



VISIT: Gredington, Hanmer SY13 3DQ. Saturday September 12 @2pm.

Chairs corner,

For the first time as far as I can remember STT had an evening walk around some of the trees of Shrewsbury, though we did tend to get distracted by some of the buildings and architecture which some of us were not aware of. It is funny how one notices things when one opens one's eyes for the purpose for which they were intended, especially enhanced when in good company.

We started by looking at the huge and problematic Ailanthus Altissima (Tree of Heaven) between the Abbey and Shirehall. If anyone knows how it got there please let us know. The trees in the grounds around the Abbey really do need some attention (ie pruning on a grand scale), on the east side of the building very little light gets down to the ground. One or two of the more recent plantings are really malformed, not many trees or shrubs can grow in such shady conditions. To have a day in there with professional tree surgeons would be very bliss. Arguably the best thing about the site was the monument to Wilfred Owen which we thought was erected in the 1930's (Art Deco style) but according to a recently erected notice board is only about thirty years old. It is in such darkness that few people see it. Adjacent to the railway bridge a small triangular piece of land which has been boarded up for many years is in the process of being cleared to create a pocket garden. The council is asking for volunteers to get involved with management and maintenance. We discussed what could be done with it, should it have a theme, perhaps plants and shrubs associated with Darwin?

Walking past the Honey Locusts (*Gleditsia Triacanthos*) guarding the old Wakeman School we entered the ever glorious Abbey Gardens with a huge Black Poplar, probably the biggest *Ginkgo Biloba* in town and some very tall Hollies. Such a sheltered site and adjacent to the river meant that they could grow unhindered. We did manage some guerrilla pruning on a miserable *Nothofagus* specimen (Southern Beech), never travel without a pair of secateurs. The twin to this garden is on the other side of the road. It can be accessed beneath the arches with a degree of nimbleness though occasionally rough sleepers are under canvas here so we accessed it via hard standing. It is one of the best spaces in town to spend a few minutes and yet few town residents seem to know about it. Apart from another huge Black Poplar and several other trees, the most attractive feature here is a bright signal red bench managed by Men's Sheds. If ever seating required sitting on this was it and it provided great views of the river.



*Figure 1: Poplar in Abbey Gardens. In STT's self-guided Tree Walk which Andy mainly wrote it is described as Hybrid Black Poplar, *Populus x canadensis* "Serotina". (Hughes)*

We didn't get very far in nearly two hours but everyone really enjoyed it not least because we managed to end up in a local hostelry for the obvious refreshments. And we even managed to discuss which part of town we would explore next summer.

The September visit on Saturday 12th September is to Gredington the home of the Kenyon family. The previous Lord Kenyon who died seven years ago was president of the Oak Society and planted over 200 species of Quercus on the land either side of the long drive from the main road so it will be interesting to see how they have survived this year's weather. In the gardens surrounding the buildings many other tree species are established, some of them quite rare, so it will be something of a treat for STT to visit again.

For anyone who wants to make a full day of it, you are very welcome to call here on the way (we are about 25 minutes from Gredington) anytime after 10.30 am. Please bring your own lunch. Faith and I can provide brews and loos and lots of seating indoors or outside. Could you let us know beforehand, email silvaspinpeter@aol.com or leave a message on 01948840073. Hope to see many of you here and there or just there. *Peter Aspin.*

Instructions for Gredington,

At WHITCHURCH roundabout take the A525 signed to Wrexham on LEFT. After approximately five miles turn left onto the A539 signed HANMER, Overton and Ruabon.

Up the hill and as you descend you will see the hamlet of HANMER on your left. The village is signed left DON'T GO INTO THE VILLAGE. Go Straight on past second sign to HANMER, then you will pass a small NFU bungalow and Two Cottages before a Redbrick Lodge beside two large Oak Trees standing beside Large Black Iron Gates, ALL ON THE LEFT HAND-SIDE OF THE ROAD. There are a few remaining stones and a new sign post indicating a road to the left joining the main road ahead that MARK THE DRIVE ENTRANCE.

TURN LEFT INTO BLACK IRON GATES. DRIVE UP CLOSE TO THE GATES, they will open as if by magic away from you. Over grid and take the RIGHT HAND FORK when the drive divides (grass growing up the middle) to the second cattle grid....then you will arrive at the house. If you see a sign left to Breaden Heath and Doctor's Surgery, on the main road, you have gone too far! THE MAIN ROAD IS JUST BEGINNING A RIGHT HAND BEND, WITH OUR DRIVE ON THE LEFT.

Peter Aspin is offering members the use of his farm for lunch before the visit from 10.30 am that day.

NB 11 October visit – Gatley Park, Leominster.

10 November 2026 - Winter talk

*Bob Watson will talk on **Trees: Roots and Shoots - the progression from soft to bark-covered growth.***

This will include mycorrhiza at root level and also releases from the canopy; not linked to forest bathing. Those of you who have heard Bob before will know that this talk will be absolutely unmissable.

Dr Andy Gordon

We are so sorry to have to record the death of our former chairman, Andy Gordon, at his home in Warwickshire just a few weeks ago. He and Fiona moved from Shrewsbury to near Stratford-on-Avon to be near their families so, happily, he was able to see a lot of his sons before his serious illness.

What a lovely man he was and how dedicated he was to seeing the continued success of the Severn Tree Trust. I knew him mostly as a STT member and as an excellent chairman. But he and I came to know each other a little beyond that but always on occasions which concerned trees which were his great passion.

When he took over the chairman's job, little did he know that Covid was around the corner and he found he had a most difficult job to do arranging outdoor visits when we had to keep our distance from each other and didn't have a proper programme for that year. He managed to work out interesting visits and keep the group going through what proved to be a difficult year for him.

His tree contributions to this Newsletter and other written material for STT were knowledgeable, interesting and original and gave our group a professional uplift. Of course, for many years he worked for the Forestry Commission as its tree seed expert before moving to Shropshire to set up the, still, flourishing, business of *Forestart* which is known nationally for the range and quality of its tree seed stock.

Even though he moved away from Shrewsbury, he still kept up his interest in what we were doing. Our thoughts are with Fiona and the rest of his family and it was good to hear that all were with him at the critical time. *John Tuer*

Any member wanting to attend his funeral in October please contact the committee for details.