



**** Headline – change to January visit
Saturday 30 January
** now Attingham Park snowdrop walk ****

****It is essential for you to ring National Trust to book a time slot or
you won't be allowed in. Entry fees may apply.****

Tel; 03442 491895.

Dear Members,

May I wish you all a more normal year for 2021. Some of us have been lucky to have received at least one of the vaccinations but, as I see it, normal service will not be resumed for many months yet, which will probably affect many of the visits we have planned if not even our lectures at the end of the year!

It was not felt to be necessary to confirm that our planned visit in January to look at the Snowdrops at Acton Scott could not go ahead once the latest lock-down restrictions were introduced. But a very good substitute is available not four miles from the centre of Shrewsbury and therefore well within the 'local' criterion. I refer of course to Attingham Park where there are several acres of Snowdrops on the eastern side of the Mile Walk opposite the Walled Garden.

A few years ago I prepared a self-guided tree and shrub walk round the Mile Walk at Attingham for the National Trust, but this does not actually mention the snowdrops. They are located to the east of point 34 on the map which along with the details of the trees and shrubs is attached to this Newsletter. I appreciate that the walk was designed for use in summer when the leaves were on the trees and shrubs but using the guide in winter would be a useful exercise in recognising winter buds for the non-evergreen species. In fact some of the early flowering shrubs are already (19/01/21) showing flowers. By the time that this Newsletter is distributed the snow-drops should be at their best. Those of you receiving the Newsletter via the inter-net please print out the text or the map at least.

Do you remember way back in the spring of 2020, STT were going to participate in the Woman's Institute "Show the Love" event at Attingham? In preparation for this

Attingham kindly printed out many copies of the above tree walk. If those of you who receive this Newsletter by post would like to visit Attingham and would like a copy please telephone me on 01743 357252 and I will put one in the post for you.

But please remember that it is necessary to book a time to visit Attingham on-line or by ringing **03442 491895**.

This year's AGM

With the January Newsletter you will have seen that we intend to have the AGM in March rather than February this year. This is allowed in our constitution which also requires that an AGM is held annually. Due to the Covid restrictions this will obviously not take place in person so we intend to hold it "on paper"!

With the March Newsletter it is intended to send out copies of the audited Accounts, the Chair's, Membership Secretary's and Planting Officer's reports as they would have given them in person. Your current Committee comprises the following persons.

Andy Gordon, Chair
John Tuer, Treasurer and Tree Planting Officer
Johanne Bracchi, Membership Secretary
David Woodhouse, Secretary (resigned on 19/01/21)

David Martin, Newsletter Editor
Julie Kaye, Member at large
Peter Aspin, Member at large
Graham Pearce, Member at large

All apart from David Woodhouse are prepared to stand again. We were very sorry to lose David due to pressure of work and thank him for his work for the Committee.

We were very pleased to hear from John Tuer that he has encouraged Richard Dorrell to take over from him as Tree Planting Officer and, almost by definition, we hope that he too will join the Committee.

Our constitution allows 12 members so you will see that the Committee is still short of members. If you are willing to stand as a member please let me know by email or phone (my number is given above) so that your name along with the others will be available with the March Newsletter for members' consideration. In the past we held meetings once every four to six weeks in member's homes but currently are carrying out business by email.

John has also made some good contacts for planting trees in the future so please read his report below of these interesting developments.

I very much hope to be able to meet you once more before very long. In the meantime, please stay safe and enjoy our wonderful environment. *Andy Gordon*

A tale of two trees

A hundred yards down the road from here lives a ninety year old lady whose garden has flooded for several years from the road outside. Initially the council provided her with a single row of sandbags which worked when there was a slight shower but otherwise was useless. They sent various teams of experts out over a period of two or three years to assess the problem, put a camera down the drain grid at one stage, later dug the road up (a very busy B route the only access for the heavy lorries from Wem Industrial Estate). But still she could not go out into her garden when the tarmac was damp in case she got soaked by passing vehicles. In the end last autumn one of those vacuum/suction lorries which one occasionally sees emptying drains was despatched and within a few minutes completely solved the problem, at least until it silts up again. However, the lady's pride and joy was a beautiful Magnolia tree in her lawn which being under water on and off for all this time did not survive. I don't believe the council provided the chainsaw.

