



Two Tree Trails in Odiham



Two walks around Odiham tracking some of the trees of the village and Odiham Common.

With details of the history and natural history of the trees

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Illustrations by Peter Forey

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Adapted from Tree Trails 1 and 2 of the Odiham Biodiversity Group, the information reproduced here by their kind permission.

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With grateful thanks for the information supplied by Steve Lyons, Hart District Council Ranger to Odiham Common.

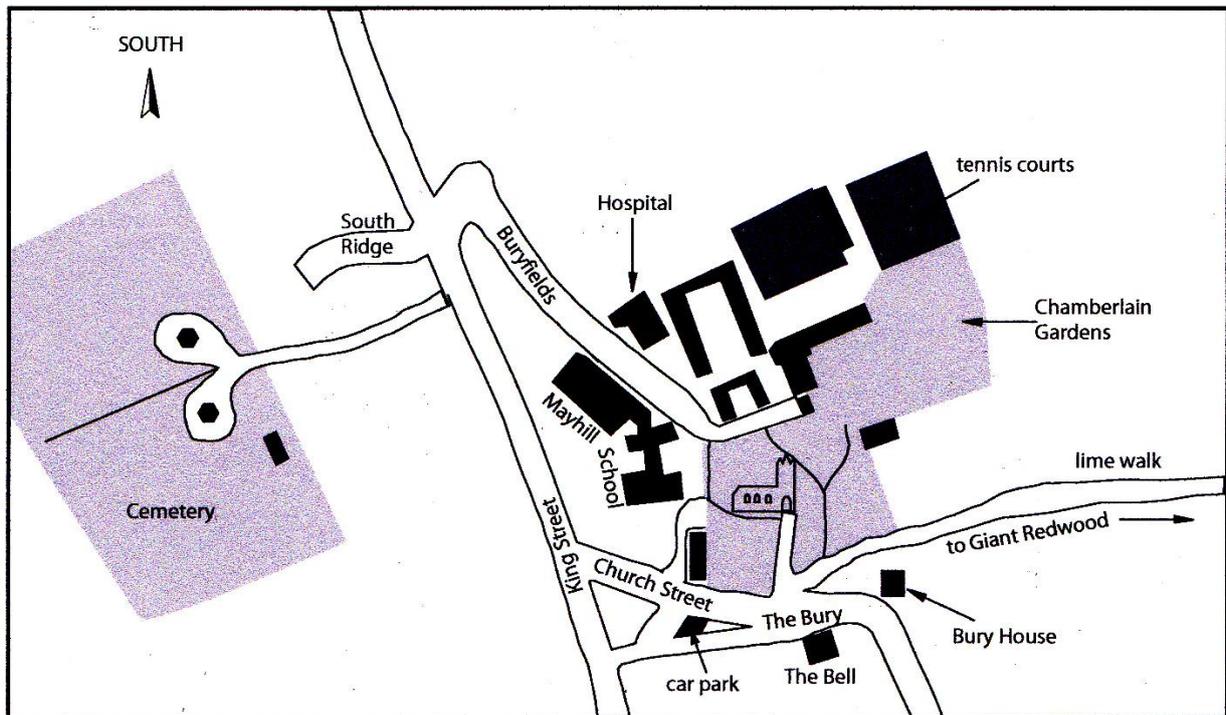
Cover illustration: Common Yew, *Taxus baccata*, from Odiham Cemetery

*The Odiham Society would like to thank PAMELA AND PETER FOREY
for producing these excellent tree trails for the Society.*

Walk 1 The Centre of the Village

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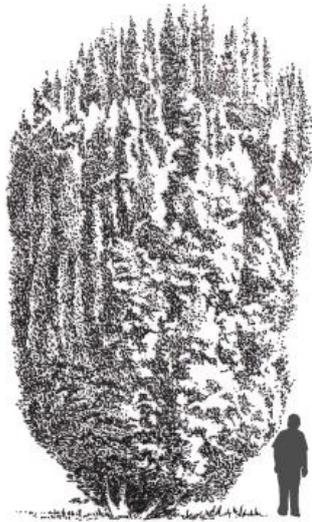
About one hour. Some parts of the walk are wheel chair accessible (the Churchyard, Buryfields, King Street and parts of the Cemetery).



Begin your walk in The Bury. This is a square behind the High Street on the opposite side of the street to the George Hotel. It lies in front of the Church. As you face the Church, there is a large Holm Oak, *Quercus ilex*, to your right inside the grounds of Bury House. This is a Mediterranean species, and unlike our native oaks, is evergreen with small oval, dark green leaves.

