

Issue 6
Summer 2011



DURHAM BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

Durham Veteran Trees

HELP THE ANCIENT

The main goal of the Durham Veteran Trees Project is to ensure that the amazing trees in the North East of England are managed well and continue to live as naturally as possible for as long as they can. There are a lot of factors that landowners may consider when managing their trees, and this is dependent mainly on the use of their land. As one of the major targets of the project, a Veteran Trees Management Guide has been developed over the last few months to give landowners an insight into the lives of their trees. It includes information about the habitat that mature trees provide and how this can harbour an amazing variety of life, a lot of which may not be known by landowners, but

should be taken into account when contemplating management of the trees. Even some of the more complicated management practises are mentioned, though not in too much detail, simply enough to understand why they are done. Contact



A Veteran Oak in Lartington. Photo by Paul Hannaby

"A Veteran Trees Management Guide has been developed over the last few months to give landowners an insight into the lives of their trees."

details of council tree services are also provided, as well as other organisations that may be able to help with the techniques that are specified in the

guide and any other queries that you might have. Hard copies of the guide will be available from the XXXX, but supply is limited. Digital copies will be made available online from the Durham Veteran Trees Project website: www.durhamveterantrees.org.uk. If you would like to know more about the management guide – including how to get hold of a hard copy – please contact the Veteran Trees Project Officer using the details at the bottom of the page.

MEET THE NEW OFFICER

Thursday June the 23rd saw the last day of the Veteran Trees Project Officer, Jesse Meredith as he is leaving the post. He will be swiftly replaced by the new officer, Vicky ?? on the 27th of June, who will take the reins for the remaining 9 months of the project. Hopefully you will get the chance to meet

the new officer at one of the events coming up over the next few seasons, especially as she will be leading the Tree Warden Training that will be held all over the North East this summer! Absolutely nothing will change with the project, and we will still be looking for all of the veteran and ancient trees

we can find in Durham, Darlington, Gateshead, Sunderland and South Tyneside, so keep those records coming in! Also keep your eyes peeled for other events that the project will hold across the region right up until the end of the project in February 2012.

Don't forget!

You don't have to wait until the project-organised events mentioned on this newsletter! Feel free to contact each other and organise your own events or tell other people where to go to find your favourite trees. Also, if there's anything you would like to see on the next newsletter, or if you know of where there are trees that need measuring, or if you have any questions at all, you can either email Jesse Meredith, the Veteran Trees Project Officer, at: jessemeredith@durhambiodiversity.org.uk, call Rainton Meadows on: 0191 584 3112, or visit the website: www.durhamveterantrees.org.uk

WANTED: VETERAN TREE WARDENS!

This summer, the Veteran Trees Project will be providing a tremendous opportunity for people that would like to help record trees in huge numbers or would like to gain surveying, conservation and management experience for their CVs. In order to hit the project's target of recording 1,000 trees during its lifetime, a number of Veteran Tree Wardens will be appointed for each Local Authority in the project remit: County Durham, Darlington, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland. To both recruit and train these wardens, events will be held across the North East, so you wouldn't need to travel particularly far to find your nearest one! There is no experience necessary, simply self-motivation and a desire to lead surveys. Training will be held at the following venues:

- County Durham: Elemore Hall School, Durham, DH6 1QD
- Hamsterley Forest Visitor Centre, DL13 3NL
- Darlington: South Park Outside In Education Centre, DL1 5TG
- Gateshead: Thornley Woodland Centre, NE39 1AU
- South Tyneside: West Boldon Environmental Education Centre, NE36 0BG
- Sunderland: The Hetton Centre, DH5 9NE

During the sessions, you will learn exactly what needs to be done at a site to ensure that all volunteers are safe, as well as how to train people that may not have seen tree surveying before. Your time as a Veteran Tree Warden won't be demanding, it can fit around your schedule and you can be as involved as you like. All sites to be surveyed in your area will be passed on to you via email or telephone, but if you can't find the time to lead many surveys, don't worry! There will be plenty of Wardens in each area for the surveys to be spread across. You could even join a survey being lead by another warden to gain confidence until you feel comfortable leading your own. Booking is essential for the training sessions, so if you would like to attend, please contact Veteran Trees Project Officer.

