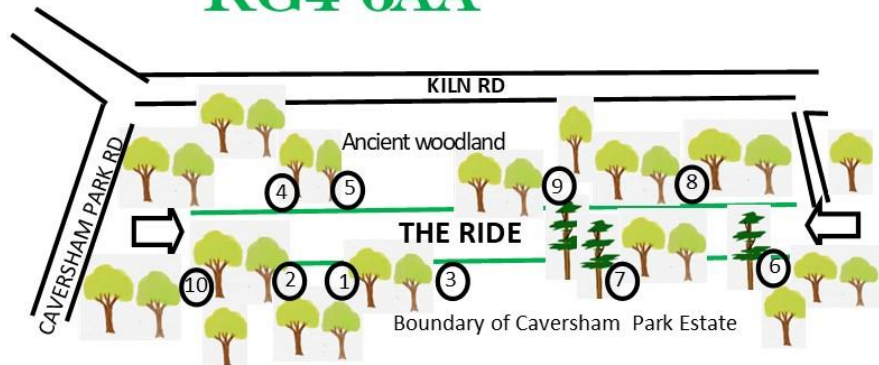


Meet 10 trees ALONG THE RIDE

each with
their own
story to tell

CLAYFIELD COPSE RG4 6AA



1. WILD SERVICE



This is a rare tree in most woodlands, often an indicator that the site is ancient woodland. There is also an old one in Blackhouse Wood. This one has seeded itself here in the last 25 years, so is rather special and guarded over.

There is a group of wild service on the edge of the wood, bordering Kiln Rd which have white blossom in spring and spectacular autumn colours



3. OAK



The 'King' of British trees! Oaks support more wildlife than any other British tree. The leaves rot down quickly, making a rich leaf mould, this encourages a wide variety of plants to grow, which increases the diversity of wild life

Many of the oak trees here are of a similar age, .. perhaps planted here as an investment by Mr Crawshay, 150 yrs ago ?



2. ENGLISH ELM



Dutch elm disease entered the country in 1964 and destroyed most of our English elms. Beetles burrow under the bark and spread a fungus which blocks the trees sap. The trees then only live for about 15 years, but they often send a sucker from the root, as this one is doing, and a new tree begins to grow.



Before 1964 the elm's stature made imposing trees in our landscape and featured in many Constable and Turner paintings.

4. HORNBEAM



The bark is grey and feels muscular, do stroke it, feel the strength. It is the hardest wood of any tree in Europe. it is a dominant tree on clay soils. The name, means 'hard tree' and the timber is used for chopping blocks in butchers shops.

Beneath this tree in spring grows an unusual buttercup style flower, found only in ancient woodland, called Goldilocks.



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5. BEECH



One of UK's tallest trees, known as the Queen of British Trees, grows to 120m silver grey bark, easily scarred, [popular for writing on], it does cast a dense shade and forms a thick leaf litter which



The fruit, is known as "mast" and is popular with finches, they have a powerful beak to break the prickly husks.



deters flowers, except for the bluebell, which flowers before the beech leaves emerge.

7. CEDAR



3 stately trees. Not native! From Mediterranean or Himalayas. Planted probably according to plans by Capability Brown as part of his designs for the outer regions of the parkland of Caversham Park House, mid 18 century. Slow growing tree, barrel shaped cones.

Several cedar trees fell in the big storm of 1987, and were turned into 'way mark' sculptures by a local wood carving group, many of which are surviving here still.



9. WILD CRAB APPLE



An old distinctive tree, leaning over the Ride, the bark has purplish brown scaly patches, leaves are small and round, it has white flowers in spring, very acid fruit but sought after by birds.

The ancestor of all our cultivated apples today, and still can provide the root stock for grafts. Fruit can be made into a jelly ...



6. ROCKY MOUNTAIN WHITE PINE



Not a native tree. It is the only one on the site! Purported to have been planted by Thomas Jefferson [yes, 3rd president of USA] in 1700s on a visit he made to Caversham Park as part of a tour of English gardens [when Caversham Park was known for its amazing garden, on a par with many other stately homes e.g Blenheim Palace].

It grows slowly and has a distinctive 5 needle arrangement not seen on other pines. It is leaning, lost a few branches and looking a little frail!



8. ASH



A beautiful tree with spaced branches giving a light canopy, delicate leaves, the seeds in bunches called 'keys'. Sadly very few left as these trees are succumbing to die back, *Hymenochaete fraxinifera*, a fungus which blocks the sap supply. The disease was identified here in 2012.

Seedlings exist and maybe some will survive [5 in a 100 ?]. These trees will be very much missed.



10. WYCH ELM



Not a very common tree generally but there are several here. They may be multi stemmed or a single trunk. The leaves are double toothed, pointy with short stalks, yellow in autumn, bunches of green seeds in spring. It is related to the English Elm, they like damp conditions.



In an open situation wych elm are a valuable habitat for the rare white hair-streak butterfly, which has been seen here.

