



Whiteknights tree walk

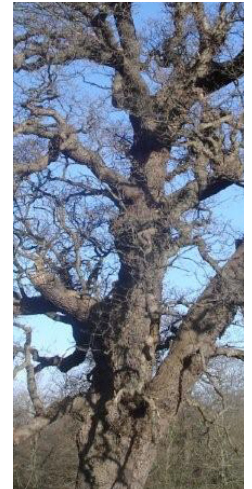
A guide for visitors to the University of Reading Whiteknights Campus wishing to enjoy the Whiteknights Tree Walk.

Many unusual, old, and beautiful trees can be found throughout the Whiteknights campus. This walk will discover 25 of the best.

In its present form the campus covers 123 hectares, including Whiteknights lake, conservation meadows and woodlands. Its history explains much of the reason that the legacy of planting is here to enjoy today.

Whiteknights has been in existence since the Norman Conquest when it was known as the Manor of Earley. In 1798 the estate was acquired by the Marquess of Blandford who spent vast sums on library acquisitions and elaborate gardens. However by 1817 the Marquess, then the fifth duke of Marlborough, was in debt. As a result in 1819 the estate was dispersed and the original house demolished in 1840. In 1867 the estate was divided into six leaseholds and a smaller house constructed in each.

The University of Reading acquired Whiteknights Park in 1947. Since that time, the University has maintained the natural beauty of the campus and preserved the lake, trees and open spaces that give Whiteknights its unique character.



The walk

This walk is a permissive walk in University of Reading private property. The walk starts and finishes from the sports grounds near the Shinfield Road entrance. If you wish to start from the Earley Gate entrance, make your way towards Friends' Bridge, then bear right and begin the walk with tree number 16.



Guidance for visitors

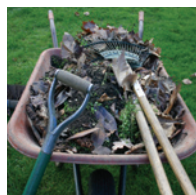
Whiteknights is the private property of The University of Reading. It has never been a park, but a public right of way runs from Earley Gate to Shinfield Road. The University reserves the right to prohibit pedestrian access to other areas as necessary. Visitors must adhere to University rules and regulations which are in operation throughout the University's privately owned land at Whiteknights and elsewhere.

In general

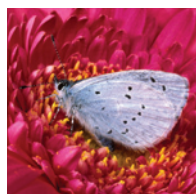
- Please keep to the paths and do not disturb wildlife or pick flowers
- Do not leave any litter or light fires
- Please keep away from buildings and research areas
- Roller-skating, skate-boarding and kite-flying are not allowed
- The lake is not suitable for water sports and activities
- Shooting, archery, golf or other projectile sports are not allowed
- Please listen to any additional advice given by the University staff
- Access may be restricted or permission withdrawn at any time.

In addition, dog-walkers please

- Keep dogs on leads at all times and away from sports pitches
- Take dog fouling away for disposal.



A small dedicated, professional team of gardeners and arborists maintain the 123 hectares of Whiteknights as well as all the other areas of University land. Our Groundsmen maintain the sports grounds to county standard.



The University pledges to preserve and enhance the wild and natural environment. Seeds are collected from its veteran trees in order to maintain stock which is valuable for biodiversity. Whiteknights has an important collection of oaks, some donated by Windsor Great Park.



Refreshments

Towards the end of the tree walk, you will find Dol.che Vita espresso bar is open to the public. It is situated in the Palmer Building (marked on the map), and is open Monday to Friday 8.30am–9.00pm, term time Saturday 11.00am–3.00pm.

The trees

1 Sport field tree groups

The tree groups that are present on the sports field site are an exceptional landscape feature. Mixtures of lime, oak, sweet and horse chestnut form tight groups of 20m+ trees providing an oasis amongst the manicured pitches.



To the left of this group are a number of elm (*Ulmus 'Sapporo Autumn Gold'*) approximately 25 years old and still showing resistance to Dutch elm disease.

2 Wellingtonia

Sequoiadendron giganteum



Wellingtonia is acknowledged to be the largest living organism on the planet. This specimen is a mere sapling at 34m when you compare it to the Sequoia National Parks General Sherman at nearly 84m; having

said that it is still quite a landmark, if not a little incongruous. Replacement specimens planted close by show the species to be an excellent landscape choice as a young tree, perhaps used on a short rotation of 25 to 30 years.

3 Tupelo Tree

Nyssa sylvatica



Chosen for its outstanding autumn colour it should also be noted that the tupelo has environmental value, providing nectar for bees and fruit for birds. Native to large areas

of eastern North America from Ontario to the borders of Mexico.

