



Visit: Sunday October 11th – Gatley Park, Leinthall Earls, Hereford, HR6 9TR @ 11 am.

(instructions below). Also see below for winter talks.

Chair's corner,

As you can see from John's report we had another fascinating visit to Gredington in September. Unfortunately we always seem to run out of time before we manage to see everything. Next time we need to make it an all day visit with an interval for lunch so that we can meander through the two hundred species of oaks either side of the long drive.

A really big thank you to Lady Kenyon and her family for hosting STT.

Hanmer is a remarkable small village with a viable pub and shop/post office and as STT sometimes does we gave a donation to the local church, in this case St Chad's, the view from which due south towards the mere is a bit special. Well worth having a look at and intriguingly one sometimes sees locals with bath towels under their arms. Wild swimming in the waters is rather an attractant, though then again this is Flintshire and they are probably better at not polluting them than east of the Dyke.

The next visit on Sunday 11th October at 11am is to **Gatley Park**, Leinthall Earls, Hereford, HR6 9TR the home of Philip and Domenica Dunne. Philip was MP for Ludlow for many years.

- Follow the A 4110 south of Leintwardine and about a mile south of Wigmore turn left towards Leinthall Earls. Passing the quarry on the left, the drive is on the left just after the white house and marked private road with a cattle grid. I would advise that you arrive in good time and drive slowly up the long circuitous road up to the house enjoying the scenery and forestry.

In September 2024 STT had one of it's very best visits to the adjacent Croft Castle in the company of two NT estate wardens who were so pleased with the exchange of knowledge that they asked us to revisit. Sadly we haven't yet returned. Those of you who have trekked up to the hill fort above Croft and looked at the magnificent view northwards will have seen a few hundred feet below the quarry and Gatley estate. The Dunne family bought it from the Crofts several hundred years back which probably explains the common theme of Sweet Chestnuts. By road Croft Castle is fifteen minutes from Gatley so it is recommended that after Gatley STT

members visit Croft for refreshments and further exploration. Hope to see you there, *Peter*.

Winter Talks

2 Talks at The Wildlife Trust Centre by the Abbey.

Please make a note in your diary and join us.

November 10th @ 7pm

A fascinating talk by Bob Watson- *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 – both linked to forest bathing.

December 8th @ 7pm

Christmas Social & Refreshments before the talk (from 6.15pm) and pub after!

Talk by Tristan Haynes; *Urban Woodland Initiatives: their past and present in creating better places for people and nature*.

Gredington, courtesy of Lady Kenyon, in September

Seventeen members turned out on what was supposed to be a rainy afternoon. In fact we met a little rain on the way to Gredington and it rained a little after we had left. So we were most fortunate to have a dry visit even though there wasn't much sunshine. But, these days, we mustn't complain about any rain and had we had a downpour, our particular visits provide us with plenty of under-tree shelter.

Now this was an exceptional visit. Lord and Lady Kenyon had planted hundreds of trees over the years and many of them were very rare specimens. We followed the avenue back towards the entrance of the estate for a few yards to look at some of the collection of oaks. But having found: *Quercus pyrenaica* 'Pendula'; *Quercus imbricaria*, the Shingle Oak; a subspecies of the Evergreen Oak with its small rounded leaves, a *Quercus Ilex* 'Rotundifolia'; and a Spanish Oak, *Quercus falcata*, we decided that it would take quite a long time to see all these oaks as they were well spread out along the avenue. So we turned back to head for the areas where could be found most of the interesting trees. But these oaks, alone, show what I mean when I say "very rare specimens" are to be found here.

When I arrived back home after our visit, I set out to look up some of these specimen trees. My regular sources of information just didn't include some of them. So I had to turn to my trees books that did have unusual trees, such as Hilliers and "New Trees".

Not so rare were the Cut-leaved Beech (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Asplenifolia') and the Cercis Forest Pansy (*Cersis canadensis* 'Forest Pansy') with its red leaves. The

latter was interesting in that much of it had reverted to the basic "*Cercis canadensis*". And not rare at all was an English Oak (*Quercus robur*) but, in a way, it had a certain rarity about it in that it had come from the Boscobel Oak in which King Charles II hid. Someone had had real success in planting a cutting.

