



Chairman's Comments

Change of venue. When your Committee arranged to visit Winterbourne Gardens on 8th June, we were not made aware of a big Open Day event they were planning that day. None of the staff would be available to introduce the Gardens and they would have been very crowded. We have therefore decided to switch venues for the day. We will visit the Arley Arboretum on 8th June and Winterbourne Gardens on 10th August. See below for directions to Arley.

We must thank John Tuer and Richard Dorrell for erecting the tree guard around the Ruth Cresswell Memorial Plane Tree to match that around the David Cresswell tree a few metres away. We must also thank Richard for its manufacture.

David Martin



Our visit to the 50 Telford Trees (Saturday, 11th May 2019)

This visit was an excellent opportunity to show members our Corporate Woodland as well as to look at a number of these fifty trees, trees used for a tree trail to commemorate Telford's fifty years of existence. The trail was actually designed by the Dothill Nature Reserve people and it was very well designed with a clear and accurate map, wooden direction signs where the visitor might go wrong and wooden plaques alongside each tree. A lot of time and effort had gone into producing this tree trail and I would hope that we were not the only people to use it.

When I say “we”, nearly twenty members and friends turned up on this sunny afternoon and enjoyed the two miles or so ramble. Breaks by stopping at each tree made the walk an easier one whilst we discussed details of each.

I do not propose to mention each tree in this report but to look at the highlights, those trees which stood out as having something more interesting about them. So, having said that this was a wonderfully put-together walk, I have to say that the identification of the first tree was incorrect. What a pity when the whole thing was done so well ! The plaque told us that the large mature tree standing in the Admaston House Community Centre car park was a Siberian Elm, otherwise known as a Dwarf Elm. We did look askance when our identification books said “dwarf”. This really was quite a large tree. But, thanks to having Graham with us, who by the way is our member who comes all the way from Nottingham, he immediately recognised some horizontal barred markings on the upper large limbs and told us that these were characteristic of *Ulmus* “Sapporo Autumn Gold”. I have since had some helpful communication with Graham who tells me that this species is a hybrid between the Japanese Elm and (I quote him) “the so-called Dwarf or Siberian Elm”. He further tells me that “It was originally selected (especially for resistance to Dutch Elm Disease) at Wisconsin University from plants grown there from seed received in 1958 from open-pollinated *Ulmus pumila* (Siberian Elm) sent from the Botanic Garden of Hokkaido University in Sapporo, Japan. It was probably first planted in Britain in the 1980s. The Dothill tree is a fine example, perhaps even a Shropshire Champion”. Thank you, Graham. That's very helpful as I can pass that information to the Dothill group (in a very delicate way, of course !).

Another Elm that we came across towards the end of the walk, and there were two specimens of these, was *Ulmus minor* 'Atinia'. No-one recognised this Elm, or its botanical name. Looking it up at home later, I was surprised to find that this is the English Elm or Common Elm, also known as the Field Elm, the tree that graced our fields and hedgerows until Dutch Elm Disease came along in the 1970s. Its previous name of *Ulmus minor* 'vulgaris' would have told us straight away of its common-ness. It is interesting that these two specimens have escaped the disease so far but if it is to attack, it usually occurs when the trees are between 15 and 20 years old. So perhaps they haven't reached that age yet. They were both smallish trees.

There were many native British trees on this trail, those that managed to reach us from the European Continent at the end of the Ice Ages before the melting ice formed the English Channel and cut off our supplies of further species. One such species in our corporate woodland was a very healthy specimen of the Bird Cherry (*Prunus padus*). We know the history of this in that it was planted by our member, Maria Knowles, in 2012. Unfortunately Maria couldn't be with us on this visit but she will be delighted to know that not only is her tree good and healthy but has been bearing copious flowers this season too. We have often wondered why our Common or Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*) has been given a botanic name that we felt ought to have been that for the Bird Cherry. Looking up “padus” in my meanings-of-botanical-names book, it tells me simply that this is the Greek word for the Bird Cherry. Not very helpful really except that, surprisingly, it's from Greek not Latin. Does any member speak Greek please ?

Unusually for this site, we also saw a Corkscrew Willow. Now I shall call this by its former name of *Salix matsudana* 'Tortuosa', or tortured willow, but those botanical powers that be who meet every ten years or so to consider if botanical name changes need to be made, have actually changed the specific name for this tree and I'm sorry that I can't remember its new name. Member Tom Fulda did tell me. Tom, would you please remind me and then I must write it down.

The whole of this site covers many acres in the Admaston area of north Telford and, because it is a part of Telford's "Green Network", this designation is intent to save the area from development. So when we see a planting of Wellingtonias (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) or Sierra Redwoods, where ten have been planted in a circle over a huge site, I think we may be comfortably sure in thinking that this is not going to receive housing at any time even in the distant future. So if these trees are to be allowed to grow to their full heights and to over one thousand years of age as they are in the Rockies, then perhaps these trees will be the saviours of this land as a green area.

This tree trail is open for all and is well worth a visit for those who didn't make it on this particular Saturday. You can pick up a tree trail map in Telford Town Centre's information stand or in Wellington Town Library. Having covered 28 of the trees on this occasion, we shall look at the other 22 in next year's visits programme.

John Tuer

Visit to Arley Arboretum 8th June 2019 2pm. (Substitute for visit to Winterbourne Gardens)

The Arley Arboretum is located just west of the A442, the road from Bridgnorth to Kidderminster just after crossing into Worcestershire and is about 35 miles from Shrewsbury. It is well sign-posted from both directions off the A442. The entry fee is £5.50 per person. The tour will start at 2pm. Please meet at the entrance after paying the entry fee.

There is a good tea-room by the entrance to the Arboretum and it is thought that members might like to meet there after possibly visiting the wider estate in the morning. Due to the change of venue and the need to advise members of this as soon as possible no arrangements have yet been made for this morning visit. Those who receive this Newsletter by email will be advised by email. Would those who receive it by post please advise Andy Gordon (01743 357252) of their interest in the morning visit and he will pass on joining instructions as and when they become available.