A quarter of a mile in the opposite direction in a neighbouring field is a large oak tree. The owner is an absentee landlord and does virtually nothing to maintain the land (a common problem in England especially, the number of absentee landlords that is). Three years ago the tree was under water to a depth of about six inches throughout the winter, field drains having silted up. It looked increasingly miserable and I feared for its fate but the spring was dry, the land absorbed the water and although the oak lost a few lesser limbs it has survived and thankfully since then the tenant has sorted the drains out.

The field on which the tree grows and my neighbouring field were a rather pleasant shade of green a few days back, now several acres of both including another neighbour's woodland have acquired the nasty habit of reflecting the sky, never a good sign unless you're a duck. Last summer contractors jetted the field drains but decided the main problem were the silted roadside gulleys which the drains flowed into, the same basic problem as the lady with the Magnolia. Therefore I got another contractor with an agricultural vacuum tanker to lift the steel grids and empty the gulleys (probably illegal under highways regulations to interfere with their infrastructure but I've got to that stage in life that one may assume the authorities are incompetent and direct action is necessary) which were completely silted up. Problem solved, or so I thought. Now, seven or eight months later the two foot diameter concrete pipe that takes the water from these gulleys beneath the road and into the adjacent stream is silted to within three or four inches of the top, therefore only working at about ten percent efficiency. The only solution I can think of at present is a bit of gunpowder. Thankfully I grow one or two Alder Buckthorns which traditionally provide the finest charcoal for gunpowder when mixed with a bit of saltpetre and sulphur. I feel an experiment coming on.... (*Peter Aspin*)
(*Don't try this at home! ed*).

A big 'thank you'

Firstly, John sends a big thank you to all of you who came out to plant trees at New Invention in December. All before this big lock-down so it was easier to work so long as we kept our distances. The weather was perfect, the ground was soft.

Everything was just right. There were about a dozen of us and we planted 125 trees.

Sarah is very grateful to you all and she thanks those of you who stayed for a short time afterwards to help mulch the newly-planted trees on the hilly part of the field. From this spot we could just see the other Caer Caradoc hillfort, its earthworks just above the horizon. In the other direction, we looked into Wales. What a splendid place in which to spend a morning tree planting. Thank you all again.

Our next tree planting sessions

I have just received the exciting news that we have been successful with our bid to Shropshire Council in obtaining trees from its Free Tree Scheme. We shall have 40 trees to plant as standards and shall be planting these in Shrewsbury on the Countryside Site at Coton Hill. We shall also have 200 hedging trees and another 20 trees to plant as standards at The Hurst between Clunton and Clun where we shall plant on a different site than where we've planted over the last few years.

Now we have a little problem. Firstly, we don't get these trees until the end of February and they will all be bare-rooted. I do like to plant bare-rooted trees before the middle of March but on this occasion we might have to plant beyond this date for the double reason of possibly still being in full lock-down in February and, of course, not getting the trees until the end of this month.

So my solution is that we plant two sessions in March and I do hope you'll come out and help then please. I usually only arrange one planting session per month but this time we have stranger circumstances. I have pencilled in the following dates: **Saturday, 6th March** and **Saturday, 20th March**.

