Tree Trail

LAKE PLEASURE GROUNDS

Warminster Town Park

3rd Edition July 2022

LAKE PLEASURE GROUNDS
Warminster Town Park

Warminster Town Council

Delivering a brighter, greener future for all

This walk takes you round the lake looking at beautiful trees.
There is plenty to see at any time of year.
The route is just over 1km long and is on level, surfaced paths.
Directions are in bold type.
The position of each tree is marked on the map (see centre pages).
While you are going around why not do leaf and bark rubbings?

START at the main entrance to the park on Weymouth Street.
Walk straight ahead until you come to the lamp post on the corner of the putting green. Turn right towards the café.

Trail map 1

Alders

Have a look at the Alder trees on the putting green, beside the path. One tree has a double trunk. Alders are deciduous which means they drop their leaves and fruits in the autumn. In contrast evergreen trees have leaves for the whole year. There are definitions of other tree-related words on page 24.

Alder Leaf

Alder fruit

Alder catkins in spring

In spring alders have long, hanging flowers called catkins. The leaves are heart-shaped with a small point at the tip.

Alders have little oval green fruits which turn brown and look like mini fir cones. These open up to release seed in the wind.

Follow the path straight ahead past the café. Go over the little bridge crossing the river Were.

The river flows from near Cley Hill, through the town and under Morrisons' car park before it comes into the park. Beyond the park it joins the river Wylye flowing south to Salisbury.

Trail map 2
Cockspur Thorns

There is a row of **Cockspur Thorn** trees ahead of you**,** along the fence line behind the play area. These are from the hawthorn family and are native to North America. The early summer white flowers attract bees and other insects. In autumn the berries and leaves turn red.

These trees have big thorns like the bony spurs on a cockerel's legs. Can you spot one?

Cockspur Thorn flowers in June

Carry on down the path following the flow of the river

Trail map 3

Limes

Inside the fence just beyond the swings are two magnificent mature lime trees.

In the past limes were called linden trees.

They can grow to about 40m tall.

Lime leaves are heart-shaped with a point at the end and a serrated edge with 'teeth' like a saw blade. The leaves are eaten by the caterpillars of several kinds of moth.

Lime trees have fragrant yellow summer flowers which are loved by bees and other pollinating insects. The flowers turn into fruits like little bobbles.

Some people say the young lime leaves taste good in sandwiches. This might be because the leaves are often covered in sticky 'honeydew' left by aphids (greenfly). These insects pierce the leaves to suck out sugars made by photosynthesis. Ants come to 'milk' the aphids for the honeydew, rather like humans milk cows. Bees, hoverflies and ladybirds also come for the honeydew.

Lime wood is very good for carving and making furniture because it is soft, has a fine grain and does not warp. Lime bark has vertical ridges and was once used to make rope.

Carry on along the path past the limes

Trail map 4

Sycamore

By the sluice gate in the river you will see a **Sycamore** with ivy growing up it. Ivy is evergreen and makes good shelter for insects, birds and small mammals like bats. It flowers in the autumn and has berries in the winter so its nectar, pollen and berries are food for insects and birds when they are short of food. Sycamores have fruits called keys which have wings. These catch the wind and spread the seed like mini spinning helicopters.

Sycamore leaves and keys

Ivy

Trail map 5

English Oak

When you come to the gate into the play area, look across to a magnificent mature English or Common Oak growing against the fence on the slope. Oak trees are five-star hotels for many different species. They support more animals and plants than any other native tree so are very good for biodiversity.

There are at least **40** different species of oak which will grow in the UK, each with slightly different leaf, bark and acorn shapes.

Oak bark has a different bark texture from the limes.

Looking towards the skate park there are two young oaks of a different kind either side of the entrance. They have a spikier shape of leaf and a smoother bark.

Hundreds of different kinds of insects live in amongst oak leaves and like to eat them, for example, the caterpillars of the Purple Hairstreak butterfly and the Great Oak Beauty moth.

