

## Elms: Sandwich, Saltwood, Wateringbury, Canterbury, Maidstone

Little research has been conducted into the varieties of elm growing wild in East Kent before Dutch elm disease struck. Some trees seen last summer appeared to be *Ulmus minor plotii*, a nominally Midlands form – the largest, 18 x 77, in a hedge near Knowlton Park, west of Sandwich.

Like *Ulmus minor*, the wych-elm is genetically variable enough for the occasional resistant survivor to be found. Being the elm of more acidic soils, these are mainly in the Weald, with the best being on the greensand at Saltwood, 24 x 93. The weeping cultivar "Camperdown" is disease resistant and still planted: the biggest, at Wateringbury, is 6 x 66. Much rarer now is the less weeping and more elegant "Horizontalis", which has survived at the Dane John Gardens, Canterbury, 13 x 83.

The largest surviving example of a rarer elm grows at Mote Park. This is the Siberian elm, *Ulmus pumila arborea*, 22 x 66.

## Oak, Ash, Wingnut, Bean, Crack Willow.

Let me end by mentioning a few other favourite finds. Much the largest scarlet oak yet found in Britain grows in a lane-side hedge opposite Kenfield Court, 24 x 118, with a fine bole. At Bedgebury School, the biggest recorded weeping ash

is 12 x 136. The largest known *Betula lenta*, among some outstanding trees at the Red House, Crockham Hill, measures 12 x 57. The wild service tree makes particularly good growth on Kentish clay, and an exceptional tree at Hall Place, Leigh, with a long columnar bole, is outstanding at 19 x 124. Other remarkable trees at this lovely garden include the biggest example of the normally tiny *Pyrus salicifolia* in the country, 9 x 69.

The hybrid wingnut, *Pterocarya x rehderiana*, is one of the most vigorous trees known. How long it can keep up this vigour has been shown by a tree at Frensham Manor, Rolvenden, a spontaneous cross which was planted in 1928 and has grown to 21 x 148. Another tree showing hybrid vigour is the bean tree, *Catalpa x erubescens*, of which the largest in Britain is a tree of 17 x 123 below Chilham Castle.

*Salix x Meyeriana* is an exceedingly rare hybrid between the native crack and bay willow, combining the latter's glossy foliage with the vigorous growth of the crack willow. A grove of apparently spontaneous trees found near Hunton includes one which has reached the previously unsuspected size of 20 x 70.

---

Tree Register's huge fund of information about large, rare and historic trees is accessible to anyone interested in the subject: donations welcome. Please contact the Secretary, Mrs P.A. Stevenson, 77A Hall End, WOOTTON, Bedford, MK43 9HP

---

## Spotted by Margery Wright in a recent issue of the *Dover Express*:

### CLOSURE OF

#### WELLARDS WAY FOOTBRIDGE

Notice is hereby given that Railtrack Southern will be carrying out essential maintenance works to Wellards Way Footbridge which carries the footpath over the Dover to Folkestone railway lines and on to Dover West (sic) Beach. In the interests of public safety it will

be necessary to close the footbridge for the period of 29 November 1997 to 29 March 1998.

WS Atkins Rail Ltd are managing the works in (sic) behalf of Railtrack and any queries relating to the closure should be addressed to Mr A Dean, WS Atkins Rail Ltd, Floor 18, Network Centre, Wellesley Grove, Croydon (sic) CR9 1DA.

*Editorial comment:* Does work on the footbridge portend the permanent closure, after the completion of the adjacent sewage pumping station works, of the now 'temporarily' closed but much more convenient Pilot's Crossing, near the foot of the Admiralty Pier?

And have you ever heard of "Wellards Way"?