

WOODHURST

TREES



JUNE 2013

WOODHURST TREES

The name Woodhurst is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word 'hyrst' which means 'wooded hill', indicating that this area must have been covered in trees at the time the settlement was named. We know that the Anglo-Saxons lived here. When Moot Way was built they discovered remains of an Anglo-Saxon house, and Birmingham University Archaeological Unit when working on the area which is now Harradine Close discovered remains indicating that the Romans had also lived here. Other evidence that this area was covered in trees is in the name Stocking. Today that is the name of one of the fields, but it was also the name of one of the large fields in the parish which was divided into strips in Medieval times. The name derives from the Old English name 'stoccing' which means land cleared of tree stumps'.

The trees in this parish have always been very important. Any agreement between landlord and tenant included details of what could and could not be done with trees. Following is an extract from an agreement between John Carstairs who was lord of the Manor and Thomas Holdich, dated 18th September 1805. This indenture was to lease a farm belonging to the manor to Thomas Holdich.

Thomas Holdich shall not at any time lop top fell or cut down or damage or cause procure or wilfully suffer to be lopped topped cut down or wilfully damaged any timber trees or young timber spires or any older trees under pain of forfeiting and paying to the said John Carstairs the sum of five pounds for every tree lopped topped felled or cut down or damaged. Except the lop of the pollards and the underwood bushes and thorns only for fencing of the leased premises.

Today we have tree wardens in the village and the Tree Officer at the District Council has to be consulted before trees in the Conservation area are cut down.

I found the following while looking for poems about trees. It is a prayer used in the Portuguese forest preservations for more than 1,000 years.

Prayer of the Woods

I am the heat of your hearth on the cold winter nights, the friendly shade screening you from the summer sun, and my fruits are refreshing draughts quenching your thirst as you journey on.

I am the beam that holds your house, the board of your table, the bed on which you lie, and the timber that builds your boat.

I am the handle of your hoe, the door of your homestead, the wood of your cradle, and the shell of your coffin.

I am the bread of kindness and the flower of beauty. 'Ye who pass by, listen to my prayer: Harm me not.

TREE SURVEY 2013

There were twenty eight returns from the request for a list of trees in the garden.

Below is a table of the trees and the number that were recorded of each tree. It would have been interesting to have made a note of all the trees in the parish, to discover the number and varieties. However there was not the time or manpower to do that. And the results from the limited survey were very informative. In 1605 James the First had a survey made of trees and woods on Crown lands. Woodhurst belonged to the Crown from the dissolution of the monasteries until 1611, so further research is needed to discover whether there is a document relating to Woodhurst and its trees in 1605.

Albizia	1
Alder	3
Almond	2
Amelanchier	2
Apple	19
Ash	14
Bay / Laurel	4
Beech	7
Birch	14
Blackthorn	1
Buxus	1
Cedar	4
Cherry	14
Cybress/Leylandii	8
Damson	2
Dogwood	1
Elder	10
Elm	6
Fig	1
Firs	11
Ginko Biloba	1
Gleditsia Sunburst	1
Greengage	2
Hawthorn	13
Hazel	5
Holly	14
Hornbeam	5
Horse Chestnut	5
Indian Bean Tree	1

Laburnum	5
Lilac	5
Lime	3
Liquid Amber	1
London Plane	2
Magnolia	2
Maples/Acer	16
Mountain Ash/Rowan	9
Oak	10
Paperbark	1
Peach	2
Pear	13
Photinia	1
Pines	4
Plum	4
Poplars	3
Prunus	10
Quince	2
Robina	2
Spindle Bush	1
Sweet Chestnut	2
Sycamore	14
Tulip Tree	1
Walnut	5
Whitebeam	4
Willows	9
Yew	8

TREES IN WOODHURST

Many thanks to the people who sent me a list of trees in their garden.. I have made a list of most of them and written a few lines about each, including where the trees originated and their uses and any folklore about them. This research was done on line, so hope it is fairly accurate . Apologies for any mistakes or omissions.