Purple Hairstreak Caterpillar
[Photo: Peter Eeles, Butterfly Conservation]

Purple Hairstreak Butterfly
[Photo: Jim Asher, Butterfly Conservation]

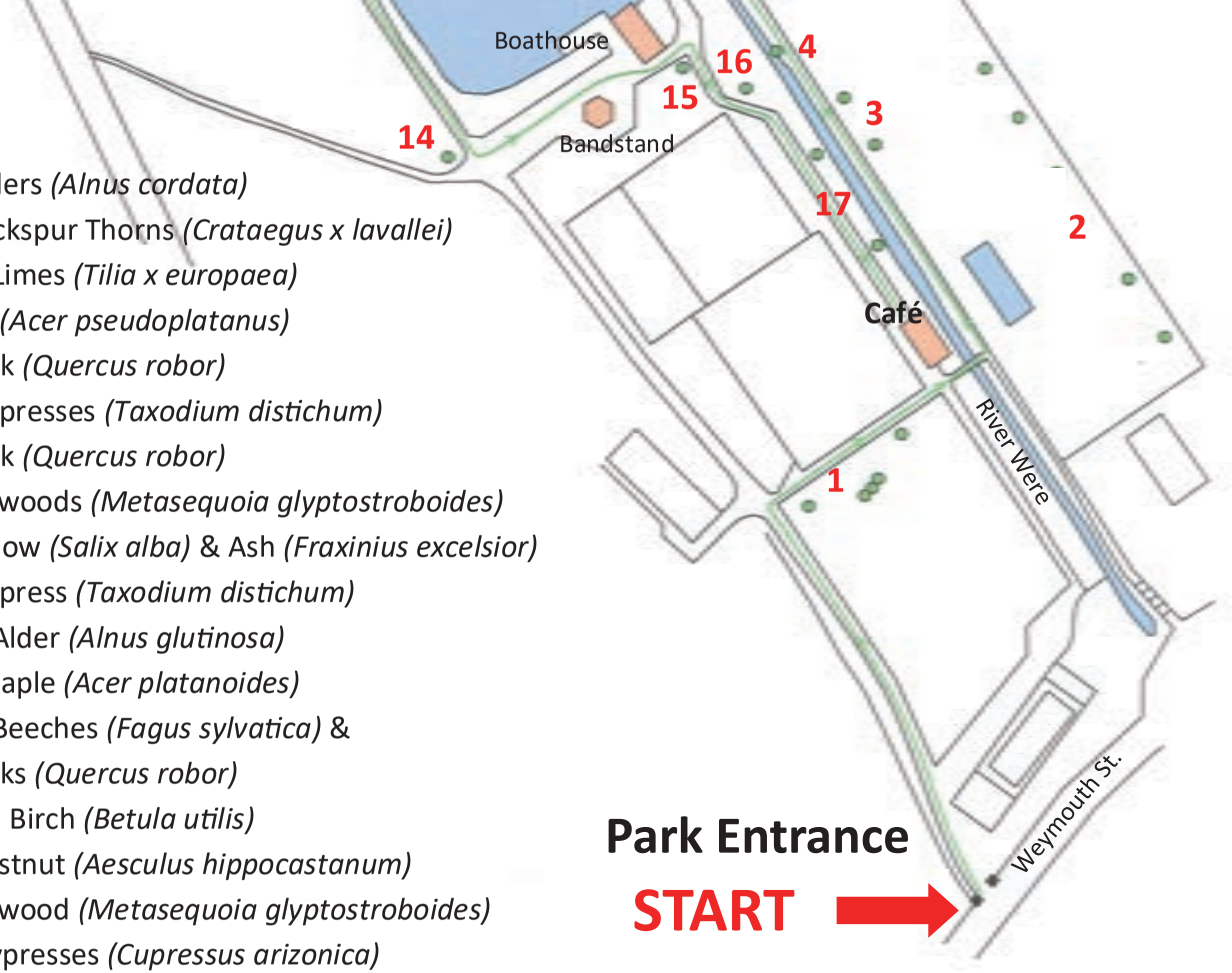
By July oak leaves get very tatty from being nibbled by insects so the trees often grow more new leaves then. The new leaves are called 'Lammas growth' because it happens around the time of the old Celtic festival of Lammas at the beginning of August which is half way between the summer solstice (June 21st) and the autumn equinox (September 23rd).

40 species of midges, mites and wasps burrow into oak buds or twigs to lay eggs and this makes the tree produce little round balls of woody material known as oak apples or galls. The eggs hatch into larvae which feed inside the galls.


Oak gall


Acorns

Birds and bats nest and roost in oak trees.
Badgers, squirrels, mice and deer eat the acorns.