4 Cretan Maple

Acer sempervirens



This maple is a tree with great character or is that two trees? Regarded as the only evergreen maple (*sempervirens* – always green) this specimen keeps its leaves for most of the winter. Early yellow green flowers are followed by striking red keys which show up well against the dark foliage. Described as a large shrub or small tree this is one of the best specimens in the country.

5 Kentucky Coffee Tree

Gymnocladus dioica



The seeds of this tree were said to have been roasted and used to make coffee by European settlers giving the tree its common name. As the raw seeds are poisonous, their use is not recommended!

The truly remarkable thing about this tree is the huge bi-pinnate leaves up to 1m long. This specimen is now flowering reliably, appreciating its sheltered position. The bark is becoming rough and fissured as the tree matures giving it a rather gaunt appearance in winter.

6 Monterey Pine

Pinus radiata



Wild specimens of this species are stunted having to endure harsh conditions along the California coast, but when moved to a more temperate climate they thrive. This tree was once

one of a pair which were the fastest growing trees in the UK. The tree measured in 1904 was 16m high with a trunk diameter of 1220mm at 1.3m in 18 years from seed. Its larger twin was unfortunately struck by lightning and had to be removed.

7 Swamp Cypress

Taxodium distichum



Despite its ability to survive submerged in water (through the development of *pneumatophores* to aid gaseous exchange) this specimen is thriving in the comparatively dry conditions

of the central area. The foliage colour in November before falling can look stunning covered in haw frost. At nearly 30m we believe it to be one of the finest specimens in the country. Look for the closely related Pond Cypress (*Taxodium ascendens*) east of Whiteknights house.

8 The Great White Cherry

Prunus 'Tai-Haku'



This strong growing tree has huge flowers up to 6cm across with coppery young foliage and good autumn colour making it one of the best cherries for ornamental planting. How Tai-Haku came to be known is to the credit of Colonel 'Cherry' Collingwood Ingram who in 1923 was shown the tree in a Sussex garden. Not knowing what it was, he propagated it. During a visit to Japan he was shown an eighteenth century book of paintings and recognised the Sussex tree as one named as Tai-Haku.

The tree is now widely grown and all originate from the tree in Sussex saving it from extinction how it travelled from Japan remains uncertain.

1 Numbers refer to locations on campus map on previous page



9 Park House Cedars

Cedrus deodara, *Cedrus libani*



The Park House Cedars were well placed in the landscape in scale with their environment and space to mature. Deodara Cedar to the left of the group is upright in form compared with the spreading nature of Cedar of Lebanon.

Deodar Cedar was traditionally used in India for boat building. Introduced to Britain in 1831, the plan to use it for the same purpose failed as the growing conditions produced a timber which lacked durability.

10 Elaeagnus-leaved Pear

Pyrus elaeagnifolia



This ornamental pear is one of two champion trees found at Whiteknights. A champion tree is the largest known example of a species in the country either the size of its trunk diameter or height but not necessarily both.

Introduced from SE Europe in around 1800 this attractive flowering tree has silvery felted young leaves especially on the underside. The twisting bark resembles sweet chestnut. Look out for the drain pipe in the trunk!

11 Incense Cedar

Calocedrus decurrens



The Incense Cedar is a tall columnar tree from California and Oregon. It is not a true cedar and is given this name because of its aromatic foliage and timber.

The timber was traditionally used for the manufacture

of pencils. This specimen has respectable trunk diameter of just over 1m and a height of approximately 25m.

12 Yew Walk

Taxus baccata

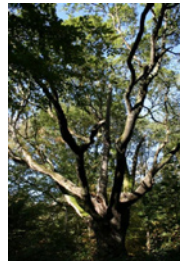


This mature row of yews includes a gold form and was likely to have been part of formal garden; rows of mature hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) providing further evidence.

Yew as a species is well represented on campus many of the maturing trees growing out from their original formal planting of hedges and shaped trees.

13 Turner's Oak

Quercus x turneri



This semi-evergreen Holm Oak x Common Oak hybrid from the Turners Nursery, although in decline, is a tree of great character, its prominent waist high graft line revealing its age.

A significant specimen mentioned by W.J. Bean in *Trees & Shrubs Hardy in the British Isles*.

14 Lucombe Oak

Quercus x hispanica 'Lucombeana'



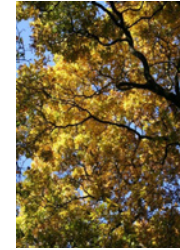
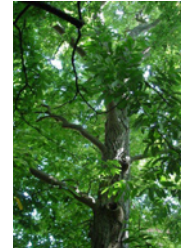
This hybrid between Turkey Oak and Cork Oak originates from around 1765 when Exeter nurseryman Mr Lucombe found the tree growing next to a Cork Oak.

