



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Addison Howard Park

A guide to trees in the park



About the park

This was formerly part of a 19th Century estate designed in the English Landscape style. Mrs Howard bequeathed The Grange and the remaining gardens to the people of Kempston for a pleasure ground after her death in September 1949. Mrs Howard named the park after her son Lieutenant Addison James Howard, who was killed in the battle of the Somme in September 1916, aged 23. Mrs Howard was reported to have remarked **“I am sure he wished that this little piece of England, which he loved so well, should remain unchanged to give pleasure to the people.”**

There are many trees still present that were part of the former garden of The Grange. The garden is separated from the rest of the park by a ha-ha, which is a concealed ditch, designed to keep livestock from roaming the gardens whilst not impeding the view across the grounds from the house.

This trail starts in the car park.

Distance: approx. 1 mile



The Grange garden

1. Turkish Hazel *Corylus corluna*

Height: 7-10m Diameter: 12-17cm

This species of hazel is a large tree which is native to South East Europe and West Asia. It was first introduced to the UK in 1582. It can reach heights of more than 20m, and has heart shaped leaves. The edible nuts are encased in deeply fringed husks. These trees near the car park are semi mature.

► *To the left of the Turkish Hazel*

2. English Oak *Quercus robur*

Height: 16m Diameter: 75cm

One of the most majestic of our native trees and an iconic tree in our culture and history. A British native, they are the second most common species in Britain, and they support more wildlife than any other native tree. Oak trees can grow to be 30-40m in height and can live for several hundred years. This is a fairly young tree, there are older English Oaks in the park, including one just outside the garden about halfway along the path next to the haha.

ID tips: *i* **The leaves don't have stalks, but the acorns have long stalks.**

► *Just beyond the oak, at the beginning of the haha:*

3. Bird Cherry *Prunus padus*

Height: 8m Diameter: 32cm

This native Cherry flowers in late spring, and later in the season than Wild Cherry, and produces long hanging stalks of white flowers. It produces black fruits in autumn which are edible.

► *Continue on into the garden of the Grange and make your way past a young oak tree with a memorial plaque to a sapling with fan shaped leaves.*

4. Maidenhair Tree *Ginkgo biloba*

Height: 5m

The Maidenhair Tree is a very unique species which is not related to any living plant. It is described as a 'living fossil' as it is very similar to fossils of this plant dating back 200 million years. It has long been valued for its healing properties, and is used in traditional medicine in China, and is found in western health food stores as well. The species is dioecious, which means there are separate male and female plants. The males are widely planted as street trees, but the females are not as the fruits have an extremely unpleasant smell. The species is large growing and long living, reaching heights up to 30 metres tall.

▶ *Standing next to the sapling, facing south towards the park you can see several trees in a rough semicircle around you. From left to right.*

5. Atlas Cedar *Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauca Group'

Height: 18m Diameter: 65cm

The Atlas Cedar is a native of the Atlas Mountains of Algeria and Morocco but has been planted in Britain since the 1840s. This particular tree is from one of the many glauca varieties that exist for this species, which display striking icy blue foliage. This contrasts well against the greens of the other trees in the garden.



6. Western Red Cedar *Thuja plicata*

Height: 13-14m Diameter: 31-38cm

This is a species from the cypress family, and not a true cedar despite its common name. Two trees have been planted here in the garden, and they could grow to a height of 65m, with some specimens living over a thousand years. Introduced to the UK in 1853 by Thomas Lobb, it is native to the western coastlines of North America.

ID tips: *i* **The foliage has a distinctive scent when crushed, often described as pineapple or pear drops.**



7. Oriental Plane *Platanus orientalis*

Height: 25m Diameter: 158cm

A native tree of the Balkans, this tree has a large spreading crown. Easily mistaken for the London Plane *Platanus x hispidus*, which is a hybrid of the Oriental Plane and the American Plane *Platanus occidentalis*, the Oriental Plane can grow a very wide bole or trunk, in some specimens up to 3m diameter. The flaky bark is very attractive and shows colours that resemble that of army camouflage. Because of the potential to have a wide bole, the Oriental Plane is a tree for large spaces e.g. parks and gardens. For urban areas, The London Plane is planted instead and is very common within our cities as it absorbs high levels of air pollution and has been credited for reducing the levels of London smog.