1 Italian Alders *(Alnus cordata)*
2 Hybrid Cockspur Thorns *(Crataegus x lavallei)*
3 Common Limes *(Tilia x europaea)*
4 Sycamore *(Acer pseudoplatanus)*
5 English Oak *(Quercus robor)*
6 Swamp Cypresses *(Taxodium distichum)*
7 English Oak *(Quercus robor)*
8 Dawn Redwoods *(Metasequoia glyptostroboides)*
9 White Willow *(Salix alba)* & Ash *(Fraxinius excelsior)*
10 Swamp Cypress *(Taxodium distichum)*
11 Common Alder *(Alnus glutinosa)*
12 Norway Maple *(Acer platanoides)*
13 Common Beeches *(Fagus sylvatica)* & English Oaks *(Quercus robor)*
14 Himalayan Birch *(Betula utilis)*
15 Horse Chestnut *(Aesculus hippocastanum)*
16 Dawn Redwood *(Metasequoia glyptostroboides)*
17 Arizona Cypresses *(Cupressus arizonica)*

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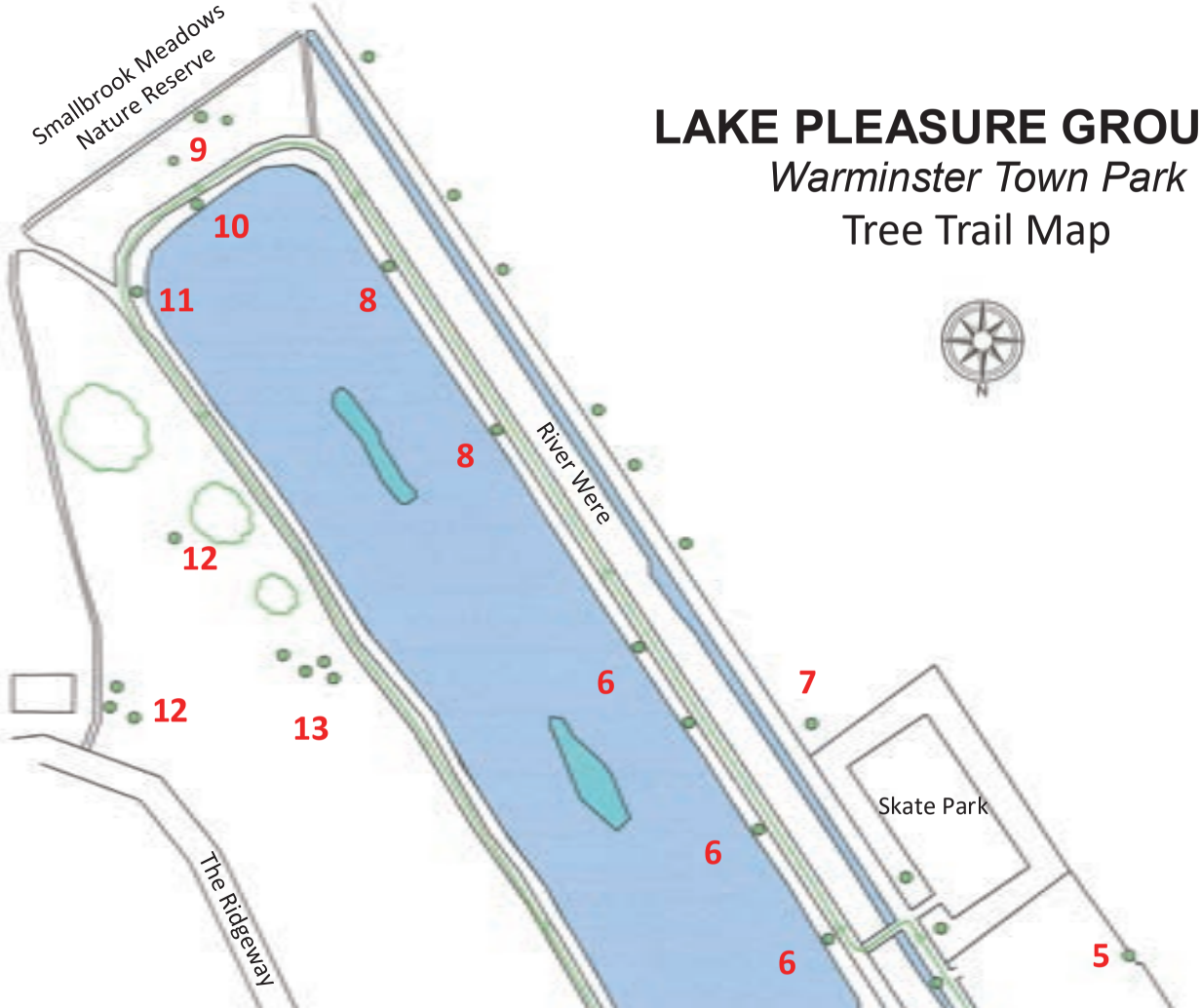
Warminster Town Park

