



Tree Tales and Trails

A Celebration of Burngreave's
Cultural Diversity
through the trees of
Abbeyfield Park, Sheffield.

TREE TALES & TRAILS

A collection of stories, poetry and artworks celebrating Burngreave's cultural diversity through the trees of Abbeyfield Park.

Created by children from:

Byron Wood Primary School
Firs Hill Community Primary School
Pye Bank Primary School
St. Catherine's Primary School
Whiteways Junior School

and members of the local community

The One World – Talking Trees Project

The One World – Talking Trees Project provided a unique opportunity to celebrate the rich cultural diversity of Burngreave through trees. It was the culmination of the first 2 years work by the Burngreave Community Forestry Project, involving around 900 members of the local and wider community in planting over 7,000 new trees.

The newly planted trees in Abbeyfield Park have been the subject of research by children from all the local primary schools. They have been looking into tree-lore from around the world, reflecting their cultural backgrounds and the importance of trees to all mankind - past, present and future. Working with storyteller Shonaleigh and illustrator Graham Higgins, they have brought together these various elements into this collection of new illustrated tree stories.

Acknowledgements:

The Burngreave Community Forestry Project would like to thank all the aforementioned schools, Shonaleigh, Graham Higgins, The Friends of Abbeyfield Park, the City Council's Ranger Service, Tinsley Tree Project, Green City Action, SHEBEEN (Sheffield Black & Ethnic Minority Environmental Network) and all who have contributed their time and energy to this project.

Compiled and edited by Peter Machan, Education Officer,
South Yorkshire Forest Partnership

Project initiated and developed by Sheffield City Council's Trees & Woodlands Team



Local Heritage *initiative*



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A watercolor painting of a tree trunk and branches. The trunk is thick and textured, with shades of brown and tan. The branches are thinner and more delicate, extending upwards and outwards. The leaves are painted in various shades of green, from light lime to deep forest green. The overall style is soft and artistic, with visible brushstrokes and blending of colors.

Trees

**Trees are all over this planet,
In all different parts of the Earth.
People don't take into account
Just how much trees are worth.**

**The ash, the aspen, the chestnut,
The oak, the maple, the pine,
The willow, the hawthorn, the birch,
There are trees of every kind.**

**They're a home for so many creatures,
An oxygen provider too,
So why not look after our precious trees,
And they will look after you!**

**By 12 year old Payvand Agahi
Bahai Faith Community**

Tree Tales and Trails

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Abbeyfield

Park

ONE WORLD



TREE TRAIL

Start the **TREE TRAIL** at the **Decorated Archway** on **Abbeyfield Road**.

Follow the numbers on the map around the park to take you to each of the trees from around the world.

There is a story and a factfile about each of the numbered trees.

Notice the group of three **Himalayan Birch** (*Betula utilis Jacquemontii*) with their distinctive white bark, that have been planted on the slope facing the Almond. Nearby a **White Mulberry** (*Morus alba*) has been planted.

Strawberry Tree

Almond

Cherry

Japanese Pagoda Tree

Golden Rain Tree

Maidenhair Tree

An **Oriental Plane tree** (*Platanus orientalis digitata*) from the far east has been planted beside the path near the Japanese Pagoda tree.

Cedar of Lebanon

Holly

English Oak

Cedar of Lebanon

Yew

Tulip Tree

An **Antarctic Beech tree** from South America (*Nothofagus antarctica*) is situated just inside the playground.



The many fine mature Beech, Sycamore and Lime trees in the park create a calm and restful setting in this busy part of the city.



View of Abbeyfield House from the Park.
Read the story of Abbeyfield House on page 44.

FIRSHILL ROAD

Notice the **Fig tree** (*Ficus carica*) that has been planted against the wall of the house.

Abbeyfield House

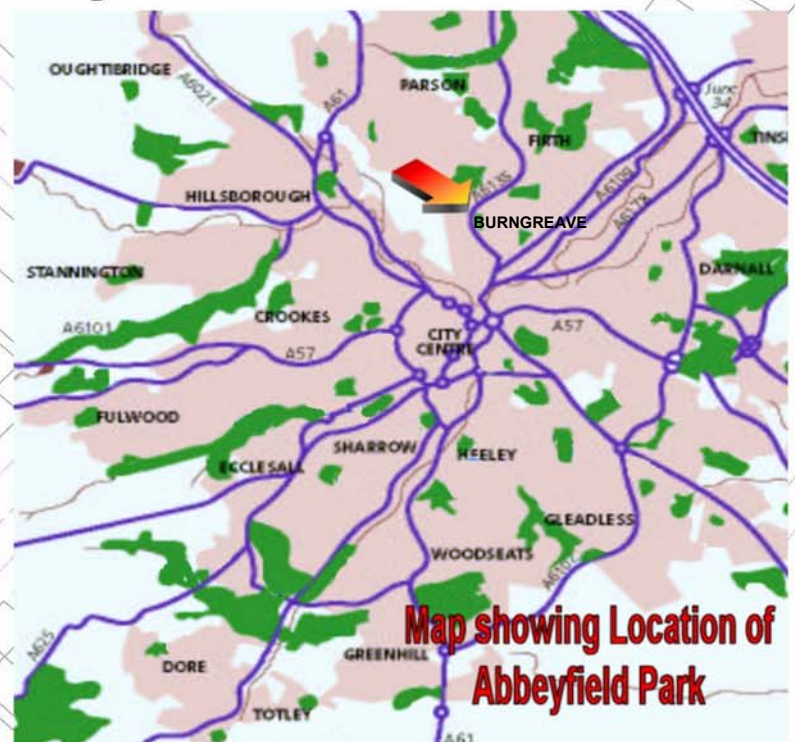
- 15 Persian Ironwood
- 16 Olive
- 1 Dawn Redwood
- 2 Kashmir Rowan
- 3 Dove Tree

Start the Tree Trail here at the Decorated Archway

The trees were planted at a community tree planting event on November 27th, 2004. See more pictures of this occasion on pages 46-47.



A **Eucalyptus** (*Eucalyptus debeuzvillii*) from Australia has been planted on the little round island, and an **Indian Horse Chestnut** (*Aescules indica*) near to the Yew .



Map showing Location of Abbeyfield Park

1

The Dawn Redwood.

Start the tree trail immediately to the right of the entrance with what is thought to be one of the oldest tree species on the planet .

It is thought that this very special tree was planted about 25 years ago by a previous park keeper.

Dawn Redwood Factfile

Latin name- *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*

Fossil records indicate that this tree was in existence as far back as the Pliocene era, (5.4 - 2.4 million years ago) but it was thought to have become extinct around 3 million years ago. That was until as recently as 1941, when a Chinese forester discovered a number of them in eastern Sichuan. Cuttings grew very well in Britain and the tree has since been widely planted.

This is a deciduous conifer and Chinese relative of the Giant Redwood, the largest tree species living on the planet.

It will grow into a conical spire up to 30 metres tall.



Tree Wisdom

This Haiku was written by Panni Poh Yoke Loh with the kind assistance of her Mandarin teacher, Xu Xiao Yan as part of the 'Tree Stories' writing course (see page 37) It was written in English before being translated into Mandarin. It was inspired by the Chinese Dawn Redwood tree (below) in Abbeyfield Park.