Entering the churchyard, turn right and follow the path until you reach a line of Limes on your left. These are Small-leaved Limes, *Tilia cordata*, unlike the Limes in the churchyard. They have smaller leaves and almost no burrs or sprouts at the base. If you follow this path to the place where it opens out (a few yards) you will see a magnificent Giant Redwood, *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, in the meadow to your left.

Returning to the churchyard entrance and facing the church, there is an avenue of pleached Common Limes, *Tilia x europaea*, in front of you. Pleaching is a process which involves pruning and training the branches of the trees along wires. Along three sides of the churchyard (east, north and south), there are more Common Lime trees, mostly pollarded. Pollarded trees are cut above browsing height so that they form many shoots at this point. Like all Common Limes these trees have many burrs on the trunk and sprouts at the base. Limes have characteristic flowers and fruits, consisting of bracts, with flowers, and then fruits growing from the centre of each bract (see page 5 for illustration). Some years the trees are absolutely covered with fruiting bracts.



Irish Yew



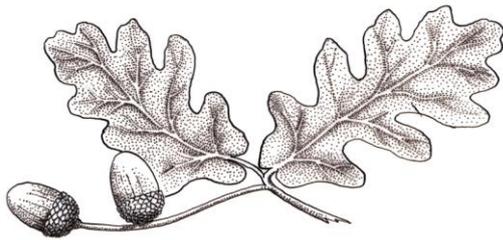
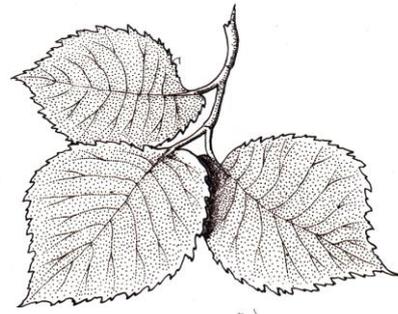
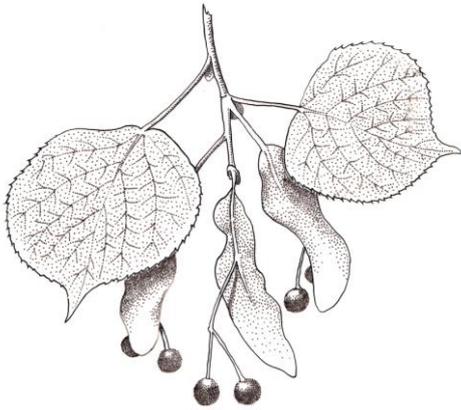
Cypress in Cemetery

There are many Yew Trees in the churchyard, both Common Yew (*Taxus baccata*) with broad spreading crowns (illustrated on the front cover) and Irish Yews, (*Taxus baccata fastigiata*) with more upright growth (illustrated above). All Irish Yews originate from two trees found in County Fermanagh in Ireland in 1780. Yews are coniferous trees or large shrubs and they can grow to a great age. They are often associated with churchyards but although mature, these trees are not very old as can be determined from old photographs.

Follow the path to the right of the Church and to your right there is a Glastonbury Thorn tree (*Crataegus monogyna* 'Biflora'). Most Hawthorns (*Crataegus monogyna*) flower once in May but Glastonbury Thorn may flower twice, once before Christmas and again in May. It is said to have sprung from the staff of Joseph of Arimathea when he visited Glastonbury. If wheelchair access is needed continue on the left fork of the path to the road at the south side of Church beside the Dawn Redwood (see later) and continue the walk from there. You can see the Pest House to your right as you emerge from the churchyard.

Or take the right fork and you will come to three large Silver Maples (*Acer saccharinum*) forming a triangle; these three maples host many clumps of mistletoe. Continue towards the south boundary of the Churchyard and you will pass the Pest House on your left (a small 17th Century house well worth a visit) and enter into Chamberlain Gardens. This area was once part of the garden of Bury House. The two sisters of Neville Chamberlain lived here during World War II and they gave this land to the Parish.

The first tree on your right is a Norway Maple, *Acer platanoides*, easy to identify in early spring by its bright, acid-yellow flowers. It has probably seeded here, because it is growing in front of a Strawberry Tree, *Arbutus unedo*, which was probably planted. There are several exotic trees in this area, which may have been planted by the gardener of the Chamberlain sisters; he was known to have an interest in trees.



