



Visit – 4th September to Bitterley Court near Ludlow

Visit – 9th October The Dingle Nursery near Welshpool

Talk – 26th October Ted Green @ Barnes theatre Shrewsbury school

Dear Member,

Life and activities seem to be getting back to a bit more like normality and I hope that none of you have suffered from the pandemic. I feel that as a family we have been lucky. Yesterday in my walking group I seemed to be the only one who had not had family affected in some way. With two doctors in the family my wife and I have had our activities very closely monitored!

Due to the disruption members have not been as aware of our visits and lecture programme as normal so I will bring you up to date with latest plans.

This Newsletter brings with it details of our next visit on **4th September to Bitterley Court, near Ludlow** and on **October 9th we are visiting Dingle Nursery near Welshpool.**

It has become a policy to start our programme of lectures over the autumn and winter with a Big name. We had lined up George Peterken to talk about his work at Lady Park Wood in the Wye valley for October 2020 but he was not able to commit himself one year on by the time we had to make other commitments. Thanks to John Tuer we have managed to book that great tree expert **Ted Green** to kick our season off. But due to problems we have had to hire so far in advance a venue large enough to house the expected numbers we have had to bring the date forward in order to use the newly upgraded auditorium in Shrewsbury School during their half term. This will be on 26th October and we may have to charge non-members a small fee. We will be advertising this event widely but to control numbers we will ask members to apply for tickets. Ted has a vast knowledge of ancient trees and is bound to amuse us as well as informing us. He has not given us the title of his talk so this note is to enable you to put the date in your diaries.

As Ted's talk is nominally the November talk, the next one will be on Tuesday 12th December when Bob Weston will talk on Trees: Great Heights and Hidden Depths and on January 11th I will give my talk on Unlocking some of the secrets of tree seeds.

I look forward to seeing as many members as possible at these up-coming events....*Andy Gordon*

Visit to Bitterley Court, near Ludlow – Saturday 4th Sept @ 2pm.

Bitterley Court, Bitterley, Sat Nav – SY8 3HL

This is on the slopes below Clee Hill. You drive to Ludlow and take the by pass, then turn left (east) off the roundabout. On A4117 from Ludlow take the SECOND turning left to Bitterley opposite Henley Hall, from Kidderminster take first turning right to Bitterley.

Parking will be at the house, the drive is on your right on a left hand bend and not through the park as cattle are grazing.

If you can see the house on your right you have just missed it, there should be a sign to the house and church and hopefully an S.T.T. member will be there to direct you.

If there is a big turn out, you will be directed to parking elsewhere but still near!

Sarah Jameson (whom we visited in July) is organising a series of online talks in September and says 'I hope S.T.T. members may be interested in our programme of free online hedgerow talks, starting on 8 September.

<https://www.cpreshopshire.org.uk/hedgerow-talks>. Sarah has updated the CPRE hedge talks page this morning and all the talks are now live and bookable. Tickets are free on Eventbrite.

We have a variety of great speakers from all parts of the UK who'll talk about everything from foraging in hedgerows to how to manage a hedge for maximum health and biodiversity.

The talks are part of a wider hedgerow project that CPRE Shropshire is undertaking in 2021/22 – more info on that here: <https://www.cpreshopshire.org.uk/hedgerow-project>

Visit to Oakgates Nursery – Saturday, 14 August 2021

There are some very interesting trees to see at Oakgates: This is not just a nursery with plants, pots, smelly candles and garden furniture. In fact, I think there are actually none of the latter two things. It's a very down-to-earth (Oh dear, sorry about that) nursery, but it does have beautiful gardens which are open at the same time

and are free to visit. So even if you missed our visit, we recommend going there when it is open.

The gardens have quite a range of tree specimens, both deciduous hardwoods and conifers, many of which are unusual and, as they have hardly any labels, were quite difficult to identify. We had a stab at a weeping cherry. Was it the pendulous form of *Prunus x yedoensis* or was it Cheal's Weeping Cherry. We could only guess. But we know we were correct in identifying a pink/white small-leaved Willow as *Salix integra* 'Hakuro-nishiki' as we were able to read one of the few labels!

There were two Dawyck Beeches, one green the other purple, both having fastigate form which can both be seen at the well-known Dawyck Gardens near Peebles in Scotland.

There was an Indian Bean Tree but it was the yellow (aurea) form, a *Cotinus*, also 'aurea', three Brilliantissimum Sycamores (*Acer pseudoplatanus* 'Brilliantissimum'), a fastigate Golden Elm (*Ulmus x hollandica* 'Dampieri Aurea') and a fastigate Golden Irish Yew (*Taxus baccata* 'Fastigiata Aureomarginata') with its yellow-margined leaves. All common enough trees in their own right but these particular varieties and forms make them a bit more special.



Figure 1: John and Graham checking on a species with a coning Noble Fir in the back ground (photo Andy Gordon)

The expected *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii* was there but so was the unexpected *Betula pendula* 'Youngii' with its mushroom-like form of weeping branches. There were two or three forms of the Rowan, not the expected *Sorbus aucuparia* but the unexpected *Sorbus hupehensis* and *Sorbus cashmiriana*.



Figure 2: Admiring the *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* (photo Andy Gordon)

Among other interesting deciduous specimens were a Judas Tree, a Willow-leaved Pear, a Gleditsia, a cut-leaved Sumac, a Euonymus (variety unknown) and an Amur Maple (*Acer tataricum* var. *ginnala*). Graham pointed out a feature of the Gleditsia leaf which few of us knew about. It was fascinating to see that, although the leaves were pinnate, one or two of the pinnate leaflets were pinnate themselves. How extraordinary! I'd never noticed that before and it was obviously something to look for when identifying them in the future.

I could mention others of the deciduous species in these gardens but to turn to the conifers, there were so many and so many that were difficult to identify. I

have already mentioned the Irish Yew but, other than this, there was a Colorado Spruce (*Picea pungens*) carrying lots of mature cones. There were a number of forms of the Mountain Pine (*Pinus mugo*), a Noble Fir (*Abies procera*), an unusual *Chamaecyparis obtusa* and three specimens of *Thuja plicata* 'Aurea'. My copy of Hilliers carries nearly fifty forms of *Chamaecyparis obtusa*. The specimen we saw had beautiful dark green leaves with lighter green edges. If any reader has a copy of Hilliers, I'd be happy for them to sort through the fifty to work out which this particular one is.

A lot of work had been put into maintaining these gardens and a lot of thought had been given to the choice of trees. There are three gardens, two on one side and one on the other of the exit drive and should any member who didn't manage to make the visit wish to see them, please go at any time and, I repeat, they are free to visit. I might add, too, and as an advertisement for the nursery who kindly allowed our visit and reserved a table in the tea room for us (thanks to Andy for organising that), their plants for sale are the most inexpensive that I've come across, and well looked after. Andy did ask the owner if he would give us a personal tour but, unfortunately, he was to be on holiday at the time of our visit. As he would have been willing to do this, perhaps that's something for us for the future.

Andy did try to get the owner to show us around but, unfortunately for us, he was away on holiday on this particular day. Thank you Andy for making a prior visit to pave the way for us. *John Tuer*



Figure 3: The entrance area and cafe at Oakgates Nursery (photo Andy Gordon)