



Abney Park Cemetery Nature Reserve

Abney Park Cemetery Nature Reserve is a 13-hectare woodland with around 200 old trees. In 1840 the site was planted as an arboretum of exotic trees by Hackney's famous Loddiges nursery. Several rare and interesting old trees remain from this period. As the cemetery business declined in the 20th century, the woodland seeded itself and the reserve is now one of London's most important sites for wildlife.

The concentration of old trees, excellent dead-wood habitats, and the fact that the site has never been built on, make Abney Park a priceless inner London haven for invertebrates and fungi. Bats, tawny owls, sparrowhawks, wood mice and bank voles also find homes here. The Abney Park Veteran Tree Project was created in 2009 in recognition of the importance of the old trees. The project was funded by the London Tree and Woodland Grant Scheme.

Abney Park Veteran Tree Project

A Veteran tree is a tree which is of particular value to wildlife due to damage, decay or old age. Many small mammals, birds, invertebrates and fungi rely on veteran trees for food or shelter. Some species can only live on old, dead or dying trees. This is why veteran trees are so important for biodiversity. During 2009 over 170 old trees were surveyed and 60 were found to have veteran characteristics. Thirty of the more vulnerable veterans were chosen for the project.

Many of the trees were in desperate need of work to stop them falling apart or being shaded out by vigorous young ash. Hackney Council's tree gang were trained in veteran tree management techniques and set about this vital task. In particular the old poplars, now over 120 years old, needed to be re-pollarded to stop them splitting apart. Indeed, several poplars failed before work began. The project has been a great success and many trees have been given a new lease of life thanks to pollarding or halo pruning.

Veteran Tree Management

Pollarding involves removing all of a tree's branches to promote new growth. Pollarding was used for centuries in English wood pasture management. It allowed animals to browse below trees whilst fresh growth was created above head height, beyond the animals' reach. Veteran oak pollards are some of the oldest trees in Europe. Britain has many fantastic old pollards ranging from 400 to over 1000 years old. However there is concern because there are few 200- to 400-year-old trees to replace them. This is one reason why managing 'young' veterans is so important. These days street trees are often pollarded to restrict their growth.

Retrenchment is a natural process whereby an old tree dies back to a smaller, lower crown. Stag-headed oaks are classic examples of early stage retrenchment, e.g. the oak by the pond in Springfield Park. Retrenchment can be caused by storm damage (as with **Veteran chestnut 24**). It can also be encouraged by crown reduction – removing the upper crown whilst retaining all low branches (e.g. **Veteran chestnut 26**).

Halo Pruning involves pruning the trees around a veteran rather than the veteran itself. By felling or pollarding neighbouring trees more light is allowed to reach the veteran. This is particularly necessary where old trees are surrounded by younger, more vigorous trees. (e.g. **Veterans 29, 34, 33, 30, 25**).

Biodiversity

Big, old trees are vital to provide homes for bats, owls and other large animals. Even more importantly, many insects and fungi can only exist where there are old trees at just the right stage of decay. Abney Park has a remarkable diversity of insects and fungi, with many locally and even nationally rare species. Beautiful orange shield cap and silky rosegill toadstools can be found growing on rotting poplar wood in late summer and autumn. Other rare fungi live inside the old trees. Hundreds of species of insect, most of which have yet to be identified, inhabit the dead and dying trees.