Top left, Common Lime: **Top right**, English Elm: **Bottom left**, English Oak:
Bottom right: Common Ash

Follow the line of trees and shrubs round to your right and next in line is another large Holm Oak, and then, among other shrubs there is a large shrub of Box, *Buxus sempervirens*. As you follow the line around the corner, there is a large Persian Ironwood, *Parrotia persica*, set back near the fence. It is easily identified by its smooth bark which flakes away leaving coloured patches and by its quite large, glossy, oval leaves. Growing in the middle of a patch of grass next to the childrens' playground is an English Walnut, *Juglans regia*. It has compound thick leathery leaves, and walnuts enclosed in round green fruits, in the autumn.

Along the side of the garden behind the childrens' playground is a Beech hedge, *Fagus sylvatica*, rather overgrown now, with its branches reaching several feet into the garden. In the far hedge, among other shrubs are several Cappadocian Maples, *Acer cappadocicum*, with handsome five-pointed leaves like all maples; these turn yellow in autumn in this species.

As you walk along this far hedge, to your left at the corner of the childrens' playground is another English Walnut. Follow the path at the far right corner of the garden till you come to the tennis courts, with another large Holm Oak to your right. Follow the path on your left and the hedge on your left has a variety of trees, including Elder, *Sambucus nigra*; Wych Elm, *Ulmus glabra* and Huntingdon's Elm, *Ulmus x hollandica* 'Vegeta'. Elms have distinctively asymmetrical simple leaves (see illustration of English Elm leaves above). You will also find Sycamore, *Acer pseudoplatanus*; Holm Oak; Hawthorn, *Crataegus monogyna*; Yew and Holly, *Ilex aquifolium* in this hedge. As you come to the end of the tennis court, turn back into Chamberlain Gardens noticing the magnificent Copper Beech, *Fagus sylvatica* 'Purpurea' to your left, and return to the Pest House. There will be a large Tulip Tree, *Liriodendron tulipifera*, to your right.



Top left, Hornbeam: **Top Right,** Field Maple: **Bottom,** Black Poplar

Now walk along the south side of the churchyard, alongside the Alms Houses. Forming the southern border of the churchyard are several unpollarded Common Limes and beside a path as it emerges from the churchyard is a magnificent Dawn Redwood, *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*. This is a deciduous conifer which was hailed as a 'living fossil' when the first trees were discovered in China in 1941 – it had long been known in the fossil record. Seed was brought back to Europe in the years following and now these unusual trees can be found in gardens all over the world. It has bright green needle-like leaves which turn yellow and red in the autumn, and then fall, and peeling reddish bark. Looking into the Churchyard at this point you can see many Common and Irish Yews and several large Box shrubs.

Continue along the road and turn right into Buryfields. You will come to a large Pedunculate or English Oak, *Quercus robur*, on your left, in the grounds of Mayhill School. There are two native Oak species in the British Isles, English Oak and Sessile Oak, *Quercus petraea*. They can be told apart by differences in their leaves and acorns. English Oaks have auricles or 'ears' at the base of their leaves (see illustration on page 5) while Sessile Oaks lack these 'ears'. English Oaks have their acorns held on stalks or peduncles (so that they resemble pipes), hence Pedunculate Oak. The acorns of Sessile Oaks grow close to the stem and do not resemble pipes. All the oaks on these two walks are English Oaks which tend to grow on alkaline or neutral soils. Sessile Oaks tend to grow on acid soils, hence the oaks in Fleet, where the soil is acid sand, are generally Sessile Oaks.

Continue past the Cottage Hospital until you come to a car park on the right. In amongst the beeches which make up the hedge at the back are two Italian Alders, *Alnus cordata*. The cones and yellow catkins are striking in spring and the trees have heart-shaped leaves and green ovoid fruits in summer; these will open up into cones as the year progresses.

At the end of the car park, turn left and go down the hill into King Street, cross the road into the cemetery entrance which is slightly to your left. As you come into the cemetery there is a splendid avenue of Irish Yews facing you. Turning right, walk around the South Chapel and there is another Giant Redwood (also sometimes called Wellingtonia) to your right. It has spongy red bark, only partly visible since it is mostly covered in Ivy. Continuing around the chapel you will come face to face with another magnificent Copper Beech, unmissable with its deep red leaves. Looking across the cemetery to your right, there is a young Atlas Cedar, *Cedrus atlantica*; this is the blue form *glauca*, a garden variety with bluer leaves than the original species which derives from the Atlas Mountains in North Africa. Beyond it is a distinctive Cypress tree (illustrated on page 4); another similar tree grows behind the Copper Beech.