Tree Wisdom

树的思考

shude sikao

I see all,
我看见了一切，
wo kanjianle yiqie

You pass by me,
你从我身边过，
ni cong wo shenbian guo

Do you see me?
你是否看见了我？
ni shifou kanjianle wo

I see you.
我却看见了你。
wo que kanjianle ni

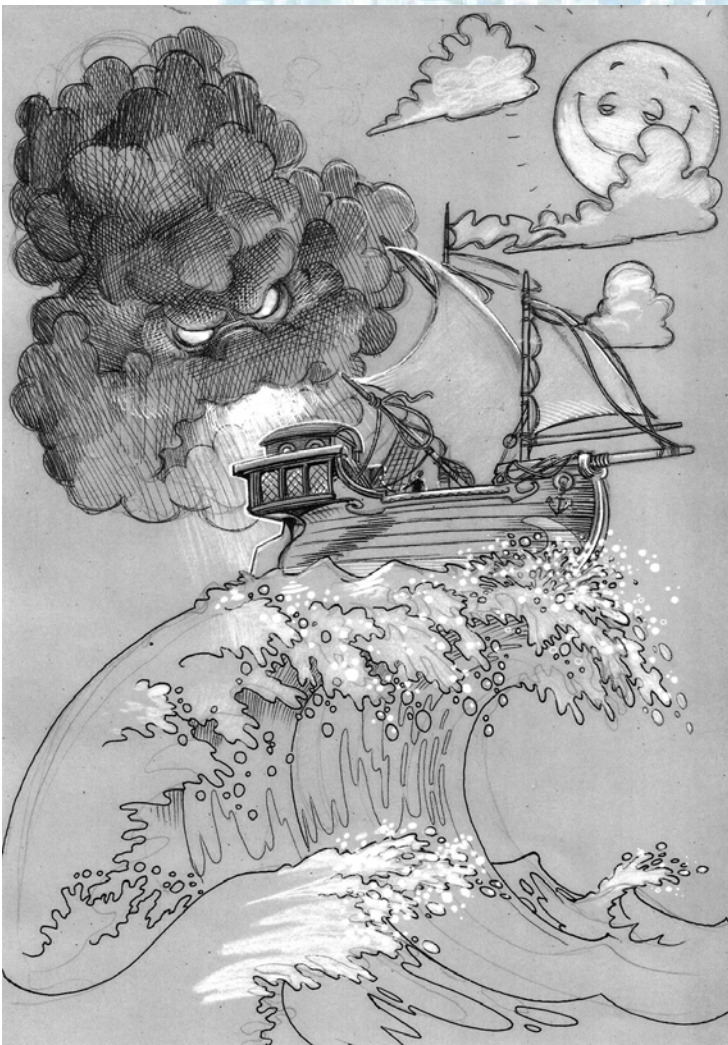
2

The Kashmir Rowan

Byron Wood Primary School – Year 5

There was once a carpenter who had a son called Ryan. Ryan loved to watch his father as he shaped the rough timber into smooth lengths of wood and created beautiful furniture. From his father he learned all about the trees of the forest, especially the Rowan because it gave good luck and protection. But Ryan did not wish to become a carpenter like his father. More than anything he wanted to be a sailor and when he was old enough he made his way to the harbour and got a job as a deck hand on a huge wooden ship that would sail around the world.

The work was very hard and sometimes he was very scared. At night when it was quiet on the deck he would watch the silvery dolphins playing, the fish flying and the moon rising. In his fingers he stroked a smooth piece of Rowan wood that his father had given him for good luck.



The ship was far, far out on the ocean when, high in the sky, the gods of the wind and the sun were having their usual disagreement over who was the strongest. Looking down they spied Ryan's wooden boat dancing on the waves and decided to use it to prove their strength. The God of Windy Storms sent a gale from the West to whip up the sea into huge waves and the boat was tossed hither and thither before being smashed to a thousand pieces. Ryan was flung into the sea. Coughing and spluttering, he managed to cling onto the ship's wooden wheel but to his dismay he lost his piece of lucky Rowan. The God of Sunny Skies took pity on Ryan and gently blew him to an island where he lived on coconuts for fourteen years!!

In the skies high above the little island the Gods had still not settled their quarrel. The God of Windy Storms was so angry that Ryan has survived that he sent a twisting tornado to destroy the coconut groves. The God of Sunny Skies however had another trick of his own. He put the piece of Rowan wood, which had been floating on the sea for all these years, in the middle of the tornado. It landed on the island and stuck into the ground.

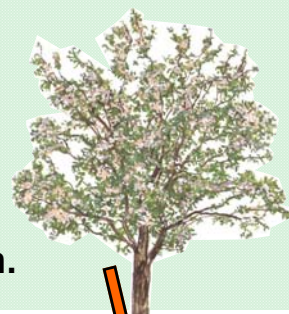
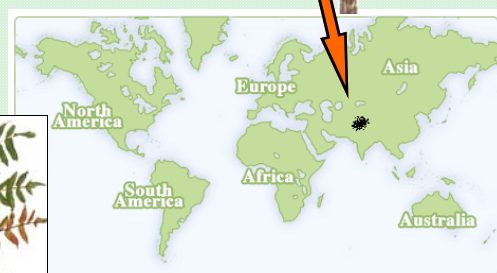
A tiny shoot began to grow and it wasn't long before there stood a fine Kashmir Rowan tree, covered in gleaming white berries. Ryan gathered and planted the Rowan berries. More trees grew from the seeds and soon the idea came to Ryan to use the wood from the Rowan trees to build a small boat and set sail for home. He used the sun and the moon and the stars to guide him homewards and the little Rowan boat kept him safe from the angry storms.

From that day onwards every boat and every sailor carries a piece of Rowan to keep them safe.

Kashmir Rowan Factfile

Latin Name- *Sorbus cashmiriana*

The Kashmir Rowan is a beautiful small tree which comes from the Western Himalayas. It is related to our Mountain Ash. It bears soft pink flowers in May and gleaming white fruits that hang like clusters of white marbles long after the leaves have fallen. It was introduced to this country in 1932.



3

The Dove or Ghost Tree

St. Catherine's School — Years 5 & 6

There was once a farmer who hated birds. They stole his corn, they ruined the thatch on his roof, they ate the fruit on his trees. Worst of all were the crows that sometimes pecked out the eyes of his newborn lambs. So he made war on ALL birds, even the doves, the most peaceful of creatures. He hung the corpses of these birds in the tree on the edge of his land. Where once it had grown straight and tall, now it seemed weighted down with shame, gnarled and twisted with the weight of all the tiny skeletons that hung, like strange fruit, from its branches. At night the tiny skeletons rattled in the breeze.

As you can imagine, the farmer's activities did not make him popular with his neighbours who loved to see and hear the birds. So when the farmer died there were few to mourn him and he was buried far out of the village.

The people longed to take down the hideous skeletons from the withering tree but they became afraid. Nothing stayed alive for long wherever the shadow of the tree fell and no birds would sing in its lifeless branches. As winter approached the sun cast a longer and longer cold shadow towards the village and as it did so all living things fell into a strange deep sleep from which they couldn't be woken. Soon every man, woman and child was asleep – like a spell over the whole village. Even the dogs and cats, cattle and wild animals that strayed near the tree would fall asleep.

One day the following summer a wandering musician wearily approached the tree and sat beneath it. The hot sun made him feel drowsy and his eyelids began to close. He was falling under the tree's spell! Before he fell asleep completely however, he happened to cast his eyes upwards into the branches above him and was shocked awake at the sad sight of the bones which hung there. He drew from his pocket a tiny pipe, beautifully fashioned from a hollow bone, and began to play a melancholy air. As he did so the tree trembled and seemed to sigh as though a soft breeze passed

through its branches. He stopped playing and turned his head to see a small man standing nearby who had been listening intently. 'You are in great danger', said the man as he approached him, 'move on. It is only



your beautiful music that has protected you from the same fate as the villagers.'

The small man told the musician the story; adding that only a person making a great sacrifice would be able to free the doves and the people of the village.

The musician, however, was not afraid. Drawn back to the tree, he once more put his precious pipe to his lips and played beneath its branches. On and on he played, every tune that he knew; reels, jigs, hornpipes and marches and, as he played, he watched, fascinated, as the moon rose and a thousand tiny white blossoms, like the wings of doves trying to break free from the tree, flapped in the branches.

And then he realized what sacrifice to make. His beloved pipe was made from bird bone! He took it and buried it beneath the tree knowing he would never find another like it. As he put the last handful of earth over his beautiful pipe, he heard a noise like a sigh. Looking up he saw the blooms flapping and then taking to the sky, turning into a flock of doves. He saw people running from the village, thanking him for breaking the spell. He asked them about the small man, but nobody knew of such a person.

As he was leaving the village, he looked out over the fields and saw an old scarecrow, wearing the same old coat, same old hat, same old scarf. It was smiling! The king of the birds he thought with a smile! And although he had lost his pipe he became a wonderful storyteller!

Dove Tree Factfile

Latin Name- *Davidia involucrata*



The Dove tree is also known as the Ghost Tree or the Pocket Handkerchief Tree because of its striking white bracts that dangle down from the tree in May. It was introduced from Western China, where it is very rare, in 1901.

It can grow into a very large spreading tree, up to 24 metres high.



4

The Golden Rain Tree

Pye Bank School – Year 6

An ancient legend says that a wandering wise man planted the last bean he had in a remote place, and because he was so holy, the tree that grew had roots of silver, bark of bronze, leaves of gold and the wisdom of mankind. It was surrounded by quicksand, and anyone wanting to pluck a leaf of gold had to answer a riddle. If you had a good heart the sands would still and you could take a leaf. If you had a stony heart the sands would suck you down and the leaf would turn to molten fire in your hand.

Now one day the King heard the story about the Golden Rain Tree and of course he wanted a golden leaf. He knew however, that he would never be able to solve a riddle; he had advisers for that sort of thing. And besides, he had a heart so hard it made stone look soft! So he asked an old wise man to do the job for him. Such a long and difficult task was the last thing that the old man wanted but he knew the King would never take no for an answer. So the next day he and his daughter set out on the long journey to find the tree, solve the riddle and pluck the leaf!