Tree Trail Map



Fallen oak leaves make a good habitat for stag beetles, fungi and lichens.

Male and female stag beetles
[photo: People's Trust for Endangered Species]

Oaks produce one of the hardest and longest-lasting timbers on the planet. Oak was used for building ships until the mid-19th century. Modern uses include flooring, architectural beams and wine barrels. Oak bark contains a chemical called tannin which was used for soaking or 'tanning' leather to make it more flexible and easier to use.

Cross back over the river on the small bridge by the skate park. Turn right onto the path going down the side of the lake.

Trail map 6

Three Swamp Cypresses on the edge of the lake

Swamp cypresses are conifers. Most conifers are evergreen (keeping their leaves all year) but Swamp Cypresses are an exception to the rule. They are deciduous and gradually shed their old needles over the winter. They come from the swamps of south-eastern United States and Mexico. Clusters of male catkins appear in late autumn, turning yellow and shedding pollen in the spring. Female flowers are tiny green conelets which grow to about 2.5 cm across. The needles turn to a rusty orange in the autumn.

Swamp cypress in winter and summer

Swamp Cypress bark is ridged and fibrous. The trunks of mature trees develop tapers at the base which are called buttresses

Walk along beside the lake until you pass the second Swamp Cypress. Now look to your right, across the river Were.

Trail map 7

Oak in the corner of the field beside the skate park

This is a veteran tree and the girth (circumference) of its trunk is 5m. This tree has been struck by lightning in the past and still bears the scars but it is still in good condition. Some dying or dead wood on a tree does not mean it is going to die. Rotting wood provides good homes for many different insects and fungi.

Oak in winter and summer

Continue along the lake side

Trail map 8

A row of three Dawn Redwoods right by the water

Dawn Redwoods are rare deciduous conifers like the Swamp Cypresses, which are their closest living relatives. They come from central China and were only identified and named by two pioneering Chinese botanists in the 1940s. Seeds were then distributed throughout North America and Europe. Before that Dawn Redwoods were only known through fossils up to 100 million years old.

Dawn Redwoods can grow to 60m tall. Their cones and leaves are similar to the Swamp Cypress and the leaves turn a reddish brown

before falling. The roots have ‘knees’ which can grow out of the water and heave up paths. In the wild, the Dawn Redwood is now restricted to just a few scattered places in China. The species is classified by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature as endangered because of intensive rice cultivation.

Dawn Redwood catkins in Spring

Carry on towards the corner at the end of the lake.

Over to your right along the edge of the field there is a row of oaks and horse chestnuts.

Trail map 9

White Willow

In the row of trees along the bottom of the lake is a mature **White Willow** with ivy climbing its enormous trunk. This is a native British tree. The narrow leaves have white hairs on the surface and white fluff underneath which gives the tree a pale look when the wind is blowing.

Willow and Ash in summer (centre)

Willow bark contains salicylic acid and so does a plant called Meadowsweet which grows in Smallbrook Meadows just beyond the lake. Salicylic acid has become one of the world's most useful drugs – Asprin, named after the Latin botanical name for Meadowsweet, *Spirea ulmaria*.

The spreading branches of the White Willow are mixed up with the Ash trees either side of it. Ash trees have black leaf buds and purplish flowers before the leaves come out in Spring. The fruits hang in clusters and turn to seed in 'keys' which have wings and are distributed by the wind, like Sycamores.

Willow leaves

Turn the corner and walk along the bottom of the lake to Trail map 10 another Swamp Cypress with a double trunk, then on to Trail map 11, a Common Alder on the corner of the lake by the water

Alder is a native British tree which likes growing by water. The leaves are different from the Italian Alders on the putting green as they have a little indent at the tip. Alder wood is useful for making clogs and for shoring up canal banks since it does not rot under water.