Continuing around the South Chapel you pass a Common Yew and then return to the Irish Yew Avenue. As you walk down the avenue you will pass three large trees to your left; first a Monterey Cypress, *Cupressus macrocarpa*, a species originally from the coast of California which has been planted in many parts of Europe, and which does well anywhere where the summers are cool – it seems to grow well here in Odiham!; then a Corsican Pine, *Pinus nigra* subspecies *maritima* (this is a form of Black Pine with amazingly long needles!) and finally there is another Giant Redwood, this one smaller and younger than the one near the entrance.

Retracing your steps towards the entrance, walk around the North Chapel, noticing the Common Ash, *Fraxinus excelsior*, on your right. This native species is under threat from Ash disease as I write this tree trail and I hope this tree survives. Its leaves are compound and its fruits in the form of 'keys' (see illustration on page 5). Walking past the chapel and turning right, look towards the far side of the cemetery to see a line of huge old Common Lime trees; these have mistletoe in them but this is only visible in winter.

Leaving the cemetery, turn right down King Street and in the hedge past the cream cottage on the left side of the road there are young English Elms, *Ulmus procea* (their leaves are illustrated on page 5). Nowadays Elms seem to grow to a certain size and then succumb to Dutch Elm Disease, but these have been here for several years and seem healthy so far. On the other side of the road you will see a large Hornbeam (opposite Hollybank); its dangling winged fruits are very characteristic in summer and autumn (see illustration on page 6).

Continue along King Street until you come to a junction and bear left till you come to the wall of Mayhill School. Behind the wall are three native shrubs; first Dogwood, *Cornus sanguinea*, with behind it another Walnut tree. Then a Guelder Rose, *Viburnum opulus* is set back a little from the road; it has lobed leaves, flat head of white flowers in June, followed by shiny red berries. Finally you will see Wayfaring Tree, *Viburnum lantana*, with long oval greyish leaves, white flowers and red berries which later turn black.

Further along, still in the school grounds but opposite the library, is a Blue Atlas Cedar, a larger and older tree than the one in the cemetery and on the other side of the school entrance a Silver Birch, *Betula pendula* with its characteristic silver bark and 'shivery' triangular leaves. There is also a Field Maple, *Acer campestre*, an English native tree often planted in hedgerows; its five-pointed leaves are more rounded (see illustration on page 6) than those of the Cappadocian and Norway Maples seen in Chamberlain Gardens.

Go on into the Churchyard and turn right into the Bury and return to the start of the walk.

Walk 2 Odiham Common

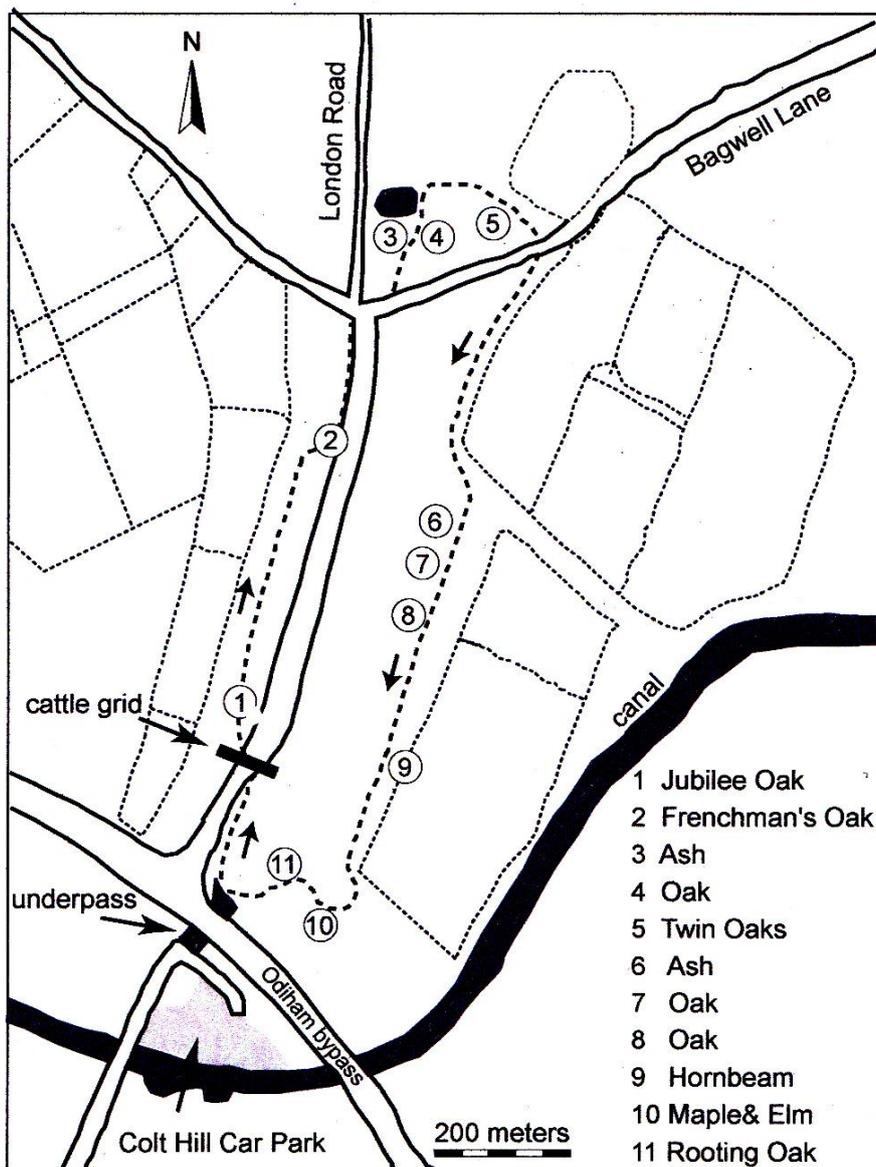
With grateful thanks for the information supplied by Steve Lyons, Hart District Council Ranger for Odiham Common.

