

# Protect Britain's 'steadfast and reassuring' trees, urges Charles

Hannah Furness

THE Prince of Wales has asked Britain to protect the “steadfast and reassuring presence” of 70 ancient trees and woodlands in tribute to the Queen’s “enduring dedication”.

As patron of the Platinum Jubilee planting project, the Prince spoke of the “profound significance” of the trees, which date back as far as 3,000 years and have paid silent witness to key moments of British history.

A network of 70 trees and 70 woodlands will be dedicated to the Queen in honour of her 70 years on the throne.

‘Trees and woodlands have a significance for us all – a reminder of our sovereign and her dedication’

“Trees and woodlands have a profound significance for us all – their steadfast and reassuring presence a reminder of our long-serving sovereign and her enduring dedication,” said the Prince, speaking under an old sycamore at Dumfries House in Ayrshire.

“Let us ensure that in her name we can now protect and strengthen this wonderful living canopy for the next 70 years and, hopefully, way beyond.

“And, above all, let us ensure that future generations can celebrate and enjoy them.”

The trees dedicated under the Queen’s Green Canopy project are described as “irreplaceable”, and were chosen in recognition of their great age, their historical significance or their contribution to science, the arts and local communities.

A handful have a connection to royal history, from the Balmerino sweet chestnut planted in Fife by Mary, Queen of Scots in 1565, to the sessile oak, where Elizabeth I rested during a hunting trip to Cowdray Park in Sussex in

1591. The Boscobel oak in Shropshire is a descendant of the original Royal Oak, within which Charles II hid in 1651 to escape the Roundheads in the Civil War, and has gone on to share its name with more than 400 pubs in the UK.

The yew tree framing the North Door on St Edward's Church, Stow-on-the-Wold, Gloucestershire, is said to have inspired JRR Tolkien, when he was writing the description of the Doors of Durin in his *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy.

An apple tree in Woolsthorpe, Lincolnshire, prompted Sir Isaac Newton to ponder gravity, and a yew in Wraysbury, Berkshire, was the scene of the signing of Magna Carta.

The Five Hundred Acre Wood in East Sussex, best known as the inspiration for 100 Acre Wood in Winnie-the-Pooh books, will be protected in the Queen's name, along with the black mulberry in the Hampstead garden, where John Keats wrote *Ode to a Nightingale*.

The Ashbrittle yew, in St John the Baptist Church in Tiverton, Devon, is believed to be 3,000 years old – reaching maturity when Stonehenge was still in use.

Speaking from the Walled Garden of Dumfries House, the Prince spoke of his awe at the historic and scientific importance of the nationwide network of trees and woodlands to be dedicated to his mother.

“I am delighted [to] launch this project in the grounds of Dumfries House, under the majestic branches of this old sycamore, which predates the very house itself, having grown from seed more than 420 years ago.

“Planted in 1599, during the reigns of Queen Elizabeth I and King James VI, it is remarkable that this ancient tree is as old as Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Caravaggio's *David and Goliath*.”