Tree of the month!

The Savernake Forest Hawthorn

The Forestry Commission managed Savernake Forest near Marlborough, Wiltshire was one of the first big datasets with 7,000 tree records uploaded onto the ATH. Most famous for its named trees such as “Big-belly Oak”, “Cathedral Oak” and “Duke’s Vaunt Oak” it also has some remarkably old hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*).

Near the southern boundary of the forest can be found a truly ancient tree dubbed the “Welwitzchia Hawthorn” by discoverer Peter Andrews and Jack Oliver of the Wiltshire Botanical Society, who first brought the tree to public attention in 2008.

In November 2011 the tree was recorded for the ATH by Regional Lead Verifiers Dave Kenny and Steve Waters who visited it with Jill Butler and David Alderman. The tree arises as 5 stems, each one hollow and twisted with age, its branches layering to produce a second generation of trees around the parent and covering more than 100 sq. metres.

This definitely a tree with the WOW factor and possibly older than many of the historic oak trees in the forest. Nearly 2,000 hawthorn have been recorded on the ATH so far, with 70 being recognised as being truly ancient. It is surely under-recorded so keep an eye out this winter along wood boundaries and on woodbanks in your local ancient woodland for more great hawthorn!

What’s new for 2012?

**Web Site**

New mapping has been embedded in the ATH web site and we are just waiting for all the original functionality to be updated. When complete you will be able to do everything you did before but faster! New features include aerial maps and a full screen map.

Keep checking the home page for latest news and for new developments!

**Events**

We have 5 regional ATH events planned for 2012, plus 4 Ancient Tree Forum events and a few specials! Join us to see how ATH data is being used to protect and conserve ancient trees. See how the historical maps link trees in the wider landscape with current ancient tree hotspots! Learn how we can add value to the data. Details coming soon!
Meet the ATH team

Jill Butler

Jill is the Ancient Tree Advisor for the Woodland Trust. She is managing the ATH and leading on using the data to inspire and protect our ancient trees. Jill is a member of the Ancient Tree Forum, a key partner organisation in the ATH.
JillButler@woodlandtrust.org.uk

David Alderman

David is Head Verifier providing support for the volunteer Verifiers and managing the data. He has worked with the Woodland Trust and ancient trees for 11 years and is Director (volunteer) for the Tree Register of the British Isles.
DavidAlderman@woodlandtrust.org.uk

Clair McFarlan

Clair is Senior Verifier helping support David, the Verifiers and recorders in areas without a Verifier. Clair will also be helping organise events and provide guidance. With the Soway Heritage Project Clair helped record over 1,000 trees for the ATH.
clairmcfarlan@gmail.com

Owen Johnson

Owen is helping manage the database, tree recording and tree identification. As Registrar for the Tree Register he has recorded more than 60,000 trees and is the most prolific recorder of trees in the UK. He is author of the Collins Tree Guide and Champion Trees of Britain and Ireland.
member@ojohnson.freeserve.co.uk

Alison Evershed

Alison worked as the Heritage Lottery Funded ATH Project Officer for a year and as volunteer events coordinator for the Tree Register will be helping support ATH events and with admin.

Recorders and volunteer verifiers are further supported by Regional Lead Verifiers.
Along with all ATH volunteer Verifiers, the Lead Verifiers are highly valued and bring a wealth of experience, enthusiasm and support,

South England
Dave Kenny
Steve Waters (Greater London)

South West England
Tim Kellett

Midlands
Lewis Goldwater

North England
Tony Burgoyne

Wales
Les Wilkins

ATH Recording at Glen Finglas, Scotland
(Photo by unknown but kind member of the public!)

Scotland
Irena Lobban

Ancient Tree Hunt partner organisations and projects

The National Trust

National Trust volunteers have been busy recording ancient, veteran and notable trees on Trust property throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Over 10,000 tree records have already been collated by their Ancient Tree Advisor Brian Muelaner and uploaded onto the ATH. 2012 looks like being another busy year and we look forward to sharing with you some of the amazing trees they have discovered!