About one hour. This walk is not wheelchair accessible. The common has many mature oaks and ash trees, as well as other species, and we have picked a selection as being most interesting. If you wander on the paths around the common you will find others.

By car, drive down Odiham High Street as if you are going to Farnham and turn into London Road on the left; drive to the far end of this road and park in Colt Hill Car Park. You will be close to the Basingstoke Canal. Take the path by the Recycling Bins and go through the tunnel under the By-pass. Turn left and it will bring you out onto the London Road on the far side of the bypass, beside the cattle grid.

On the other side of the road there is a line of tall straight trees as if in a hedgerow – these are Elms with a few Field Maples. This may be the largest clump of elms left in the area and they are home to White Hairstreak butterflies in summer. Cross the road to the Elms' side and walk along the path to the Jubilee or Queen Victoria Oak – the bench beneath it was placed there to commemorate one of Queen Victoria's jubilees – either the 887 or 1897 one – and the tree's roots have grown around it.

This is an English Oak, *Quercus robur*, one of our two native English Oaks (see earlier walk for details on how to tell them apart). This tree is about 300-350 years old. It has several branches about 12ft above the ground – evidence it was pollarded and the wood probably used in shipbuilding. The dead limbs you see on this (and other oaks in the walk) provide good habitat



for bats and insects. Oaks tend not to drop dead limbs and these have been on this tree for a number of years.

There is another old English Oak to your right, with twin trunks. It may originally have been two acorns that grew together. It was never pollarded. Now follow the path through the woods to your right and cross the meadow, or return to the road and walk along the road to Frenchman's Oak – identified by the metal supports on the road side of the tree. This ancient English Oak is reputed to be the limit of parole for French soldiers of war imprisoned in Odiham during the Napoleonic wars, hence Frenchman's Oak. The oak is black inside, not because it was burned but because it was tarred – it was hoped this would delay its decay but it has actually hastened the process because the tar has trapped moisture inside the wood. It has the fungus, Chicken in the Woods, growing on it in the autumn.

Now follow the road to the cross roads of Bagwell Lane and Poland Lane, cross the London road and follow the path just inside the wood parallel to the London Road, as far as Bagwell Pond. This was a drovers' pond on the way to London, where they stopped to water the cattle. There are several English Oaks here and also a large Ash, *Fraxinus excelsior*, beside the pond.

