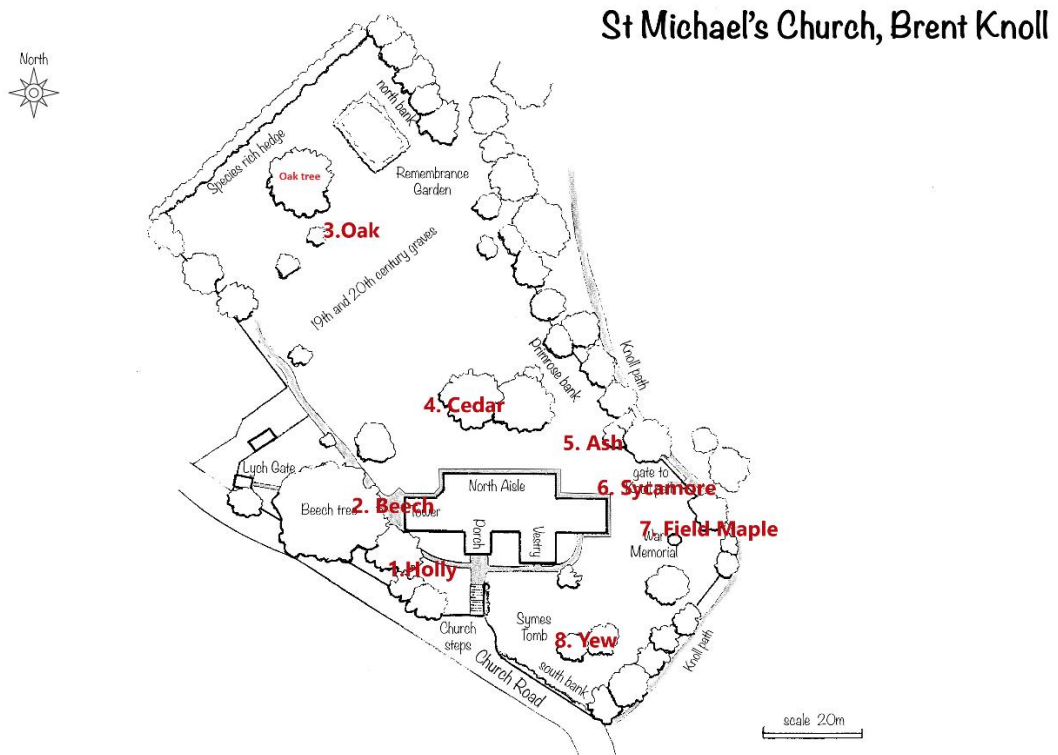


# St Michael's Churchyard, Brent Knoll – Tree Trail

## Introduction

Our tree trail provides an opportunity to see eight species of tree in our magnificent churchyard.

The trail starts to the west of the south porch with a Holly tree and takes a circular route around the churchyard ending south of the chancel.



To read a general introduction to trees [click here](#). At each tree point please stop and look at the tree. You can read the detail on each tree by **clicking on the link below**.

[Holly](#)

[Beech](#)

[Oak](#)

[Cedar](#)

[Ash](#)

[Sycamore](#)

