter Hungate, a huge *Ailanthus*; at St Giles on the Hill, a very promising *Pinus ponderosa*; and finally, in the last hour before my train, at St Julian's, King Street, a new champion for the common Smoke-bush, *Cotinus coggygria*, with a short single bole 36cm thick.



A new champion *Prunus* 'Washino-O' at Canterbury City Cemetery



Prunus perulata with *Sorbus coronata* in front, Lochinch Castle

(Photos: Owen Johnson)

Registrar's Report continued

Dr Owen Johnson MBE

Ravishing

Another 115 of last year's champion trees have been updates of the late Maurice Mason's plantings in the remains of his two great gardens in western Norfolk. Through the middle years of the 20th century, Maurice was neck-and-neck with Sir Harold Hillier at Ampfield as to who could build the most comprehensive plant collection, but since then the fates of these places have been very different. Inching through the brambles, and confronted again and again by the rarest of tree species in their prime of maturity, the value of the Tree Register as a resource was brought home to me: Maurice fashioned his plant labels to last, but eventually only our computer records will remain to document the identities and existence of all these ravishing trees.

New heights

Rob Lynley – a volunteer who we can count on to find at least one new height champion for a common tree each year – used his laser in 2019 to record a 26m Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) in Keeper's Wood at Sledmere in the East Riding of Yorkshire, equalling the long-standing record-holder at Kinnettles in Angus. Steve Spires spotted a hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) in the Low Wood nature reserve near Silsden in West Yorkshire which becomes the tallest found worldwide at 18.4m, and Michael Lear organised the climbing of a new champion Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*) at Glenkiln near Dumfries, which is 22.6m tall. One other new height champion for a widely grown tree is a superb 35m *Nothofagus alpina* which I measured in the woods at Weston Park in Staffordshire, where the Earls of Bradford have long experimented with the use of this genus in forestry.



Catalpa bungei in one of Maurice Mason's old gardens
(Photo: Owen Johnson)

250,000 records

The Tree Register is on course to pass a quarter of million individual tree records by the end of 2020, and is closer to its unspoken goal of becoming a comprehensive record of Britain and Ireland's finest trees than we ever dared to imagine, thirty years ago when the organisation was in its infancy and I first became actively involved. At that time, the late Vicky Schilling had quite recently formed the Charity to curate Alan Mitchell's accumulation of tree statistics, and, with her husband Tony Schilling, in her inimitably generous and enthusiastic way she took me under her wing, encouraging me (plus Peter Bourne, also in his twenties then and now an international authority on elms) to update the records of trees across Sussex.

Now that I have passed Alan's own lifetime total of trees measured, the significance of her role in mentoring the next generation of young dendrologists is brought home to me.

The Vicky Schilling Bursary

In memory of Vicky Schilling The Tree Register is setting up a Bursary in her name, to honour the significant contribution she made to the Charity.

Vicky leaves a legacy of tireless endeavour in the recording of notable trees and a growing awareness of their historical value and their continuing contribution to the health of our planet.

The Vicky Schilling Bursary will provide others, who have a passion for trees, the opportunity to share the pleasure she enjoyed by travelling around Britain and Ireland, visiting parks and gardens discovering our rich tree heritage.

What is it for?

The Bursary will primarily provide funding towards travel and subsistence expenses for projects that support the work of the Tree Register as approved by the Bursary Panel.

More details for applicants will appear later this year on our website:

www.treeregister.org

If you wish to contribute financially to the fund please contact Pamela Stevenson, our Honorary Secretary and Treasurer at:

info@treeregister.org

Tel:01234 768884

(Right) Vicky Schilling (née Hallett) with *Rhododendron* 'Victoria Hallett' RHS Award of Merit 1989
(Photo: Tony Schilling)



Obituary

Vicky Schilling, co-founder of Tree Register

We are saddened to record the death, following a relatively short illness, of Vicky Schilling, aged 67 on 23rd November 2019. It was Vicky who, together with Alan Mitchell, founded the Tree Register of the British Isles and who subsequently became the central figure in the growth and development of the Tree Register. Vicky's contribution in the formative years of the Charity was unequalled and reflected her passion for trees. She leaves a legacy of tireless endeavour in the recording of notable trees and a growing awareness of their historical value and their continuing contribution to the health of our planet.