I shall certainly have the trees by then and will keep them in a cool place. There is a better chance of being in a Tier System again rather than full lock-down which will allow us to do what we did at New Invention. **Please put these dates in your diaries for now** and I can give you full details of planting places and dates in the March Newsletter. *Thank you for your understanding and good wishes. (John Tuer)*



Figure 1: A wintry scene last weekend

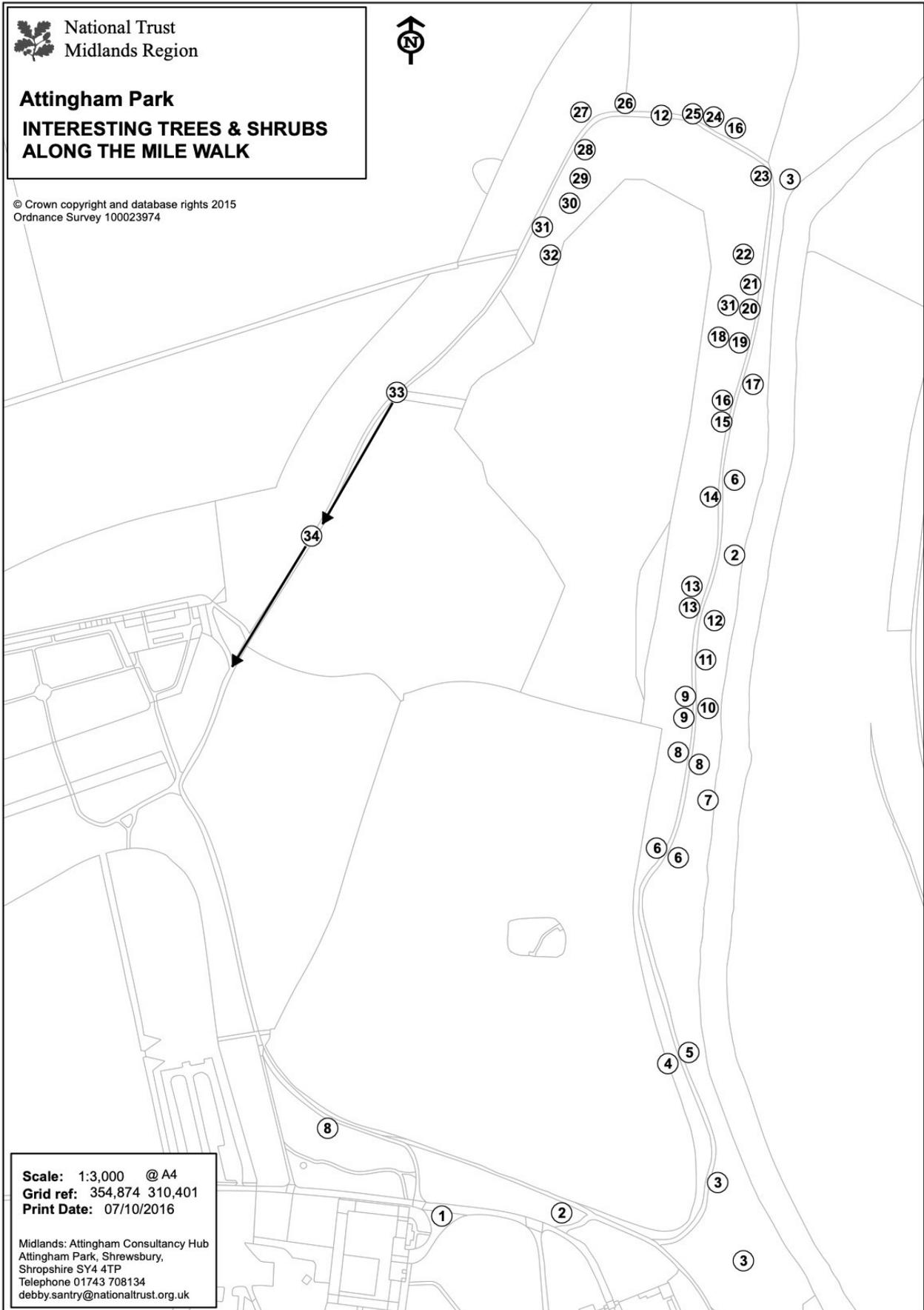


National Trust
Midlands Region



Attingham Park
INTERESTING TREES & SHRUBS
ALONG THE MILE WALK

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