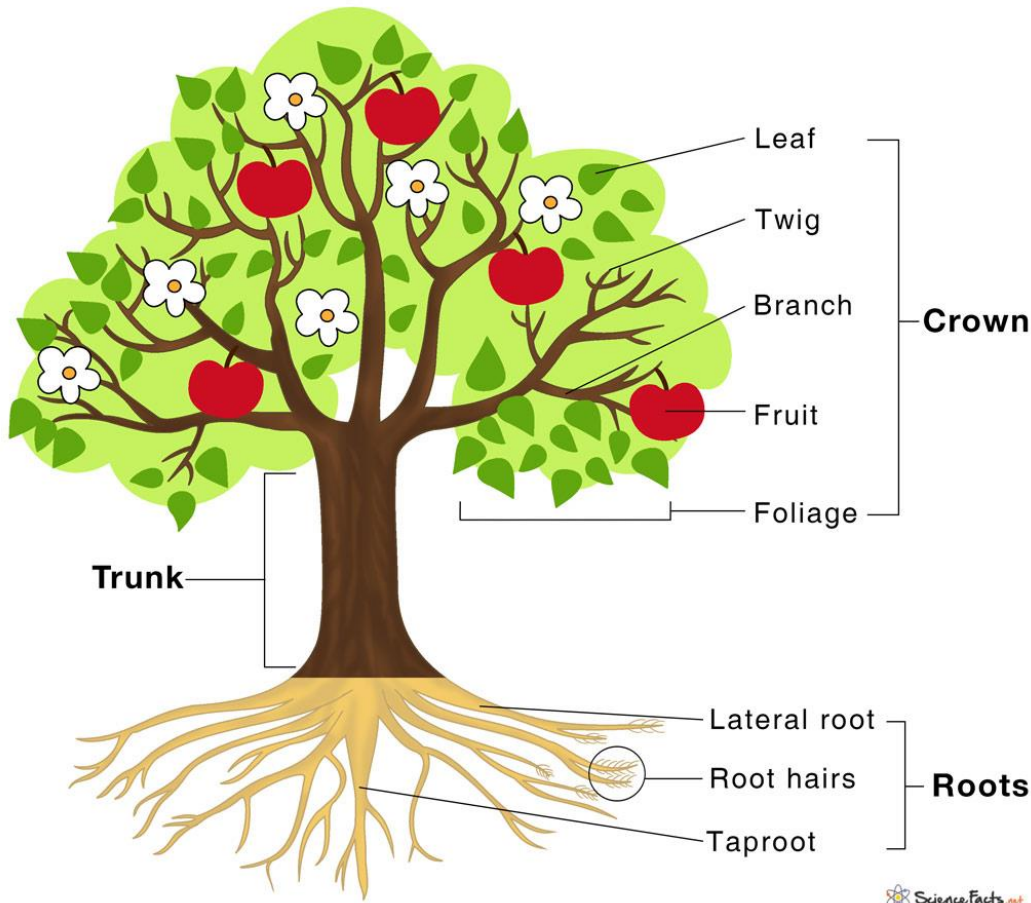
[Field Maple](#)

[Yew](#)

# What is a tree ?

- A tree is a very large woody plant.
- There are about 100,000 different types of trees in the world.
- Trees have a thick stem or **trunk** that supports smaller **branches** and even smaller **twigs**.
- Branches and twigs bearing **leaves** make up the **crown** or **canopy**.
- The leaves help the tree use **sunlight** to live.
- A tree might have **flowers** or **fruit and seeds** which are a source of food.
- The fruit and seeds help the tree **reproduce**.
- The tree is held in the ground by **ROOTS**- a main **tap root** & smaller **lateral roots**
- The roots help the tree drink **water**
- Some trees keep their leaves all winter and are called **EVERGREEN**  
Other trees drop their leaves in winter and are called **DECIDUOUS**
- **PLANT/ TREE REPRODUCTION TERMS**
- **Dioecious** - have distinct male and female plants e.g. Yew, holly
- **Monoecious** - describes a single plant that bears both male and female flowers e.g. Holly, Ash, Sycamore, Elder, Oak, Cedar, Beech

# Parts of a Tree



## Why are trees important?

- the biggest plants on the planet
- give us oxygen
- store carbon
- stabilise the soil
- provide an environment for wildlife
- provide food for humans ,animals and plants
- provide firewood for cooking and heat
- provide wood for home construction and tools
- provide a place of spiritual cultural and recreational importance

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# Holly *Ilex aquifolium* (Christ's thorn)



- Evergreen with shiny waxy leaves with spikes. Leaves at the bottom of the tree are more spiky than at the top
- Fruits are red berries. Birds like these but are poisonous to humans
- Birds and animals help spread the seeds
- Holly wood is hard, fine grained and used for making furniture and walking sticks
- Spikes are useful for protection against animals - and witches too!