8. Deodar Cedar *Cedrus deodara*



Height: 27m Diameter: 111cm

The deodar cedar is also a mountainous tree but native to the Western Himalayas in Asia, where they are held sacred, indeed their indigenous name, devadāru, in Sanskrit, means ‘wood of the gods’. Brought from the Himalayas in the reign of George IV in 1831, this soon became a favourite in the gardens of Georgian houses and rectories.

► Walk past the Cedar towards the Grange, and you will see a young memorial tree:

9. Common Walnut *Juglans regia*

This tree was planted in memory of Addison James Howard. Today, Kempston and the common walnut tree are closely linked as Mr. Walter Harter, a very rich gentleman, had a walnut orchard comprising 365 trees, and whichever way one looked the trees were in perfect alignment. These walnuts were much in demand and Mr. Harter sent them to London where large notices could be seen in Roman Road and Petticoat Lane: “**Kempston grown walnuts for sale – the best in the land!**” He was noted for his generosity to the poor of Kempston.

It was for this reason that Mrs Howard planted a common walnut tree in the grounds as a memorial to her late son Addison James Howard. The original tree was lost but the memory lives on as a new common walnut was planted as a replacement.

► Turn left towards the haha, and continue round to see the next 4 trees:

10. Cedar of Lebanon *Cedrus libani*



Height: 25m Diameter: 151cm

The Cedar of Lebanon is a native of a mountainous area of the Mediterranean region but mostly associated with Lebanon. It is believed that Solomon’s Temple was built from the timber of this species, about 2,800 years ago, and there are many references to it in ancient Christian, Judaic and Islamic texts. This tree was first introduced to the UK in the 1640s, and planted extensively by Capability Brown in the 18th Century. It is highly admired for its large height and characteristic flat level branches.

ID tips:  **The rule of thumb for identifying cedars is as follows:**

Atlas = **Ascending (the branches grow upwards)**

Deodar = **Drooping (the branches grow downwards)**

Lebanon = **Level (the branches grow laterally).**

11. Holm oak *Quercus ilex*

Height: 12m Diameter: 78cm

This is an evergreen oak, native to the Mediterranean region. The name Holme comes from an old name for holly, and is sometimes called Holly Oak. It was introduced to Britain in the 1500s. The leaves are dark green, and are spiny when young. They can grow to be large trees, but as they cope with pruning and clipping well, they can also be used for hedging.

12. Turkey Oak *Quercus cerris*

Height: 24m Diameter: 115cm

Introduced in 1783, the Turkey Oak is amongst the fastest growing of all oaks and can reach heights close to 40 metres. It can be distinguished from other oaks by its 'hairy' acorn cups, which appear to be covered in dense moss.

13. Wellingtonia *Sequoiadendron giganteum*

Height: 28m Diameter: 92cm

This tree, planted near The Grange is one of the Redwood family. Most likely planted by the Howards, the Wellingtonia was introduced to Britain by William Lobb in 1853, and widely planted by the Victorians. Native to California, they are very long lived, and can grow to be very large on their native soil. 'General Sherman' thought to be the world's largest tree, (but not the tallest), is 84m high and has a circumference of 31m, and is estimated to be over 3000 years old. They do not reach those sizes in the UK, but can easily reach 50-60m in height here.