ALBIZIA

(Commonly called silk plants, silk trees or sirises)

Small trees or shrubs native to Asia, Africa, Madagascar, America and Australia. It grows very rapidly and can quickly colonise areas' It is considered an invasive species in Hawaii

Uses They are important forage, timber and medicinal plants

ACER

There are over 100 species in the genus Acer, see Maple.

ALDER

(Also called Aller, Whistle-Wood and Irish Mahogany)

Native to this country, grows in wet places, marshes and stream sides. Flower is a catkin.

Human uses. Timber is resistant to decay under water. Used for small boats and piles under bridges. Much of Venice is built on alder piles. Also used for charcoal and making clogs. Woodworm like alder and branches were cut and put in cupboards so woodworm would go to the alder and ignore other wood.

ALMOND

Native to Middle East and South Asia. It is mentioned several times in the Hebrew Bible. It was a symbol of watchfulness and promise. Thought to be one of the earliest domesticated tree nuts. They have been found in Early Bronze Age Sites in Jordan, and were found in Tutankhamun's tomb. The kernel of the wild almond produces deadly cyanide. Today the United States is the largest producer of almonds.

Uses They are used extensively in cooking. They are a rich source of oil, used by massage therapists and as a wood conditioner.

AMELANCHIER

(also known as shadbush; shadwood; serviceberry; wild pear; juneberry; sugar plum and wild plum)

Native to temperate climates on Northern Hemisphere

Uses Fruit of several species are edible, similar to a blueberry. Make pies and jam from the berries. Wood is hard and close-grained; makes tool handles, fishing rods. Native Americans made arrow shafts out of the wood.

APPLE

There are more than 7,500 varieties of apple. The tree originated in Central Asia, where its wild ancestor is still found. Apples can be found in mythology and religions of many cultures. Probably the earliest fruit tree to be cultivated. The **Crab Apple** is similar to one of the earliest ancestors of the cultivated apple.

Uses Timber very good for woodworking. Fruit used for jams and jellies. Some crab apples have been found in Bronze Age Coffins.

Folklore. Many beliefs to do with love and marriage. One is that you throw the pips on a fire saying the name of your true love. If the pips explode your love is true.

ASH

(other names Uisinn (Gaelic); Ask (Norse); Esh)

Native to this country, it is the third commonest tree species in Britain. Currently affected by ash die back disease. Survives on poor soils where other trees cannot..

Uses Wood is strong and flexible. Used by Anglo Saxons for their spears and shield handles. Recent uses include furniture, walking sticks, gates, oars, and aircraft wings on the De Havilland Mosquito.

Folklore In Britain the ash was thought of as a healing tree. In times past a naked child was passed through the split trunk of an ash tree in a ritual to heal a broken limb or cure rickets.

BAY LAUREL

(Also known as sweet bay; bay tree,; true laurel; Grecian laurel)

Aromatic tree native to the Mediterranean area.

Uses The aromatic leaves are used extensively in cooking, but removed before food is eaten. Ground bay leaves are used in soups and stocks. Oil of bay laurel is used in massage therapy. It is said that it relieves arthritis and rheumatism. Bay laurel was used to fashion the laurel wreath of ancient Greece . It was a symbol of victory in Ancient Rome.

Folklore In Chinese folklore there is a great laurel tree on the moon. It is the source of the words Baccalaureate and Poet Laureate, and the saying "resting on ones laurels"

BEECH

(also known as Boc, Bece; Beace (Anglo Saxon))

It is native to Britain and can grow to 40 metres high..

Uses The timber is used for many things including furniture, fuel, and sports equipment. Beech timber bends without breaking and is ideal for chair making. Beech wood burns well and is used to smoke herrings. Beech nuts are used to feed pigs and in France they are sometimes used as a coffee substitute. Before paper, beech wood tablets were used for writing in Germanic societies. The oil obtained from the nuts can be used to light oil lamps.

Folklore the leaves could be boiled to make a poultice.
Copper beech trees are a mutant variety.

