



### Chairman's Comments

Dear Members,

Our esteemed colleague and long standing committee member and treasurer Don Mansell has had to step down from the committee and he and his daughter Sue have decided to stop doing the finances for the Severn Tree Trust. We wish Don well and hope he has more time for his woodworking, and we hope very much to see him at future events. This opens up scope for a new treasurer and anyone interested should contact the committee please.

Peter Aspin led an interesting trip to Cholmondeley gardens and you will see his report below and we wish him well although he is snowed under at his farm (not by snow I might add, just work, see...) We look forward to Tony Russell's talk in November which will be in the University building at Frankwell, read below as members will have an opportunity to get the first tickets.

David (Chairman)

### Report on visit to Cholmondeley Castle Gardens Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> August.

Despite a miserable weather forecast eleven hardy members ventured beyond the northern extremities of Shropshire and into the ancient estate of Cholmondeley and we were blessed with not a drop of the wet stuff that some of us might remember used to fall from above. Preparations were well in progress for one of those big equestrian events the following weekend which are so essential to its financial viability and a well attended cricket match beneath the castle mound lent an air of Englishness to the occasion. The least number of visitors appeared to be for the gardens and for the first time in living memory the access route to the model farm and livestock (the goat atop the tower surveying its kingdom had always been an attraction) was inaccessible. Surely they cannot be converting those buildings for housing?

We passed a couple of Cedars of Lebanon either side of an Atlas Cedar before entering the lower Temple Garden which had a microclimate all of its own being sheltered on all sides by long established trees which allowed those within to grow without the hindrance of extreme winds. A couple of well-shaped Swamp Cypress and the County Champion (there were many CC's here) Dawn Redwood were at the southern end of the pools, As we walked up the western side a Magnolia had put on considerable growth since coppicing three or four years ago and at the northern end the orange-red trunk of a Strawberry Tree (*Arbutusx arachnoides*) was striking.

Here and there throughout the gardens those of us with a well-attuned sense of smell received the glorious whiff of candyfloss which could only mean Katsuras, despite the fact that autumn was still some distance away. Perhaps the heat of this summer had accentuated the fragrance. A couple had some age (one another CC) but a few had recently been planted. Once again the high percentage of young trees here, as in so many gardens, being varieties of Magnolia is becoming problematic; there are so many other shrubs and trees which are far more beneficial to the environment.

The high (or perhaps low) point of the day was when we took a vote on the identity of a specimen, probably a first for STT though it did add to the entertainment value of the day. Liquidambar or Oriental Plane. Inevitably it was the edible leaf taste that decided it was the latter, far too fibrous for a Sweet Gum. The one National Champion tree on site we were unable to see- a golden Black Locust- as it was out of bounds close to the house, perhaps if we'd used the garden's own guide we might have been allowed into otherwise inaccessible areas, an issue to ponder in the future. But by far the largest tree was a Wellingtonia close to the exit drive, planted in the 1850s and appropriately named "Red Sentinel".

The afternoon went so quickly and in the end we were virtually chased off the premises by the gardener in his buggy, it was 5pm and chucking out time (perhaps another STT first). We did have an earlier break for refreshments and found the tea rooms deserted apart from all the girls having a good chinwag around a table, they almost seemed disappointed to have to bother to serve anyone but the bramley apple pie definitely did not disappoint. 'Twill live long on the tastebuds.

Peter Aspin

### **Our next visit Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> September at 2pm to Oteley Hall Gardens**

**Please note the change of date – see last Newsletter.**

For SatNav users: SY12 0PB. For old-fashioned map users (like me!) SJ412348.

The hall and gardens are across the Mere from Ellesmere town.

**How to get there:** Go from Shrewsbury towards Ellesmere on the A528. On approaching Ellesmere, look for the road on the right to Whitchurch (the A495) and a few yards further also on the right is a tarmac lane passing through trees. Take this lane. It bends right and goes through farmland. Follow it to the house. Turn left into a yard by the barns, then right into a large car parking space in front of the house. We shall meet here at **2.00pm.**

The gardens are extensive with some beautiful trees of different ages. The number of species is great so there's an opportunity to look at a range of trees. We were to visit these gardens about 3 years ago, then horrendous storms blew down a number of trees devastating the gardens. Mrs. Mainwaring, who owns the house, was distraught and had to put us off our visit. In the meantime, she has sadly passed away so we shall be hosted by her husband, Mr. Mainwaring who will provide us with tea and cake at the end of our visit. The cost is £5 and I think you will find it well worth it. Mr. Mainwaring gives all funds raised through opening his gardens to charity.

We hope to see lots of you there.

John Tuer

### **ADVANCE NOTICE ABOUT TICKETS FOR THE TONY RUSSEL TALK ON 13<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER**

Unusually, we shall be charging and providing tickets for our November talk as Tony Russell is a national speaker and is coming from North Wales. But, although we shall be asking members of the public to pay £5 for their tickets, we are asking members to pay only £2 a ticket. We are also giving members priority over ticket purchase, so we ask you, please, to try to buy your tickets as soon as you can so that we shall know how many members of the public we can sell to. We shall be selling to the public from 1st October and I shall be away for the last two weeks of September. So if you don't buy your tickets during the first part of the month, when I return and distribute the public tickets, I shall do my best to sort out which are for members first and you will still get priority.

Please send me a cheque for your tickets together with a stamped addressed envelope. Cheques to be made payable to 'the Severn Tree Trust' and my address is Evergreen, Woodside, Homer, Much Wenlock, TF13 6NQ I hope all that makes sense and that tickets sales will go like clockwork (and like hot cakes too).....  
John Tuer"