On the way they saw a most peculiar sight. All the animals were playing a game of football, but not the sort you or I know. This was a very ancient game indeed and they had no ball. Instead they used the poor armadillo as a ball! The wise man's daughter felt so sorry for the poor creature (it was making a pitiful noise each time the elephant and the monkey kicked it) that she took some gum from a nearby Gum Tree. Rolling the gum into a ball (much like your grandmother would roll a ball of knitting yarn) she gave it to the animals. The armadillo was so happy he said that he and the other creatures would help them on their quest.



They all set off and had many adventures. It turned out to be a good job that the animals had joined them for the elephant was able to shelter the travellers from the desert heat with his broad ears, the crocodile formed a bridge across a great swamp, the monkey showed them the way through thick forests and the llama kept them warm with its thick wool in the high mountains.

Eventually they came to a clearing in a wood and there stood the Golden Rain Tree, its golden leaves dancing and sparkling in the sunshine. As they approached the tree sang out a riddle that they had to solve

"I'm always reaching up, yet I'm always falling down. I'm always branching out and I wear a golden crown"

Everyone tried to solve the riddle although some gave up sooner than others! The monkey and the elephant got bored and started a game of football. The sun was already beginning to sink by the time the old man and his daughter finally solved the riddle. When they did (I'm not going to tell you the answer, see if you can work it out!) the quicksand became firm and the old man walked gently over to the tree and plucked a pure gold leaf. He stepped back and was preparing to set out on the long journey back to the king's palace when he heard the voice of the tree softly singing out;

'Because you are the first traveller who has ever approached me and taken just one golden leaf, taking nothing for yourself, I will show you something that you will always remember.'

And with those words a breeze shook the long twisty branches and the onlookers gave a gasp, as the tree seemed to catch fire. The tree was suddenly crowned with bright golden plumes that transformed into shining papery Chinese lanterns hanging from every branch. In the warm pinkish glow the travellers became entranced by the sound of the most beautiful music that they had ever heard. By the time that dawn was breaking in the east the old man no longer felt weary but was refreshed and set out for the king's palace with a new spring in his step and the gold leaf safely in his pocket.

Golden Rain Tree Factfile

Latin Name- *Koelreuteria paniculata*

One of the other names for this tree is the Pride of India, which is confusing because it originally comes from China, Korea and Japan. It has dark dense foliage which turns yellow in autumn, and thick twisting branches. Its most dramatic feature are the 30 cm. long golden plumes of flowers that cascade from its crown in summer followed by pinkish seed pods like Chinese lanterns.

It was first introduced in 1763.



5

The Maidenhair Tree

Pye Bank School – Year 5

In the far ancient past there stood on the border between two lands a very special tree. It had strangely shaped leaves that turned to beautiful gold in the autumn. Few people knew that that the spirit of this tree watched over all those that slept beneath it, having the power to make them stronger and to heal wounds.

Now to the North of the tree there lived an evil dragon. It had made its own land a scorched wasteland of sharp rocks and jagged stones where nothing could grow. All you could see for miles was barren earth. But the Maidenhair Tree stood on the boundary between two lands and so far had kept the dragon from attacking the Southlands.



During the winter months, when the tree slept, a strong warrior and his army would advance from the south to do battle with the dragon, always winning. The warrior did not realise it but his strength came from the ancient tree for at night, after each battle, he would fall asleep under the branches of the Maidenhair tree and she would fill his dreams with power.

One spring, while the warrior was sleeping, the spirit of the tree fell in love with him and, summoning all her power, she turned herself into a human woman with long golden hair. The warrior woke up and, not surprisingly considering her great beauty, fell deeply in love with her. He had no idea, of course, that she was the spirit of the Maidenhair tree. Only the dragon knew because he was watching and saw her transform herself while the warrior slept.

‘At long last,’ growled the fearsome dragon, ‘the power of the Maidenhair tree is overcome. Now is my chance to vanquish the warrior and take the Southlands.’

The dragon crept up to the peacefully sleeping couple and whisked away the golden haired maiden. He then roared a mighty challenge to the warrior to fight without his army if he wished to recapture the maiden. The warrior of course agreed because he was brave and fearless as well as very much in love.

The battle however was long and fierce. The warrior fought with all his might but after many hours was exhausted and terribly wounded. With a final gasp he sank dying to the ground. With an evil glint in his eye the dragon advanced, ready to use his savage breath to burn the warrior to a crisp. In that moment the golden haired Maiden knew that the only things that could save the warrior were the precious golden leaves from the tree. But if she changed back to save him she could NEVER become a woman again. She thought about this for only an instant. There was a loud sigh like moaning wind through winter branches as the maiden transformed back to the stately tree, scattering leaves from her hair as she changed. The warrior revived, sprang to his feet, and was just in time to slice the startled dragon into two halves.



Where the dragon's scales fell, nothing ever grew again, and the warrior never found the golden haired maiden. He never married but slept beneath the Maidenhair tree on the eve of every battle, gaining power and comfort from the dreams that he had.

The Maidenhair tree still lives on, the most ancient tree in the world.

Maidenhair Tree Factfile

Latin Name- *Ginkgo biloba*



From the fossil record we know that this is the world's oldest surviving tree species. Despite the shape of the leaf (which looks like a duck's foot) this is actually a conifer, but unlike most conifers it sheds its striking yellow leaves in autumn. Ginkgo has been used in Chinese herbal medicine



for over 4000 years to treat memory loss in the elderly and it is still popular today. It was introduced into this country in 1758 from a temple garden in China, where it is now very rare.

6

The Holly Hag

Pye Bank School – Year 5

The Holly Hag will stalk you in the dark. She will suck out years of your life if you upset her or steal her treasure. She lives on the west coast of Scotland; so if you live in Sheffield you're probably safe. Holly Hags bury their treasure beneath young holly. As the leaves harden and become pricklier the treasure is usually safe. They are bad tempered for they often prick their fingers while digging. This is why the leaves are prickly and the berries are red!

Once there was a young farmer called Tom McNell. He was poor and had a hard time looking after his sheep. He always seemed to be coming home after dark, after looking after a sick lamb or ewe. But he always made sure he had a lamp or candle because he knew the stories of the Holly Hags and how they hated the light.



One dark night Tom met a Holly Hag on the road home. She tried to make him look into her eyes, for that is the source of their power, but he wouldn't. He kept walking, hat pulled down, lamp held high, feet striding out through the forest till he got home. He bolted the door securely and lit the fire and the lamps.

The next day he saw freshly turned earth near a young Holly bush and thought "The Hag must have buried some treasure." Now he should have left it alone but instead he dug it up and took it to town and spent the lot.

That night the Holly Hag came back ...banging on the doors, scraping on the windows with her sharp, filthy nails, and calling down the chimney for her gold. Poor Tom hardly slept; he hardly slept for weeks, then months. She haunted him every night.

When Tom got married the Holly Hag seemed to go away for a while. Maybe she had no quarrel with Tom's wife. But on the day that his wife went to look after her sick father.... well the haunting started all over again.

A few nights later there was a knock on the door and Tom opened it thankfully, thinking it was his wife, home from her fathers. But it was not. It was the Holly Hag. Before he realised it he stared straight into her eyes and disappeared that very night.

Tom McNell was only seen once more after that awful night. On a windy night seven years later an old old man knocked on the farmhouse door. He begged his wife to recognise him but she said "Seven years have passed and even if my husband Tom came back this night he would be a young man, not an OLD man like you" Tom turned wearily into the night and was never seen again.

Holly Factfile

Latin Name- *Ilex aquifolium*

The Holly is a common European tree. Farmers used to plant it in clumps called 'holly hags' as winter feed for sheep and cattle.

In the past Hollies were thought to provide protection from lightning and so they were planted in close proximity to houses. Later scientific tests have shown that the spines on the leaves do indeed act as conductors.

During Victorian times Holly was used as the Christmas tree rather than Norway Spruce. The thorny foliage and red berries were used to symbolise the crown of thorns Jesus wore, the berries representing his blood.



7

The Common Yew

Firs Hill Community Primary School

The wars between the English and the French had gone on for many weary years. There was a soldier of the English army who got separated from the rest of his company during the chaos of battle in the muddy French countryside. To keep out of the way of the French soldiers, he had taken to the forest, hiding in the thick undergrowth by day and cautiously creeping out by night. One night, scared of wild animals and the enemy, he found himself beneath the spreading branches of an ancient Yew tree. He climbed up into the strong wide branches to stay safe for the night. The breeze whispering through the stiff green leaves soon lulled him into a deep sleep.

While he slept he had the following dream. He dreamt that the Spirit of the Yew tree was a kindly old man that told him the reason the English kept losing was because their bows were too short. They needed to be longer and more flexible. In his dream he saw the arrows flying great distances and defeating the French.