BIRCH

(Silver Birch; Beith (Gaelic); Paper Birch (Wiltshire); Ribbon Tree(Lincolnshire)

There are many different varieties of the Birch, most native to Britain. Belongs to the same family as alders, hazels and hornbeams.

Uses Timber is used for houses, furniture, carts and gates etc. Some parts of UK for broomsticks. Today birch brushwood is used for jumps for horses, bark used for tanning leather, the sap is said to help kidney stones.

Folklore Birch will protect you against spirits and the evil eye. Symbolises love. In Medieval times the local magistrate carried a bunch of birch twigs as a symbol of his authority, and to use as a means of correction.

BLACKTHORN

(also known as sloe)

This small tree is native to Britain. The small purple/black fruit is very sour.

Uses The wood used for walking or riding sticks and was traditional wood for Irish shillelaghs. The fruit is used for making sloe gin.

BUXUS

(also known as box and in North America Boxwood)

Small tree or shrub with over 70 species native to parts of Europe and Asia. Used for hedges and topiary. If cut very low and small it makes an ideal edge for gardens.

Uses Timber excellent, due to its fine grain, for wood carving, although due to small sizes available it is limited in its use. Formerly used for wooden combs, it is now used for boxes and often used for chess pieces and woodblock printing. During 18c it was used to make recorders and still today small parts of musical instruments.

CEDAR

(known as Cedar of Lebanon)

Evergreen conifer came originally from the mountains of Eastern Mediterranean.

Blue or Atlantic Cedar are native to the Atlas Mountains of Algeria

The Deodara Cedar is from the Himalayas/Afghanistan/North Pakistan & India. Among Hindus the Deodara is worshipped as a divine tree. It is the national tree of Pakistan.

Uses It is used in medicines. The inner wood is aromatic and used for incense. It is also anti-fungal and rooms made of this store meat and grain. In Hichmal people suffering from asthma sit under this tree in the early morning.

The oils from this tree are used in aromatherapy, soap, polish and insecticides.

CHERRY

Native to most of Europe, Asia and parts of northern Africa. The fruit of this tree has been eaten since prehistoric times. Henry VIII introduced them to England having eaten them in France and enjoyed them.

Uses The fruit is eaten both raw and cooked.

CYPRESS

There are over 20 varieties of Cypress. the strongest versions grow in North America. Their history dates back to ancient Egyptians who used the trees to build mummy cases. It is said that Plato's code of laws was etched into Cypress wood because it was thought to outlast brass. The best known variety of Cypress is the **Leylandii** (see the section on Leylandii)

DAMSON

The exact origin of this tree is debatable. One theory is that this tree was first cultivated in antiquity in the area around the ancient city of Damascus, and brought to Britain by the Romans. Another that it developed in Britain from the sloe, and was a fruit peculiar to England. It was taken to the American Colonies by English settlers. There are several varieties of damson, all of them rich in flavour

Uses Damsons are made into jams and jellies.

DOGWOOD

Native to Britain this tree can grow to 10 metres high

Uses The smooth straight twigs were used to make butchers' skewers. Skewers used to be called 'dags' or 'dogs', hence the name of the tree.

ELDER

(Also known as Boortree, Battery, Dog tree, Fairy tree and Ellern)

Native to Britain it is found everywhere, except in sandy soil. The berries are poisonous if eaten raw, and the leaves are poisonous.

Uses Elder has been used for food and drink over the centuries. Elderflower cordial and wine are made from the flowers. The flowers can be dipped in batter and fried. They can be used for cleansing the skin and as an eye lotion, The leaves it is said can keep flies away.

The branches are light and filled with pith, which makes excellent pea-shooters. It is thought that the Anglo Saxons used them to blow air on a fire. 'aeld' is the Anglo-Saxon word for fire and could be the origin of the name elder.

Folklore There are many magical references to elder. If you burn elder wood you will see the devil, but if you planted one by your house it will keep the devil away.

ELM

The elm is native to Britain and Europe. It was widespread in England until they almost completely died out due to Dutch Elm disease.