The park

▶ Join the path and continue until just before the tennis courts you will see on the right:

14. Horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum*

Height: 24m Diameter: 103cm

Known by many as the Conker Tree, this tree is native to the Balkan Peninsula, and has been planted in the UK since 1616, although the first recorded game of conkers was in 1848. It is often planted for its white flowers, which are large and showy in the spring. The Horse Chestnut was often planted by smithies, and the conkers used in horse medicine, from which it most likely got its name.

A similar tree that you will see in the park is the Red Horse Chestnut *Aesculus x carnea* which has red flowers. Most Horse Chestnuts are now threatened by a disease called bleeding canker, caused by a bacterium, and although they can survive for many years with this disease, fewer are being planted as the disease reduces their expected lifespan.

A related species, the Indian Horse Chestnut *Aesculus indica* may prove to be a viable alternative. There are a few trees of this species recently planted in the park.

ID tips:  In winter the buds are sticky to the touch.

Tree locations map



Key

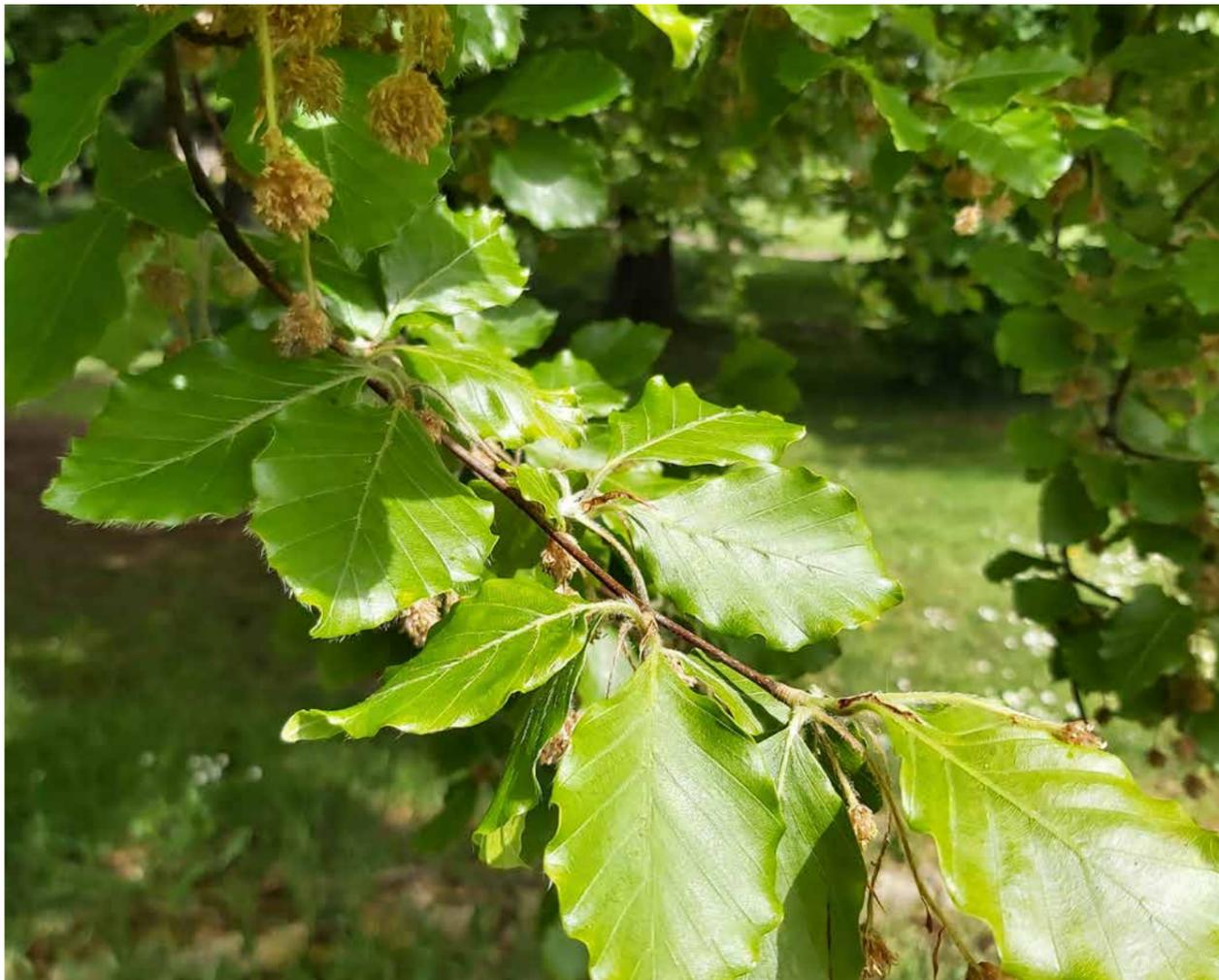
-  The Lime Avenue
-  Yew Walk
-  Tree locations

