

THE HERSCHEL PARK TREE TRAIL GUIDE

follow our tree trail map overleaf and use our tree trail guide to learn more about some of the trees in Herschel Park



1 Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*)

The Holm Oak or 'holly oak' was introduced to the British Isles from the Mediterranean some 400 years ago. It is grown as an ornamental tree and has evergreen leaves. The wood from this oak is very hard and durable. It was used in construction, especially for pillars, waggons, tools and wine casks. Truffles, which grow on the roots of these trees, are greatly prized in French and Italian cuisine.



2 Lucombe Oak (*Quercus X hispanica 'Lucombeana'*)

The Lucombe Oak is named after William Lucombe, an eighteenth century nurseryman from Exeter. This oak was first grown in 1762 by crossing a Turkey Oak with a Cork Oak. Its bark is cork-like in texture and soft to the touch. The Lucombe Oak, like the Holm Oak, also keeps its leaves throughout the winter.

In the later years of his life, Mr Lucombe was so taken with the tree that he cut down the original specimen and used the boards to fashion a coffin for himself for when he died. However he lived a lot longer than expected (to 102 years). By his death the boards had rotted and were unusable, so the timber from another early tree was used in their place.

A new Lucombe Oak was planted in 2011 by the Friends of Herschel Park to commemorate the completion of the restoration of the park.

3 Deodar Cedar (*Cedrus deodara*)

The Deodar Cedar or Himalayan Cedar is the national tree of Pakistan. The name 'deodar' comes from a Sanskrit word devdar which means 'timber of the gods'. These trees can grow up to 75m tall. The wood from this cedar is strong, durable and is fragrantly scented. It is used for the construction of temples, palaces, bridges and railway sleepers.



This cedar was introduced to Britain in 1831 and very quickly became a popular tree in parks and large gardens. By the middle of the 19th century it was planted in forests for the purpose of using it in the construction industry, as in the Himalayas, but this scheme was soon abandoned as the tree did not grow to the same heights as in its native country due to the British climate.

The Deodar Cedar is characterised by having drooping branches, in contrast to other cedars. It is conical in shape and has huge egg-shaped cones.

4 Swamp Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*)

The Swamp Cypress is a member of the redwood family and is native to the south-eastern part of the USA. It is found, in particular, in the mangrove swamps of the Florida Everglades. This tree was once found in the British Isles during prehistoric times, but died out during the last Ice Age.

The tree was re-introduced to England in 1640 by John Tradescant the Younger, an English collector and botanist who brought back seeds of the great trees of the Americas such as the Magnolia, and introduced them into English gardens. This ornamental tree became very popular and was in demand for planting near lakes, streams and rivers or anywhere there were damp soils or areas of wet land.

The Swamp Cypress is one of only a few deciduous conifers growing in Britain and it sheds its foliage in winter. For this reason it is also known as the 'Bald Cypress'. The needles and shoots that fall off in the autumn are fine and feathery and are at their most stunning just before they drop, when they are a rust-red colour.



5 English Oak (*Quercus robur*)

The English Oak is one of England's most iconic trees and it dates back to prehistoric times. The English Oak tree can be found over most of Europe, Asia and parts of North Africa.

The tree is slow growing and can reach a height of 43 metres (140 feet). There are some English Oaks which are over 1000 years old. Such trees can be found locally in Windsor Great Park. There are some trees which date back to the time of William the Conqueror which originally formed part of the Royal Forest of Windsor. The English Oaks in Herschel Park date from the 1780s.

From the early medieval period onwards, the timber from the oak tree has been used traditionally for the construction of buildings and ships, from the early medieval period onwards because of its strength and stability. The bark from the tree was used in the rather smelly process of tanning leather. The fruit of the oak is an acorn and one of its past uses was to feed pigs to fatten them up. The oak tree is home to an amazing variety of wildlife.

The leaves from the tree have been used for a number of medical cures, such as to make a decongestant, as an astringent and to control haemorrhages. Old traditions suggest that the bark is good for relieving diarrhoea, rashes and even frost bite.



6 Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*)

The Horse Chestnut tree originated on the Balkan Peninsula, in Greece and Albania. It was later cultivated in many countries for shade and ornament. The tree was first introduced into England in 1616. Herschel Park's Horse

Chestnut tree is the oldest tree to be found in the park and dates to c.1700 - almost 150 years before the park was laid out.

The tree can grow to some 30 metres and it produces some striking flowers in the spring and early summer. Individual flowers have crumpled white petals with pink patches at their base.

Horse Chestnut trees are probably best known for their fruit - the conker which is the centrepiece of a game which almost every child has grown up with. The earliest known reference to a game of conkers was in 1848 on the Isle of Wight. Previously the game was played with snail shells or hazelnuts. During the Second World War children were encouraged to collect conkers, which were used in the manufacture of explosives.