## The Holly and The Ivy (Carol)

The holly and the ivy,  
When they are both full grown,  
Of all the trees that are in the wood,  
The holly bears the crown..

The holly bears a blossom,  
As white as the lily flower,  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,  
To be our sweet Saviour.

The holly bears a blossom,  
As white as the lily flower

And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,  
To be our sweet Saviour.

The holly bears a berry,  
As red as any blood,  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ  
For to do us sinners good..

The holly bears a prickle,  
As sharp as any thorn,  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ  
On Christmas Day in the morn.

The holly bears a bark,  
As bitter as any gall,  
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ  
For to redeem us all.

The holly and the ivy,  
When they are both full grown,  
Of all the trees that are in the wood,  
The holly bears the crown.

### **Refrain:**

*Oh the rising of the sun*

*And the running of the deer The  
playing of the merry organ  
Sweet singing in the choir*

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# Beech *Fagus sylvatica*



- A beech tree is large with smooth greyish bark
- It has small male catkin flowers and female flowers in Spring
- Nuts are called masts. They are small, angular and can be eaten though are bitter. They form every 3 or 4 years
- It is very shady under the tree canopy and not much grows
- Butterflies and moths like beech trees
- The wood is good for furniture, tools and burning. Good for making charcoal
- Bodgers made furniture from beech

## Beech tree activities

### **LOOK AT THE TREE CAREFULLY**

- Is the bark rough or smooth?
- Look at the leaf litter- Is anything growing?
- Can you find old nuts?
- Can you find any insects?
- Can you spot any carvings? – They grow with the tree
- Can you spot the woodpecker holes?


# How old is the beech tree?

A tape measure/ string and calculator will help in this task

- You can estimate the age of a beech tree by measuring its girth (distance around the tree) at **120cm feet above the ground.**
- If girth is less than 450 cms multiply the answer by 0.45
- If girth is greater than 450 cms multiply the answer by 0.5
- This will produce an answer in years
- A beech tree is **NOTABLE** if it is 75 to 150 years old
- A beech tree is a **VETERAN** if it is 150 years to 225 years old
- A beech tree is **ANCIENT** if it is over 225 years old

# Can you write an Acrostic poem about a Beech Tree?

**BEECH**



Write an acrostic poem about beech trees. Begin each line with a word that starts with the letter on that line.

**B** \_\_\_\_\_

**E** \_\_\_\_\_

**E** \_\_\_\_\_

**C** \_\_\_\_\_

**H** \_\_\_\_\_

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# Oak *Quercus robur*



- There are about 600 different oaks in the world
- Two are native to Britain
- Leaves are arranged in a spiral with rounded edges.
- Fruit is an acorn in a cup. 1000's of acorns may fall.
- It takes 6 – 18 months to germinate
- A mature oak may be 100 ft tall
- An oak is a home for birds, bugs, moths and beetles
- Insects may make little bumps called galls which contain larvae
- The wood is a hardwood and is used for furniture and making barrels for wine and whisky. It was used in ship building.
- Oaks can live to be 1000 years
- Tannin from the bark is used in leather making.

## Oak Tree Poem Johnny Ray Ryder

### *The Oak Tree*

A MIGHTY WIND BLEW NIGHT AND DAY.  
IT STOLE THE OAK TREE'S LEAVES AWAY.  
THEN SNAPPED ITS BOUGHS  
AND PULLED ITS BARK  
UNTIL THE OAK WAS TIRED AND STARK.  
BUT STILL THE OAK TREE HELD ITS GROUND  
WHILE OTHER TREES FELL ALL AROUND.  
THE WEARY WIND GAVE UP AND SPOKE,  
"HOW CAN YOU STILL BE STANDING OAK?"

THE OAK TREE SAID, I KNOW THAT YOU  
CAN BREAK EACH BRANCH OF MINE IN TWO,  
CARRY EVERY LEAF AWAY,  
SHAKE MY LIMBS AND MAKE ME SWAY.