She was born Victoria Hallett in Burgess Hill, West Sussex in 1952, the fourth generation of her family to be born there. Her grandfather was gamekeeper at the nearby Heaselands Estate owned by the Kleinwort family which was noted for its formal and woodland gardens including ornamental trees and spectacular displays of native bluebells in spring.

Tree measuring

Aged 20 she went to live in New Zealand, returning to Sussex after three years to learn about spinning and weaving with Hilary Bourne in Ditchling. It was at this time that she obtained permission from its owners to walk the grounds of Heaselands in order to keep a nature diary of the birds and native flora including the measuring of trees, native and ornamental. In order to learn how best to go about it, she asked the leading authority of the day, Alan Mitchell, for his advice which led to her accompanying him on some of his tree measuring visits to gardens and estates. This, in turn, led to her volunteering as his assistant at the Forest Research Centre, Alice Holt in Surrey.



Vicky in recent times at 'Dogwood' their Ullapool garden
(Photos: Tony Schilling)

Green Scene

When Alan officially retired from his post in 1983, Vicky continued her work on cataloguing Alan's historical tree records which included converting the Imperial measurements into metric. Meanwhile, she continued joining Alan on his many visits to estates around Britain, measuring and recording trees. They briefly set up and ran a consultancy service, 'Green Scene', primarily to help fund costs of travel and other expenses which also involved Vicky organising Tree Identification Field Study Courses and Guided Walks, led by Alan, locally in Surrey and in Scotland. During this period she was

working constantly on preparing tree lists for estate owners and responding to requests for advice and information on tree matters. Her work on collating tree records previously made by Alan had her trawling his vast collection of handwritten index cards. It is impossible to identify the exact number of trees she visited and recorded with Alan but it is unlikely to have been less than 20,000.



New charity

It was in 1987, the year of the 'Great Storm' in South East England, while visiting Snowdenham House and estate with Alan, that they met Lord Hamilton of Dalzell. It was he who suggested that they should establish a charity to protect and conserve their tree records for the future. Wasting no time, Vicky took the initiative and persuaded some eminent land owners and horticulturists to become trustees and the Duchess of Devonshire to become its first Patron. The new charity was established in 1988 under the name The Tree Register of the British Isles (TROBI) and Vicky, appropriately, became one of its first trustees.

Initiated newsletter

Three years later, in 1991, Vicky married fellow trustee Tony Schilling, then the Curator of Wakehurst Place in Sussex, making their home in a flint-stoned cottage under the lee of the South Downs. The following year she retired as a trustee and took on the official title of Registrar as well as joint secretary assisted by Pamela Stevenson. With a newly acquired word processor she initiated the first newsletter for members of The Tree Register under the title "Leaves from Tree Measurers' Diaries".

Take a step back

It was Vicky who first realised the value in computerising the tree records which, in 1993, had surpassed 100,000. Within two years this had been achieved and she was able to take a step back from her role as Registrar. A whole new chapter for her began in 1997 when she and her husband Tony moved to Ullapool in Scotland. At this point they became joint Honorary Presidents.

In 2004 Vicky retired from the charity but continued to keep closely in touch with Pamela Stevenson sending details of ownership changes she noticed in the papers of many of the estates she had visited whilst tree measuring with Alan.

The Vicky Schilling Bursary

Vicky's life and love of trees will be commemorated by a Bursary which The Tree Register is setting up to support volunteer tree recorders.

Potsdam Botanical Garden, Germany

Dr. Gordon L Mackenthun

8th European Champion Tree Forum



Crossing by ferry, the ECTF visited Pfaueninsel ("Peacock Island") to see ancient oak and this remarkable naturally occurring fastigiate oak.

