Elm Avenue leads naturally to the east entrance of Nottingham Arboretum, traditionally called 'The Approach'. The Arboretum was the centrepiece of the whole scheme and was opened in 1852 to a design by Samuel Curtis (1779-1860), which featured a systematic labelled collection of trees and shrubs some of which were supplied by the local nurseryman John Frederick Francis Wood (1806-1856) of The Coppice. There are over 800 trees on this 19-acre park including 240 different species and varieties from almost 30 different families.



The Arboretum

## 11. Hungarian Oak *(Quercus frainetto)*

This tree originates from the Balkans region of south-eastern Europe and was introduced in the1830s. It is an elegant tree with a straight, cylindrical trunk and neatly radiating branches. The leaves are large and elaborately lobed. This specimen is a County Champion and sits among other notable oaks on this bank, including one offspring of the famous Major Oak.

## 12. Indian Horse Chestnut *(Aesculus indica)*

A member of the Buckeye family, this species was introduced in 1851 from North-western Himalaya. It is noteworthy for the red-bronze emerging foliage in spring and handsome leaves with stalked leaflets and tall spikes of multi-coloured flowers in mid-summer. Old-fashioned, imported tea chests (as once utilised for packing cases) were made from this timber.

## 13. Hybrid Bean Tree *(Catalpa x erubescens)*

This is a cross of the North American Indian Bean Tree *(C. bignonioides)* and the Chinese Yellow Catalpa *(C. ovata)*. A member of the Trumpet Creeper family, this hybrid was first raised in America in 1874 and came to Britain in 1891. More vigorous than its parents and with larger leaves but similarly leafs out very late, sometimes not until June. It produces spikes of fragrant white flowers in mid-summer, followed by long, bean-like pods. This specimen is a County Champion.



## 14. Tree of Heaven *(Ailanthus altissima)*

This is one of the first trees to be introduced to Britain from China, in 1751. A member of the Quassia family, this is a female tree, with flower plumes less smelly than those of the male, and producing attractive, winged fruits. The lower leaflets bear nectar glands.



## 15. Various-leaved Hawthorn *(Crataegus heterophylla)*

This Thorn ranges from Southern Europe to China and has been cultivated in Britain since the early 19th century, but is now very rare. This specimen was designated a National Champion Tree in 2004, being rated as one of the largest of its kind. There is another National Champion nearby called the Small-flowered Black Hawthorn *(Crataegus pentagyna)*.

## 16. Common Fig *(Ficus carica)*



Mediterranean, self-fertile clones have grown in Britain since the early 16th century. The fig may have been the first crop ever cultivated by man, being grown by Stone Age farmers in the Middle East over 11,000 years ago. Part of the Mulberry family, this very old specimen is also a County Champion.

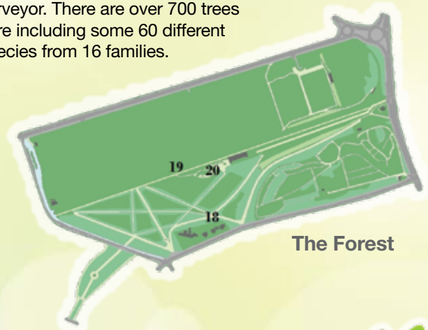
## 17. Cut-leaf Alder *(Alnus glutinosa 'Laciniata')*

Though nearing its end, this is still a notable specimen, for its rarity, maximum size and age, most likely dating back to the Arboretum's establishment. The species is native to Britain and has many valuable attributes both ecologically and for timber uses. This particular foliage variant originated in France sometime before 1819. From the Birch family, this is another County Champion. Nearby is the Oak-leaved Alder *(Alnus glutinosa* 'Incisa') which is a National Champion and by the gate there is an Italian Alder *(A.cordata)*, another County Champion.

Departing the Arboretum via Waverley Lodge leads naturally to the General Cemetery which has several noteworthy specimens among its 250 or so trees. Originally opened in 1838, a further 4 acres of land were awarded to the General Cemetery in 1845.

A north-westerly route out of the General Cemetery for half a mile leads to the 4-acre Waterloo Promenade which ultimately leads to 'The Forest' and to the Church Cemetery which is also known as Rock Cemetery. Rock Cemetery was allotted 4 acres in 1845, and along with a further 9 acres purchased by local churchmen, this 13-acre cemetery was opened in 1856 and was laid out partly over sand mines, at the eastern end. Species of trees are plentiful here too with some 35 different species and varieties among nearly 200 trees.