Uses Timber is most useful part of tree the wood is strong and very durable and is resistant to water. Used to build, boats, furniture floorboards and coffins. Before metal was available it was used for water pipes. The foliage was used for bedding domestic livestock

Folklore Used to be associated with melancholy and death, maybe because they drop dead branches without warning. The elm was an essential part of the landscape and many stories were written about them. In some places people would gather under a particular elm tree to sing psalms. In Litchfield it was the custom to carry elm twigs into the cathedral on Ascension Day and throw them in the font,

Huntingdon Elm This species was raised in a Huntingdon nursery in 1760. This elm which occasionally can be seen in some parks and hedges has some resistance to Dutch Elm Disease.

FIG

Fig trees are native throughout the tropics, with a few species growing in the cooler climate zones.

Uses The fig tree is an important source of food to many animals and birds., and to some insects.

Figs are important in some human cultures. There is evidence that they were cultivated in the Middle East more than 11,000 years ago..

The fig fruits are eaten as a fruit and used in medicines.

Folklore and Religion They are important to some religions; the common fig is one of two sacred trees of Islam. In addition the Fig is sacred to followers of Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism. The Fig tree is cited in the Bible, where in Genesis Adam and Eve cover their nakedness with fig leaves, and the list of food found in the Promised Land includes figs.

FIR

There are about 50 species of fir tree. Native to different areas including, North America, Asia, South & Central Europe.

Uses Popular choice for a Christmas tree. Wood not suitable for general timber use, can be used for making things to be kept indoors or for wood pulp.

GINKO BILOBA

(Also known as maidenhair)

The ginko is a living fossil dating back 270 million years. It was once widespread but about 2 million years ago it was restricted to a small area in China. Ginko evolved in an era before flowering plants. Today there are some trees in China believed to be over 1,500 years old, They adapt well to urban environment and are resistant to disease. The ginko leaf is the symbol of the Japanese tea ceremony. Six ginko trees were among the few living things to survive the bomb at Hiroshima,

Uses In China Ginko nuts are eaten on special occasions, they are believed to benefit health. However it is said that when eaten over a long period in large quantities seeds can cause poisoning. It is thought that Ginko supplements can help to improve cognition in dementia patients . However a report from the USA published in April 2013 suggest that it causes cancer in rats. There are many side effects to taking ginko, and can cause allergic reaction.

GLEDITSIA SUNBURST

(also known as Honey Locust in North America)

This tree is native to North America. They grow to 30 metres and their life span is about 100 years. They have thorns which begin life as soft and green and end up grey and brittle.

Uses The North Americans used the pulp for food and to make beer. They also used extracts to treat arthritis and as an anti -cancer drug.

The shade provided by the tree is of great value for livestock in hot countries. The legumes are a high protein cattle food.

GREENGAGE

The first true greengage was bred in Moissac France from a green fruited wild plum, which had originated in Asia Minor. Imported into Britain by Sir William Gage in 1724.

Uses Makes jam and jellies

HAWTHORN

(also known as Quickthorn, Quick, and May)

One of the most common species of native tree found in hedgerows and woods of Britain. It has over twenty other names. In this area it was known as 'quick'.

Uses Wood is hard and tough used as veneer for boxes, millwheel teeth, ribs of small boats. Excellent for firewood and charcoal. The fruit (haws) and flowers make jellies, wines, liqueurs and ketchups.

Folklore More ancient beliefs and traditions than any other tree. Supernatural force for good and evil. The May blossom comes at the end of winter, and often the May Queen on May day wears a crown of May blossom. But it is unlucky to bring May flowers into the house.

HAZEL

(also known as Filbeard, Nuttall, Wood-nut, Ranger)

This native tree was commonly planted for coppicing.

Uses The wood is very flexible and can be twisted and even knotted. It was very important to people in the past. Used for thatching spars, sticks for water diving, hurdles, wattle fences, furniture and firewood. The hazel nuts a prized food source. The nuts or cobs can be eaten, if the squirrels do not get them first.

HOLLY

(also known as Berry Holm, Poisonberry, Christmas Tree, Christ's Thorn)

Holly is our commonest native evergreen tree.. The berries are poisonous to humans but not to birds. To them it is a good source of food.

