

## Notes from Local Interest Group Meeting 29<sup>th</sup> October 2020

**Present:** Maureen Lloyd (ML), Dainis & Wendy Ozols (WO), Roy & Avryl Lloyd, Jenny Francis, Allison Joyce, Keith & Sue Hodgetts, Bronwen Jenkins, John Price, Elsa Harflett, Cherry Williams, Ann & Howard Dean, Sylvia Illingsworth, Lucy Trench

ML welcomed everyone to the first Zoom meeting for LIG and congratulated us all on navigating the complexities of the program in order to attend.

### **Gossip – Analysis of the Year**

The meeting started with a review of the Gossip for the year 2019/20. The minutes of last year's review were read and approved. ML went on to explain that the aim was to "break even", but last year we did make a profit and so the decision was made to buy a year's subscription to Zoom Pro. This is now available for any group within our community to use for meetings, quizzes, book clubs, etc. If anyone would like to set up a meeting, they should contact ML, John Price or Allison Joyce, who will be happy to arrange things for them.

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Each issue of the Gossip covers a two-month period. Contributors send in articles, photos, etc, by the end of the month before publication. ML sends out an email reminder before each deadline. There is currently a print run of about 200 copies for each issue. A team of helpers distributes the copies in their local area.

Bethany Price is employed to prepare the copy for each issue. This is then finished off for publication by ML. Finally, proof-reading is done by a small editorial team before the issue is sent (electronically) to the printer.

ML ended this section of the meeting by asking that anyone with suggestions for articles should get in touch with her; all ideas will be gratefully received. She also said that photos were very welcome and, since we have eight colour pages, they really brighten up each issue.

### **Local Interest Group Review 2019/20**

The second section of the meeting was a review of the LIG activities this year. Once again, this group does not aim to make money, but voluntary donations at each meeting go towards the cost of heating and lighting in the Adullam Hall, as well as a small fund which is maintained in order to pay for speakers (expenses, etc) when required.

Since the last review, we have had only four meetings in the Hall because of the Corona Virus pandemic. These were talks given by John Price, the Powys Moorland Partnership team, Cherry Williams and Rob Dingle (from the Offa's Dyke Association). From March to June inclusive all the meetings had to be cancelled. In July, we resumed activities with a

socially distanced walk from Cwmpiban to Doctor's Pool and back, following part of the 1853 Perambulation of the Manor of Elfael. A further walk with the same aim was completed in August, below Pentrecaeu. These were both evening walks and were well attended. In September, we had a visit to Bryngwyn to view Lee Miles' extensive collection of farm and other machinery and artefacts, again a very well attended event with everyone safely in their facemasks and socially distanced.

So far, in the new LIG year, we have had yet another walk, this time a morning event, following another section of the 1853 Perambulation (from near Pen-y-Craig to Twm Tobacco's grave and back above Llanbwchllyn lake) and the Zoom meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> October. ML has asked some of last year's intended speakers whether they would be able to do a Zoom talk for us and, so far, Philip Hume has come back with two dates, one in January and one in April. ML showed us a list of other possibilities for the new year and asked for more suggestions. The intention is to have a mix of Zoom lectures and socially distanced, day-time walks, once they are permitted again. Lucy Trench has offered to investigate the possibility of visiting the Sydney Nolan Trust near Presteigne and, possibly, another visit to Monaughty House near Knighton. She suggested that both of these visits might be better in the summer months.

### **Ancient Tree Inventory (ATI) – Woodland Trust**

The last section of the meeting was a talk about the Ancient Treen Inventory. WO took us through a Powerpoint presentation kindly provided by the Woodland Trust, following their recent webinar. The aim of this part of the meeting was to make people aware of the Inventory and how to use it or contribute to it if they wish. The ATI is a Citizen Science initiative; information is recorded by members of the public/volunteers and it is then verified by an expert.

The UK has thousands of ancient trees, more than many European countries, and these are being recorded on the ATI so that our valuable tree heritage can be protected. The inventory already lists more than 160 000 trees, but the Woodland Trust knows that there are thousands more that could be added.

WO told us that an excellent guide to the recording and mapping of ancient and veteran trees can be found on the ATI website. The link below will take you to the PDF which you can download.

<https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/1480/ati-booklet-digital-web-res.pdf>

There are three types of tree recorded on the inventory – ancient, veteran and notable.

**Ancient** = a tree in the third and final stage of its life, which is old relative to others of the same species and is interesting biologically, aesthetically or culturally because of its great age. Look for “wow” trees.