On Friday 24th May 2019 the ECTF met officially for the 8th time at the Potsdam Botanical Garden, adjacent to the remarkable Sanssouci Palace.

Lectures included: Herbert F. Gruber - Champion Tree of the year in Germany; Myles Ritchie - Heritage Trees on Hawaii; Andrea Marò - Giant Trees of Italy; Marc Meyer - Spanish initiative on the adoption of olive trees; Gordon Mackenthun - In search of the big old elms in the Leipzig Floodplain Forest; Rob McBride - European Tree of the Year and Trees Under Threat; David Alderman - Update on the Tree Register; Luboš Úradníček - Update on current projects in Czech Republic; Jeroen Philippona - The Bomenstichting - latest developments and Amsterdam, the location for the 9th ECTF meeting 2020.



(left) The largest *Taxodium distichum* in Germany in the Sanssouci Palace Park, planted in 1830 and 7.76m in circumference.



A splendid golden oak of unknown origin planted in the 1950's in the Botanical Garden Potsdam.

The 8th meeting of the European Champion Tree Forum was supported by the Botanischer Garten der Universität Potsdam and the Deutsche Dendrologische Gesellschaft.

Metasequoia glyptostroboides

Dawn redwood reaches 70 years in cultivation

Introduced to Britain in 1948, the first plantings of the Dawn redwood are now 70 years old. The largest is in the Fellows' Garden of Clare College, Cambridge, with a deeply fluted trunk 5.27m in girth at 1.5m. Second fattest is in the nearby Emmanuel College, a smoother trunked tree with remarkable fig-like rooting on one side and with a girth of 4.87m (photo bottom right).



The champion *Metasequoia* at Clare College, Cambridge, with Head Gardener Steve Elstub (left) and Deputy HG Kate Hargreaves



The tallest

A 1950 planting at Leonardslee Gardens, West Sussex, (photo above) was regularly visited by Alan Mitchell since 1958, when he first recognised it as an exceptionally fast growing tree. By 1990 it was the first measured tree to have reached 30m in height. Despite slowing up and being over-taken by others, Ron Kemeny recorded its height as 33m in 2019, when the gardens re-opened to the public after many years of being closed.

Today there are 12 known *Metasequoia* trees recorded at 30m or more and the height champion is currently a tree of 36.5m in Dunster Woodlands, Somerset.



(Left) Aubrey Fennell with the Irish champion *Metasequoia* at Ardnagashel, Co. Cork. With a girth of 3.74m in 2019, Aubrey predicts this will be the first tree in all of Ireland to reach 4m.



The original *Metasequoia* at Emmanuel College, Cambridge

Acer campestre 'William Caldwell'

John Weightman

A fastigiata cultivar of our native Field Maple

Over the last few years, 'William Caldwell' has started to become better known as a strikingly neat fastigiata cultivar of one of our most attractive native trees, the Field Maple (Acer campestre). In the summer of 2019, I was contacted by Dono Leaman who first bred and sold this tree; our volunteer recorder Judy Dowling visited Dono and together they measured one of his first plantings, at Akebar in the Yorkshire Dales, which was duly installed as the new champion – proving to me at least how this superb clone maintains its shape, and continues to grow with greater vigour, than I had idly assumed would be the case. Keen followers of the Champion Trees list may however have noticed that the title-holder has changed twice more since then. John Weightman, our measurer in Cheshire, takes up the story....

Fastigiata habit

Donovan Caldwell Leaman was a co-director of the Caldwell and Sons Nursery in Knutsford Cheshire with his cousin William Caldwell when he made a remarkable discovery on 16th September 1976 (the year of the great drought). While examining several thousand seedlings of Field Maple which were destined for hedging material he noted among the swaths of prematurely yellow foliage a single scarlet sapling. Further examination showed the sapling to have a fastigiata habit in dramatic contrast to the normal plant. Dono quickly planted the sapling in his own garden in Knutsford.