Uses Freshly cut holly wood is so dense that it sinks in water. The fine grain makes it suitable of inlay work. Hammers in harpsichords and butts of billiard cues can be made of holly wood.

Folklore The holly with its red berries and sharp spines was seen as a powerful fertility symbol and a charm against witches and the devil. They were brought in the house to decorate homes before Christianity came to Britain. The Druids wore holly wreaths on their heads. It was said it was unlucky to cut down a holly tree. Boiled young holly leaves were said to be a cure for colds, bronchitis and rheumatism. Between 13c and 18c before introduction of turnips, holly was cultivated as winter fodder for cattle and sheep.

HORNBEAM

Although these native trees are numerous in southern England they are one of the least known British trees. They can grow to 20 metres high.

Uses The wood is extremely hard, which gives the tree its name. Horn meant hard. Because of this hardness it could not be used to make furniture. It was used for ox yokes, musical instruments, mallets, skittles and chopping blocks. When burnt the wood was hot enough to smelt iron.

HORSE CHESTNUT

(Also known as conker tree)

Native to Northern Greece/Albania. The nut of this tree is mildly poisonous.

Uses The nut called a conker is used in the game of conkers. The first recorded game was in the Isle of Wight in 1848. The world championships is played yearly in Northamptonshire.

Other uses of the conkers include horse medicine (maybe that is how the tree got its name); additives in shampoos, and as a starch substitute.

INDIAN BEAN TREE

(Latin name is Catalpa bignonioides; also called cigar tree)

This tree does not come from India and does not produce beans. This tree is native to south eastern United States. It has clusters of white flowers and a distinctive gnarled trunk. It was introduced into Britain in 1726 and has been planted widely ever since. It is adaptable and has flourished wherever it has been introduced. The oldest known one in England is in a graveyard in Reading

LABURNUM

These trees are native to the mountains of southern Europe. All parts of this tree are poisonous. The seeds can be mistaken for peas.

Uses The wood was used for cabinetmaking and inlay and for musical instruments. The heartwood of the tree is very hard and a dark brown.

LILAC

(Also known as Syringa)

Small tree and bush native to south-east Europe and eastern Asia, now commonly cultivated in temperate zones. It is attractive to butterflies and some varieties have a strong perfume. It is popular as a decorative tree/shrub in gardens.

LIME

This native tree both small and large leaved limes, is widely planted in streets and parks. It is not closely related to the lime tree that bears lime fruit.

Uses Can be coppiced and was used for hop-poles, bean-sticks ladles, bowls and Morris dancing sticks. Fibrous layer of under bark twisted into ropes and sandals. Leaves used for animal fodder and blossom to make tea.

Folklore Lime is considered a female tree and has links to fertility dating back to Dark Ages. In France and Switzerland limes were planted to celebrate battles which freed the country from domination by others.

LIQUID AMBER

(commonly called American sweet gum)

Native to eastern North America, Mexico and central America. It is now popular as an ornamental tree in temperate climates. It is named after the fragrant gum that exudes from the tree.

Uses. The timber, known as satin walnut, is not suitable for outside use but is used for furniture, cigar boxes and flooring. Formerly used in the States for interior finish of sleeping cars, and dyed black as a substitute for ebony.

LONDON PLANE

Despite its name this tree is not native to Britain, but is thought to be a hybrid of an oriental plane and an American sycamore. It can grow to be nearly 30 metres tall. It is very tolerant of pollution and root compaction and is therefore very suitable for growing in urban areas.

MAGNOLIA

Magnolia is an ancient type of plant, appearing before bees in the evolution of the world. The flowers evolved to encourage pollination by beetles. Fossilised remains of Magnolia have been found dating to 20 million years ago. Charles Plumier gave it the name Magnolia. He found it on the island of Mauritius in 1703 and named it after Pierre Magnol. The natural range for the many species of Magnolia are east and south-east Asia and North and Central America, the West Indies and South America.

MAPLES

FIELD MAPLE This is a small tree, the only maple whose leaves do not turn orange or red in autumn.

