



## ALL SAINTS CHURCHYARD TREE TRAIL – INFORMATION SHEET



- 1 Opposite the north porch door, in the remains of an old Easter Garden, is a very large **Chinese Arborvitae** (*Platycladus orientalis*, synonym *Thuja orientalis*). This species was originally introduced to Britain around 1740 when French missionaries sent seeds from Peking to Paris, from where Philip Miller, curator of the Chelsea Physic Garden, obtained it and introduced it to the U.K. It has long been cultivated on Chinese graves and in temple gardens. It is now rare in this country. Our tree might eventually grow to 15 m (c. 50 ft), rather more than expected when planted as a miniature!
- 2 Head back towards the main entrance gate, the last tree on the bank to the left of the gateway is a fine specimen of a **Copper Beech** (*Fagus sylvatica* var. *purpurea*).
- 3 Along the Judges Lane boundary wall is a row of 5 large Common or **European Limes** (*Tilia × europaea*, synonym *T. vulgaris*) These are hybrids between *Tilia cordata* and *T. platyphyllos*.. Although the trees produce large quantities of seeds, they are seldom viable and commercial propagation is by layering of shoots. These trees provide copious valuable nectar for bees.
- 4 Between two Limes and closer to the wall is a double-stemmed **Turkey Oak** (*Quercus cerris*), now native to SE Europe and Asia Minor, but once grew in Britain before the ice age 120,000 years ago eradicated it. It was introduced as a faster growing oak in 1735, but the timber is poor, splitting and warping and used only for fencing and fuel. It is also a host of the gall wasp (*Andricus quercusculicis*) whose larvae damage native oak acorns.
- 5 Return to the path, head to the west door, look back past the memorial with the column. There are two large pine trees. The one on the right by the wall, with the larger darker leaves or 'needles' is a **Corsican Black Pine** (*Pinus nigra*), introduced in 1759 and widely planted for timber production and to produce shelter belts in exposed situations.
- 6 To the left is a **Scots Pine** (*Pinus sylvestris*), with its characteristic red-brown upper bark, contrasting with its shorter and less robust blue-green needles. This is our only native pine, though all present-day English trees were originally planted in the New Forest as early as 1770 from Morayshire, and have then spread by seeding.
- 7 To the left of the pines, there are two female and thus **Berrying Hollies** (*Ilex aquifolium*).
- 8 Follow the path descending the steps, past a young **Mountain Ash or Rowan** (*Sorbus aucuparia*) on the right, whose bright red fruits are a favourite food of birds.
- 9 Turn right at the bottom of the steps. The large tree on the right, near the brick shed, is the **Norway Maple** (*Acer platanoides*), whose leaves somewhat resemble those of the Plane Tree (*Platanus orientalis*).
- 10 In the far corner, on the other side of the shed, is a fine example of a common **Horse Chestnut** (*Aesculus hippocastanum*). *This tree is a nesting favourite each year, for one of the pairs of blue tits in the Churchyard.*
- 11 Turn back and walk straight along the path until you come to a grave stone surround with no headstone on the right, with a tree inside it, behind this is a **Sycamore** (*Acer pseudoplatanus* 'Atropurpureum'), identified by its golden leaves in the spring and turning purple in the autumn.
- 12 Retrace your route, and a few yards back up the hill, take the mown track on the right. Follow this along to find a **Sweet Chestnut** (*Castanea sativa*), it appears as a bush rather than a tree!
- 13, Follow the track up the bank, on the bend, there is a young **Red Oak** (*Quercus rubra*) with a bird box. A native of eastern N. America introduced early in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and is the best grower of the American oaks here. Its attractiveness is enhanced in the autumn by the large leaves which change to a dull reddish or yellowish brown. It is presently growing vigorously and should eventually become a fine tree 25 m (80 ft) tall, with a trunk up to 1.8 m (6 ft) diameter.
- 14 At the top of this track, on the right, you will find a group of **Spruces** (*Picea species*), originally planted to supply All Saints with Christmas trees. The traditional one is the Norway Spruce (*Picea abies*), once native to Britain, but wiped out by the last ice age and then recultivated for over 400 years.
- 15 Directly ahead of you, over a grave headstone, a large specimen of **Box** (*Buxus sempervirens*) can be found. Box is a native of southern England, including Box Hill, Surrey. The wood is bright yellow and very hard, making it ideal for making rulers, sculpture (especially chess pieces) and marquetry. It was also once the favourite wood for block making to produce fine prints and engravings. Box is now suffering from an invasive fungal disease (*Cylindrocladium buxicola*) as well as (since 2007) defoliation by box tree caterpillars (*Cydalima perspectalis*). No doubt this Box was originally planted on or around the grave.



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**16** Turn right down the mown track, past the spruces, and look up. There is a tall and very narrow **Serbian Spruce** (*Picea omorica*), found only in the wild in a very small area (c. 60 ha) of W Serbia and E Bosnia-Herzegovina.