The name 'Horse Chestnut' can be somewhat misleading, as it is poisonous to horses. However, it is used in homeopathic medicine to treat varicose veins and to reduce swelling and inflammation.



7 European Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*)

The name 'ash' comes from the Anglo - Saxon word 'aesc' or in English 'spear'. Folklore says that 'oak before ash in for a splash - ash before oak in for a soak'. This referred to the timing of the opening of the buds. If the oak buds were seen to open first, the summer would be dry, while if the ash buds opened first, the weather would be wet.

The Ash tree is found in Europe, Asia Minor and North Africa. It is one of the tallest species of ash tree and can grow up to 40 metres in height, with a girth of 6 metres. This tree is often coppiced to provide a renewable source of timber.

Wood from the Ash tree is very hard and durable and is used to make hockey sticks and oars, as well as walking sticks, bows, tool handles, tennis rackets and snooker cues, as this wood has the ability to withstand shock. The wood is also used as firewood and burns extremely well, even when freshly cut. Up until the Second World War, the Ash tree was coppiced and was used to provide fuel, used in building construction and for wood working.



8 Turkey Oak (*Quercus cerris*)

The Turkey Oak was originally found in Northern Europe and the British Isles before the last Ice Age, some 120,000 years ago. However it did not survive the cold climate and was not re-introduced into southern England until c.1735. It was brought to this country to be used principally for timber but it was found that the wood warped and split badly. Despite this, the wood has been used in the past by cabinet makers, wheelwrights and turners.

It was found that this tree grows very quickly, so it was used in planting both parks and arboretums, especially to create sheltered avenues. This particular species grows very

quickly to a height of 140 feet. Turkey Oak mature while quite young which increases their chance of hybridising with other Oaks (see Lucombe Oak).

The Turkey Oak poses a great threat to the English Oak because it plays host to the Knopper Gall Wasp. Within its lifecycle the Gall Wasp lays its eggs in the flowers of the English Oak, which causes the acorn to grow a bizarre 'knopper'. This makes the acorn infertile which can threaten regeneration of English Oak woodland where Turkey Oaks are present.

The Herschel Park Turkey Oak was planted in c.1780 and is already 38m tall. It is the tallest tree in the park.

9 Monkey Puzzle (*Araucaria araucana*)

The Monkey Puzzle tree is an evergreen which is native to southern Chile and western Argentina. The tree was first discovered in Chile in the 1780s and was brought to England in c.1830. The Herschel Park Monkey Puzzle tree was planted in c.1857.

The name 'Monkey Puzzle' was derived from a young specimen at Pencarrow House, near Bodmin, Cornwall, when a visitor to the house in 1834 remarked to its owner that "It would puzzle a monkey to climb that". As the species had no existing popular name it was first called a 'Monkey Puzzler' tree but later it was shortened to the familiar 'Monkey Puzzle'. The tree has spikey, scaly leaves and is impossible to climb. It can grow up to 40m high and its trunk's diameter can reach up to 2m wide.



10 English Yew (*Taxus baccata*)

The English Yew tree is a conifer which is native to the United Kingdom and has existed in the British Isles since prehistoric times. They are often found in churchyards and the earliest existing examples in the British Isles date back to the early 11th century. Yews were seen to have magical properties which could ward off evil spirits. One of the yew trees in nearby St Laurence's Churchyard, Upton-cum-Chalvey, is about 600 years old.

Yew wood was used to fashion weapons. The earliest example found was a 50,000 year old spear from Clacton-on-Sea. From the medieval period, yew wood was used to make long bows. The yew produces a red berry-like fruit which contains a single seed called an aril. The fruit is eaten by thrushes, waxwings and other birds. Both the fruit and the leaves are highly poisonous. The Herschel Park yews are not particularly old and were planted in c.1857.

Want to know more about Herschel Park?

Learn more about the park and events at the Friends of Herschel Park website.

www.friendsofherchelpark.org

You can also visit the Slough Museum website for educational learning resources and further information.

www.sloughmuseum.org/play-learn/herchel-park/

Essential information for your visit.

Opening times

Open every day 8.00am to 8.00pm or dusk, whichever is earlier.

Parking

A visitors car park can be accessed from the Datchet Road within the access road to the NFER. The park can be accessed by a short walk through the nature reserve. NO visitors parking is available within the Upton Park Estate (risk of clamping).

Accessibility

- Limited disabled parking bays are located within Upton Close nr Kiosk
- The park is crossed by surfaced paths suitable for wheelchairs.
- A disabled toilet is available at the Kiosk at certain times (Radar key).

More to Enjoy

Activities and Events are held all year round - check park noticeboards or logon to www.slough.gov.uk/herschelpark for more details.



Herschel Park Tree Trail

Find out more about Herschel Park's historic trees



The Herschel Park Tree Trail.

The trees of Herschel Park were mostly planted during the late Victorian period. There are very few trees which date from the original layout of the park. The ones which survive date from the 1840s and are all English Oak trees.