VETERAN TREES - THE BOOK

Perhaps the highest profile outcome of the Durham Veteran Trees Project after it finishes next February will be the publication that the project will produce later this year. After long discussions about what format the publication will take, it has been decided that a folder will be produced with a background on each of the most remarkable trees in the Durham Biodiversity Action Plan area.

There will be 20 trees selected from County Durham, 20 from Gateshead, 20 from Darlington, 10 from South Tyne-

"A folder will be produced with a background on each of the most remarkable trees in the Durham Biodiversity Action Plan area"

side and 10 from Sunderland, and each tree will have a page in this binder comprising of a map showing its location, a photograph of the tree, and some text explaining any known background to the tree. Each page will be available online as well as in a number of hard copies dotted around the region, so anybody will have access to the publication.

The best part about the publication is that each page will follow a set template, which means that even after the project ends, more remarkable trees can be added to the binder for years to come. So when more trees are discovered (as they undoubtedly will be), there will be a document in which they can be recorded, all but insuring their protection in the future.

Also as part of the incredible publication that will be produced by the project will be a set of cards detailing a number of self-guided walks that take in some of the best sites for veteran and ancient trees across Dur-

ham, Darlington, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland. In development are guided walks in Stanhope, Castle Eden Dene, Blackwell Grange Golf Course (Darlington), Jarrow and Barnes Park (Sunderland). If you have a particular site that you like to walk around and admire some of your favour-

ite trees, please contact Veteran Trees Project Officer, Jesse Meredith, and your walk may become immortalised in the publication.



This beech at Castle Eden Dene is one of the trees that will be immortalised through the publication as it can be seen when walking along the Selg-Guided Walk through the Dene.

Photo by John Durkin

TIME FOR HOMEWORK!

A list of woodland sites across the area has been compiled over the last few weeks. At the end of the summer, the newly appointed and trained Veteran Tree Wardens will be able to lead their own surveys of some of the sites, but work could be started early - particularly with the good weather at the moment, and the not-so-good weather scheduled to come! If you feel that you could have a go at measuring and recording veteran and ancient trees from any of these sites, or would like to know more details about where to find them, please contact the Veteran Trees Project Officer. The list of sites is as follows:

Brancepeth & Brancepeth Castle Golf Club

Whitworth Hall

Byers Green (Cobey's Carr Lane)

North Spennymoor

Woodlands around Oakenshaw (Off Reed Avenue)

Along the B6286 North of Hunwick

Sunnybrow (Luxmoore Avenue)

Helme Park Hall

Wear Valley Parallel to A68

Redworth

Oakleaf Golf Complex

Monk Hesleden/Nesbitt

Coniscliffe Road (A67) out of Darlington

Heightington Lane, Aycliffe Business Park

Brusselton

Barmpton

Sadberge (Road past Dogs Trust)

Little Stainton

North of Bishopton

Bleach House Bank

Middleton-One-Row (Teesbank)

Neasham

Woods along Sockburn Lane

Hurworth Place

B6275 North of Summerhouse

Crook Golf Club

Roddymoor/West Roddymoor

Garmondsway/Mainsforth

Doxford Park

Strip of Woods Between Ryhope and Seaham Grange Industrial Estate

Wearside Golf Club

Jarrow Cemetery

Woods Around Boldon Business Park

Again, if you think that you would be able to survey any of these sites, please contact the Veteran Trees Project Officer so that other volunteers can be informed and perhaps even lend a hand! Also, don't forget to submit the data collected either as hard copies (paper or disc) or via the Submissions page at www.durhamveterantrees.org.uk. Don't forget to take photographs if you can!

VETERAN TREES PROJECT GOES TO SCHOOL...AGAIN!