15. Beech *Fagus sylvatica*

Height: 25m Diameter: 118cm

This large tree is native to the south east England and south east Wales, but has colonised the rest of Britain. It grows best on well drained soils: chalk, sandy loams and limestone. A beech woodland has a very dense canopy and only specialist shade plants can survive underneath the canopy, many of which are rare. You will often see the Copper Beech (*Fagus sylvatica* f. *purpurea*), which has purple leaves, planted in parks and formal landscapes.

ID tips: *i* Easily confused with the hornbeam in winter as the buds are the same cigar shape, the beech tree has smooth grey bark. The leaves are bright green when young, and have a smooth wavy edge.



► Look along the line of the wall in front of the tennis courts and you will see:

16. Norway maple *Acer platanoides*

Height: 14m Diameter: 44cm

This tree was introduced to Britain in 1683. A large tree, it can grow up to 30m. The leaves turn yellow in autumn, and it supports a variety of invertebrates, birds and small mammals. It is found in many parks and gardens, and is often planted as a street tree as it is tolerant of air pollution, shade and drought. There are many cultivated varieties of this tree, including a variegated and a purple leaved variety, which is planted here.

► Take the left fork of the path, and on the left:

17. Silver Birch *Betula pendula*

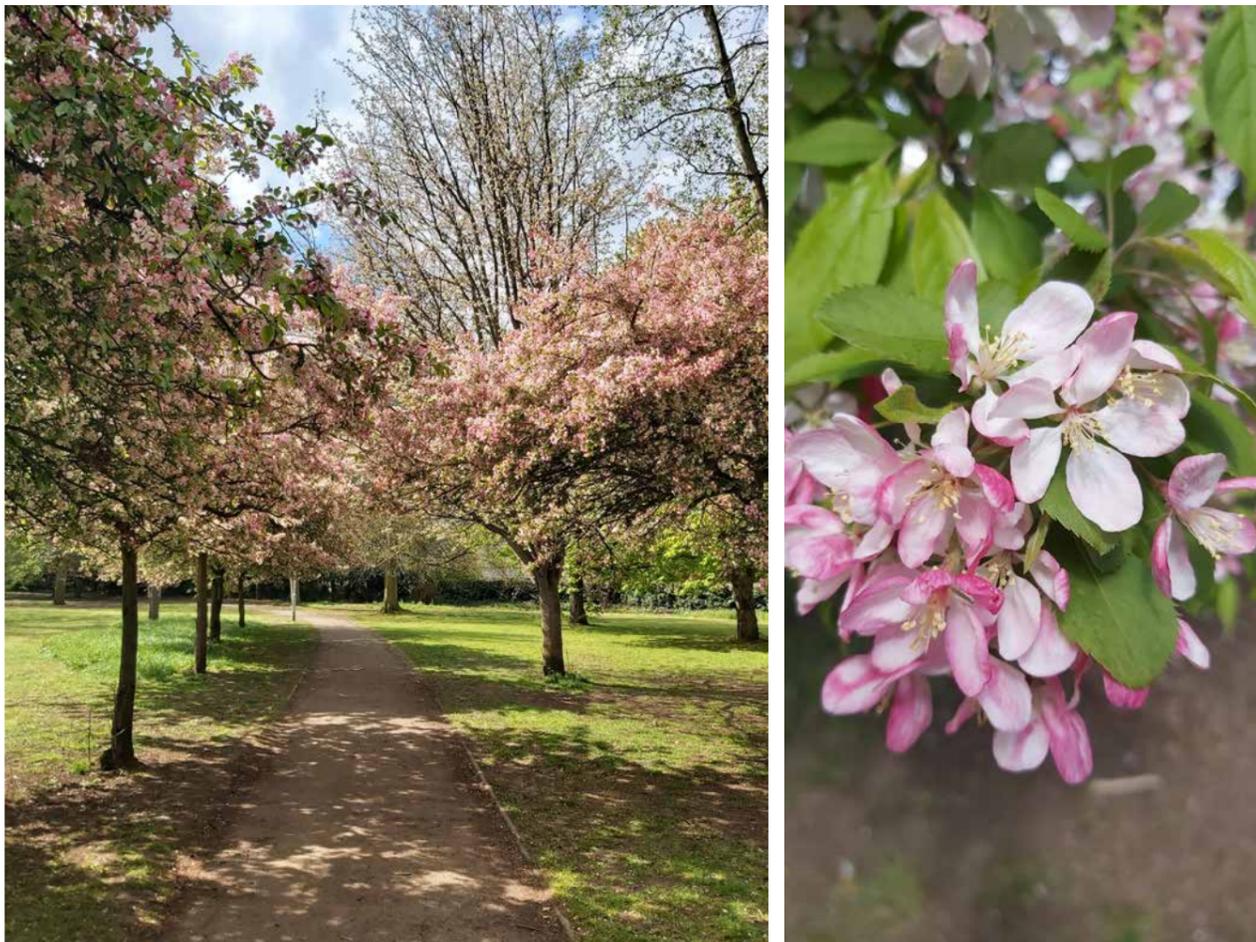
Height: 10m Diameter: 25cm

