



Dear Members,

We finally managed to start our 2020 programme of visits on a lovely sunny day in Telford and John Tuer has prepared a report of the tour of the second part of Telford's Trees which you will see at the end of this newsletter.

Your Committee has decided to go ahead with our next visit on 11th July which is to the gardens and trees of The Hurst, an Arvon Centre for Creative Writing, once the home of John Osborne. It is just over half way between Clunton and Clun on the B4368 from Craven Arms. Its Post Code is SY7 0JA. The left turning is just as the road bends right. Park in the main car park in front of the large house to start at 2p.m.

The Hurst is temporarily closed due to Covid-19 but they have kindly agreed that we can visit the grounds as we will have the place to ourselves. There is plenty of room on the grass slopes to have a picnic, which is what my wife and I intend to do.

WE WILL DIVIDE UP THOSE WHO COME INTO GROUPS OF FIVE PLUS A GUIDE to comply with current Government guidelines as of 1st July. If larger groups are permitted by 11th of July we will of course increase the size of the groups. PLEASE RESPECT THE ISOLATION DISTANCE RULES OPERATING ON THE DAY HERE AND FOR YOUR LOCAL AREA.

We are trying to arrange that members will have access to a toilet but I would encourage members to bring their personal sanitising products.

In his article on Tall Trees in the June Newsletter John Tuer threw out a challenge to members to find out all they can about the grove of Coastal Redwoods at the Hurst. So we know that we will see these majestic trees but we will see many other interesting broadleaves as well. A few pages down this newsletter you will find a short introduction from Jo Selman, the gardener at The Hurst.

Miyawaki Forests.

In the April Newsletter I mentioned the first "Tiny" Forest (600 trees in 200 sq. metres) that had been planted in Britain. There was an article in The Guardian recently naming the Japanese botanist who started the procedure and who has now planted over 1000 such forests in Japan, Malaysia and a few other countries. If a wide variety of broadleaved trees native to the country are planted at these densities (three plants per square metre) not only do they grow faster but they are also much more bio-diverse than normal local

forests. In the Netherlands 100 Miyawaki forests have been planted and Belgium and France have between them planted 40 more.

Such forests will only add to the pressures on the forest nursery industry which is going to struggle to produce enough plants as it is for the Government's latest target of 30,000 ha per annum.

Missed targets.

The provisional figures of planting by country in the 2019-20 season have now been revealed by the Forestry Commission. They make very poor reading. In the four countries planting was 1% less than in the previous year but the lower figure was almost certainly due to the effect of the Covid 19 pandemic. The total hectares planted (13,460 ha) is not even half way to the 30,000 ha UK target. Scotland did best by planting 10,860 ha against its current target of 12,000 ha, England managed to plant just under 2300 ha., (target 5,000ha) Wales about 80ha (target 2,000 ha) and Northern Ireland about 270ha (target 900ha).

One of the reasons for the poor performance in England is because for about two years there has been no forest strategy for England. It was to have been published by the last Government but the election put a stop to its publication. It has finally been published and is available on line for comments at www.gov.uk/government/consultations/developing-a-tree-strategy-for-england. The site is available for comments until September 11th.

Urban Tree Cover.

A few years ago several STT members took part in a tree survey of urban tree cover for Shrewsbury organised by the Tree Officers in Shropshire Council. Over a year ago participants were invited to a report back session but have been waiting for the published report ever since. Dougald Purce was one of the co-ordinators; he spoke to us in January and will be speaking to us again next winter. We should ask him to begin his talk next year with a brief summary of the findings. This is of relevance because Forest Research has just launched its own Inter-active tool to produce a map of the urban tree cover for the UK. Details of the scheme should be available at <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/research/i-tree-eco/urban>. Members might like to participate in this project.

Vandalism of Urban Trees.

I was horrified to see recently that a newly planted native Black Poplar tree had been vandalised and broken off at the height of the protection and left there to bring attention to



the crime (see picture). The Council probably spent about £200 to plant a rather overgrown one year old cutting and for the very sturdy protection against the cows which are put in this field of the Reabrook Nature Reserve to the east of the Reabrook

Roundabout for about two weeks a year! The protection contrasts dramatically with the spiral tree guard and cane I put round a native black poplar in 2000 also in the Reabrook Nature Reserve about 50m from the above on the opposite side of the brook but in an area where cows are never put out to graze. It is now 1.6m in girth and growing well. See picture. This begs the question whether the small income the Council gets from renting the



land to the graziers is justified.

