



**Tree 3. An ancient Sweet Chestnut and leaf**

No.	Species	Girth (m) 2005	Estimated age (years)
1	Sweet chestnut	4.8	350
2	Common oak	3.76	250
3	Sweet chestnut	4.83	350
4	Common oak pollard	3.46	250
5	Common oak pollard	4.25	400
6	Sweet chestnut	5.16	400
7	Beech (felled)	3.66	200
8	Yew	4.24	500-600
9	Yew	5.64	800-1000
10	Holly clone	16	c.600+
11	Beech	4.19	400
12	Sweet chestnut	3.25	200
13	Wild service clone	Not	applicable
14	Beech	5.53	350+
15	Sycamore. <i>The Soldier's Tree</i>	1.27	100+ (on carvings)
16	Ash	3.89	200
17	Yew	3.53	300-350
18	Yew	4.26	500-600

**Veteran Trees** are special trees. They are not necessarily extremely ancient, but - like human veterans - they have stories to tell and the scars to prove them!

**Veteran Trees** can tell us how our ancestors managed their land, how they provided their families with warmth and shelter and how and where they grazed the animals that provided them with food and clothing.

**Veteran Trees** are a link to past landscapes, not only through human history but also through the colonies of creatures that lived in the historic landscapes and survived in the old trees when the landscape changed. A veteran oak will be home to uncountable numbers of insects, invertebrates, and other animals that can only live in the cavities, rot holes and bark of a veteran tree and have no way of moving to another tree should their home be felled.

**Tree Management.** Cut a deciduous tree off near ground level and the stump (stool) will grow multiple shoots. The shoots can be harvested when they reach an appropriate size and the stump will shoot again. The process can continue almost indefinitely. This practice is Coppicing. Grazing animals love the new shoots and have to be excluded from a coppice.

Cut a deciduous tree at about 2 metres and the animals cannot reach the new shoots. They can be harvested in a similar way to a coppice stool but with more difficulty. This practice is Pollarding. The most ancient trees, like those in Windsor Great Park, are pollards.

To produce long timbers trees are left un-cut but may be pruned. Such trees are called Standards.

### Estimating the Age of Trees.

Coppice stools. Take an average diameter. For oak, ash, and hazel allow 0.3m per 100 years. For sweet chestnut allow 0.6m per 100 years.

Pollards. Measure the girth at about 1.5m above the ground. In a wood allow 8 years for every 10cm and then add another third. In the open allow 4 years for every 10cm and then add a third.

Standards. Measure the girth at about 1.5m above the ground. In a wood allow 8 years for every 10cm. In the open allow 4 years for every 10cm.

But growth slows as trees grow older and so old trees will be older than the calculated age.

**Ashampstead Common** is, like its Veteran Trees, a Special Place. For centuries it was pasture woodland grazed by wild animals and by cattle, horses, pigs and sheep. These ate tree seedlings and kept the woods open and grassy. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century it was enclosed with a bank and ditch to be a deer park, but continued to be grazed and kept open. The park was abandoned about 1600 and reverted to being common grazing. Apart from the road material quarry pits and the chalk pits the ground surface has been undisturbed. This treatment has resulted in a very rich wildlife of trees, flowers and other creatures.

**Access.** The Commons are owned by Yattendon Estates. Ashampstead Parish residents have unrestricted access under a legal agreement of 1974. Non-parishioners are technically restricted to the many paths shown on the map.

**DRIVERS USE THE CAR PARK  
ENTIRELY AT THEIR OWN RISK**



West Berkshire  
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## Ashampstead Parish. West Berkshire Ashampstead Common **Veteran Trees for the Future.**



Dick Greenaway and Nick Hopton 2013