Carry on walking round the lake passing big clumps of evergreen laurel on the slope and holly beside the path. Look up the slope to

Trail map 12

Maples

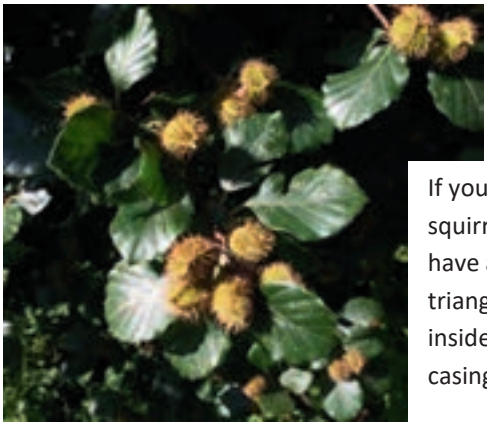
Maples at the top of the slope beside the house with the solar panels.

Trail map 13

Beech and oak

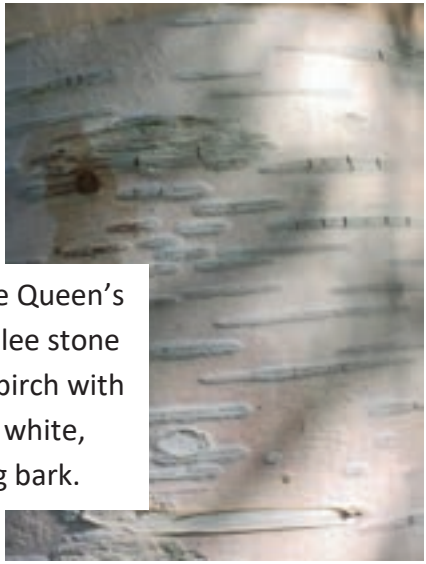
When you are past the first island in the lake, look up to your right to a mixture of mature beech and oak trees.

The Common Beech is a British native tree with a smooth bark compared to an oak.



If you can beat the squirrels in autumn, have a look at the triangular beech nuts inside their spiny casing.

Walk to the top of the lake Trail map 14 Himalayan Birch



Behind the Queen's Silver Jubilee stone there is a birch with papery white, peeling bark.

Turn left and go past the bandstand towards the boathouse

Trail map 15 Horse Chestnut

Horse chestnuts come from northern Greece and Albania and were brought to England in the late 1500s during the reign of Elizabeth I.

Spring sticky buds & horseshoe patterns

Pink 'candle' flowers

Spiny conkers form in summer ...

... & split open in autumn

Trail map 16 & 17

For refreshments head for the Pavilion Café passing a Dawn Redwood and two Arizona cypresses

Cypress cones and flowers in June.

Botanist	**A scientist who studies plants.**
Buttress	**Large roots visible at the base of a shallow-rooted tree. They prevent the tree from falling over.**
Catkin	**A flowering spike of many small flowers, usually hanging down in clusters.**
Cone/conelet	**A woody fruit containing seed e.g. on an Alder or Swamp Cypress.**
Deciduous	**A deciduous tree sheds all its leaves for part of the year.**
Evergreen	**Keeping leaves all year.**
Girth	**The measurement of the circumference of a tree trunk 1.5m from ground level.**
Habitat	**The home of an animal, plant or other organism.**
Native	**A native tree is one that came to a country naturally, not introduced by humans. Trees native to the UK came when glaciers melted after the last ice age before it was separated from mainland Europe by the sea.**
Non-native	**A tree introduced to the UK by humans. A species that would not naturally be living here if it were not intentionally or accidentally brought here.**
Photosynthesis	**The process that plants use to make nutrients from carbon dioxide and water using sunlight. Photosynthesis in plants generally involves the green pigment chlorophyll and generates oxygen as a by-product.**
Pollen	**A powder produced by the male part of a flower. It fertilises female flowers so they produce seed. Pollen is carried by insects or the wind.**
Seed	**The part of a fruit which can grow into another plant.**
Serrated	**Serrated leaves have notched edges like the teeth of a saw with their points angled towards the tip of the leaf.**
Veteran tree	**A tree which is of exceptional cultural, landscape or wildlife value because of its great age.**

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Warminster Town Council
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