It is native to Britain and will grow almost anywhere. Become more common in urban areas as it can tolerate pollution.

Uses Timber is fine grained and used for woodturning, carving and musical instruments, especially harps. Wood can also be used as a veneer. The sap of the tree can be used to make maple syrup or wine

NORWAY MAPLE This tree with leaves very similar to the Canadian maple leaf on their flag, is native to northern Europe. Planted as an ornamental tree in parks and gardens.

SYCAMORE MAPLE See under Sycamore

CRIMSON KING MAPLE The leaves are dark purple and then deepens to an intense burgundy. Can grow to 50 feet and spread 40 feet.

SNAKE BACK MAPLE This tree is native to eastern Asia. These are distinguishable from other maples by their distinctive bark. These are small trees rarely reaching 20 metres tall and often short lived.

MOUNTAIN ASH

(also known as Rowan)

The mountain ash is not a member of the ash family, It is a variety of Sorbus which is a European native tree,. The tree can grow up to 50 feet . The white flowers in spring are followed by bright orange/red berries in the autumn.

OAKS

ENGLISH or COMMON OAK Native to Britain, since prehistoric times throughout Europe it has been the predominant timber tree.

Uses Most importantly used for ship building in days of wooden ships; Timber also used in buildings and for furniture. The bark used for tanning leather and the acorns are a rich food source for pigs. Smaller branches used for firewood and making charcoal.

Folklore Sacred to many people, including Greeks, the Norse and Celts. Oak was sacred wood burnt by Druids. The word Druid means oak man. Tradition has it that Charles II hid in an oak tree to escape the Roundheads. And May 29th is known as Oak Apple Day in memory of that occasion.

HOLM OAK or MEDITERRANEAN OAK This tree is native to Southern Europe and was introduced to Britain in the late 1500s. As it tolerates salt spray and strong winds it thrives by the coast.

SESSILE OAK Similar to the Common English Oak but its acorns are not carried on stalks but directly on the outer twigs.

Uses The heartwood is impervious to liquids and it is ideal for making barrels or casks. Also used in construction and the bark in the tanning industry. **Folklore** similar to the English Oak

PAPERBARK

This is a small tree of the allspice family native to New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea and coastal Easter Australia. It gets its name from the bark which is white beige and grey and gives appearance of paper. It likes swampy areas, but has been classified as a noxious weed in six U S states.

Uses Aboriginal Australians make great use of this tree, making a brew from the leaves to treat colds headaches and general sickness. The bark used for making shelters wrapping baked food in and lining ground ovens. The nectar is drunk, and the flower produces a type of honey. The essential oil from this tree is used in a variety of cosmetic products in Australia. It is said that it is an antiseptic and antibacterial agent.

PEACH

This tree is native to China and South Asia where it was first cultivated. It can be grown and fruit produced successfully in this country, if the correct position is chosen in the garden.

PEAR

There is evidence of the use of pears as a fruit from prehistoric times. It was cultivated by the Romans who ate them raw or cooked (there is a recipe in a Roman cook book for stewed pears).

PHOTINIA

This is a small tree or large shrub part of the rose family and related to the apple. Can grow to 15 metres tall . and are very popular grown for their foliage, white flowers and red fruits.. They are native to parts of Eastern Asia

PINES

There are Over 100 species of Pine trees and they can be found in most of the Northern Hemisphere. One species, the Sumatran Pine crosses the equator. All pines are evergreen.

AUSTRIAN PINE This tree is native from western Europe to Asia Minor, including Austria, which is where it gets its name. . It can grow to 20 metres and is very dense and ideal as a wind break. It is however susceptible to disease.

Uses Used in general construction work, fuel and paper manufacture.

CORSICAN PINE This is an alpine species found at heights from 1100-1600 metres , native to Corsica and Southern Italy.. As the foliage is full of volatile oils there is a great danger of forest fires where these are grown.

PORTUGUESE PINE As the name implies this tree is native to the western and south-western region of Europe. In favourable conditions it can spread rapidly.