The soldier awoke with a start. He could hear the sound of hooves. A company of soldiers on horseback were coming towards his hiding place. Knowing they must be French he stayed hidden in the tree. As he sat there waiting for them to pass, he remembered his dream. It was true that the short bows never had enough power and the bow always seemed to break at the wrong moment. But where would you find wood that could bend.

As the soldiers passed underneath the Yew tree the rhythm of all those horses set the ground jumping, and the branches of the tree bouncing! Suddenly the soldier understood that the very tree he sat in was so flexible it would make perfect bows; long bows to defeat the French!

Excitedly he set about making a longbow as tall as himself from a branch of the Yew tree. Carefully he shaped it so that the dark springy sapwood was on the outside and the tough, light heartwood on the inside of the curve. He strung the bow with a strong animal sinew and made arrows from straight Hazel shoots. It needed all his strength to draw back the bow until his knuckles were next to his ear. He let the arrow fly and was stunned to watch it fly true and straight through the trees.

Without delay the soldier found his way back to the English army and asked to see the king. King Henry was amazed at how good the longbow was and ordered his armourers to start making them without delay. The soldiers began to train to use the new weapon, for soon it would be put to the test.

On a wet and miserable Friday morning near the village of Agincourt the ceaseless rain had turned the ploughed field before the English into a swampland. The French, 50,000 strong, were less than a mile away and in good spirits, confident of an early victory over the weary English army numbering less than 10,000.

King Henry ordered his men at arms and bowmen to fashion hundreds of sharpened stakes from the beech woods around and to secure them into the ground at an angle of 45 degrees in front of them. Behind these waited the longbow men. With the bows a foot taller than the average man they could hit a target with speed and accuracy at three times the range of the French crossbow. The best bowmen could fire twelve arrows a minute.

The French trumpets sounded..... the French Knights and cavalry advanced, only to be bogged down in the soft mud. The English bowmen were ordered to fire their arrows into the air. The arrows rained down on the stricken French army. The English archers had won a great victory for the King.

Yew Factfile

Latin Name- *Taxus baccata*

This is an evergreen tree that grows right across Europe, Iran and Algeria.

Yews are extremely long lived. The 4000 year old tree in the Scottish village of Fortingall is thought to be the oldest tree in Europe. Yew wood was ideal for making longbows and they were commonly planted in churchyards.

The red berries are called 'arils' and though the seeds and leaves are highly toxic, one of the most important finds of modern medicine in the 1990s was the use of chemical extracts from Yew in the treatment of cancer.



8

The Cedar of Lebanon

Pye Bank School – Year 5



The Cedar of Lebanon is one of the most ancient and distinguished trees. The great flat branches are strong and the wind whistles through them, leaving its music behind. Every part of it is powerful, but the stiff, pointed leaves have a special magic. They can be made into a potion that can make you beautiful. The Spirit of the Cedar will tell you this if you sit long enough to listen.

There was once an ugly witch who wanted to be beautiful so that she could marry the prince. She was incredibly ugly, with a big warty, pointed nose and a big hairy spot on her forehead. Because she was so unattractive to look at, people mocked and shunned her so it was not surprising that she had developed an unattractive nature. She had a bad temper, bad breath and a BAD attitude – and the prince didn't like her at all.

The witch, however, had a plan. She kidnapped the princess so that the prince couldn't find her. Then she went to the tree, took some leaves, and made them into a potion. Then she drank the potion straight down. Immediately she was transformed and was BEAUTIFUL. She went to the castle, sure the prince would fall in love with her. But her plan did not work! The Prince didn't fall in love with her. He hardly noticed her. He was too sad!

The witch returned to the tree for more leaves, sure that he would love her if only she were gorgeous enough, but her beauty was already beginning to fade. The Spirit of the Cedar told her that beauty from the leaves only lasted a short while. "But don't despair," said the Spirit, "If you take a branch and make a harp and string it with some of your own hair, I will teach you the beautiful song of the Cedar".

Later, as she sits under the tree playing her Cedar harp, longing to turn beautiful again, the prince rides by. He stops to listen to the haunting sounds and the witch starts to shout at him to go away because she knows she's ugly. But the music of the Cedar is already charming her. She feels herself grow less bitter and sad. The prince tells the witch that the harp music is really beautiful and she has nice hair. The witch feels guilty about imprisoning the princess and takes the prince to her. The princess is so pleased to see the prince that they ask the witch to play her harp at their wedding.

At the Royal wedding she played so well that at the end of the evening people don't remember her hairy spot and warty nose and she forgets to be bad tempered. Everyone asks, "Who is the lovely harpist with the pretty hair?"

From that time the wood of the Cedar of Lebanon has made the sweetest of instruments!

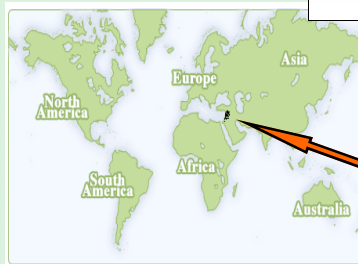
Cedar of Lebanon Factfile

Latin Name- *Cedrus libani*

The Cedar of Lebanon comes from the Middle East.

Younger trees are pyramid shaped but as they mature they become a majestic, flat-topped tree of massive proportions. They were planted from the 1740s on the lawns of all the grandest houses where they can still be seen as huge spreading trees. Older trees have large rounded cones which take two years to develop.

This is the great Cedar of the Bible, mentioned more times than any other tree. Its sweetly scented timber was used in the construction of Solomon's temple.



9

The Tulip Tree

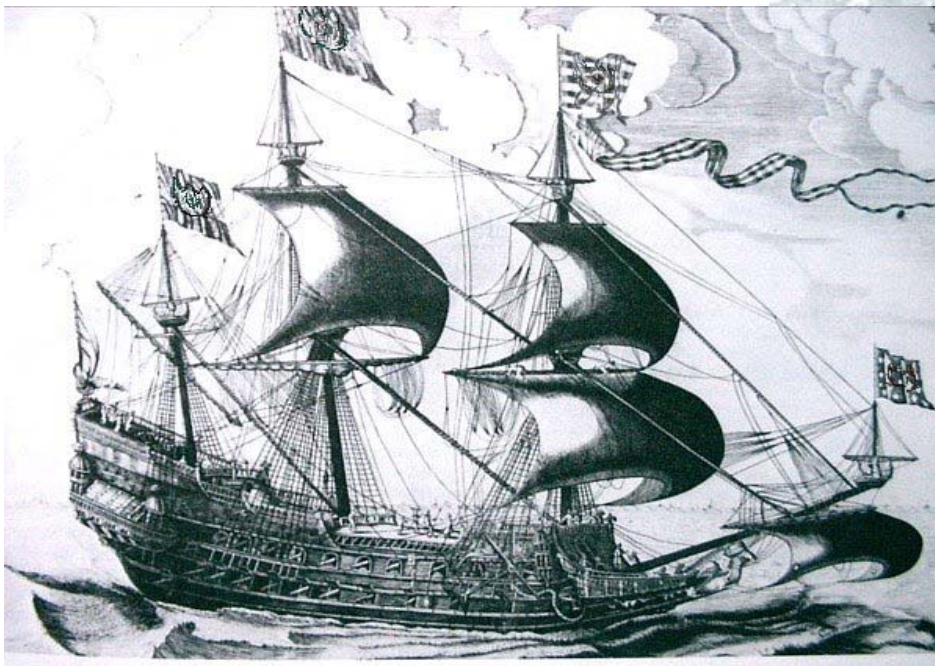
Whiteways Junior School

There was once a little Dutch boy who came from such a poor family that he had never been given a name. His parents, however, who loved him dearly, called him their 'Little Tulip' for the tulip was at this time the most valuable thing in the land. The most precious bulbs were changing hands for thousands of Guilders.

When he was 12 years old the lad's parents called their 'Little Tulip' to them and said that they could no longer afford to keep a growing boy. He must go and make his own way in the world. Sadly he packed his few belongings into a brown sack and made his way to the great port of Amsterdam. Amongst his things he carried a little wooden shield that his father had made for him, for he treasured it more than anything else. It was made in the shape of a tulip and had a bright yellow tulip painted on the front. It would always remind the boy of his home

No sooner had he arrived at the docks, where the sight of the tall masts and rigging of dozens of warships and merchantmen amazed him, than he was called up the gangplank of a warship and recruited as cabin boy. The very next morning he was sailing away to fight in battle in the wars with England.

The lad found that he enjoyed this new life and quickly became skilled in running up ropes on the towering masts and out along the spars. He even felt a thrill from the battles in which he ran hither and thither bringing powder and shot to the canons. More than once his little wooden tulip shield saved him from being injured by great splinters of wood that flew off



Tulip Tree Factfile

Latin Name- *Liriodendron tulipifera*

A native of mid-western and south-eastern USA, it was introduced to Britain around 1650. It is frequently planted in parks and large gardens. The flowers do indeed look somewhat like a tulip but they do not appear

until the tree is about 25 years old. The leaves turn bright yellow in autumn.