King Canute

Over the next two years he had successfully budded the plant onto common *campestre* rootstock. One of the two budded stock produced was planted in the nursery display border in 1980 to mark the bicentenary of Caldwells and named 'King Canute', their trademark and emblem. In 1983 Dono renamed the clone 'William Caldwell' in honour of his cousin Bill. Dono then moved house, planting the second of the budded stock there; later, the original sapling was also moved there but sadly it succumbed to Honey Fungus. Dono retired to Wensleydale in July 1992 shortly after the closure of his nursery.

A number of the early trees, raised from French-layering, found their way into local gardens in Cheshire, while some went further afield to such prestigious locations as Sir Harold Hillier nurseries in Hampshire and RHS Wisley.

British champion

Although this is an on-going project, I have managed to trace several healthy specimens in Knutsford and Nether Alderley. The surviving tree in Dono's last house in Knutsford is currently the British champion for girth. The larger of two specimens in a private Nether Alderley garden is currently the British champion for height. There is every chance that there are others yet to be traced which may well exceed these recent ones in girth and height.

Intrigued

A notable feature of these finds has been the open co-operation given to me by many of the householders most of whom are not the original purchasers of the "Bill" Maples. All are intrigued that they might be the chance possessor of a British champion tree!



Donovan Leaman with one of his 'William Caldwell' plantings from 1992, at the Friars Head public house in Akebar, Wensleydale, North Yorkshire. Planted in memory of a pub worker. (Photo: Judy Dowling)



Acer campestre 'William Caldwell'

(Above) Unusually red autumn colour in Hereford, due to very acidic soil?
(Photo: Donovan Leaman)



(Above right) Autumn colour in Cheshire
(Photo: Donovan Leaman)



(Right) Summer at Marks Hall Arboretum, Essex
(Photo: Owen Johnson)

Houghton Lodge Gardens, Hampshire

Alison Evershed

Widest espalier pear in the world?



When Sophie Busk contacted the Tree Register requesting a visit to see what may be the widest pear in Britain, perhaps the world, I imagined a fruit so large it would require a wheelbarrow to bring it to the table. Of course Sophie was describing the spread of its branches pruned and tied to the wall, espalier fashion, in the walled garden of Houghton Lodge Gardens, Hampshire.

Picturesque

The beautiful gardens in the picturesque Test Valley are open to the public and the pear tree is admired by visitors keen to know if they are looking at a champion! Believed to have been planted in the early 1800's, the pear today takes up the space of at least three trees at normal spacing and measures 16.44m from tip to outstretched tip.

DNA

Only recently has the tree been confirmed, by checking its DNA, as the variety *Beurre Diel*, described by Heritage Fruit Trees as being a chance seedling found in 1805, by M. Meuris the head gardener for Dr. Van Mons at the Chateau of Perck near Vilvoorde, Belgium. Van Mons named it in honour of his friend Dr. Augustus Frederick Adrien Diel, a distinguished German pomologist.

The pear is certainly the widest single-stemmed trained fruit tree we have recorded on the Tree Register, so I am writing this as a challenge to prove this or discover otherwise! If you know of a wider fruit tree please do contact us.