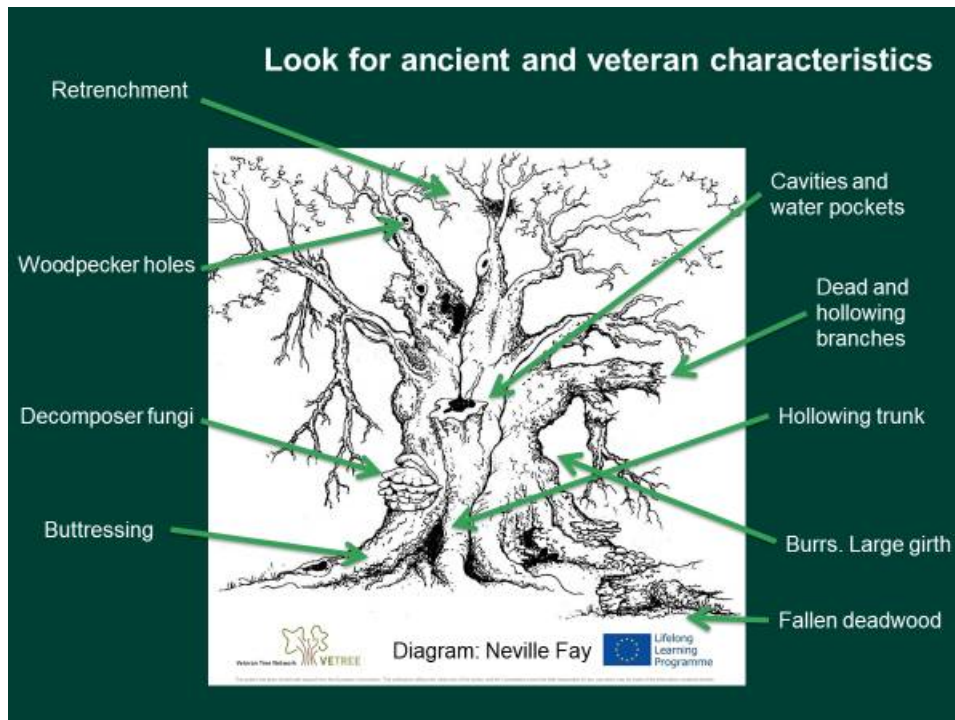
**Veteran** = a tree which has some of the features found in an ancient tree, but they are usually only in the second stage of their life.

**Notable** = trees that are usually mature and which stand out in the local environment. They might be large in comparison with other trees around them.

There are really good descriptions of each of these in the guide.

All three types of tree can be found in a number of different environments, but they are rarely found in ancient woodland. More likely locations are: former royal hunting forests; medieval deer parks; historic woodland pastures; ancient wooded commons; and, old hedgerows. They can also be found in urban parks, on village greens, in churchyards and the grounds of historic buildings.

WO showed us a slide which summarised some of the characteristics of an ancient tree. Obviously, a single tree will not necessarily display all of these features.



The ATI has very specific information/data about individual trees which it likes people to collect before entering the tree on the website. All of this is covered by the PDF mentioned above or in information found on the website, and so is not covered in detail here.

1. **Essential information** – this includes exact location (a very comprehensive list of possible locations is in the guide) as well as a 10 figure OS grid reference obtained from a GPS or mapping app for your phone. Also required are genus/species of tree, girth, access (public or private land) and photos (the most helpful information for the verifier).
2. **Additional information** – tree form (is it a maiden, multi-stem, coppice, etc.), condition of the tree, living status, surroundings, epiphytes (these are plants which grow on the tree, such as moss, lichen, ivy, fern, mistletoe, cuckoo tree), fungi, bird nesting holes and bat evidence, invertebrates, threats and additional comments, such as how easy it is to access.

Measuring the girth of a tree is not always as straightforward as it sounds and the guide provides really comprehensive and illustrated details on how to do this. It was suggested that you would need a tape measure of at least 10m in length and that it should also be a flexible cloth type one as metal tapes are really difficult to use for this purpose. The girth

measurement should be taken at a height of 1.5m, if at all possible – again the guide has further information about this.

If you wish to record trees on the website, it is important to register as a user first and the toolbar at the top of the web page has a link to this. After that, every time you use the site you should sign in, also on the toolbar at the top.



Very ancient Ash tree at Moccas Park

When you want to find a tree in the inventory, there is a “button” called “tree search” on the tool bar. You type in a postcode or named location and an interactive map will appear. Each recorded tree in the local area is shown on this and you can tap on any tree to find out more information about it. The trees are colour coded: blue trees can be easily viewed as they are on “public” land; red trees are on private land and so permission must be gained from the landowner before accessing these trees; if a tree is shown in grey, this means that it has been recorded on the website but has not yet been verified by an expert. Also on the map, A is an ancient tree, V a veteran and N a notable tree. It is worth checking that a tree is not already recorded before you try to add one on the website. However, if it is already recorded, you can update the information and add photos, etc.

The Woodland Trust Powerpoint included lots of photos of trees that have already been recorded and reminded us that there are some factors to remember. One type of tree might take a variety of forms; not all old trees are large – hawthorn, sloe, for example;

different types of tree become ancient at varying ages, eg 500 years for an oak, 800 years for a yew, a lot younger for many other species.

The ATI website has a good guide to some of the more commonly recorded trees. There is also an app which you can download for your smart phone; this is particularly useful as it can be used in places with no internet signal. Since trees are often easier to spot in winter, it was also suggested that an ability to recognise the bark of a tree can be very useful. On the website there is a two-sided recording sheet which you can print off to take out in the field so that you do not forget to record any of the important details.

WO showed us a map of our local area which revealed that there are not that many trees on the Inventory (many of the ones that are listed are yews in the local churchyards) and so there is plenty of scope to find potential additions; this could form the basis of a LIG walk once the weather is better.

One final, important thing to note is that landowners need not be concerned; having an ancient or veteran tree on their land does not give anyone right of access to view that tree without permission. Furthermore, inclusion on the register does not give the tree any protection, as was illustrated in October 2020 when an old pear tree, the Cubbington Pear, was felled in order to make way for the HS2 project.

Hopefully, the presentation will encourage people to go out to look at the trees in their area and to appreciate them even more. We may find ones that should be recorded on the ATI.