This was a favourite tree of Richard St Barbe Baker who founded the 'Men of the Trees' (now the International Tree Foundation) in 1924. By making people aware of the importance of trees and forests to the planet and encouraging local people to plant trees, he formed the basis for community forestry.

when cannonballs struck. He fought bravely and, as years went by, became a skilled sailor. The Captain took notice of his skill and he was promoted to Lieutenant and eventually, after many battles and adventures, he was given command of his own ship called 'The Tulip' with a crew of 90 men.

But that was not the end of it! The courage and skill with which he commanded the Tulip became renowned. He was so well liked by his men that sailors tried to serve on his ship. His wooden tulip shield was carefully fastened to the bottom of the mast. He still didn't forget where he came from. Finally the proud day came when he became Admiral of the Dutch Fleet, with a grand uniform, in command of hundreds of warships and thousands of sailors.

When he was an old man he would never tire of telling the story of the tulip shield that had pride of place over the fireplace in his home, and when he died, he was buried with all the ceremony befitting a fine Admiral. His one last wish was to be buried with his old wooden shield. The one with the tulip. The one that his father had made for him when he was a boy.

They say that a tree grew on his grave. The leaves and the flowers were exactly the same shape as the picture on the wooden shield. They say that the seeds from this tree went around the world and wherever the tree grows people know that you should always remember home and what is important to you, however grand you get in this life.

10

The English Oak

St Catherine's School – Year 5 & 6

There was once a Baron who had to protect his people from Roman invaders who came across the sea to his coast every year.

Each time the Romans came he would call his terrified villagers from the fields and they would bring their belongings and their animals inside the great wooden fort to make sure they were safe.

One day a great fleet of ships came over the sea and many boats were drawn up on the nearby shore. This time the Romans were well prepared and determined and lay siege to the fort for two whole years.

For all this time the people held out, living on the stores of grain and water that they had wisely laid away in preparation for such an event. But after two years the stores of food were nearly gone and the water was going green and stagnant. People began to sicken and die. The Baron couldn't bear to see his people dying. He called his strongest and wisest advisers together and asked what he should do. They all told him that all he could do was give in to the Roman Commander.

"It seems that I have little choice," sighed the Baron, shaking his head sadly. "Open the gate. I will go out and surrender to the invaders."

English Oak Factfile

Latin Name- *Quercus robur*

This European tree has always been the most valuable tree in the English woods, planted to produce

timber for buildings and the great wooden battleships. It was also used to produce charcoal for the iron and steel industry and the bark used in tanning leather. Jays and grey squirrels distribute the acorns from which new trees grow.

This is probably the best tree for wildlife as a mature oak can be home to over 1000 species of living things!



The great wooden gate began to swing open with a mighty creak and the Baron was just stepping out when a small boy that looked after the pigs ran out of the shadows. "Sir, Sir I have a plan that could save us," shouted the lad.

The soldiers laughed. How could such a small boy have thought of something that they had not? The boy whispered his plan into the Baron's ear. The Baron smiled and agreed to the boy's plan!

He went down to the Roman Commander and negotiated a truce. He asked for only one thing. That his people be allowed to plant one last harvest. If the Romans allowed them to do that, they would give up without a struggle and there would be no more bloodshed. The Commander agreed. It seemed fair enough, a harvest would only take a few months and they had been at war for two years and his men were tired.

So each member of the Baron's company came down to plant that last harvest... But the Romans are still waiting to claim the fort! For you see they planted ACORNS! Acorns take 300 years to grow into a full tree, 300 years to live and 300 years to die. The harvest would not be ready for 900 years!

The Commander went back to Rome, tricked by a Baron and a small boy who looked after the pigs! But they say that if you hear a whispering in the trees...it is the Roman army coming back to see if the harvest is in!!



(That's why the rangers are always planting new oak trees.... just to be on the safe side!)

The Japanese Pagoda Tree

Byron Wood Primary School – Year 5

In the far, far East there was once a very old woman who had lived in a mysterious house on the top of a cliff for longer than anyone's memory. People thought her strange but they would have been amazed if they had known that she spoke the ancient language of dragons. This was not her only secret. At the dead of night a stream of light shone on her house and in that stream of light tiny flying fairies brought her seeds of the Japanese Pagoda Tree, a tree that gave you wisdom.



Every year the old lady would leave her strange house and set off on a long walk all around the different countries, carefully planting the precious seeds of the Pagoda trees in the gardens of those who deserved to be wise.

On one of these long journeys, as she passed a dark cave, she saw sharp claws and heard a roar and voice that threatened to tear her to pieces.... but she was not afraid. The voice threatened to blow its burning breath on her. As the dragon stretched out towards her she saw that it was a Sun Dragon. But instead of frying her with its sizzling breath it gave a great sneeze! The Dragon had a bad cold and so could only cough and splutter and not blow fire any more.

The Dragon told her how he was ashamed because he could no longer blow fire and protect his people. He slunk back into the gloom of his cave in shame. She (using the language of Dragons) told him that she could help him and persuaded him to come out of hiding.

In the stony ground the old lady planted a seed that quickly grew into a Pagoda Tree. The Dragon fell asleep under it and as the leaves fell on him, he dreamt of being brave and strong again.

Next day the old lady and the Sun Dragon went into the town. An evil Samurai warrior stood in their path and laughed.

'You can no longer protect the town' he cried, 'I am now in command!' But his laughter froze upon his lips as the Sun Dragon stood proud and unflinching as he and the old lady grew taller and shinier and brighter. As the Sun Dragon breathed out a huge flame shot out and burned the evil Samurai to cinders.

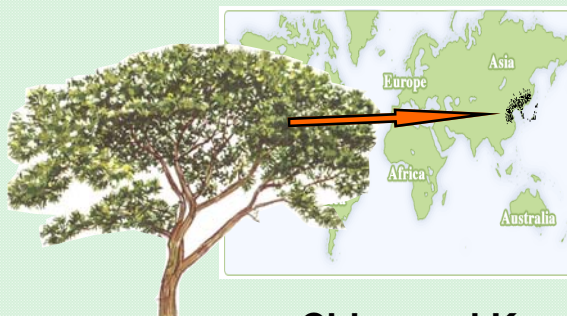
The Sun Dragon turned to thank the old lady but she had floated away into the sky. It turned out that she was the Dragon of the Clouds. As she floated higher and higher she dropped her bag of seeds.

The seeds fell all over Japan and the people of Japan who slept under those trees became very wise and clever and did great things.

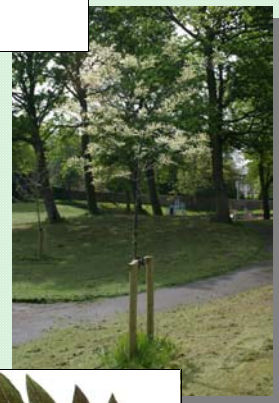
People all over the country still talk about that day and remind each other that you never know when you might have met a Dragon!!

Japanese Pagoda Tree Factfile

Latin Name- *Sophora japonica*.



Also known as the Scholars Tree, this beautiful tree first came from



China and Korea in 1753.

It has leaves rather like an ash tree and grows into a big broad tree, often 25 metres tall. It has showy white flowers but you will have to wait for about 30 years to see them!



12

The Wild Cherry Tree

Firs Hill Community Primary School



In Serbia they say that the Cherry Tree has a fairy-like creature, called a *Vila*, living in its branches. They are beautiful beings, with long white hair and fair features but their moods are very unpredictable. If you catch them on a day when they are in a good mood the cherries you pick will be plump and sweet and good for jam! But if you offend them with bad behaviour then any fruit you pick will be shrivelled and sour and good for nothing but feeding back to the birds!

Now, one day a doctor sat beneath the cherry tree and wondered how to heal the children in the village that had developed terrible coughs that wracked their tiny bodies and made them so very ill. Soon the warmth of the day and the heavy fragrance of the cherry blossom made him feel drowsy and he fell asleep beneath the cherry tree. Two of the *Vila*, peering down through the pink blossoms spied the doctor and fell in love with his kind face and dark good looks! Almost immediately they began to argue about who would try to win his heart!

When the doctor finally woke from his sleep the two little creatures appeared before him and told him he must choose between them. The poor doctor was completely thrown off guard by the appearance of the strange little beings and would not choose. They became quite angry and disagreeable.

“How tiresome these little creatures are,” thought the doctor, and, instead of being afraid, he stood and looked at them sternly and became angry himself!

“How can you think of love when the children of the village are dying? What selfish little creatures you are!”