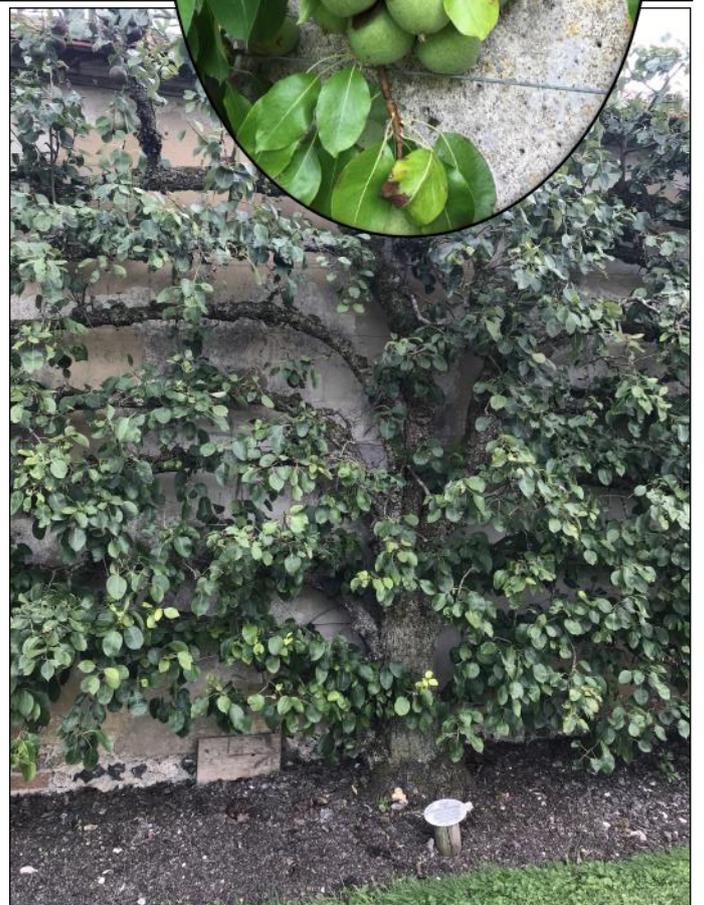
Historic spreading pear

The title for the most spreading pear tree by layering probably belongs to one in a field belonging to Holme Lacy Rectory in Herefordshire which was a 'very old tree' in 1776 (Littlebury's Herefordshire

Gazette). Elwes and Henry's description in 1913 seems to have had an average spread of 38.5m, due to it layering across the field. One remnant portion was going strong in 2014 when Brian Jones recorded it for the Ancient Tree Inventory.



The Holme Lacy Pear (Photo: Brian Jones)



Houghton Lodge Gardens are open from 1st April 2020

Please visit their website houghtonlodge.co.uk for more details.



Ancient Yew Group

Tim Hills

Veteran yews discovered in Somerset churchyards

Following in the footsteps of Peter Norton, who has recorded more than 2,500 yews at approximately 1100 churchyards in Hampshire, Wiltshire and Dorset, I embarked on collecting similar data in my home county of Somerset.

Over a period of 6 years this took me to 562 churchyards. There was at least one yew growing in 453 of these and more than 1250 individual yews were recorded. It was particularly satisfying to discover so many previously unrecorded veterans. These were found at: Ash Priors, Churchstanton, Cutcombe, Keinton Mandeville, Norton-sub-Hamdon, Pitney, Stoke Trister, Tellisford, Tickenham, West Coker and Woolley.

Keinton Mandeville

St Mary Magdalene's church dates from the 13th century. SE of the church is a yew seen in a drawing from 1834, found in British History online (see below). The yew, now hollow, had a girth of 4.74m at 0.3m in 2015.