A Tree Walk round Shrewsbury

Some of you might have seen on display in front of the Reception at the Visitor Centre in the Square a series of pamphlets to allow visitors to self-guide themselves round various interesting parts of Shrewsbury. Your Committee decided a pamphlet on Shrewsbury's Trees would be a good idea. During the lock-down some members of the Committee have been working hard on this with a view to having it ready for when Visitors might again start to come to Shrewsbury. It will cost £1, just like the other pamphlets in the series and will compliment the free Tree Walk round the Dingle which we produced a few years ago, which continue to be in demand when the Dingle is open! We are in the final stages of having the Tree Walk pamphlet published and we hope that members will enjoy the experience when it becomes available.

Andy Gordon (Chair)

An introduction to STT and The Hurst by Jo Selman (Gardener at The Hurst)

Our rich association with Severn Tree Trust begun when John contacted the Centre Manager at The Hurst, Natasha, in 2014 to arrange a visit. Out of this sprang firstly a Tree Trail of the grounds written by John swiftly followed by the gift of three very local old apple trees varieties for our orchard, planted by John and Andy (Onibuy, Bringewood and Downton Pippin). The Tree Trail has become a very popular guide around the grounds for our writers.

The Hurst Estate had owned the adjoining wood Sowdley (500 acres) up until the sale of The Hurst in 1976 by the Cook family. Various owners had had a keen interest in forestry. In 1949 H.E. Harrison picked up First Prize for Douglas, Sitka and Japanese Larch in the Woodlands, Plantations and Estate Nurseries Competition. In July 1951 60 members of the North-West Midland Division met for a visit of Mr Harrison's woodlands to see his seventeen year old winning Sitka Spruce grown at 1,200 ft. above sea level. He also planted the Redwood stands. When the Estate was sold off Sowdley was bought by a member of the Sainsbury family and continued to win recognition.

The Hurst Book of Trees (compiled by H.E.Harrison) contains snippets such as 'cut down three big Larch by back drive...' which according to their rings were... 'about 150 years old'.

It is along here that over the last 5 years about 2500 whips have been planted by the amazing Severn Tree Trust volunteers. These have utterly transformed the old drive into Clun from a barren denuded area into a wonderful rich hedge and made a huge difference to The Rough, part of the woodland which is one of the most popular walks. In addition John managed to get local oaks to add to this. This hedge planting has continued down the main drive and has again transformed it, providing both a rich habitat and visual beauty and bringing back a lost thread of the landscape. Added to this we are very excited to have been given five *Ulmus* 'Wingham'; a cultivar with very high resistance to DED. Jo

Our Telford Trees walk: Saturday, 13th June 2020

Unsurprisingly, considering the present situation, only eight people came along to this visit. We just thought we ought to provide something for members as we'd been unable to run some of our recently planned events. However, the visit was in wonderful sunshine and we did look at the remainder of the fifty trees designated and marked by Telford to celebrate fifty years of the new town in 2019 and we did keep ourselves at the required social distance. When I say "marked by Telford", it was in fact the Friends of Dothill Nature Reserve who had done all the work in providing the trees with their plaques and producing the accompanying map and information.

It just so happened that, by coincidence, I met Keith Jones, the very person who had done all the work for their group only two days before our visit. He told me that, sadly, one of the trees had been removed (Norway Spruce – No. 25) because of disease and one had been blown down in gales early this year (Hornbeam – No. 13). He found that the original hornbeam did have another growing nearby so that has now become Number 13. So the Telford 50 trees at the moment are only forty nine. I'm sure that will be rectified soon.

Why I mention this detail about the specific number of the trees is because some of you who could not attend the visit might like to go yourselves either to follow the whole route to visit all the trees or just to see those we visited on Saturday. If the latter, you have the list that David sent out, together with the route to help you. If you wish to do the whole round of the trees, please go into the Dothill website and you will find the map and route that may be printed out. The website is at www.dothillnaturereserve-friends.com

I won't bother to list the trees for you that we saw on Saturday as you already have it but I shall say that, trees apart, the route makes a very pleasant walk through one of the sites labelled as Telford's Green Network. It is extensive, varied, and seemingly quite rural within the town itself. And for those of you who didn't come along last year, the beginning of the route will take you through our (the Severn Tree Trust) corporate woodland.

John Tuer



Well done with that social distancing, like a good mixed deciduous woodland: no plantations here! (ed)