Nobody had ever spoken back to them like this before and the *Vila* stopped being angry and went back to talk to their sisters about how to help the Doctor (and maybe if they helped him he would love them!!!)

Soon two little faces appeared once more from the thick foliage above the doctor’s head. One *Vila* gave him sour cherries and the other gave him sweet cherries.

“Give these cherries to the sick children,” said one *Vila* in a high, squeaky voice. “But you must promise to marry the one of us that gave you the right cherries that helped you to cure the children.”

The doctor thanked them and went back to the village. Then they waited to see which cure worked best.

Now the doctor didn't want to marry a *Vila*, he wanted to marry a mortal woman. So he thought long and hard and this is what he did. From the sour cherries he made cough medicine; this helped cure the coughs and bring down the fever. From the sweet cherries he got a local girl to make jam and jellies to help the children regain their strength.

When he went back to the Cherry Tree he told the *Vila* they had both helped. They began to argue with each other and while they argued the Doctor crept quietly away! They are arguing still, which is why some cherries are sweet and others can be sour. As for the Doctor – he married the local girl who made the jam and jellies!!!

Wild Cherry Factfile

Latin name- *Prunus avium*

Although most of the pink flowered Cherries in the park were bred originally in Japan, cherries have been cultivated across Europe for many years for their fruit. After a meal containing cherries the stones from the cherries would be counted out whilst saying the following rhyme: 'This year (1), Next year (2), Sometime (3), Never (4) ...' until there were no stones left and the person counting would know when they were due to marry.



The bark of the cherry tree was used in the past as a talisman against plague. It was often hung over doors or put into water butts to guard against disease and poisoning. Cherries are still a key ingredient of many cough medicines and syrups.

The Strawberry Tree

Byron Wood Primary School – Year 5

There was a man who set off on a journey to find medicine for his sick wife. On the way he saw a tree with strange fruit that looked like strawberries. He had never seen such a tree so he didn't know that the berries were bitter and poisonous. The berries looked sweet and juicy so he picked some.

He ate one and felt dizzy.

He ate two and felt strange.

He ate three andhe fell to the floor in a faint.

When he woke up he couldn't move. He tried to move but he couldn't because his feet had turned to roots, fixed into the ground, his legs had turned into a long brown trunk and his arms had turned into sharp, twisted branches. He had become a tree! His head was hidden in the branches of the tree all covered in leaves and in his hair there was a birds nest!

One month later the first son came along to find out what had happened to his father and to find some medicine for his sick mother. He passed the tree and his father tried to call to him but he couldn't speak.

Two months later the second son came along hoping to catch up with his brother and find his father. He was in a hurry because their mother was getting worse and he ran straight past the tree.

Eventually the young daughter left her mother's side and came the same way hoping to meet them. She came to the Strawberry Tree and was so tired and sad that she lay down beneath the tree and cried and cried. Her father was so upset that he began to cry and his tears fell as leaves. The leaves fell on the girl and her tears fell into the roots and the tree melted away leaving her father standing there... they hugged each other for what seemed like hours.

As they stood there the two brothers came back. They had found medicine that would cure their mother...but how they found that, is another story!

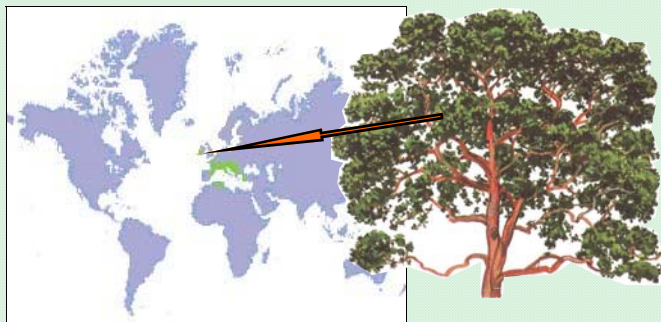
Strawberry Tree Factfile

Latin Name- *Arbutus unedo*



This is a small evergreen tree with rough red-brown bark. It was introduced from south west Ireland and the Mediterranean. The flowers and the small strawberry-like warty red fruits are seen together in autumn.

The fruit, though edible, is unpalatable; hence the latin name 'unedo' which means 'I only eat one!'





The Almond

Whiteways Junior School

Throughout history, almonds have maintained religious, ethnic and social significance. King Tutankhamun took several handfuls of almonds to his grave in 1352 B.C., to nourish him on his journey into the afterlife. Among the Hebrews, it was a symbol of watchfulness and promise due to its early flowering, while the Chinese consider it a symbol of enduring sadness and female beauty. Christian symbolism often uses almond branches as a symbol of the Virgin Birth of Jesus; paintings often include almonds encircling the baby Jesus and as a symbol of Mary. In the Bible, Aaron is chosen among the other tribes of Israel by a rod that brought forth almond flowers.

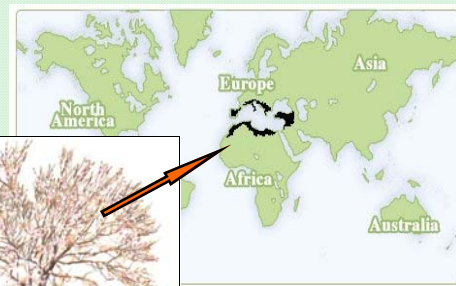
The Romans showered newlyweds with almonds as a fertility charm. This tradition survives in the Middle East where sugar coated almonds are given at weddings to remind the happy couple that marriage has both its sweet and bitter moments but that, if they work together, their life can be happy and fruitful.

Almond Factfile

Latin Name- *Prunus dulcis*

Almonds originally grew in central Asia but travellers consumed almonds while travelling the 'Silk Road' between Asia and the

Mediterranean, and, before long, almond trees flourished in the Mediterranean region. There are two forms of the plant, one (often with white flowers) producing sweet almonds, and the other (often with pink flowers) producing bitter almonds. Almond oil was used internally in medicine and remains fairly popular in alternative medicine, particularly as a carrier oil in aromatherapy, but has fallen out of prescription among doctors. California is now the single largest producer of almonds since their introduction to the state in the mid 1700s.



In parts of north Africa the Almond tree is known as the 'Awakening One' as it is the first tree to flower, as early as January in the Mediterranean region.

The Italian word for almond is *mandorla*. Ancient musicians adopted the pleasing oval of the almond in designing a musical instrument. The lute-like instrument evolved in the 18th century in Italy into the mandolin.

15

The Persian Ironwood Tree

Whiteways Junior School

There was once a tree as strong as iron. The wood from this tree would make the finest of handles for any weapon. But that wasn't its greatest treasure. Its greatest treasure was its sap. It was said that the sap of this tree could make bitter water taste sweet and drinkable again.

Many years ago the Guardian of this special tree had trapped an evil Djinn who was caught in its great roots, trapped by a spell forever in an iron chest. It was the responsibility of the Guardian to make sure it was never released. To anyone who was courageous, greedy or foolish enough to ask, the Djinn still had the power to grant three wishes in any year. Few had been desperate enough to risk, however, for they knew the Djinn's reputation for cunning and treachery. This was fortunate, for the only way for him to break free was for three people to accept wishes within a year.



For two years there had been little rain and the water in the country's wells had become cloudy and evil tasting. The land was dying and the King of the land needed the sap of the Ironwood tree to make the poisonous water sweet again. He had three sons, they were all big, all brave, all very strong, but the eldest was hard hearted and wanted nothing but to rule his father's kingdom. The middle son liked nothing but his own *GH.* company, he hated the people and saw them as a nuisance, and the youngest son, well he just wasn't very clever. Well meaning, but not very bright!

The three sons were sent off to bring back the sap from the Ironwood tree. The King had given each a precious ruby as a present for the Guardian of the tree in return for the sap. But as the first brother approached the

spreading branches of the tree he heard the cunning voice of the Djinn offering him a wish. "What harm can it do?" he thought. "I have come all this way. I deserve something for myself," and with that he wished he was as hard as stone... and so he became....stone. An immovable rock to the west of the tree, a ruby set fast in the stone where his hand would have been.

The second brother did no better. He accepted the Djinn's offer and wished to be a lone wolf.... and so he was. He was last seen running into the desert howling at the moon.

The youngest brother, meanwhile, watched all this in terror from a safe distance. "You should have worked together", said the Guardian, emerging from behind the tree. "That is the only way that you can be successful in your mission. Whatever you do, do not accept a wish from the Djinn."

"What use is that advice now that my brothers are gone?" sobbed the youngest son. But as he sat in despair that night near the Ironwood tree, wondering how to cut the bark and release the sap, a wolf approached him, a thighbone in its mouth. The young man took it and began to sharpen it on the ruby, embedded in the nearby rock. As he did so it became the sharpest of knives.