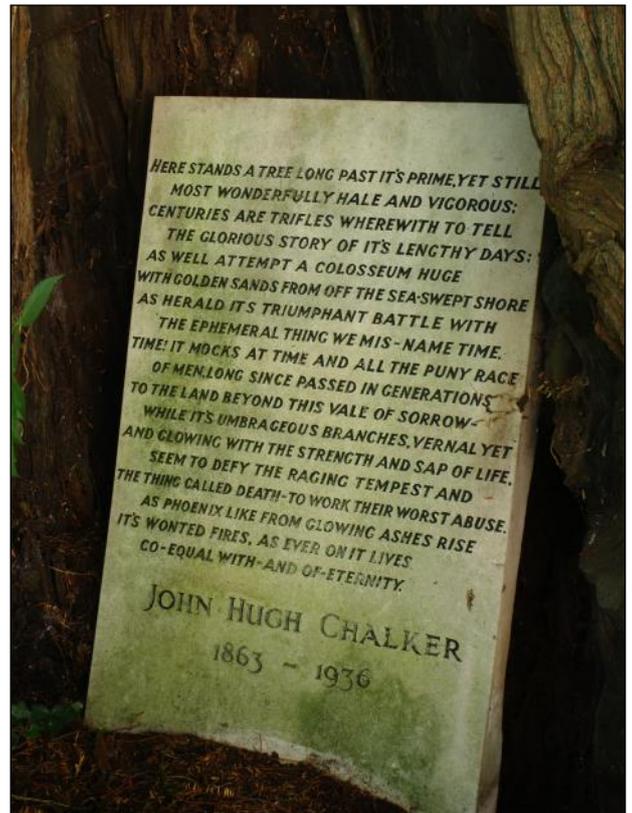
Today the yew leans slightly and supports a large number of branches, with healthy and thick foliage. Propped inside the tree is a poem written by a local man and carved in stone (see below).



My attempts to find anything more about the history of the Keinton Mandeville yew were thwarted by (1) the destruction of all pre-1726 records in a vicarage fire (2) the diocesan records which were sent to Exeter for safe keeping were destroyed by WWII bombs (3) recent records were

HERE STANDS A TREE LONG PAST ITS PRIME, YET STILL
MOST WONDERFULLY HAILE AND VIGOROUS;
CENTURIES ARE TRIFLES WHEREWITH TO TELL
THE GLORIOUS STORY OF ITS LENGTHY DAYS;
AS WELL ATTEMPT A COLOSSEUM HUGE
WITH GOLDEN SANDS FROM OFF THE SEA-SWEPT SHORE
AS HERALD ITS TRIUMPHANT BATTLE WITH
THE EPHEMERAL THINGS WE MIS-NAME TIME.
TIME! IT MOCKS AT TIME AND ALL THE PUNY RACE
OF MEN, LONG SINCE PASSED IN GENERATIONS
TO THE LAND BEYOND THIS VALE OF SORROW -
WHILE ITS UMBRAGEOUS BRANCHES, VERNAL YET
AND GLOWING WITH THE STRENGTH AND SAP OF LIFE,
SEEM TO DEFY THE RAGING TEMPEST AND
THE THING CALLED DEATH - TO WORK THEIR WORST ABUSE.
AS PHOENIX LIKE FROM GLOWING ASHES RISE
ITS WONTED FIRES, AS EVER ON IT LIVES
CO-EQUAL WITH - AND OF - ETERNITY.

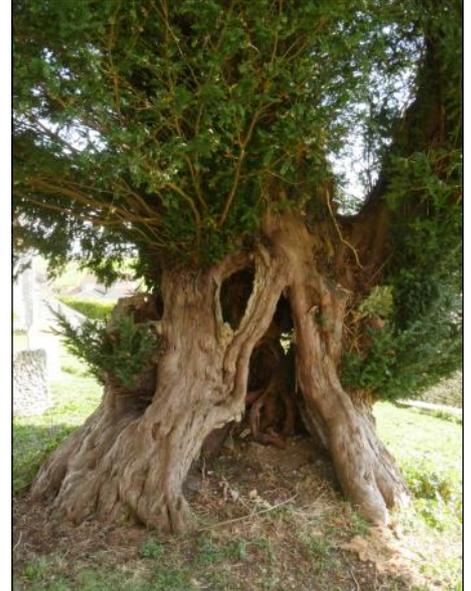
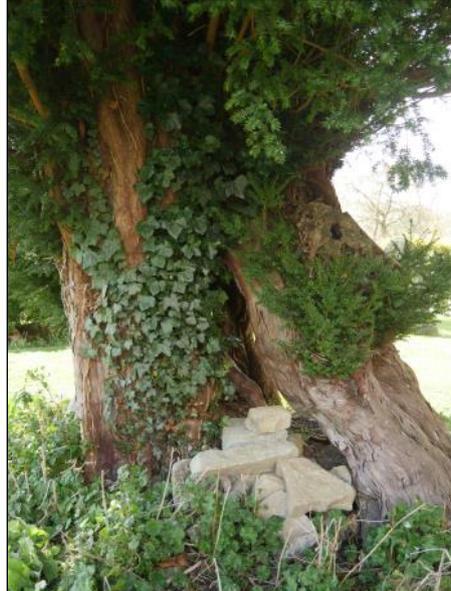
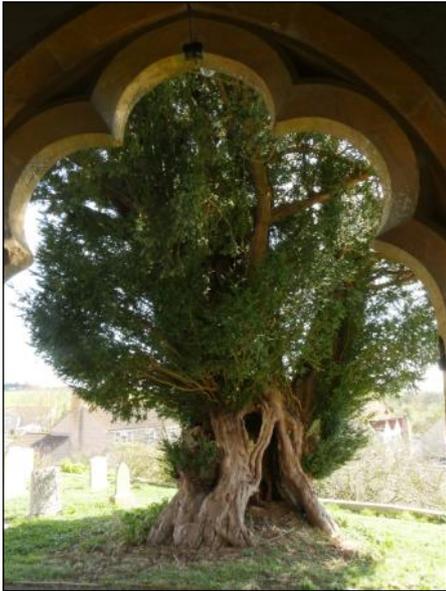
JOHN HUGH CHALKER
1863 - 1936