Uses This pine is planted for its timber and for decorative purposes

SCOTS PINE The Caledonian Pine Forest in the Highlands of Scotland is the only true native pine forest in Britain. It can grow to 36 metres high.

Uses The timber is one of the strongest softwoods available. It is used in construction and joinery; telegraph poles, pit props, and fencing. The resin is used in the making of turpentine; rope from the inner bark, tar from the roots and a reddish brown dye from the cones. Cones are also useful as kindling for a fire.

PLUM

There are many varieties of plums, they may have been one of the first fruits domesticated by humans. Plum remains have been found in Neolithic age archaeological sites. They are produced all around the world and in different forms.

Uses They can be eaten raw or cooked in various puddings. Plums are made into jam and the juice fermented into plum wine. Dried plums are known as prunes are sweet and juicy and contain antioxidants and known for their laxative effect. In Asia they sell dried salted plums as a snack and pickled plums. .

POPLARS

WHITE POPLAR The name comes from its appearance as from a distance it looks as if it is covered in snow. There is some debate as to whether this is native to Britain, It is thought it originated Central and Southern Europe.

Uses Planted as a shelter belt from the wind

LOMBARDY POPLAR (Also known as 'populus nigra Italica' the Black Poplar) This tree was native to Europe, southwest and central Asia and northwest Africa.

ROBUSTA POPLAR (also known as Hybrid Poplar) This is a fast growing leafy deciduous tree, used often for shade and screening.

PRUNUS

According the Oxford English Dictionary Prunus is a genus of trees and shrubs that includes many varieties grown for their spring blossom or for their fruit. The trees grown for their blossom are a welcome addition to many gardens, both private and public. There are over 400 species spread throughout the northern hemisphere.

QUINCE

The quince is a small tree that bears a golden yellow fruit similar in appearance to a pear. It is native to southwest Asia, Turkey and Iran. It has been in cultivation for a long time. In ancient Greece a quince was offered as a ritual offering at a wedding. The Romans used it extensively in cooking, They are first recorded in England in about 1275 when Edward I had some planted at the Tower of London.

Uses They are used to make jams and jellies and a little added to apple pies enhances the flavour. The Portuguese name for quince is marmelo and the name marmalade originally meant quince jam. Many countries use it for jams and spreads to eat with meats and cheese.

ROBINA

(also known as Black Locust)

It is native to the southeastern United States but has been widely planted in Europe, South Africa and Asia. It can grow to a height of over 20 metres, with a trunk over a metre in diameter, and has fragrant white blossoms.

Uses It is the source of acacia monofloral honey in France. The wood is extremely hard making it ideal for making furniture fence posts etc. It is also used extensively in United States for wood burning stoves as it burns slowly with little flame or smoke.

SPINDLE BUSH

Latin name is Euonymous. This bush/tree originated in south east Asia. Is now planted for its bright pink flowers with bright orange seeds.

Uses The straight smooth heavy twigs were used as spindles to spin raw wool, hence the name of the tree. Twigs were also used for skewers, toothpicks pegs and knitting needles. In the past the berries were used as a laxative or baked and powdered used as a treatment for head lice.

SWEET CHESTNUT

The sweet chestnut is native to South Europe, North Africa and Asia. Possibly brought to Britain by Romans.

Uses The nuts are a good source of energy and can be ground into flour. Can also be boiled, steamed, grilled or roasted. They are often added to animal fodder. The wood is more durable than oak outdoors. When grown beyond 50 years the wood loses much of its durability. The wood is most suitable for tanning heavy hides and for soles of high quality shoes.

SYCAMORE

This is not native to Britain, but was brought here many hundreds of years ago. It grows easily and gives shade. But is now spreading so rapidly that some people consider it a weed which needs to be removed.

Uses The timber is as strong as oak but does not last as long. It is used for making toys, kitchen ware and other small wooden items. It is the favourite wood for making love spoons in Wales.

TULIP TREE

The Latin name is *Liriodendron* and it is also known as the yellow poplar. The tree, which can grow to 32 metres high, is native to North America. It is named after the shape of its flowers.