Ignoring the Djinn's imploring voice for him to accept a wish, the young man cut the bark, and let the sticky sap run into a bottle. He turned and was amazed to see the rock transforming itself into the shape of his long lost brother. The wolf however ran back to the desert, happy to be alone again. The Guardian made a sword handle from a branch of the tree, for the eldest and the youngest brothers, so in battle they would never forget what the Persian Ironwood had done for them!

Persian Ironwood Factfile

Latin Name- *Parrotia persica*



This tree comes from Iran and the forests south of the Caspian Sea in Asia. It first came to this country in 1841 and can occasionally be seen in large parks and gardens. It grows into a small spreading tree with a very thick crown and short trunk. It's main feature, however, is the



striking autumn colour of its leaves which turn a rich crimson and gold.

16

Complete the Tree Trail at - The Olive Tree.



The olive tree is a tree of great beauty. It is called the "*Tree of Eternity*" because of its ability to regenerate. After 150 years of olive production the tree begins to yield a lower harvest, then around 200 years the cap of the tree dies leaving the roots and base of the trunk. This base is able to produce sprouts, regenerate and begin its life process again.

No other tree carries the heritage of the olive. It is at once the symbol for life, hope, peace, wisdom and victory. Olive trees dominated the rocky Greek countryside and were so sacred that those who cut one down were condemned to death or exile. In ancient Greece and Rome, olive oil was the hottest commodity; advanced ships were built for the sole purpose of transporting it from Greece to trading posts around the Mediterranean. It was in Greece that it was first cultivated. Since then, the presence of the olive tree in the Greek region has been uninterrupted and closely connected with the traditions and the culture of the Greek people. It has been said that the power of ancient Greece was made possible by the cultivation of the olive, which provided rich fruits from rocky countryside that could produce little else. Greek myths tell how a dove brought an olive twig from Phoenicia to Athens, where it was planted on the Acropolis to become their first olive tree. When Xerxes captured the Acropolis he burned a mystical olive tree which reappeared by magic. The Greeks dedicate the olive to their goddess Athena who, it is said, gave the Olive Tree the power to bear fruit. It was symbolic of peace and prosperity; and olive leaves were used to crown Olympic champions.



It seems, therefore, that the well-known association of the olive with the dove of peace owes as much to Greek mythology as to the biblical account of the dove returning to Noah's ark at the end of the flood (Genesis 8:11). Even so, the olive is one of the most important and symbolic plants mentioned in the Bible.

Olive Factfile

Latin Name- *Olea europaea*

This is a slow growing but incredibly long-lived tree. Sun, stone, drought, silence and solitude: these are the five ingredients that, according to Italian folk traditions, create the ideal habitat for the olive tree. The fruits and the oil made by crushing them are used in cooking, in the treatment of high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes and even as a component in protective sun creams and ointments to soothe burns. The tree requires long hot summers and mild winters and is unlikely to fruit in this country. The olive branch has become an internationally recognised symbol of peace and prosperity.



Tree Stories

'Tree Stories' was a creative writing course organised by Burngreave Community Forestry Project and Green City Action held in Abbeyfield Park. The course was led by Alison Ross. Course participants and Alison have written the four seasons tree stories.

"Settling down in Abbeyfield Park house in the afternoon, surrounded by the overwhelming noise of the wind in the trees, watching a boy attempting to kick a football that the wind carried high into the air, we found ourselves inspired by the trees, and the weather. We planned a sequence of short stories on the theme of children's relationship with the trees in the park, weaving in the folklore of trees. Trees in parks become familiar objects, continuing to live their extraordinary, secret lives, observing the frantic lives of people as they rush through their short life spans."

The stories are based on real trees in Abbeyfield Park.
See if you can spot which ones.



The tree paintings resulted from a workshop in the park led by Panni Loh (front left) in June 2005. The lovely 'dotty' background was drawn by hand by Lois Palfreyman using natural crayons and materials. It was inspired by Aboriginal rock art which she saw on a recent trip to Australia.



Almond Eye-Awakening
Penny Philcox

Spring

by Stephanie Briddon

Yesterday's savage wind had died down. After picking litter and fallen branches, Mrs Redwood, their teacher, called the class to come to where a group of young people were standing by a young sycamore tree at the top of the park.

Tilia was nervous. Today's assembly was important; it should have been Sy Moore's birthday. Mrs Redwood had asked her to write something about him, to read out at the ceremony. She had learnt her lines so that she didn't have to keep glancing down at the piece of paper, but she was frightened she would make a mistake. She tried to picture him running round the park doing all those mad things, completely absorbed in his own world. No wonder the other boys used to call him 'Psycho'. How were they to know it was all part of his illness? But Tilia had somehow broken through the protective shell that had surrounded him.

Tilia glanced around and smiled nervously at Rohan and Yusaf from her class, and Ash, the school football captain, who had often had a kick-about with Sy on Sunday afternoons, communicating wordlessly. She took some deep breaths. As Tilia started to speak, the spring sun came out and in a nearby tree a thrush sang.

She spoke with confidence: *'Sy loved this park. He always seemed to be here when he wasn't at school – collecting conkers, climbing trees, kicking his football around. People thought he was weird, but he wasn't. Two years ago, I was in the park with my dog, when he ran out into the road. I thought he was going to get run over, but Sy rescued him for me. He was hard to get to know, but I'm lucky that I was one of them. He would have been thirteen today, but this tree is here to remember him, and the money from the school Christmas concert raised enough money to buy this plaque.'*

Tilia smiled shyly as her schoolmates gave her a round of applause. She looked down proudly at the shining brass plaque attached to a smooth block of stone. The tree planted in remembrance the previous autumn was bare of leaves but was now budding profusely. At its base was a carpet of the year's daffodils, Sy's favourite flower. Tilia hoped that this tree would be safe from vandals, and outlive all of them.

Summer

by Jean Wildgoose

Wild Cherry and Rohan came to play in Abbeyfield Park one hot day in late summer. The children sat on the warm, dry grass and made daisy chains whilst all around them multicoloured butterflies flitted amongst the flowers and bees hummed as they flew from blossom to blossom. They talked about where they had been for their summer holidays. It was almost time to go back to school.

They were sitting under the biggest tree in the park and they noticed, as the afternoon lengthened, that the breeze in the tree was softly rustling the leaves. It made it sound as though the beech tree was whispering to them. The wind grew stronger and it sounded as though the tree was sighing and moaning, its stiff branches heaving to and fro. The children leapt up and started to play aeroplanes, soaring and swooping in the wind, their arms outstretched. 'I'm an eagle soaring high around the mountain tops,' shouted Rohan excitedly.

After a while the stormy wind died away and they sank down, out of breath. The wind had blown down lots of little red cherries. Cherry picked one up and popped it into her mouth. Rohan was horrified. 'How do you know they won't kill you?' he exclaimed. 'They are lovely' said Cherry, laughing, 'Mum and I sometimes come to get these cherries to make cherry crumble from this tree. Here, try one.' Making a screwed up face, Rohan bit into one of the bright fruits, but his face quickly broke into a broad smile and he started to collect more and to throw sticks to knock down the juiciest cherries. 'Ummm..' was all that he said for a while until he'd had enough and had wiped the red juice from his chin.

'Those are really cool' said Rohan, rubbing his stomach.

'Yes, and that's not the only special thing about this tree' said Cherry. 'Grandma had told me that people used to believe that the bark from the cherry tree would protect people against plague and diseases.' 'My Dad is off sick,' said Rohan. 'My mum is really worried about him.' 'Well let's try it then' said Cherry, and she peeled off a strip of the reddish bark that curled around the tree trunk. Rohan shoved it into his pocket and said that he would hang it over the door. He said he wouldn't tell his parents because they'd think it was rubbish. Secretly he thought it was nonsense himself. But then he remembered how she had shown him the cherries and again he smiled as he ran home.

Kath Wilson



Autumn

by Alison Ross

Now that summer was over and school had started again, there weren't so many children playing in Abbeyfield park. But Yusaf knew that Dawn would be there. Her gran lived in one of the flats overlooking the park and she was allowed to play out, as long as she came in before it got dark. Sure enough, she was there, by her favourite tree near the entrance to the park.

Dawn told everyone that her grandfather had helped to plant a Dawn Redwood conifer in the park 20 years ago from seeds that were found in China. Before he died, he told her that it was one of the oldest trees in the world- it had existed over 2 million years ago. Dawn loved to see how tall it was growing and how the leaves changed colour over the seasons, but mostly she boasted that it was *her* tree. Today Yusaf had something to tell her.

His favourite tree was the old yew. The leaves were so dark and thick and spread out so wide, you could shelter under it if it rained. Apart from the holly bush, it was the only evergreen tree in the park.