This tree, a UK native, is one of the prettiest Birches. Its white bark with rough black diamonds and airy, pendulous branches provides interest no matter the season. The species is one of the shortest living species in the UK, with an expected life expectancy of 60 to 90 years. They are known as a pioneer species, and can quickly colonise rough ground. Preferring light sandy soils, it can cope with poor impoverished soils making it a good choice for the urban environment despite its short lifespan.

18. Japanese Crab Apple *Malus floribunda* and Crab Apple *Malus sylvestris*

Bordering the path there is a decorative row of Japanese crab apple trees, and is particularly pretty in the spring when they are in blossom. This is thought to be a hybrid, cultivated in Japan and introduced to Europe in the 19th Century, and is planted widely in the UK.

Behind these trees to the right are a couple of our native Crab Apples. This species supports a wide variety of wildlife, as well as providing food for foragers. Once thought to be the main ancestor of cultivated apples, recent genetic testing has proved that this is not the case, and cultivated apples instead largely descend from a wild apple native to central Asia *Malus sieversii*. The crab apple is often planted in orchards alongside cultivated apple species, and many of the 'wild' crab apples found in hedgerows are possibly escapes from orchards, or from discarded apple cores.



► Just behind the Apples, on the right are:

19. Alder *Alnus glutinosa*

Height: 15m Diameter: 27cm

A UK native species, this tree is commonly associated with riparian habitats. It is one of the few species that is able to fix nitrogen, due to a symbiotic relationship with bacteria in its roots. As such it is able to survive on impoverished soils where other trees will not. It has long catkins in the spring and cones in the summer / autumn, which often persist on the tree until the following year.