BUT I HAVE ROOTS STRETCHED IN THE EARTH,  
GROWING STRONGER SINCE MY BIRTH.  
YOU'LL NEVER TOUCH THEM, FOR YOU SEE  
THEY ARE THE DEEPEST PART OF ME.

UNTIL TODAY, I WASN'T SURE  
OF JUST HOW MUCH I COULD ENDURE.  
BUT NOW I'VE FOUND WITH THANKS TO YOU,  
I'M STRONGER THAN I EVER KNEW.

# Cedar (Cedrus)



- Conifer that likes high ground
- Grows up to 60 metres
- Broad sweeping branches
- Wood has a spicy scent
- Bark has thick ridges
- Leaves are evergreen, waxy and like needles in spiral clusters
- Cones are like small barrels and green/brown . The cones release winged seeds when they are mature.
- The seeds contain a nasty sticky resin
- Moths do not like cedar
- Cedar was used for making chests and producing a type of oil

## CEDAR POEM Rita Kowats

*My god roots herself*

*Within me like a great*

*Cedar Mother*

*Who plants her massive*

*Elephant feet on earth*

*Roots down*

*To hold and nourish.*

*She is the frame that shapes my existence.*

*Stalwart*

*Stable*

*Steady*

*Never mind that bark strips away*

*Life is in the stripping.*

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## Ash Fraxinus Family Oleaceae (olive tree like)

- Medium to large tree
- Mostly deciduous
- Seeds are known as keys (samara)
- Leaves – light green, oval , 9-13 leaflets in pairs, pointed, toothed
- Buds are sooty black
- Used to make handles for tools eg axe
- Believed to have powers to heal and protect from lightning and witches!

## Ash die back a disease killing about 80% UK ashes

- Fungus from Asia – our trees have no defence
- Affects trees of all ages
- Leaves develop dark patches in summer
- Leaves wilt, turn black and shed early
- Lesions develop where branches meet trunk. Diamond in shape and dark brown
- Trees may develop new growth from dormant buds – response to stress

## A Haiku Poem Japanese poem – 3 lines and 17 syllables

### For example Ash tree Haiku

*Great cosmic axis*

*Hanging drunk inspiration*

*One eyed ecstasy*

Can you write a Haiku poem for another tree?

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# Sycamore

Acer  
pseudoplatanus



- Deciduous tree
- 100ft tall with a flaky creamy white bark
- Leaves -5 lobed like hands
- Small flowers that attract bees
- Winged seeds like helicopters.
- About 1000 seeds a year
- The tree is a symbol of strength eternity and divinity
- Used in furniture, instruments
- It can tolerate pollution and provide shade and is strong in wind
- It can live 150 to 600 yrs

Find some sycamore seeds and see how they fly ....

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# Field Maple



## Acer campestre

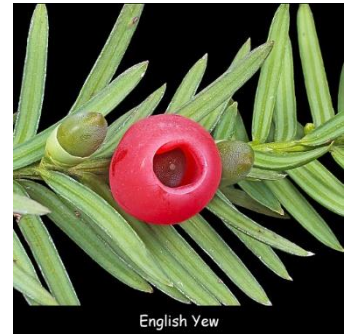
- A sturdy broadleaf, attractive tree
- Can grow to 30m and live 350 yrs
- Bark – light brown
- Leaves - Small, dark green and shiny, five lobed and rounded teeth
- Seeds are pink tinged with wings in a straight line
- Flowers are both male and female and are yellow green and small
- Liked by caterpillars and aphids
- Resists air pollution

## Maple John Claire

*The Maple with its tassel flowers of green  
That turns to red, a stag horn shaped seed  
Just spreading out its scalloped leaves is seen,  
Of yellowish hue yet beautifully green.  
Bark ribbed like corduroy in seamy screed  
That farther up the stem is smoother seen,  
Where the white hemlock with white umbel flowers  
Up each spread stoven to the branches towers  
And mossy round the stoven spread dark green  
And blotched leaved orchis and the blue-bell flowers  
Thickly they grow and neath the leaves are seen.  
I love to see them gemm'd with morning hours.  
I love the lone green places where they be  
And the sweet clothing of the Maple tree.*