The first really rare tree that we came across was a subspecies of the Chilean Fire Bush (*Embothrium coccineum* 'Lanceolatum') with lots of holes regularly placed around its stem. Obviously this tree had more opportunities for photosynthesis as these lenticels, as with lenticels on all trees, are 'passages' for gaseous exchange – carbon dioxide in, oxygen out. There was a *Fraxinus angustifolia* not yet showing its autumn red leaves; a *Lindera praecox*, one of the aromatic spice bushes; another *Lindera*, this time '*Lindera obtusifolia*', a deciduous tree whose autumn colouring will sport bright butter-yellow leaves; a Japanese Hop Hornbeam (*Ostrya japonica*) and a rather different Horse Chestnut. This one, *Aesculus x neglecta* 'Autumn Fire' with spectacular autumn colour.

We were all very taken by a special Hawthorn – *Craetagus orientalis* with its masses of haws, literally thousands of them together with glaucous (bluish-grey) leaves. Having looked up this one at home, I find that it's had a name change. It's now *Crataegus laciniata* 'Sanguinea'.

Let's move on. We were like children in a toy shop. "Hey, what's that ?" and we'd rush over to have a look. It was a Wingnut but we were undecided as to which one. With its catkin-like inflorescences, was it *Pterocarya fraxinifolia* or *Pterocarya stenoptera* ? I looked this up, too, when I got home and it seems to depend on the length of the inflorescences. We'll take something to measure them next time we go.

And here's another tree for which the taxonomists have changed the name. Formerly

Sophora japonica, it is now *Stiphonolobium japonicum*, commonly called the Pagoda Tree. And for the Crab Apple known as "*Malus trilobata*", which is rare, my copy of Hilliers says "this little-known tree is worthy of more extensive public planting, particularly where space is confined....attractively tinted red in the autumn." The *Staphylea* or Bladder Nut had plenty of nuts on it which, I am told, are edible. Before trying them out, I might first check on this ! The *Aralia spinosa*, as its botanical name implies, was covered with spines along its stems, is also known as the Devil's Walking Stick or, as Peter told us, Hercules's Club.

We had already seen a member of the *Cercis* genus, the Forest Pansy, but here was another, *Cercis siliquastrum* 'Bodnant', from Bodnant Gardens in North Wales. This one had bright deep purple flowers, many still being on the tree as we saw it.

There were so many interesting trees to look at so I must stop after just a few more.

We debated about a Tupelo tree (a *Nyssa*). Was it *Nyssa sylvatica* or *Nyssa sinensis*? Actually the name 'Tupelo' is given to the former. The latter is the Chinese

species. But one needed a tree reference book to compare the size and shapes of the leaves although in both species the autumn colour is a stunningly bright red.

There was an amazing *Sorbus* with lots of orange berries. This was *Sorbus randaiensis* but, sadly, the latest bout of dry weather had taken its toll and it remains to be seen if this tree will survive through to next year.

I'll finish with a Hazel with the strange name of *Corylus colurna* 'Te Terra Red'. This is a form of Turkish Hazel but so new that it doesn't appear in many tree books. However, it is referred to in Grimshaw and Bayton's "New Trees". This is what it says about it: "*Corylus colurna* has become an important street tree valued for its neat shape and tolerance of urban conditions. It has been hybridised recently with one of the purple hazels....of these 'Te Terra Red' is probably the best with the potential to form a striking purple-leaved tree of *Corylus colurna* shape." This shape, for those of you who don't know about the Turkish Hazel is one that is distinctly pyramidal.

Phew !!! So many wonderful trees. So many to see. It was now almost four o'clock and we almost had to drag members away because Lady Kenyon had laid on for us a splendid array of cake and cream scones with, of course, by now the equally acceptable cuppa.

We thanked our host immensely for our tour this afternoon and Lady Kenyon told us that we would be welcome to return any time. So for any of you who couldn't make this visit, please note what you've read here and come next time. As you can read, you won't be disappointed. *John Tuer*