



## Map of Scadbury Park Acorn Trail Key:

1-20: Numbered posts  
A- T: Referenced trees

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## What are Veteran and Ancient Trees?

An ancient tree is one that has reached the latter stages of its lifespan. This differs depending on the species, with some trees maturing after 40 years and others after 400. Ancient trees may have a reduced, or flattened canopy and a wide trunk relative to other trees of the same species. The tree may be hollow, or beginning to rot from the inside, bracket fungi normally being a good indicator of this. Ancient trees are not necessarily dying and may go on to live for centuries. The older the tree the more valuable it becomes, providing homes to an increasing number of invertebrates as they age, particularly ancient oak trees which are known to support a vast number of insects. Veteran is a term describing a tree with notable features, such as fallen limbs, rot, fungus, or signs of decay. A veteran tree is a survivor that has developed some of the features found on an ancient tree, and is not necessarily an old tree. Ancient veterans are ancient trees, not all veterans are old enough to be ancient.

The Friends of Scadbury Park is a charity (ref 1181218). Run entirely by volunteers, we seek to maintain and protect our precious Nature Reserve, make it accessible to all, and communicate to the 300,000 visitors each year. There is much work to be done to maintain our valuable trees. You can help by joining us, and/or by making a donation to help us with our work. Learn more at [www.scadbury-park.org.uk](http://www.scadbury-park.org.uk)



# the friends of Scadbury Park

## Ancient and Veteran Trees on the Acorn Trail



### The Tree Trail

There are more than 120 Veteran or Ancient trees in Scadbury, many of which can be seen from the Acorn Trail. This 2.5 mile walk describes about twenty of them, starting at The Old Perry Street car park. Tree numbers may not always be easy to see. Please note: paths are uneven in places with some steep slopes and are very muddy and slippery at times.

[scadbury-park.org.uk](http://scadbury-park.org.uk)

**A. Veteran English Oak (tree number 2751).**

Girth: 4 metres. Smaller trees growing around it compete for water and nutrients so the Friends cut some of them back each winter. Cutting too much, too quickly, can shock the tree and damage it.

**B. The Elizabeth Oak. Ancient English Oak (2754).**

Post 1. Girth: 5.9m. One of the widest trees in the park, it may have been here when Queen Elizabeth I visited in 1597 to knight Thomas Walsingham IV. It has suffered from fire damage, competition, and root damage due to soil compaction. Management involves removing competing trees and re-directing the path.

**C. Ancient English Oak (2755).**

Girth 3.5m. It has suffered from excessive shading and competition but can now be seen following clearance of trees and shrubs around it. *Pause at the pond to admire the alder trees along its bank. After the boardwalk and small bridge the woodland has been thinned to let in more light and encourage the growth of woodland flora including English bluebells. Just beyond here look to your left for:*

**D. Ancient English Oak (2758):**

Girth 5.1m. This huge tree dropped a limb a few years ago leaving a huge wound in the tree trunk. Holes like this are important habitats for birds, bats and invertebrates. *After a bench on your left by some silver birch trees, look on your right for a large yew tree set back from the path:*

**E. Large yew tree (not numbered).**

Note how the ground beneath the tree is relatively bare, a result of mildly toxic yew needles rotting beneath it. Yew can live beyond 2,000 years. Ancient yew trees have to be at least 800 years old, so this tree is not classed as ancient or veteran yet, but with time and good management it may reach that age. *Cross the road and continue through young birch woodland, then as you curve to the left pass some yew trees. At the bottom of some steps is:*

**F. The Midfield Oak (2743):**

Girth 6.2 m, the widest and possibly oldest tree in the park. The path has been re-routed around this tree to reduce soil compaction around the roots from years of footfall.

## Ancient and Veteran Trees on the Acorn Trail

Look to your right to spot the remain of:

**G. Another Ancient English Oak (2744).**

Girth 5.69m. This tree looks dead but is still surviving and probably of a similar age to the Midfield Oak. The two may have once marked a boundary point. In the meadow below the Midfield Oak is

**H. Silver Birch**, an impressive example of a silver birch. Birch are pioneer woodland species – one of the first trees to colonise newly cleared areas. They are short lived trees reaching 70-100 years. This is an old but still healthy specimen. Birch provides food and habitat for more than 300 insect species. *Just past the meadow you can see the stump and felled remains of:*

**I. The Big Stump**

The dead wood is very important for fungi and many invertebrates. You can see how large this tree must have been by the large open space in the tree canopy. *Just before you pass beneath the telephone wires look left to see*

**J. The remains of veteran tree (2738).**

Girth 3.35m., part of which has now been turned into a bench. Pass another bench and look for

**K. Mature beech tree**

with a wide straight trunk of about 4m diameter. Look up into the canopy to see the large bracket fungus, Ganoderma, which is likely to kill the tree.

*Continue past the moated manor until the path junction, turn left, then right following the sign-post to Little Wood. Look across the horse paddocks on your left to the view to Chislehurst and London. These fields were apple orchards until the 1960s.*

**L. Linear orchard-a line of 10-15 veteran apple trees**

between the track and the field. These represent the remains of the orchard. The trees are much younger than the veteran oaks but are old for apple trees and have features which classify them as veterans including holes and dead wood.

*Opposite the pond look for:*

**M. An Ancient English Oak (2839)**

Girth 4.2m. which has signs of fire and storm damage. Possibly once a field boundary marker. If you look up you can see nest holes of ring-necked parakeets in the trunk.

**You should have no trouble hearing them!**

*Follow the path past the bar gate and into Little Wood. Immediately on your left see*

**N. The split trunk of a Veteran Holm Oak (2848)**

Native to the Mediterranean, in the UK holm oaks are spreading as the climate warms.

*Further along on the right look for:*

**O. A large Veteran Sweet Chestnut tree (2845).**

Girth 5.4m.

**P. Veteran Sweet Chestnut tree (2849).**

Girth 4.3m. Sweet Chestnuts were introduced by the Romans and may have been planted on the estate for timber.

*Follow the path downhill around a bend to the left.*

**Q. A Giant Redwood**

towers over other non-native evergreen trees including pines. These may have been planted as part of a small arboretum when Scadbury park was a country estate.

*Cross the bridge and walk through the meadow. In summer the meadows are full of butterflies including Marbled White, Meadow Brown and Green Hairstreak. Towards the top of the hill on your left is a small woodland known as Bank Shaw. On the edge look for:*

**R. Remnants of Veteran English Oak (2851).**

now just a charred stump under the shade of Veteran English Oak (2850). Girth 4.3m.

*At the end of this meadow on your right is:*

**S. A row of 4 Veteran trees in the hedgeline;**

**2 oaks, an ash and a hornbeam.** This suggests that these fields have been farmed for a very long time. *Continue through the next field towards the Lodge, cross the road into the woodland and continue to the picnic area.*

**T. Collapsed trunk of Sweet Chestnut (2785)**

in play area. Girth 3.4m. An example of 'phoenix regeneration' - despite having fallen years ago it has recovered and is a healthy tree.

Popularly known as the 'Elephant Tree' it is used for climbing by children and together with the remains of some other trees blown over in the 1987 storm forms part of the Natural Play Area at the edge of the grassed picnic area.