



### Editorial

We welcome Joseph Davies from Anscroft as a new member and look forward to seeing him at our last visit for the year or at one of our coming lectures.

Our fall-back for a book-keeper for the Trust has had to withdraw his offer so we are desperately looking for a volunteer to carry out this role. It will only require a few hours throughout the year and is not at all onerous. Please do consider doing this for the Trust.

Your Committee decided to spend some of our funds on publishing our activities to the wider public in the area. One of these initiatives was to have an article written about us in the September/October number of My Shrewsbury. Sent out by email with this Newsletter is the article written by Sarah Hart entitled Woodland Wonders. Those of you who do not receive emails can still obtain copies free of charge at outlets round Shrewsbury such as in the entrance hall in Sainsbury's at Meole Brace. There are too many colour photos and my printer does not do a good enough job for me to send all recipients of the Newsletter a copy by post but if you would like a copy please let me know and I will print one off and send it to you. (01743 357252).

### The last visit: Oteley Hall, Ellesmere, Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> September

Following a devastating storm in 2014, Mr. Mainwaring, the owner of this estate, and his gardener, Steve, took it upon themselves to clear the site between them. They hired a large tree trunk handler and lifted the fallen trunks so that they could put a chain saw through them and remove the fallen timber. They did, however, contract someone to rebuild the part of the boathouse that had been seriously hit by falling trees and they did find another contractor who would remove the large root plates left around the site.

We saw photographs of the effects of this storm and, for someone who is so proud of their tree collection, this must have been heart-breaking. The gardens were opened again for visitors in April 2016.

This was not the first time that bad luck had hit the estate. The original house, a half-timbered manor was burned to the ground while its replacement, a very elaborate brick and stone mansion, became so costly to renovate and repair, as its timbers were so riddled with rot, that it had to be demolished for the present house to be built.

The Mainwaring family has lived on this site for many centuries and many of the family must have been keen tree enthusiasts. There are trees on this site that have a long history but most have been planted in the last hundred or so years. Together with the more recent planting, this gives an interesting and varied age structure to the trees and, with the immense variety of species chosen for the planting, the site has one of the best arboreta in the County. Conifers and broad-leaved trees mix well. It would be interesting to revisit the gardens in winter to see the effect of the conifers among the leafless broad-leaved tree skeletons.

Among many of the usual species expected of an arboretum, such as Wellingtonias and Coast Redwoods, ornamental Japanese Acers, Sweet Gums and Tulip Trees, there were a few quite unexpected specimens, the Mountain Ribbonwood (*Hoheria glabrata*), a Lindera, a Japanese Umbrella Pine (*Sciadopitys verticillata*), a Golden Elm and a *Eucryphia nymensensis* amongst them. Standing together were the two irregular species of the Twisted Hazel (*Corylus avellana* 'Contorta') and the Twisted Willow (*Salix babylonica* var. *pekinensis* 'Tortuosa'). It was interesting to see the two side by side. The latter was formerly known as *Salix matsudana* 'Tortuosa' but has changed its specific identity in more recent years. Thanks to Tom for drawing my attention to this. The Cypresses (*Cupressus* species) and the False Cypresses (*Chamaecyparis* species) were in fruit (cones) so we had the opportunity to compare their relative sizes. The many Western Red Cedars (*Thuja plicata*) were also fruiting prolifically and their different cone shapes were noted.

As we walked through the gardens, our path took us alongside the Mere of Ellesmere, from which we could look across to the town. Steve, the gardener joined us in our visit and was able to tell us when some of the trees were planted. He had been working in these gardens for the past thirty eight years and so had been responsible, himself, for much of the more recent planting.

We are most grateful to Mr. Mainwaring for allowing us to visit his garden with its superb range of trees and to Steve for giving up his Sunday afternoon to show us round. We are grateful, too, to the team of ladies who provided us with tea and cake at the end of our tour. Members seemed to feel that this had been a very worthwhile visit and all enjoyed the afternoon.

John Tuer

### **Our next visit: to the Redwood Grove and Charles Ackers Arboretum at Leighton** **Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> October:**

This is a private site belonging to the Royal Forestry Society so we not only have permission for this visit, but will also have the advantage of being shown around by RFS member, Mr. David Williams, who will come across to join us all the way from Blaenau Ffestiniog. The Redwood Grove of Coast Redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*) is spectacular. Do come and join us. The cost of this visit is £5 per person and **WE SHALL MEET AT 1.30PM**, please, not the usual 2.00pm.

How to get there:- From Shrewsbury, take the A458 towards Welshpool. As you approach Welshpool, turn left onto the B4388, signposted Leighton. There's a white church on the corner.

Continue along this road (B4388) for 4 miles.

Then as you enter a small village (no village sign but it's Kingswood). Take the first left turn, signposted "Trelystan and Long Mountain". The road will soon bend left at an Offa's Dyke sign.

After 0.4 mile, you'll arrive at Greenwood Lodge gates on your left with a small RFS sign. Enter here and go down the rough track to the left. After about 0.2 mile, you'll find the RFS car park to the right.

**REPEAT: Please meet here at 1.30pm.**

John Tuer

### **A reminder of the Tony Russell talk on 13<sup>th</sup> November:**

As we are now into October, I shall be selling tickets to the general public. If members have still not bought their tickets for the November talk, please do so from me as soon as possible.

Members' tickets are £2 each. Please send me a cheque payable to the "Severn Tree Trust" together with a stamped addressed envelope. My address is Evergreen, Woodside, Homer, Much Wenlock, TF13 6NQ.

Tickets for members of the public are £5 each but if you are a member, you will still get priority and I shall recognise from your cheques whether or not you are members.

John Tuer