► Follow the path to just before it re-joins the boundary path to see:

20. Pin Oak *Quercus palustris*

Height: 9m Diameter: 51cm

A North American native, this species was introduced to the UK in 1800. The pin oak has arguably the best autumnal colour of all oaks, turning a rich red-brown in good years. It prefers warm areas of the UK, and has been planted in many parks and gardens where the climate suits it.

► Briefly head off the path to the left in a south-easterly direction. At the edge of the trees, closest to the goal posts you will see:

21. Caucasian Wingnut *Pterocarya fraxinifolia*

Height: 9m Diameter: 43cm

Native to Iran, this tree was introduced to the UK in 1782 and has become a popular parkland tree. It has the potential to become a large tree, up to 30m in height. It is particularly attractive in summer when its crown is adorned with yellow pendulous catkins that droop down to 50cm in length. Sadly human activity is a serious threat to this tree in its native range.

▶ *Head back to the path and continue on, until at the last trees on the left:*

22. False Acacia *Robinia pseudoacacia*

Height: 15m Diameter: 30cm

A native of Eastern USA, this tree has been planted in the UK since 1630. The shoots have spines and it flowers in the summer, producing cascades of white scented flowers. It has little timber value, and is planted purely as an ornamental tree. An interesting feature of this tree is that its timber fluoresces strongly under UV light. While not the best specimens, these are the only two trees of this species in the park.

▶ *Continue on, and just before you reach the gated entrance:*

23. Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*

Height: 16m Diameter: 58cm

A naturalised tree species in the UK, possibly introduced by the Romans, this tree can spread quickly and in the right conditions has the potential to colonise and invade woodlands. It supports a wide variety of invertebrates and other wildlife. It can grow very large, up to 40m. Young trees have smooth pinkish-grey bark, but mature trees have large bark scales.

ID tips:  **The leaves of Norway Maple and Sycamore can be easily confused, Norway Maple leaves have 'whisker-tips' which Sycamore leaves lack. In winter Sycamore buds are bright green, Norway Maple buds are orange-brown, and Norway Maple bark has narrow regular ridges.**

▶ *Turn left to follow the path, on the left you will see a group of semi-mature trees and a little further on to the right a mature tree of:*

24. Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*

Height: 22m Diameter: 88cm

A UK native species, the Ash is a very common tree. Growing to 30-40m in height, they support a large variety of wildlife. In winter this species can

be distinguished from other Ash species by its black buds. Now threatened by Ash Dieback, it is hoped that some trees are resistant to the disease, or mature ash trees in the landscape may become very rare.

▶ *Continue on past the play area to the start of the Yew Walk.*

25. Common Yew *Taxus baccata*

Native to the UK, this tree is an evergreen conifer, with dark green foliage. The fruit, called an Aril is bright red and wrapped around the seed. The seeds and foliage of the Yew are toxic, especially to livestock. The bark can be colourful with grey, purple and red hues. Yews are dioecious, with separate male and female plants. The male plants produce huge amounts of pollen, on a windy spring day you can see clouds of yellow pollen streaming from these trees. These trees can be very long lived and the oldest tree in the UK, the Fortingall Yew, is estimated to be 2000-3000 years old. They are one of the most abundant trees in the park.

▶ *On the left in between the playing fields is a magnificent open-grown tree:*

26. Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus*

Height: 14m Diameter: 77cm

The hornbeam is a native tree that has been appreciated for its very hard wood for many centuries. It is likely the name derives from the hardness of the wood. Horn means hard and beam is an Old English name for a tree. It is long lived, reaching ages in excess of 300 years. The younger bark has distinctive wriggling, vertical grey-silver snake marks, which in maturity form a distinctive ribbed and hollowed bark.