Tree Council

Tree Council Tree Wardens have made a great contribution to the ATH. On 3rd December, as part of National Tree Week, a new Ealing Tree Warden Network was launched in London.
Reading Tree Wardens’ search for their borough’s Favourite Trees culminated in a National Tree Week exhibition at the Civic Centre (26th Nov - 4th Dec).

For more details go to www.treecouncil.org.uk

A phoenix hornbeam (Carpinus betulus) at Hatfield Forest, Essex. (Photo by Phil Newberry)

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Regional Roundup

ENGLAND

Nocturnal Verifier
Extreme tree recording in Cornwall for Lead Verifier Tim Kellett means getting out there even when it is too dark to see an ash from a sycamore!

You can just make Tim out standing on top of a typical Cornish hedge measuring an ancient Sessile Oak. Tim explained, “We were running late after a long day verifying, but had a tip-off there was something special up this lane that leads to Restormel Castle.”

SCOTLAND

Most northern wood pasture?
We have been in contact with Adele Beck of Great Glen Ecology who has recorded ancient trees as part of a wider study of upland wood pasture. This Downy birch (*Betula pubescens*) is at Loch a Bhealaich to the south of Ben Klibreck, in a sheltered and relatively fertile glen amongst the wilderness of peat bog. Adele estimates the birch to be more than 250 years old and is one of several birch and alder pollards covered in lichens and ferns in this remote relict wood pasture. We are hoping to get some of Adele’s trees on the ATH very soon and she has offered to act as a guide if there is a group of volunteers keen enough for an expedition into the old county of Sutherland?

NORTHERN IRELAND

Great Sycamore of Castle Ward
One of the latest data batch uploads from the National Trust onto the ATH included 57 trees at Castle Ward, Co. Down. The top tree for girth was this sycamore at 6m (Tree No. 89915) One of the biggest in Ireland, it looks like it has a twin. But, Stephen Maxwell had already recorded it in 2008 (Tree No. 11151) and is one of several duplicates we will be looking to merge throughout 2012.

WALES

Ruthin Rowan
Michael Woolner records trees whilst out on his walking expeditions and over the past few years has discovered some amazing ancient trees. Recently Michael sent us these images of some very ancient rowan growing along a boundary in Cyffylliog near Ruthin in Clwyd.
Join the Ancient Tree Forum on Facebook

Want to keep right bang up to date with all things Ancient Tree in the UK? Then sign into the Ancient Tree Forum’s Facebook page

The best way to learn about ancient tree events, recording, news and see some of the latest finds by ancient tree recorders and enthusiasts.

Common sense risk management of trees

The National Tree Safety Group’s (NTSG) new guidance is now out. It’s for tree owners and arboriculturists to provide an approach to tree management that is proportionate to the risk posed by trees and defensible rather than defensive.

1. Common sense risk management of trees (The main guidance document priced at £19.99 plus P&P)
2. A Landowner Summary (for estates and smallholdings available free)
3. Managing Trees for Safety (For the domestic tree owner available free)

All the documents are available from the Forestry Commission Publications

Blog of the month!

ATH Tree No. 12140

This ancient oak tree stands in the centre of Oak Meadow which is surrounded by a loop in the River Wye opposite Ross-on-Wye and clearly visible from Wye Street.

The Littlebury’s Directory and Gazetteer of Herefordshire, 1876-7 indicates that records preserved in the town appear to state that at that time the tree was over 1,100 years old making it some 1230 years old today. The report goes on to say that the tree suffered significant fire damage in 1854. (The record referred to is thought to be The Doomsday Book.)

An etching from 1886 shows the tree as an ancient specimen having significant damage and a hollow trunk such that the local farmer had provided a thatch cover to provide a shelter for sheep. The fire damage within the hollow trunk is such that there are now two trunks, one of which is erect and substantial whilst the other has leaned over and is supported by two iron rods between it and the upright trunk.

Both parts of the tree appear to be healthy with minimal evidence of invertebrates or epiphytes and just one small recent bracket fungus attached to the leaning trunk.

10th November 2011
Brian Jones

This tree is on private land and permission is required to visit