burnt in a fire in council offices in Langport in 1962!

Pitney

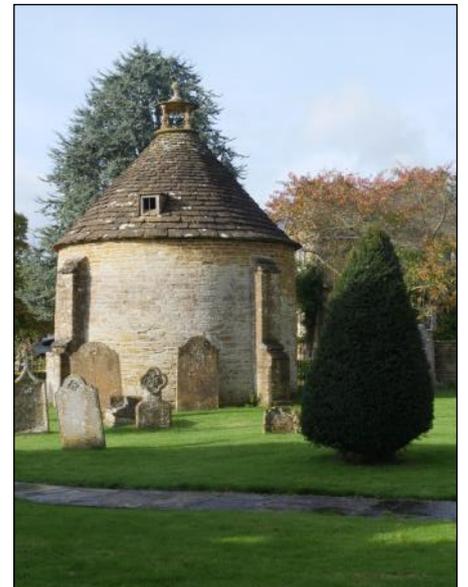
The yew at Pitney grows only 4 metres from the porch of St John the Baptist church. It is an extraordinary hollowed out male tree, with a girth of 4.8m at 0.6m, rising to 6.4m when measured around the base. Above the hollow at the height of about 1.8m grow many thick branches, mostly on the east side of the tree, with a single branch on the west side. In the hollow could be seen several small internal stems. (Photos below)



Norton Sub Hamdon

Here is a female yew with a 1.62m girthed internal stem made external by the loss of part of the tree. We know therefore that it has been larger than its present girth of 4.39m at 0.3m. More likely however to grab attention in this churchyard is the 17th century dovecote. Originally attached to a Manor House demolished in 1850, it is now within the grounds of St Mary's church, which originated in the 13th century. We seem to have ages for everything except the yew!

(Left) The Norton Sub Hamdon Yew
(Right) the dovecote



Tellisford

All Saints church at Tellisford dates from the 12th century and its tower was added in 1490. This yew grows only 2 metres from the church (see photo right) and 50cm from the wall of an adjacent garden. The church website states that the 'old yew tree beside the tower was quite possibly planted in obedience to a statute of Edward 1 (1272-1307) ordering the planting of yews in churchyards, so that his archers might have a supply of this wood for their bows'. Its girth of 4.88m (exactly 16') suggests that it is more likely to have been planted when the tower was built. While it might seem foolish to plant a yew only 2m from a building, it is a practice that continues and during the Somerset survey I recorded several yews planted to celebrate the millennium that are only a metre or so from the church.