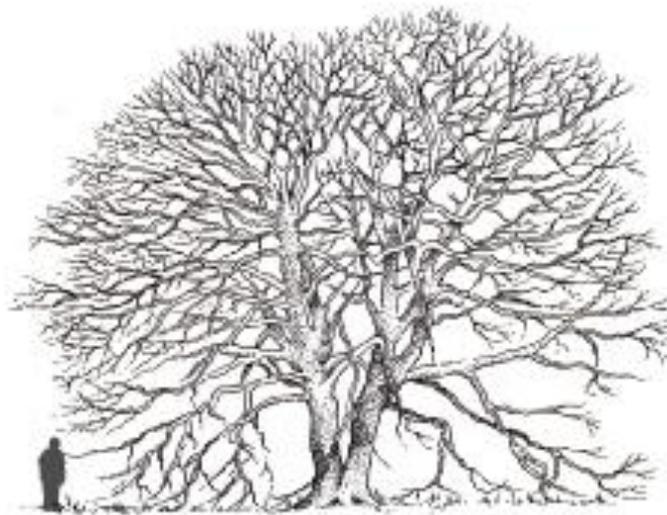
If you turn away from the pond and look into the woods you will see a large English Oak which has been 'haloed' – the scrub cleared around it to give it more space. It has a squirrel dray on one side and bats roost in it in summer. Continue to follow the track as it bends round to the right and take the right fork when it splits, away from the power cable. Within 50 metres you will come across two English Oaks together (The Twins), along with another off to the right. They have also been haloed, the holly around them was choking them to the extent they were beginning to drop their lower limbs and you can see several very large limbs around the Twins, but now they have more space they are beginning to put growth back on the lower limbs. Holly is also growing back around them.

Follow the path towards Bagwell Lane and cross this road, continue into the meadow on the other side of the road, keeping the edge of the meadow on your left until you come to a track on your left into the woods. Take this track – it has a growth of oaks and ash on both sides. You will come to a place where the track divides. If you take the left track it will bring you to the canal. For this walk take the broad ride on the right. In winter you can see a large Ash tree, and then a large English Oak and then another large English Oak, all further into the woods on your right. They have been haloed to give them space, although the ash has been left with oaks growing around it to protect it from strong winds since it is getting old and may lose its top. Because these trees are deeper in the woods only the final oak is really visible in summer. Cross a ditch, and there is a mature Field Maple, *Acer campestre*, on your left and then the outside edge of the common will become visible.

As you follow the track there will be a young Hornbeam, *Carpinus betulus*, to your right and then a mature hornbeam to your left with a number of young trees around it. You can tell a Hornbeam by the horizontal, slightly zigzag structure of its twigs and its toothed leaves (see illustration on pae 6). The boundary of the common is still visible to your left as you walk and then a meadow opens out to your left which is also part of the common. This is strip mowed in summer – different strips left each year to provide habitat for insects and other small animals. The whole common is home to many mice, voles and shrews, as well as bats.

Walk into and then around the right hand border of this meadow to the entry to another meadow on your right. At this entrance there is an old Field Maple with mistletoe in its branches; it is probably about 100-150 years old. There are also several young elms here. There is another old Field Maple overhanging the ditch to your left. This ditch marks the line of an old hedgerow (of which the maples are remnants), which was the boundary to the Cricket Pitch.

Now walk through the entrance into the second meadow; on the far side is the tunnel beneath the by-pass which leads back to the car park. If the meadow entry is too wet, retrace your steps into the wood and take the left path, entering the meadow further along. On your right (or your left if you take the second option) there is an English Oak, rather different in form to the other trees we have seen for it has many of its branches touching the ground; if these root into the ground eventually there may be a ring of oaks, which will survive when the present one dies. This Oak tree is shown below in its winter form, so that the branches can be seen clearly.



Continue across the meadow to the underpass to return to the car park. Near to either side of the entrance there are two Goat Willows, *Salix caprea*, famous for their 'pussy' catkins in spring.

North Warnborough Black Poplars

Black Poplars, *Populus nigra* var. *betulifolia*, were once common native trees in the UK but are now scarce for they have been replaced by hybrid Black Italian Poplars which grow more quickly and, being male, do not drop swathes of white woolly seeds in spring. The two old Black Poplars in North Warnborough are worth a visit. At the top of Odiham High Street turn right down Dunley's Hill (look out for the large Lime trees on the right with a large rookery at the tops of the trees) and turn right at the next roundabout. About half a mile along the road you will come to a large pub on the right (currently called the Chilli Pad). If you can, park in the pub car park and cross the road to the nature reserve opposite. The entrance to the reserve is to your left down a side road, and the Black Poplars are in the hedge about 50 yards into the reserve. The leaves are illustrated on page 6; the spiral in one of the leaf stalks is a Spiral Gall caused by an aphid, *Pemphigus spyrothecae*.