The Forest is believed to be an outlying southern remnant of Sherwood Forest. It was landscaped with walks and planted according to a plan originally devised by Joseph Paxton and developed by Henry Moses Wood (1788-1867) the borough surveyor. There are over 700 trees here including some 60 different species from 16 families.



The Forest

## 18. Turkey Oak *(Quercus cerris)*



The commonest Oak on the park, this species is native to Southern Europe and was introduced to Britain around 1735. It is fast-growing and can reach 35m. It is also called the 'Mossy Cup Oak' due to the appearance of shaggy growths on the acorn's cup.

## 19. London Plane *(Platanus x hispanica)*



Numerous and stately throughout the park, this hybrid is a commonly planted street tree due to its tolerance of pollution and exhibits variegated bark that readily flakes. A cross of the Oriental Plane *(Platanus orientalis)* and the American Buttonwood *(P. occidentalis)*, it probably originated in Spain or France around 1650.

## 20. Tulip Tree *(Liriodendron tulipifera)*



Lining the central promenade, this species is botanically primitive, with uniquely shaped leaves that turn butter-yellow in autumn. Flowers appear in mid-summer and, though rather hard to find, they resemble tulips, coloured green, yellow and orange. From the Magnolia family, the species was introduced around 1650 from Eastern North America.

The Inclosure Oak can be found at the end of the route. It was grown from an acorn brought from Windsor Great Park and planted in 1865 to commemorate the passing of the Inclosure Act. It is an unusually slow-grown English Oak *(Quercus robur)*.

In 2015, a further oak sapling grown from an acorn, this time from the famous Major Oak, was planted to celebrate 150 years of the Forest Recreation Ground.



*Corporation Oaks*

More detailed tree trail leaflets are available for many parks across the City of Nottingham including some of the parks in this trail. Downloads are available from the Nottingham City Council website **www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/parks**

For more information about this leaflet, please contact the Parks and Open Spaces Team on 0115 915 2733 or e-mail **parksandopenspaces@nottinghamcity.gov.uk**

For more information about this community history project 'The Social World of Nottingham's Green Spaces' please visit **www.ng-spaces.org.uk**

Acknowledgements: Paul Elliot, Graham Piearce

*Front cover image – Nottingham Arboretum*

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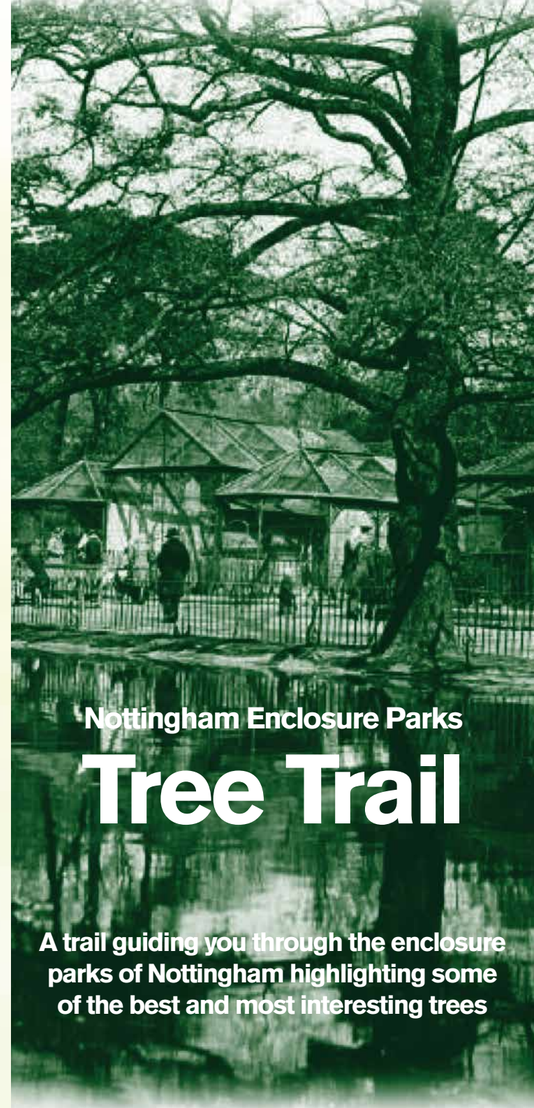

Nottingham Enclosure Parks

# Tree Trail

**A trail guiding you through the enclosure parks of Nottingham highlighting some of the best and most interesting trees**

**The county of Nottinghamshire is, of course, renowned as the home of Sherwood Forest and until the later eighteenth century Nottingham was well known for the number of its trees and green spaces.**

By the early nineteenth century however, the common lands surrounding the town had become a stranglehold hemming in the population and producing highly dense and unhealthy urban living and sanitation problems. The town officials wanted to hold on to their rights over the common lands and so objected to enclosure plans intended for commercial development and urban improvement.