This first tree apparently was cut into planks for his own coffin!

The Wilderness specimen is a sizable tree with a diameter of 1310mm and a height of approximately 28m clearly showing the vigour of a hybrid tree. The tree is growing within scrub and is difficult to access, photograph and measure!

15 Shag Bark Hickory

Carya ovata



Hickory is an early introduction from eastern North America (1629) where it is held in high regard for the quality of its sweet nuts. Unfortunately spring frosts generally prevent nuts forming in this country.

This specimen is a champion tree (see *Elaeagnus-leaved Pear*). The hickories are known for their autumn colour.

16 Cedar of Lebanon

Cedrus libani



The University is lucky enough to have over thirty Lebanese Cedars of varying sizes and ages. This tree is of the highest quality and certainly in its prime.

There are a number of specimens in this area; take a look at the variation of form and colour. Differences in colour are likely to be the result of differences in seedling provenance the more glaucous (blue) the tree the higher the altitude of origin.

17 Mirbeck Oak

Quercus canariensis



Native to Southern Europe and North Africa this oak species has tremendous landscape potential. It could benefit from predicted climate change

leading it to be more widely planted. The tree is semi-evergreen with an upright form. There are a number of unusual oak species in this area including Cork Oak (*Quercus suber*), Water Oak (*Quercus nigra*), Daimyo Oak (*Quercus dentata*) and Chestnut Leaf Oak (*Quercus castanifolia*).

18 Wild Service Tree

Sorbus torminalis



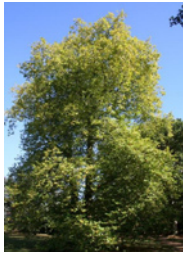
The Wild Service Tree is one of our most ornamental native trees but one of our least well known.

A good garden tree with an upright form covered in white flowers against the young maple like foliage with good autumn colour. Apple scab in some years is the down side. The fruits were used to brew the drink 'checkers'. The species can make a suckering group as in this specimen.



19 London Plane

Platanus x hispanica

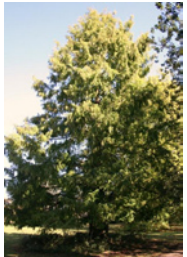


There are a number of good examples of London Plane across Whiteknights but this specimen is probably two trees planted in the same planting pit. London Plane displays hybrid vigour by

growing up to 40m with trunks up to 1m diameter within a century. Many of the Whiteknights trees are over 30m.

20 Dawn Redwood

Metasequoia glyptostroboides



Until 1941 this was a tree known by palaeontologists only; the discovery of live specimens in south-west China was as remarkable as the recent discovery of Wollemi Pine.

This specimen is the largest Dawn Redwood on campus and is starting to show fluting of the trunk. This is a characteristic of the original Chinese tree that was propagated (cloned). Recent seed imports without this basal flaw are being used to assess its suitability for forestry. This is a fast growing species with the potential to grow to 40m. As an amenity tree it is shapely and deciduous with good autumn colour.

21 Blue Atlas Cedar

Cedrus atlantica 'Glauca'



This specimen shows the typical ascending branch pattern for the species which helps to distinguish it from the level branches of Cedar of Lebanon and the drooping branches of Deodar Cedar.

A hardy tree from the Atlas Mountains of North Africa where it can be snow covered for three months of the year. The blue foliage is decorated in autumn with finger sized pollen covered catkins followed by tubby cones.

22 Veteran Oaks

Quercus robur



The Whiteknights campus has a number of oak veterans. These are trees which have huge value to the landscape and the local ecology. Specimens with diameters over 1.5m can be found around the lake and within the Wilderness these trees are managed with minimum intervention.

23 Balkan Maple

Acer hyrcanum



These maples flower and come into leaf several weeks earlier than Norway Maples which they resemble.

The Balkan Maple is smaller and slower growing eventually reaching 10–12m.

The new Film and Theatre project has been designed around these trees so access to the group will not be available until its completion.

24 Hupeh Crab

Malus hupehensis



This extremely useful crab apple was considered by its collector, Ernest Wilson, to be the finest flowering tree that he collected. Large white flowers are followed by marble like fruit that will remain on the tree as long as the birds will allow. Genetically triploid, the tree comes true from seed and is easy to grow.

25 Chinese Walnut

Juglans cathayensis



Long sticky leaves, attractive catkins and showy pink spikes of young nuts on a vigorous tree should encourage more people to grow this uncommon walnut. The tree produces large crops of nuts but because of the thickness of the shell there is little inside.

Landscaping



The Grounds department is involved in landscaping the University grounds from designing and replanting to liaising with landscape architects or other consultants for capital projects.