**17** Take the mown track on the left, past the Box. In almost every churchyard is a specimen of the **Irish Yew** (*Taxus baccata* 'Fastigiata'), and ours is no exception. The Irish Yew was originally found as two plants on a moor in County Fermanagh in 1780. Compare later, the upright habit of this one, with that of the spreading species (**23**) The extremely poisonous seeds of yews are each enclosed in a bright red, fleshy structure called an aril. Yew leaves also provide the drug taxine, used to treat breast cancer. Gardens with extensive yew topiary and hedges used to sell their clippings to pharmaceutical companies.

**18** Turn right at the end of the track, then first left, you will find a **Californian Redwood** (*Sequoia sempervirens*), some of the tallest trees in the world (115 m / 377 ft, 186 ft taller than our spire). This was a very healthy specimen, but our tree had twin leaders, one of which split off and fell in a storm and tree surgeons advised the removal of the other damaged leader. This specimen may recover, but has a long way to go, especially in our different climate. The tallest specimen in Britain is 49 m (161ft) at the National Trust's Bodnant Gardens in Wales, but such very large trees seem to get regularly damaged or killed by lightning. Seed reached Britain from Hartweg in Saint Petersburg in 1843 though the Scotsman, Archibald Menzies, who discovered it in California in 1794. More commonly seen is the Wellingtonia (*Sequoiadendron gigantea*) – examples in Mentmore Park and in the Plantations Estate, the latter containing the arboretum of the Bassett family (of local bank fame). Both species live to a great age and a felled specimen of *Sequoia* in California was found to be 2,200 years old, and a *Sequoiadendron* 3,200 years.

**19** Growing near the *Sequoia* is a young **Cork Oak** (*Quercus suber*), deformed by the Sequoia. It was raised from an acorn brought back in 1993 from the Spanish cork-oak forest reserve of Alcornocales, behind Gibraltar. The cork bark is now beginning to develop, but it will be another 20 years before we are able to harvest a crop. The first cut of cork is not of good quality and goes to make cork tiles and composition cork, but later cuts (every 12 – 20 years depending on the environment and speed of growth) are good, and used to cork Champagne and premier grand cru wines, before the quality deteriorates again. The cork protects the growing tree tissues from fires, and allows the trunk and large branches to resprout again.

**20** On the opposite side of the track, the grey-needled tree with drooping branches is an **Atlas Cedar** (*Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauca'), a species introduced from North Africa in the 1840s.

**21** Further along the track is a young twin trunked **Incense Cedar** (*Calocedrus decurrens*), no relation to the true cedars, but of *Thuja*. It grows eventually to 30 m (98 ft) here, but trees in its native Oregon and California reach 46 m (150 ft). Introduced by Jeffrey for the Edinburgh Oregon Association of America in 1853, though discovered earlier.

**22** Turn left up the small bank, and on the left is a young English Oak (*Quercus robur*) planted by Roger Collor in the 1960s. It grows slowly in this vicinity, recognised from our other oaks by its almost stalkless leaves.

**23** Also to the left, on the other side of the main path, is the **Spreading Yew** (*Taxus cuspidate*). This is very different in character to the Irish Yew (**17**) mentioned earlier.

**24** Crossover the main path ahead of you, past the large pine to a **Laburnum** (*Laburnum × wateri*), a hybrid that combines the longer yellow flower inflorescences of *L. alpinum* with the more numerous flowers of *L. anagyroides*, and being a hybrid produces less of the poisonous seeds.

**25** To the right of the Laburnum, near the wall, is the **Sycamore** (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). They invariably get 'Tar-spot' disease, a fungus causing round black spots with yellow edges on the leaves. It is currently home to 3 bat boxes!

**26** Follow the path next to the wall round to the Church to see a fine **Magnolia × soulangiana**, growing just east of the old vestry. Planted by the late Fred Fletcher, a well-known Leighton butcher in memory of his wife Marion, a very popular Pulford School teacher despite her 'tranquillisers' (two one-foot box wood rulers held to make a loud clack when she hit you with them). This species is a hybrid between *M. denudata* and *M. obovata* and is regularly and spectacularly covered by tulip-shaped, white, flushed pink flowers. As flowering is slightly later than most other Magnolias, it usually escapes frost damage.

**27** Make your way towards the wooden cross and the main gate, you will pass two **Deodar Cedars** (*Cedrus deodar*) from the Himalayas, either side of a dead sycamore. With a distinct habit and longer needles, it is easily recognised from other cedars. One of these is the cultivar 'Aurea' with more yellow foliage.

**28** At the main entrance gate of the Churchyard, note the three **Nootka Cypresses** (*Xanthocyparis nootkatensis*, synonyms *Cupressus n.*, *Chamaecyparis n.*) from Alaska to NW California, and named after the Nootka Sound between Vancouver Island and the mainland. It is the hardiest of the Cupressaceae and the drooping branches are an adaptation to shed snow.