In 1845 however, as a result of encouragement provided by the parliamentary Select Committee on Public Walks (1833) and the example of enclosure measures in other towns such as Birkenhead and pressure from local landowners and reformers such as the members of the Sherwood Forest group of writers, an enclosure act was passed by Parliament which helped to transform the situation.

As a result of the act, 130 acres of land were set aside enabling the creation of an interconnected series of public parks and walks and providing additional land for burial grounds. These eventually included Nottingham Arboretum, The Forest, Meadows Cricket Ground, Bath Street Cricket Ground and three miles of 90-foot wide walks including Corporation Oaks, Elm Avenue and Robin Hood's Chase. The General Cemetery received an additional 4 acres of land as did a new cemetery called Rock Cemetery which was created adjacent to The Forest.

This all encouraged a major programme of tree planting in public spaces during the ensuing decades and trees planted in the Arboretum, the Forest and the other public parks and walks were intended to promote public health and encourage the development of middle-class suburban residences with their own private gardens. Along with European cities such as Paris, the parks and public walks enabled by the 1845 Inclosure Act also helped to inspire the tree-lined boulevards created in Nottingham during the 1880s, which were seen as a continuation of the avenues around other parts of the town.

Orientated roughly a mile south of Nottingham Castle where the River Trent is crossed by the Toll Bridge can be found the southernmost part of the enclosed land. The 6-acre 'Queen's Walk' was named after Queen Victoria's visit in 1843 as she passed through Midland Station on her way from Chatsworth to Belvoir Castle. It is 1km long and was finished and opened in July 1850. Common Lime trees were planted along its length in 1862 to overcome flooding, many of which still remain today.

A further 6 acres of allotted land formed the 'Meadows Cricket Ground' which can be found towards the end of Queen's Walk. We now know it as 'Queen's Walk Recreation Ground' and there are over 100 trees here including around 45 different species from 13 different families.

## Queen's Walk Recreation Ground




### 1. Double White Cherry *(Prunus avium* 'Plena'*)*

One of hundreds of ornamental cherry trees across the City, this double-flowered version of our native Wild Cherry lines the walkway through the centre of the park. A member of the Rose family along with Thorn trees featured further on along the route, it flowers a fortnight later than the native Wild Cherry, specimens of which can be seen on the park boundaries. Over 30 different varieties of spring-flowering cherry trees have been planted in green spaces and at roadsides around Nottingham.

### 2. Small-leaved Lime *(Tilia cordata)*



Lime trees feature significantly throughout the route and this particular variety from pre-historic times was once the dominant species throughout southern England. Limes are a family within themselves known as the Basswood family and this tree is one parent, with the Large-leaved Lime *(T. platyphyllos)*, of the widely planted hybrid Common Lime *(T.* x *europaea)* which is the same tree that lines Queen's Walk. The leaves are heart-shaped, grey-bluish below with tufts of orange-brown hairs.

### 3. Oriental Thuja *(Platycladus orientalis)*

One of five gymnosperms on the park and a member of the Cypress family, this conifer is the only one of its kind along the route. The foliage is the same colour on both sides and is more or less scentless and the cones have prominently hooked horn-like projections. Introduced from China in 1752 where it has religious significance, it is commonly used in Chinese herbalism as both the leaves and the seeds contain an essential oil.

### 4. Red Oak *(Quercus rubra)*



A member of the Beech family along with Sweet Chestnut and other Oaks also found along the route, this species was introduced to Britain in 1724 from eastern North America. It is fast-growing and is used as both a timber and an ornamental tree. Conspicuous for its very large leaves, the bark is smooth and grey, like that of the Common Beech.