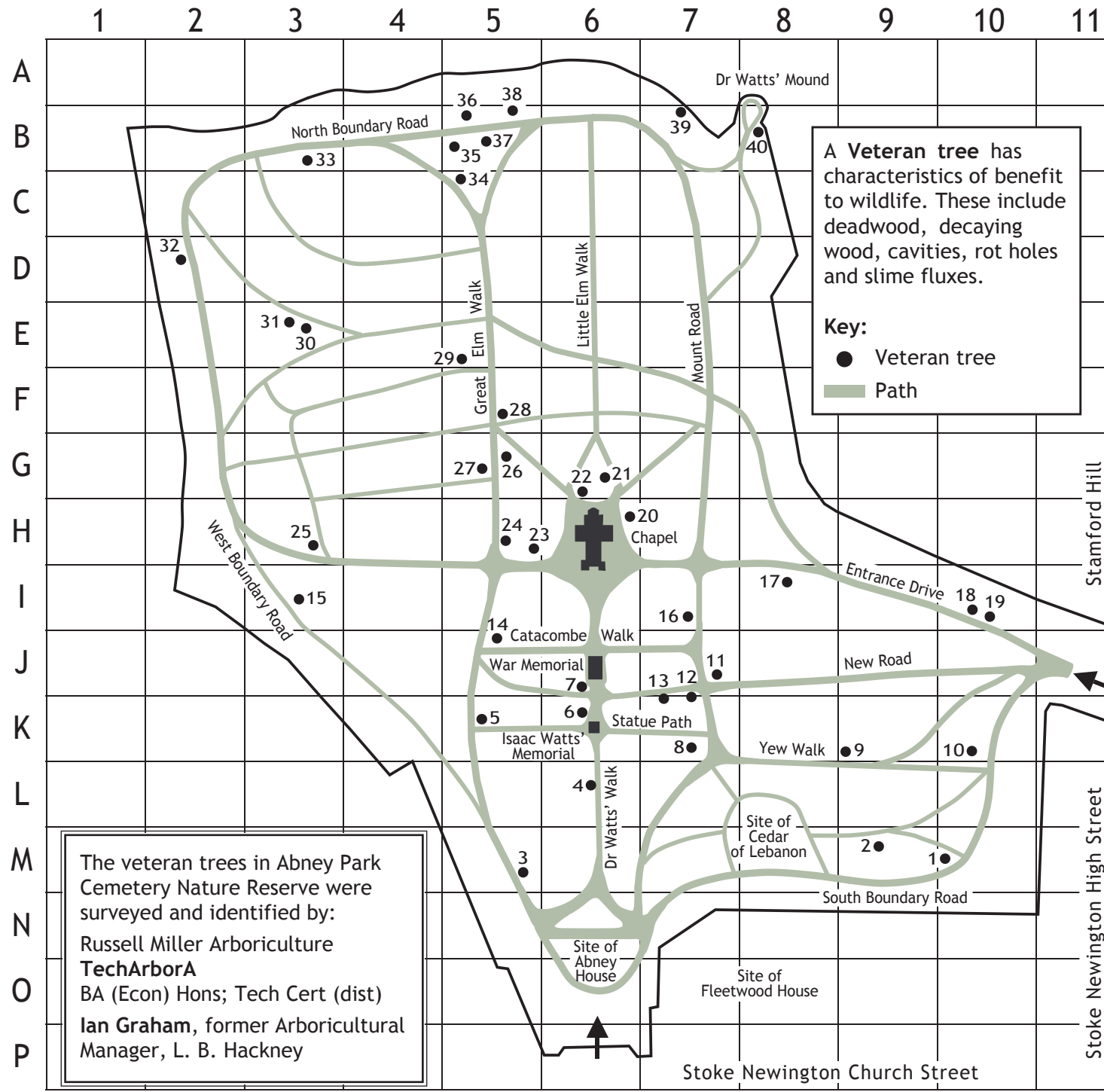
The VETERAN TREES of ABNEY PARK CEMETERY NATURE RESERVE

2nd edition



including detailed location map





Veteran Trees of Abney Park Cemetery Woodland

- 1 - Hybrid black poplar *Populus x canadensis* Serotina
- 2 - Hybrid black poplar *Populus x canadensis* Serotina
- 3 - Japanese cherry *Prunus serrulata*
- 4 - Silver birch *Betula pendula*
- 5 - Plantier's poplar *Populus nigra* Plantierensis
- 6 - Plantier's poplar *Populus nigra* Plantierensis
- 7 - Hybrid black poplar *Populus x canadensis* Serotina
- 8 - Hybrid black poplar *Populus x canadensis* Serotina
- 9 - Hybrid black poplar *Populus x canadensis* Serotina
- 10 - Plantier's poplar *Populus nigra* Plantierensis
- 11 - Plantier's poplar *Populus nigra* Plantierensis
- 12 - Hybrid black poplar *Populus x canadensis* Serotina
- 13 - Weeping ash *Fraxinus excelsior* Pendula
- 14 - Common lime *Tilia x europaea*
- 15 - Common ash *Fraxinus excelsior*
- 16 - Perry's weeping holly *Ilex aquifolium* Argentea Marginata Pendula
- 17 - Bhutan pine *Pinus wallichiana*
- 18 - Common ash *Fraxinus excelsior*
- 19 - Common ash *Fraxinus excelsior*
- 20 - Hybrid black poplar *Populus x canadensis* Serotina
- 21 - Hybrid black poplar *Populus x canadensis* Serotina
- 22 - Western Catalpa *Catalpa speciosa*
- 23 - Hybrid black poplar *Populus x canadensis* Serotina
- 24 - Horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum*
- 25 - Spotted thorn *Crataegus punctata*
- 26 - Horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum*
- 27 - Plantier's poplar *Populus nigra* Plantierensis
- 28 - Horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum*
- 29 - Common hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*
- 30 - Fontainebleau service tree *Sorbus latifolia*
- 31 - Fontainebleau service tree *Sorbus latifolia*
- 32 - Common ash *Fraxinus excelsior*
- 33 - Fontainebleau service tree *Sorbus latifolia*
- 34 - Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus*
- 35 - Common ash *Fraxinus excelsior*
- 36 - Common ash *Fraxinus excelsior*
- 37 - Common ash *Fraxinus excelsior*
- 38 - Common ash *Fraxinus excelsior*
- 39 - Narrow leafed ash *Fraxinus angustifolia*
- 40 - Common ash *Fraxinus excelsior*

The veteran trees in Abney Park Cemetery Nature Reserve were surveyed and identified by:
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You can find photographs and more information at www.abney-park.org.uk