'This is *my* tree,' Yusaf told Dawn. 'Yew- Yusaf. Do you see?'

'You can't just say that,' Dawn scoffed. 'Anyway, *your* tree is a bad luck tree. You find it near graveyards. My granddad told me, if you eat one of the leaves, you'll die!'

'That's all you know. It's one of the best trees there is- you can make daggers or spears, or even bows from the wood, the branches are so strong and ... bendy.'

'Huh- I'd like to see you try!'

'And, what you think is poisonous, ok, is actually a very strong medicine.'

'Are you going to eat some then?'

'I'm not stupid! You have to know how to use it.'

'And how's that?'

'Inside the needles of the tree is a chemical. It's one of the newest and strongest drugs for fighting cancer.'

Dawn thought about her granddad, and the tree he planted and said was hers. 'OK, Yusaf, this can be your tree!'



Joan Williams

Hazel Carman

Winter

by Anne Grange

It was already dark, even though it was only half past four, and Holly Foley was rushing home from the rehearsal for the school Christmas concert. She was performing a solo piano piece, and it had gone well tonight. She was excited but also anxious about seeing her dad over the holidays. She hadn't seen him for a while, and now he had a baby with his girlfriend. She turned left after the bus stop, taking her normal short cut home across the park. Her mind whirled with nerves in case she played the wrong notes at the concert, and at the same time, she was wondering what Christmas present she should buy for her new half-sister.



Halfway across the park Holly suddenly noticed how dark it was, the dark mass of the rhododendrons blocking out the streetlights. She felt a stab of fear. She was scared of the people who came here sometimes after dark, and she felt helpless and stupid for coming here on her own. The sound of the wind in the trees seemed threatening. She shivered as a sudden gust moaned through the leaves and set the bare branches creaking. Holly breathed a sigh of relief to see the lights of the houses on the other side of the wall. She started to run, desperate to escape the park.

But as she rushed along the dark path she tripped on the roots of a cherry tree that were pushing through the asphalt, and she sprawled full length on the ground. Her grazed knees throbbed with pain. She picked up her school bag and hurried out of the park, ignoring her ripped tights and bleeding knees. When she turned her front door key in the lock, she put her hand on her neck. Her silver locket had gone. Her mum's silver locket. Holly hadn't even asked to borrow it. She had taken it so that she could show off at school. She remembered having it on the bus – the driver had complimented her. It must have come off when she fell over, but she couldn't face going back into the park.

Ash slipped into the moonlit darkness of the park. It had been one of the worst days of his life. Before today, he had been one of the star players of the school team. There had been an important match against a rival school. In the opening

minutes a big, beefy kid with real malice in his eyes had tackled Ash. As he had been robbed of the ball, Ash had received a hefty kick on the shin. It had ruined his concentration for the rest of the game. His passes had become weak, and he had missed a goal that would have won them the game. Instead of sympathy from his team-mates and teacher, there had been harsh words and humourless sarcasm.

When he had arrived home, hoping for some comfort, the place was in chaos, with relatives rushing up and down the stairs, helping to prepare for his sister's wedding next week. His mum had slapped his hand away from the food in the kitchen, because it was for the wedding. He slammed the front door behind him, doubting that anyone would notice.

Ash lurked in the park, wanting to kick and punch things, anything to take away the frustration of his ruined day. He kicked a wire litterbin, bending it out of shape, but it didn't make him feel any better. He rubbed his bruised leg. He stopped by a young tree, tied to a stake. It would be easy to snap and break. He reached up and pulled hard on one of its thin branches. It gave an ominous creak. Ash felt a sudden pang of guilt. He stopped what he was doing and glanced around the deserted park. He liked the way the grass looked silver in the moonlight. He felt ashamed of his stupidity. He wasn't normally a destructive person. He looked down and noticed something silver glinting on the path. He bent to pick it up. It was a round locket on a delicate chain. He didn't know if it was the right thing to do, but he hung it in the branches of the tree – the tree he had tried to destroy. He walked back home, feeling calmer.

Holly showered, stuck plasters on her knees, put on fresh clothes, and prepared tea for herself and her mum. The cheese on toast was bubbling under the grill by the time her mum got home from work. They sat in the kitchen to eat, swapping news about the day, until her mum became absorbed in Eastenders.

'I'm just doing upstairs to do my homework!' Holly yelled, but she put her coat on, grabbed the emergency torch and sneaked out of the back door. She had to find the locket before her mum knew it was missing. But she didn't hold out much hope. Someone would have taken it by now. She walked into the park through the side entrance, and realised she didn't have to turn her torch on. The park was bathed in dazzling moonlight. She retraced her steps, but didn't find anything. Her mum would never forgive her. She was heading back home when she noticed the moon. It was huge, almost perfectly round, hanging in the bare branches of a tall sapling. It looked magical. And there was something shiny, dangling in the bottom branch like a Christmas decoration. The locket! She reached up and lifted it off the branch, pausing to admire the way it caught the light, and then she ran home to put it back in her mum's jewellery box before hurrying off to perform in the concert. She felt so happy that she knew now that she would play better than she had ever played before!

The Four Seasons Of A Tree

When we gaze at the beauty of a tree,
God's gift to us and for all to see.

Spring its blossom, summer fruit to bear.
Each season comes, still amazed we stare.

Summer arrives with picturesque scene,
When every branch holds leaves so green.

Autumn leaves fall without a sound,
Forming a golden carpet all around.

Winter is here and the snowflakes fall
Covering each tree with a snow white shawl.

Whatever the season we will always see
The magical changes of every tree.
Helped by the sun, encouraged by the rain,
Now ready to evolve all over again.

Sylvia Reaney

The Story of Abbeyfield House and Grounds

A local coalmine owner called Pass built Abbeyfield House in the late 1700s. It was from the local coal workings that the area became known as Pitsmoor. At this time the area around the house would have been open fields and heathland but, as the population of Sheffield exploded in the early 19th century, it was taken up for house building; poorer and meaner red brick streets nearer town, stone built villas for cutlery factory owners and professional people along the fashionable Burngreave and Pitsmoor Roads. During the 19th century Abbeyfield House was occupied by the Wake family. Bernard Wake, one of Sheffield's leading solicitors, extended and completely remodelled the building, adding a coach house, stables and conservatory. The very unusual sundial on the wall of the octagonal bay dates from this time.



**Abbeyfield House,
About 1890**

**The Unusual
Sundial**



At the same time as Bernard Wake was transforming the house the grounds were also undergoing a makeover. A broad driveway was created, leading from the formal entrance gates, opposite the old tollhouse on Pitsmoor Road, past the stables block towards the house and a new walled garden was built. The curving network of pathways was laid out, leading to an artificial mound and an ornamental lake with a small island.

Playground

Enwiling Green

**The Boating Lake,
About 1900.**



**Abbeyfield Park
in 1930**

The site was acquired for the City in 1909, with the intention of creating a much-needed area of recreational space. By 1923 a bowling green had been constructed on the site of the artificial mound and a second on the walled garden site was later added. Tennis courts were built to the east of the house. In the 1950s the lake was filled and a children's playground built there.

The house was occupied in part by the resident park keeper who took great pride in his work. Older people remember the beautifully manicured lawns and the colourful displays of summer bedding flowers.

Following the period of decline when the house was unoccupied and little maintenance was carried out the park is now revitalised. Overgrown conifer hedging has been removed and the grandeur of the fully mature Sycamore, Beech and Lime trees can be fully enjoyed.

The house itself is now occupied by the offices of Green City Action and the Burngreave Messenger. An exciting new children's playground now stands on the site of the lake and pupils from Fir Vale School worked with sculptor Amanda Wray to produce the decorative gateway that now welcomes visitors into the park at the Abbeyfield Road entrance.



“Burngreave is at last getting what it deserves – community action.”



“My classes story is about the dove tree. Read it!!! It’s great.”



“This is a wonderful project – not just for the present community, but for generations to come”



**Community Tree Planting Event.
Abbeyfield Park,
November 27th, 2004**



“It’s great to see more trees being planted in Abbeyfield Park, especially from ‘around the world’ that reflect the multicultural nature of the area.”



“The energy created by this project gives life and love to the whole area. We are all one people, like the different leaves of one tree. May the roots of cooperation grow deep.”



SOUTH YORKSHIRE
forest
A National *community forest* Partner



**Start the tree trail at the decorated archway to
Abbeyfield Park, Burngreave.
Follow the numbered route on the map to discover
a whole world of trees and their fascinating stories as
told by children in the local schools.**

**For more information on this project
or to get involved
please contact-**

**The Burngreave Community Forestry Project,
Trees and Woodlands Team,
Parks and Countryside,
Sheffield City Council,
Meersbrook Park,
Brook Road,
Sheffield S8 9FL**

Phone: 0114 2500500