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# Yew tree *Taxus baccata*



The English yew tree is native to Britain, and is also found in Europe, W Asia and N Africa,

- Evergreen
- Dioecious – there are male and female trees
- Live a very long time – on occasion 3000 yrs
- Trees attract ravens. Birds eat the red berries and disperse the seeds
- The bark, the leaves and the seeds of **yew** trees are highly poisonous to cattle, horses, sheep and other domestic livestock as well as people, especially children; only the red fleshy seed covering is not poisonous, hence **yew** trees were planted in **churchyards** so that common folk did not graze their livestock on Church ...

**Q. Why does every Churchyard have a yew tree?**

**A.** possibly because of druid and pagan belief, cadavers, the longbow or perhaps protectionism.

- **In 1307, Edward I ordered that yew trees be planted in all churchyards to protect the buildings from high winds and storms. The mature yew also provided a source of bow making timber to keep the country's archers supplied.**



**Long bow – 6 feet long**

**Q. How many yew trees are in the churchyard.?**

**Answer :**

# Druids

**Druids** planted groves of yew trees as **places of worship**. They were **forbidden** from **worshipping** their gods **inside an enclosed building** so worshipped outside. Most of their sacred sites were on **high ground** where the heavenly bodies that they worshiped could be seen most clearly.



## Lorton Vale Yew trees William Wordsworth

THERE is a Yew-tree, pride of Lorton Vale,  
Which to this day stands single, in the midst  
Of its own darkness, as it stood of yore;  
Not loth to furnish weapons for the bands  
Of Umfraville or Percy ere they marched  
To Scotland's heaths; or those that crossed the sea  
And drew their sounding bows at Azincour,  
Perhaps at earlier Crecy, or Poictiers.  
Of vast circumference and gloom profound  
This solitary Tree! a living thing  
Produced too slowly ever to decay;  
Of form and aspect too magnificent  
To be destroyed. But worthier still of note  
Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale,  
Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;  
Huge trunks! and each particular trunk a growth  
Of intertwined fibres serpentine  
Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved;  
Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks  
That threaten the profane;--a pillared shade,  
Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,  
By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged  
Perennially--beneath whose sable roof  
Of boughs, as if for festal purpose, decked  
With unrejoicing berries--ghostly Shapes  
May meet at noontide; Fear and trembling Hope,  
Silence and Foresight; Death the Skeleton  
And Time the Shadow;--there to celebrate,  
As in a natural temple scattered o'er  
With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,  
United worship; or in mute repose  
To lie, and listen to the mountain flood  
Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves.

# The Ewe, You and the Yew Denis Barter

As I viewed the view I could see you, a ewe and a yew.  
Then I saw the ewe, under a yew, was looking at you!  
But that ewe under the yew looking at you, was a view  
which begged the question as to why, the ewe under the yew,  
was looking at you, and what was its view of you?  
Did you see that ewe under the yew, looking at you,  
or did you only see the yew and not the ewe looking at you?  
or was it only the ewe looking at you, and not the yew?  
I ask this of you, for I cannot ask the ewe standing under the yew,  
nor can I ask the yew, under which stood the ewe,  
who was stood looking at you. So what's your view?  
Do you, take the view that the ewe, under the yew  
had nothing to do, and was simply under the yew  
so it could look at you? Although I'm sure the yew  
had nothing to do with you, neither did the ewe,  
that was looking at you, from under that yew!  
Maybe the yew, under which the ewe stood looking at you,  
was a convenient yew for the ewe, to get a good view of you?  
That's my view, as to why the ewe stood under the yew to look at you?  
If you know, please tell me do, so I can forget my view  
of the question as to why the ewe under the yew, was looking at you!  
Then I can bid you, the yew and the ewe, a fond Adieu!

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