

Tuesday May 7th Sidmouth Tree Trail and Salcombe Regis Walking Trail with Iain Ure and Dee Woods

A group of 11 walkers met up for this special quest on a cool but dry day. After admiring some fine red and white Horse chestnuts in front of Kennaway House, we were led through the churchyard, (looking for a mystery myrtle), and into Blackmore Garden's for pleached limes. Iain then took us through back alleyways to the ford, and from there we wended our way uphill, pausing briefly to admire massive Monterey pines and a wildflower meadow, on up through a bluebell wood to the Frog Stone on the SW coast path, stopping briefly to admire the views, and for rest and refreshment. We headed inland through woods and meadows and down to the lovely churchyard at Salcombe Regis. Here we found beautiful specimen trees such as *Robinia pseudoacacia* – Locust tree – *Quercus coccinea* – scarlet oak – *Liriodendron tulipifera* – tulip tree – and a *Liquidambar styraciflua* – American gum tree, as well as a *Acer griseum* - Paper-bark Maple, a *Magnolia grandiflora* and a glorious spreading 50 year old cherry tree. This made a delightful stop for lunch, after which we headed off for Soldiers Hill, and then down through ancient oak woodland with carpets of bluebells, and a fine beech avenue.

Downhill all the way back to the Byes in Sidmouth, the tree spotters found a *Ginkgo biloba* – Maidenhair-tree – in a garden adjoining the footpath. We made our way along to the Golden Copse in Margaret's Meadow, where we were delighted with the special varieties of golden trees. Back down the Byes we detoured through the community orchard, and found a wealth of beautiful large trees, such as holm oaks, sweet chestnuts and an unusual weeping lime. We stopped to admire the foxglove tree – *Paulownia tomentosa* – which had almost finished flowering in the grounds of the Hunters Moon Hotel. Next we took in the fine copper beeches and lovely grounds of Sidholme, where there was a music concert in the Music Room. We made our way up to the cemetery, noting a magnificent red Japanese maple, a weeping birch, and an unusual variegated tulip tree. We entered Peasland Knapp to admire the fine lime trees, and then crossed over into Knowle Gardens which is a fine arboretum in its own right. On the driveway was a flowering old Judas tree – *Cercis siliquastrum*- and several hornbeam and a young foxglove tree. We were shown a semi-mature Ginkgo tree that was to be moved to the new Council offices. A huge Monterey pine had partially collapsed, and a glorious hankchief tree – *Davidia involucrate* – was in full flower. We then made our way down secretive Glen Goyle and over to the Connaught Gardens for a most welcome cup of tea. Many thanks to Iain Ure for devising this very interesting tree walk based on the Sidmouth Arboretum guides, and to all the avid tree spotters.

Dee Woods

There was a photographic competition for all the walkers on this tree trail. There were two themes - the walk in general and anything which surprised us. Stella won the (stiff) competition with her composition of a Handkerchief Tree.

Many of the things we saw were genuinely a surprise –the wild meadow overlooking Sidmouth, the 'prison wall' and the Frog Stone, its shape being immediately seen when viewed from the right direction. Salcombe Regis churchyard proved to be a special place for specimen trees and a failing Monterey Pine hosts a Rhododendron in the grounds of Knowle House was magical.