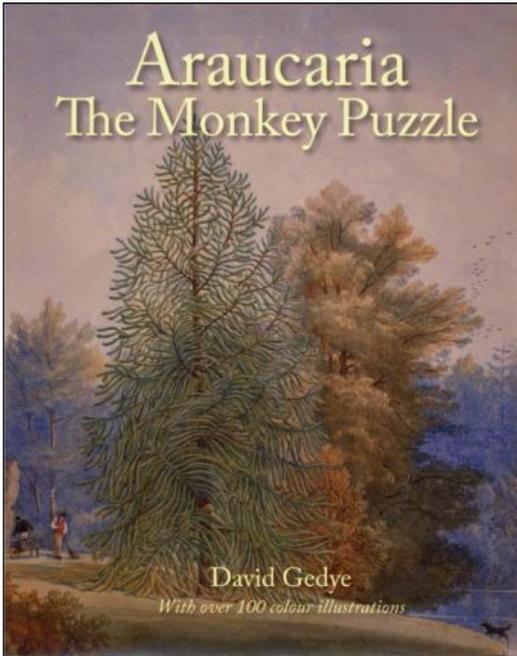
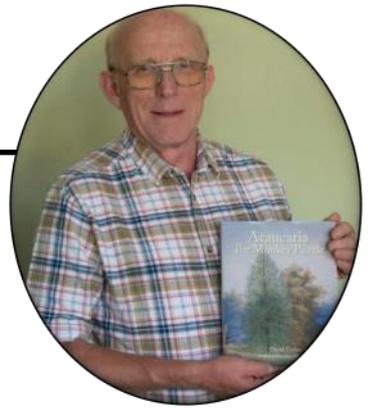


All photos: Tim Hills
For more information on Somerset's churchyard yews go to:
<https://www.ancient-yew.org/ss.php/bath-and-wells/12/49/74>

NEW BOOK

Araucaria - The Monkey Puzzle

Author - David Gedye



In his first book, *Araucaria – The Monkey Puzzle*, author David Gedye tells how, on inheriting his great-great-grandfather’s nineteenth century Monkey Puzzle tree photographs, he tracked down the history of his forebear’s trees and discovered he had inherited the only known photograph of an original 1795 Archibald Menzies’ tree.

David explained that “It was an exciting moment when I obtained the evidence that convinced me I owned a photograph of one of Menzies six trees. The tree was given into my forebear’s care in 1830 and survived until the early 1900s”. During his research, David discovered that much that was written about the Monkey Puzzle’s introduction into Europe was based on myth, and was misleading, and decided to write a book to tell the true story of how the Monkey Puzzle reached Europe and became a firm favourite of Victorian gardeners.



“*Araucaria – The Monkey Puzzle*” dispels the myth that Archibald Menzies obtained his *Araucaria* seed at a meal with the Viceroy of Chile, and highlights the significant contribution of the Horticultural Society plant collector James Macrae, and the role played by nurserymen such as Skirvings of Liverpool, Loddiges of London, WF Youell of Great Yarmouth, and others, in relation to the tree’s introduction.

This hardback book of 216 pages has over 100 colour illustrations and a foreword by Martin Gardner MBE. It costs **£25 plus £5 postage** (UK only - please obtain quote for overseas postage) It can be purchased directly from the author on Tel: **01487 840963** or by emailing your details to:

orakariapress@gmail.com

A guaranteed minimum of £5 per book will be donated to the **International Conifer Conservation Programme** to support their Monkey Puzzle conservation work.

Superb *Eucryphia x nymansensis* 'Nymansay' in a private garden is the new Kent county champion!



Planted in 1957 in a garden in Sevenoaks, this tree, now owned by Mr and Mrs Hands, has become the new county champion 16.4m tall x 1.65m in girth.

Chris Hands (left) contacted the Tree Register and provided the photo (far left) of the tree in flower during the summer of 2019. It certainly looks a champion!



Visit our NEW website www.treeregister.org

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