Along with the emphasis on surveying trees as we near the end of the Durham Veteran Trees Project (the final date being the 17th of February 2012), the project will be leaving another legacy with schools across its remit. Since the project began, work has been going on with schools behind the scenes, providing guidance for tree planting or maximising the potential of wildlife gardens and mature trees – and even a few veterans and ancient woodlands! – but now the real work begins. One of the first targets to be hit by the project was the development of an education pack to be distributed to schools. Now the project is in possession of about 100 packs

(some of which have been shared with the Woodland Trust's new VisitWoods East Durham Project) that need to be dispersed across the area. If you know of any schools that could use a trees pack (which includes seeds, ID guides, how to make your own leaf skeletons, a trigonometric device for calculating tree height – for the more advanced students – and other information) or even a free tree-based activity day, please contact Veteran Trees Project Officer, Jesse Meredith and spread the word to the next generation! There is no age or ability in particular that the project aims

its education at, so even community groups or adult learners can have a free activity day!



Veteran Trees Project Officer, Jesse Meredith leading a group of nursery pupils from Sunderland High School as they learn about types of trees.

Photo by Mrs Natalie Jewitt

TELL US A STORY

I'm very sad to say that recently one of the fantastic sweet chestnuts at the Auckland Castle Park was removed recently because of risks posed to the health and safety of members of the public that use the park. This season's story revolves around this tree and the way that I found out that it had been removed...

A few weeks back I received a telephone call from a woman named Amanda that lives in Cleatlam. Her disabled brother, Simon, had been for his daily walk around the Bishop Auckland Castle Park earlier that day to find people removing his favourite tree. According to Amanda, her brother was very angry and had to compose himself before approaching the tree surgeons and asking why the tree had to be removed. The men at work explained that they could not discuss with him why the work was being performed under the groundsman's strict instruction, which just made him even more angry.

Fighting back tears, Simon returned home—

shaking with every step—to tell his sister the bad news: that the tree they used to climb and have picnics around as children was being removed. In that same call, Simon told Amanda that he would never go back to the park as he was so disappointed that somebody would kill such a beautiful tree, and not tell onlookers why it was being done. Amanda immediately called me and I had to dig a little deeper, especially with all of the work towards a plan for the management of the park that the project and the council have been undertaking. It turns out that the tree was too close to a public footpath and simply because of its age, had to be removed. I still do not understand why the path was not moved, rather than the tree being killed...

If you would like to tell us your story, please email them to the Veteran Trees Project Officer at:

jessemeredith@durhambiodiversity.org.uk

Or call Rainton Meadows on:

0191 584 3112

Or write a letter to:

**Rainton Meadows,
Chilton Moor,
Houghton-le-Spring,
Tyne & Wear,
DH4 6PU**

Any stories received have the chance of being written up onto the next newsletter as an article, so keep your eyes peeled for future publications with your names on them! Hopefully the trees that you tell the project about will be recognised as important, not just for biodiversity, but also for personal reasons and will receive the protection that they deserve, and who knows, maybe others will create their own ties to the trees in the future.

OUR RECENT TRAVELS...

All of the leaves are out, colour is returning to our gardens, parks and woods, and now we have to make the most of the (mostly) fine weather and fill our lungs with the scent of nature! Recently, the project has been focused on the important, office-based aspects of conservation: arranging training events and guided walks, designing publications and management guides, organising photographs and data submissions,

rather than getting our boots muddy and measuring trees ourselves. Luckily, our volunteers have been keen to charge the GPS, ready the tape-measure and don the waterproofs across the area, with submissions coming in from Spenny-moor, Staindrop, Stanhope, Lartington, the Durham Riverbanks and a number of other locations...

...but we need more! The project is 9

months away from completion, and we need as many records as we can find in this time. Summer is the perfect time for measuring trees. Weather is less of a worry, the leaves are out making trees easier to identify and everybody loves visiting new places in the summer! Lets all get out and record all the trees we can! Good luck tree hunting!