**Veteran Trees**

**Veteran Trees** can tell us tales of their lives, of when they were planted and what they provided for the people who lived near them. They can tell how the land was used and give clues to the age of the landscape features they stand on. To add to this, their scars and rugged barks provide clues to the age of the landscape. They can tell how the land was used and give clues to the age of the landscape features they stand on. To add to this, their scars and rugged barks provide clues to the age of the landscape.

**Veteran Trees for the Future** need not necessarily be ancient trees now, but they will be trees with a significance for the local community or with particular historic or ecological importance. This is illustrated by the trees selected by the local people who chose the trees for the local community or with particular historic or ecological importance.

**Veteran Trees are trees with a story to tell and experiences to share**

Woodland products were vitally important before railways and motor vehicles could distribute coal and before plastics were invented. Pollard trees were cut off at about two or three metres above the ground, so that animals could not graze the shoots which were harvested at regular intervals. Pollard oaks and beeches provided firewood and small timber. Acorns and beech mast were valuable for birds and mammals.

Coppice stools were cut near ground level and their shoots harvested at short intervals. Their shoots provided small timber for fencing hurdles and tool handles etc. Generally the tenant had the use of the shoots of pollards and coppice stools while the lord of the manor owned the pollard trunks and coppice stools. Regularly cut pollards and stools live much longer than ordinary trees. Our oldest trees, like the Coronation Oak, are pollards.

Dating Veteran Trees and Coppice Stools

This is not an exact science!

However, you can make a reasonable estimate by measuring the girth at about 1.5m above the ground and then using the diagram.

The ‘girth’ is the tree’s ‘waist measurement’!

The curve gives the estimated age of a Maiden tree – a tree which has not been cut. Pollarding slows the growth until the canopy re-grows. Add an extra third to their age.

Coppicing has the same effect. Take an average diameter of the stool near ground level and allow 0.3 metre for every century.

**Approximate Ageing Curve for Oaks growing in Open Conditions**

Trees in woodland will be older for the same dimensions. For pollard and coppiced oaks add 30% to the age indicated by the girth.

**Map no.** | **Tree species and description** | **Girth (m) 2008** | **Estimated age**
---|---|---|---
1 | Sessile oak – pollard | 6.9 | 520+
2 | Oak stub | 5.85 | 600
3 | Beech – multi-stemmed maiden | 5.04 | 260
4 | Beech – multi-stemmed | 4.01 | 330
5 | Oak – pollard | 3.97 | 260
6 | Beech – multi-stemmed | 4.72 | 330
7 | Oak – maiden | 4.07 | 210
8 | Oak – maiden | 5.43 | 330
9 | Oak – pollard | 3.21 | 200
10 | Oak stub | 4.50 | 225
11 | Sessile oak – Acorns on the twig | | |
12 | English oak – Acorns on stalks | | |
13 | Beech | | |

**What species and age do you think these two trees are?**

We challenge you to go out and measure! Our estimate is on the Friends’ website www.pangandkennetvalleys.org.uk
This elegant Beech is about 150 years old.

Another multi-stemmed beech which may have grown from a coppice stool.

This oak stub stands on the Common boundary bank and is probably a boundary marker. It is at least 325 years old. It is prized as a climbing tree.

A pollard oak at the west end of the Avenue is about 210 years old.

The Coronation Oak. This pollarded sessile oak started life in Tudor times and is about 520 years old. In 1902 Edward VII’s coronation was celebrated with a picnic in its shade by 1200 people.

Wellingtonia were first introduced in 1853 so this giant cannot be more than 150 years old.

This oak stub stands on the Common boundary bank and is probably a boundary marker. It is at least 325 years old. It is prized as a climbing tree.

What species and age is this tree?

A pollard oak at the west end of the Avenue is about 210 years old.

This multi-stemmed beech may be the result of several beech nuts germinating in a squirrel’s hoard.

Another multi-stemmed beech which may have grown from a coppice stool.

This oak stub stands on the Common boundary bank and is probably a boundary marker. It is at least 325 years old. It is prized as a climbing tree.

What species and age is this tree?

Another multi-stemmed beech which may have grown from a coppice stool.

What species and age is this tree?

This Oak pollard is probably 200 years old.

This oak stub stands on the Common boundary bank and is probably a boundary marker. It is at least 325 years old. It is prized as a climbing tree.

What species and age is this tree?

Another multi-stemmed beech which may have grown from a coppice stool.

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