The park was laid out with areas of open space, together with a network of serpentine



paths which were occasionally punctuated with distinct groups of trees and shrubs. A contemporary engraving, dating from around 1850, shows what the park looked like at this time. A surviving Yew and an Ash tree were planted in the 1850s.

From the 1880s onwards, a number of fine specimen trees were introduced to the park, much to the delight of the tenants of the large villas which fronted onto the park. These included a triple stemmed Deodar Cedar and a Monkey Puzzle tree.

During the early 20th century, another Turkey Oak was added to the park, together with two Sweet Chestnut trees and a Black Pine.

On the south-western edge of the park is a three hundred year old Horse Chestnut tree dated to around 1700, which predates the park by almost 150 years. Also of note are a Turkey Oak and an English Oak dating from the 1780s.

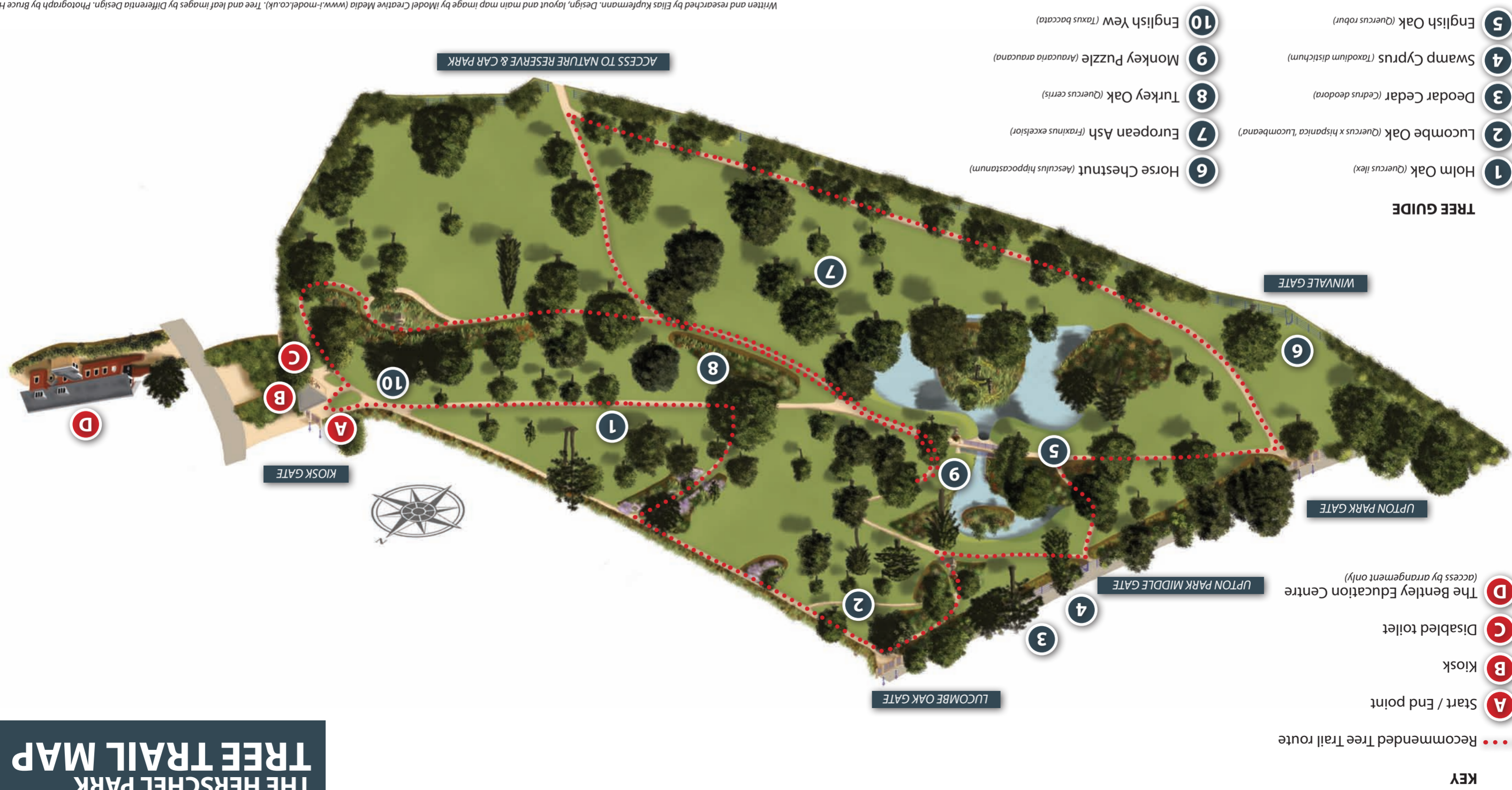


Contact us
For all park enquires please contact Slough Borough Council, tel. 01753 475111 or visit www.slough.gov.uk



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THE HERSCHEL PARK TREE TRAIL MAP