ID tips:  **The leaves have serrated edges.**

▶ *Head back to the Yew Walk, and continue on. You will see that there are also mature specimens of Oak, Sycamore and Horse Chestnut, as well as another conifer:*

27. Scots Pine *Pinus sylvestris*

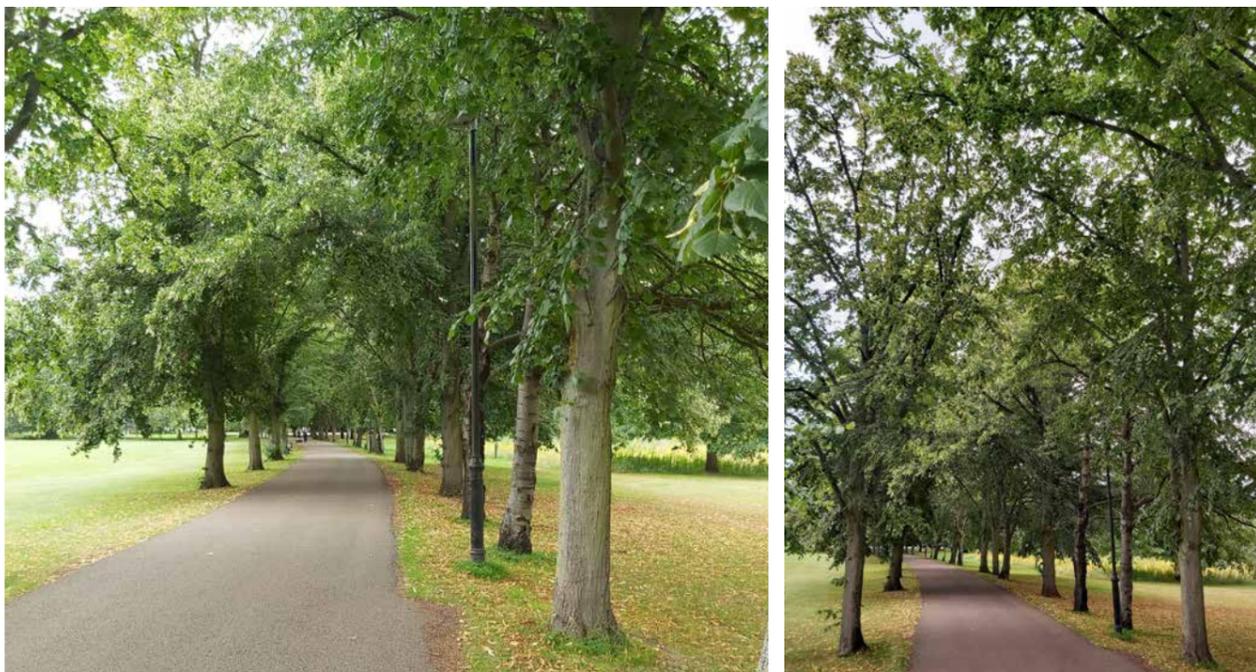
Height: 24m Diameter: 53cm

A native to the northern regions of the UK, this tree is commonly planted for timber. In parks it, along with other evergreen conifers, is planted to provide a green landscape in the winter. A tall tree, which can grow up to 40m, this pine is fairly slow growing, particularly in cooler climates. The reddish-orange bark of the upper half of the tree makes it easy to distinguish from other pines.

▶ Continue around the edge of the park, and turn left to head back to the car park.

28. The Lime Avenue *Tilia x europaea*

The lime avenue was planted in the 1960s along with wild cherries *Prunus avium*, however the cherries have mostly died off. Some of these cherries have been replaced with new planting, whereas the common lime trees *Tilia x europaea* still continue to serve the avenue well. The common lime is a cross between the two native limes of broad-leaved lime *Tilia platyphyllos* and small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata*.



▶ The very last tree of the Avenue on the left:

29. Wild Cherry *Prunus avium*

Height: 9m Diameter: 28cm

One of the British native cherry species, this tree is spectacular in the spring, with white blossom. The dark red fruits in autumn are edible, providing food to wildlife and anyone who can reach them.

Pink flowering cherries are probably either a form of the Cherry Plum, (or Myrobalam Plum) or one of the many available Japanese flowering cherries.

