

Gwent Wildlife Trust Lottery for Wildlife Update for 2018



The Ancient and Veteran Tree monitoring project

Thanks to everyone who participated in Lottery for Wildlife 2018.

The **Ancient and Veteran Tree monitoring project** has been led by our Woodland Conservation Officer Doug Lloyd with the help of staff, volunteers and members of the public. The aim was to map the locations of Gwent's notable, veteran and ancient trees. Trees in these categories are an important and attractive feature of the landscape and are beneficial to people and wildlife.

Training courses at our woodland reserves including Pentwyn Farm, Prisk Wood and Silent Valley Nature Reserve gave participants the opportunity to identifying and survey veteran and ancient trees.

Equipped with 23 newly trained tree measurers, we were able to log 147 trees onto the Woodland Trust's ancient tree inventory website (www.ancient-tree-hunt.org.uk) throughout 2018.



Champion pear tree at Llanvetherine by Doug Lloyd

As well as woodlands at our nature reserves, we were also invited to visit six landowners' woodlands which gave us a fascinating insight into woodlands that we would not normally be able to access. During our



Trainees stood next to 500 year old oak by Doug Lloyd

landowner visits, we uncovered veteran beech trees on the Blorenges and veteran yew trees along the River Wye, while empowering the landowners with new skills to help them manage veteran and ancient trees on their land. Perhaps the most interesting find during these site visits was in Llanvetherine in Monmouthshire. It turned out to be an enormous pear tree with a trunk girth of 4.26m and at least 300 years old. Following verification with the ancient tree initiative senior verifier David Alderman, it was confirmed that, as it stands this is the champion pear tree of the UK and Ireland. There could be many bigger and older trees that we don't know about so if find any please let us know.

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A vital part of the **Ancient and Veteran Tree Monitoring Project** is working with the owners of these impressive trees and offering advice on how to look after and preserve them for future generations. In areas where there are clusters of ancient trees we hope to create partnerships with local authorities and land owners to ensure they are recognised and looked after. In 2018 this project allowed us to train people and give them the skills they need to identify, measure, monitor and conserve these magnificent trees that in some cases have been on this planet for millennia. This knowledge can be passed on for generations.

Where has your money been spent?

Thanks to players of Lottery for Wildlife, GWT has been able to carry out training sessions for staff, volunteers and members of the public. With 23 newly trained tree measurers in Gwent this is a fantastic addition to the recording and surveying of trees across the county.



1000 year old yew tree by Jan Winder



Ancient birch in Llangattock by Doug Lloyd

The vast majority of work has involved surveying at various locations across Gwent. Part of this survey work took place at Piercefield and Wyndcliff Woods near Chepstow where some fantastic ancient small leaved lime trees were present and many yew trees including one that is over 1000 years old (pictured above). Between January and March, as part of the Wye Valley Woodlands project, we led woodland owner sessions. We helped organise a Woodland Trust ancient tree walk for the Long Forest project at Pentwyn Farm and Prisk Wood, looking at the ancient lime trees there.

Trees are initially recorded on paper and vital statistics such as species, form, standing or fallen, living status, girth and veteran status are written down. A photo is usually taken and the location recorded including a grid reference. All this information is then input to the online ancient tree inventory.

the necessary equipment such as specific measuring tapes, gloves and tools.

Let's hope the wildlife takes advantage of the work we are doing. Ancient trees are known to be full of nooks and crannies, holes and rotting wood. Perfect for plants and fungi, roosting bats and nesting birds like woodpeckers and redstart.

So thank you very much for your continued support of this project and indeed all the work we do at Gwent Wildlife Trust.



Field maple being measured by Doug Lloyd