Half a mile on a north-easterly route past the railway station sits the historic St. Mary's Church on High Pavement. Here there are a good 28 different species of tree to admire. Continue north-east along Stoney Street to Barker Gate and a peaceful old burial ground can be found called Barker Gate Rest Garden. First used in 1803, the garden contains 10 different species of trees. Passing through this garden onto Woolpack Lane and ahead onto Goose Gate, the route leads north-east less than half a mile to Victoria Park and St Mary's Rest Garden on Bath Street.

## Victoria Park and St. Mary's Rest Garden




Victoria Park covers 4 acres and was first opened in 1894. Originally known as 'Meadow Platt Cricket Ground', the oldest trees here date back to around 1900. St. Mary's Rest Garden covers 6 acres and was formerly a cemetery established after the Cholera outbreak in 1832. Its most celebrated occupant is William Thompson, a renowned prize fighter known as 'Bendigo', whose tomb is guarded by a statue of a lion. There are almost 200 trees across both places including over 40 different species from 15 families.

### 5. Silver Maple *(Acer saccharinum)*



Maples are another family within themselves and this particular species has several representations on the park as well as across the city. So called due to the silver underside of its leaves, this is America's fastest growing maple which was introduced to Britain in 1725. It is valued for its decorative timber known as 'Bird's eye maple'.

### 6. False Acacia *(Robinia pseudoacacia)*



Part of the Legume (pea) family, this tree is also known as the Black Locust. An early 17th century introduction to Britain, the hard durable wood makes good fencing posts though legend states that the False Acacia has a 'will to live' and that when cut into fence posts and anchored back in the ground, the posts grow roots and sprout limbs again. It was also traditionally used for shipbuilding because of its extreme hardness and close grain.

### 7. Mop-head Maple *(Acer platanoides* 'Globosum'



This is a cultivar of the Norway Maple dating back to 1873. A striking small tree, it has a mop-shaped head and can grow to heights of up to 10 metres making it well adapted to street tree plantings.

### 8. Sweet Chestnut *(Castanea sativa)*



Also known as the European Chestnut or the Spanish Chestnut, this tree is native to the Mediterranean and was introduced to Britain by the Romans. Female flowers develop into spiny green fruits that split in autumn to release edible chestnuts. The timber is naturally similar to oak and turns well.

### 9. Weeping Ash *(Fraxinus excelsior* 'Pendula')



A member of the Olive family, this variety is the best known cultivar and was widely planted during the Victorian era as it grows vigorously and forms an attractive small to medium size tree with mounds of weeping branches.

### 10. Tansy-leaved Thorn *(Crataegus tanacetifolia)*

Initially thought to be an Oriental Thorn, *Crataegus orientalis*, but now regarded as this closely related and rare species from south-west Asia. It is a small, bushy plant with woolly-hairy, deeply divided leaves, and is typically thornless. In autumn it has yellowish rather than red fruit, with five pips.

Half a mile on a north-easterly route out of St. Mary's Rest Garden is the first of three grand walkways called Robin Hood Chase. All three walkways opened in 1851 and span 10 acres. Robin Hood Chase is lined by almost 100 trees, predominantly with almost pure, fairly old, Common Lime trees interspersed with Sycamore *(Acer pseudoplatanus)*. The Limes replaced original plantings of Elm trees. Notably also is a row of Mop-head Maple trees along Lavender Walk side-street. Robin Hood Chase takes a north-westerly route half a mile to where it crosses Woodborough Road.




Here it becomes Corporation Oaks which is populated by over 100 trees. Several Turkey Oaks *(Quercus cerris)* line the lower end while English Oaks *(Quercus robur)* line the top. When the walk was first planted, each principal member of the Town Council planted an Oak and was honoured at the foot of the tree with a cast iron plate.

Atop of the walk sits the Belle View Reservoir, now known as St. Ann's Hill Reservoir, but historically known as Toadhole Hill. The reservoir itself is circled by numerous fine, tall examples of Common Lime trees interspersed with some specimens of Broad-leaved Lime *(Tilia platyphyllos)*. The route continues south-west to Elm Avenue and crosses Cranmer Street.

Elm Avenue has approximately 50, mostly young, modern varieties of limes including Caucasian Limes *(Tilia* x *euchlora)*, several of which show pedestal bases where they have been grafted. These trees most likely replaced the original elms killed by Dutch Elm Disease in the 1960s/70s. Towards the end of the avenue there are some Broad-leaved Lime and mature old specimens of the Common Lime.