STT

Newsletter

June 2026

(Formerly Men of the Trees following the work of Richard St Barbe Baker)

SEVERN TREE TRUST

Visit; SATURDAY 13th June at 1.30pm for a 2pm start @ Willey Estate. Please contact Peter for directions 01948840073 or silvaspinpeter@aol.com

Bolesworth

Severn Tree Trust has visited Bolesworth several times over the years and it is always quite an experience. It was a favourite of one of our most valued members, the late Len Salt who was the curator at Birmingham Botanic Gardens for many years. The house is hewn out of the sandstone ridge near the top of which it is built with the quarry behind as a reminder of its origin. The view to the west from the surrounding gardens and woodland are awesome looking across the Cheshire Plains and Dee valley down onto that other great estate of the region belonging to the Grosvenor family at Eaton Hall.

Many of the trees were in full flower, a Davidia (Handkerchief Tree) was very prominent with its white brachts against a cloudy sky, as was a Sorbus “John Mitchell”, though there was discussion if this was the correct moniker and not simply an ordinary Whitebeam. The owner insisted that it was a JM so we resisted any discussion. When she realised, however, that we were a tree group, she offered STT members a unique offer: she had lost the identification of some trees and suggested that we visit about October to look at the autumn colours and ID some of the trees for her. This would be done at very short notice on a fine weekend when convenient for the family. If any STT members would like to take up this offer please get in touch and I will make a list.

However, the abiding memory of visiting Bolesworth above all else was the number of hares in the grounds, chasing, boxing and otherwise cavorting about the place. The perfect environment really; classic parkland with variable sward length surrounded by woodland. What more could a hare want? One member of the owner’s family said the sight in the evenings was almost surreal with huge numbers visible across the landscape. A real treat for us March-borns, and others I guess.

The next visit is on SATURDAY 13th June at 1.30pm for a 2pm start. The last time I saw the Willey Estate on a STT programme was in the 1990s so a return is rather overdue; can any members recall that one? In the medieval period South Shropshire consisted of ten Royal Forests and the Shirlett one extended west of the Severn and south of what is now Ironbridge and Wenlock. A small remnant of the Shirlett R.F. remains on the Willey Estate. However, the CEO would like to know beforehand how many members and cars to expect which would determine where to meet and park the vehicles. Our initial idea was at the woodyard but here parking is limited and as she described the facilities are “insalubrious”. Therefore, could members contact me as soon as possible to confirm their intention to

partake (**01948840073** or silvaspinpeter@aol.com). I will then send accurate directions. This area of the county is very much a hidden gem but there are some extremely narrow roads with crater-like potholes in places and I'm not sure about satnavs! As with the last visit to Eyton Hall STT has agreed to make a donation to the local church at Barrow.

A couple of brief mentions:

In October we visit the home of the former Ludlow MP Philip Dunne at **Gatley Park** just north of Croft Castle. He was featured recently on the Radio 4 programme "Rinsed" about pollution in our watercourses. Well worth listening to. Secondly, Canal Boat Diaries seems to have replaced Prue and Tim as an inspiration for our navigable waterways. In the latest series (used to be on BBC but now on another channel, U or W) Rob Cummings explores the Montgomery Canal and in the first programme he interviews STT member Tom Fulda who is project manager for the resurrection of the Monty. Great place to look at the engineering work.