Uses Tulipwood is used for cabinet and furniture framing. Another name in America is canoe wood. This was because the trunk was used to make dugout canoes by Eastern Native Americans.

WALNUT

There are two major species of Walnut, the English and the Black. The English Walnut originated in Persia and the Black Walnut is native to North America. The Walnut is now grown worldwide, in 2010 China was the world's largest producer.

Uses Walnuts are mainly eaten raw, particularly at Christmas, but can also be used in cooking. It is said to be the most nutritious of all the nuts eaten by humans. It is suggested that eating walnuts may improve the use of body fat in overweight adults!!

WHITEBEAM

(also known as Chess-apple; Hen-apple; Quickbeam; Whip-crop)

Whitebeam is native to Britain. It is not a very large tree growing to 15 metres tall.

Uses The wood is fine-grained, very hard and white. It was widely used for wood turning and fine joinery. The berries were known as chess-apples in Northern England and are edible when just about rotted.

WILLOWS

The first two Willows are both native to Britain and the remainder to China. The main use of the British Willows is using the twigs to weave into baskets of all kinds.

GOAT WILLOW or SALLOW (*also known as Pussy Willow; Palm Willow, Sally; Great Sally; Black Sally*) This is native to Britain and the commonest of the willows grown in England.

Folklore In Biblical times it was seen as a tree of celebration. Later it became a symbol of mourning which was reflected in poems and art.

WHITE WILLOW (*also known as Saugh*) Native to Britain a variety of the White willow is used for making cricket bats.

WEeping WILLOW Native to China, now grown in many countries

TWISTED WILLOW (*popular variety also known as Corkscrew Willow*) This tree native to China has been introduced to many countries as an ornamental tree. It is also used as a bonsai tree in floral arrangements.

YEW

The Yew tree, native to Britain is the most ancient of trees with some said to be over 1000 years old. The oldest yew in Britain is said to be the Fortingall Yew in Perthshire, Scotland, which is said to be between 2,000 and 4,000 years old. The leaves and the seed inside the red berries are highly poisonous.

Uses. Yew was traditionally used for longbows and spears. The oldest surviving yew longbow was found in Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland. It was radio carbon dated to 4040 BC to 3640 BC. The world's oldest wooden artefact was a yew spear found in Essex said to be 200,000 years old. The timber is very hard and will outlive iron.

Folklore Yew trees have been planted in churchyards for hundreds of years. There are at least 500 churchyards in England where the yew tree is older than the church itself. It was said that a yew planted over graves of plague victims purified the dead. They were planted in churchyards which were fenced, so cattle could not get in, and therefore would not be poisoned by the tree. Some cultures see the yew as a symbol of doom, others as a symbol of immortality

TREES

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.
A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the sweet earth's flowing breast;
A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;
A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;
Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.
Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

Ivyce Kilmer

WOODHURST'S OLDEST TREES FEAST WEEK 2013

As part of the Feast Week tree survey, we have also tried to find out the oldest standard (not coppiced) tree in the village and surrounding fields. We have done this by measuring the girth on some 20 likely trees - oak, elm, chestnut, sycamore and yew. The measurement is then divided by a factor depending on the species. This method is taken from the National Parks website but obviously will only really give us an indication - the measurements also have to take into account for example ivy growing round trunks and human error! A lot of the trees are 120-150 years old but the four main contenders are:

1. **Oak tree** on private land in the "Cricket Field" on South Street (on the field boundary between the field currently grazed by cattle and the field being left for hay) - **200 years old**



Oak tree on private land at Fullards Farm - **188 years old**



Elm tree adjacent to grassfield footpath opposite Fullards Farm - **160 years old**



Oak tree on private land at Manor Farm - **160 years old**

These trees may not actually seem that old but older Woodhurst trees will probably have been felled through time to sustain war efforts for example in charcoal production (used in gunpowder) and Dutch Elm Disease will undoubtedly also have killed off some old trees within the village. Interestingly landowners were asked to replant oak trees in the post Napoleonic era around 1815.

