

## Worcestershire Ancient Trees – Update Spring 2016

Graham Hill

Development of the Worcestershire Ancient Tree Database continues, although progress may not particularly obvious. Currently the database contains 3,235 records, 43 of which have been added since January 2015. These include, four ancient cherry trees on the edge of Eyemore Wood, although the girth of these trees is moderate the obvious reduction in the size and vigour of the canopy, together with flaking bark, firmly places them in the later stages of life. Three Beeches, two Ashes, an Oak and a Sycamore were recorded on Bredon Hill, whilst just outside a woodland near Fetterlock Farm, Martley grows a magnificent coppiced Small-leaved Lime with 15 stems and a total girth calculated at 9.5m, within the wood are two Sweet Chestnuts, one coppice with six stems measured 6m at ground level whilst the girth of the other was estimated at 7.5m – unfortunately being at the top of a quarry face meant that access to survey wasn't safe! Twenty veteran oak trees, located to the east of the M5 in Tibberton Parish, have also been added to the database, whilst six Sweet Chestnuts, an Alder and Pedunculate Oak were recorded at Poollands on the edge of Hartlebury Common.

It was great to hear Ancient Trees getting a mention on BBC Hereford and Worcester recently when James Hitchcock, from the Wildlife Trust, was discussing the Veteran Trees at Pipers Common, Hartlebury – not often do I hear this sort of information being aired, although I do know that Worcestershire Biological Records Centre include our recorded trees in their reports to outside enquiries.

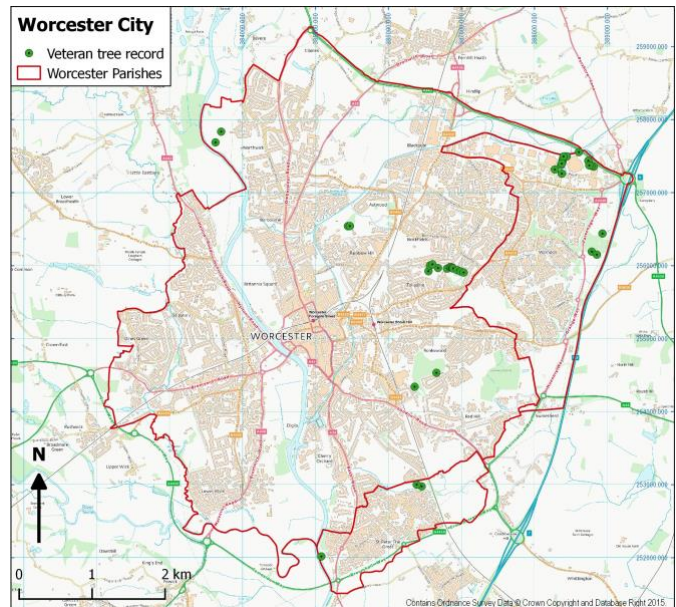
On the technical side, updates are being made to the database. When the database was transferred to ArcGIS a few years ago it meant that the photographs included in the earlier database no longer worked, which was frustrating. Many of the original photographs have now been identified and the process of linking them to their tree record in the current database is well underway, it is slow going and may not get finished before the summer arrives! You may have noticed that the Ancient Tree pages on the WBRC webpages, have not been updated in recent years, this has been a source of frustration to me (who knows very little about websites), however having now retired from the day job and learnt a little more about websites I hope that we might be able to update the webpages in the near future.

### Ancient Trees in Worcester City

Actually, I mean those in the City of Worcester, Warndon and St Peter the Great Parishes, as they cover the administrative extent of Worcester. At the start of 2013 there was only one tree recorded in Worcester – a Pedunculate Oak at the entrance to Northwick Lido. Surely there were more!

Over the past two years 40 more trees have been added, mostly as a result of undertaking survey work for Worcester City Council (before retirement). In 2013, 21 Pedunculate Oaks, a Crack Willow and two Hazels were recorded at Gorse Hill, Elbury Mount and in the Offerton Lane area of Warndon. In 2014 a further seven trees have been added, two apple trees at the back of Astwood Cemetery, an Ash and two Pedunculate Oaks in Warndon Woods, and a Hornbeam and large coppiced oak in Perry Wood. The map 01 shows the extent of ancient trees in Worcester, the Hornbeam (02) is unusual, with only nine others being recorded on the database across the county.

Of the 40 trees recorded in Worcester, 24 have girths in excess of 3m, with the coppiced Oak in Perry Wood being particularly large – three stems each with girths of over 2m. I wonder what this particular tree has witnessed during its lifetime. Although one of the characteristics of Worcestershire is its pollarded streamside willows not many have been recorded, however, in 2014 a Crack Willow with a 3.77m girth and height of around 20m was recorded at Northwick Lido.



01. Ancient trees recorded in Worcester.



02. WAT3221 a Hornbeam in Perry Wood, Worcester. Graham Hill

Records continue to be added, albeit slowly, adding to the value of the database. If you have any details of big trees in Worcestershire please let me know – an eight or ten-figure Grid Reference would be very useful. If it is already recorded I would be happy to receive an update on its condition or a new photograph, but if it is new then I can let you have a recording form and some instructions.