



Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

South East Worcestershire Local Group

Local News & Local Events April 2019

INDOOR MEETINGS

Winter Programme 2019-2020

All meetings are held at Wulstan Hall, Priest Lane, Pershore, commencing at 7.30 p.m. Entrance fee £2.50. Meetings are usually on Thursday evenings.

Thursday 17th October 2019. Butterflies of Limestone and Grassland in the UK. An illustrated talk by John Tilt. John's wealth of knowledge on butterflies and their habitats takes us beyond Worcestershire's borders on this occasion.

Thursday 21st November 2019. Ancient woodland plants and their conservation. An illustrated talk by Paul Rutter. Which plants thrive in woodland and what has to be done to encourage them in the richest of natural habitats?

Thursday 19th December 2019. The Return of the Pine Marten. An illustrated talk by Johnny Birks. Johnny is of course well-known for his informative and amusing presentations. He has been studying pine martens for many years and is involved with national re-introduction programmes.

Thursday 20th February 2020. A sideways look through birds' eyes. An illustrated talk by Graham Martin. You may have heard Graham's talk on bird vision before but there will be new things in this version!

Thursday 19th March 2020. Details in the next Newsletter

WEBSITES

Information on Local Group events and log sales can be found on the Trust's main website www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk and on the local website www.tiddesley.org.uk/

If you can, please check the Tiddesley website before meetings in case of last minute changes.

LOCAL GROUP CONTACTS

Useful phone numbers and your local committee:

Harry Green 01386 710377 (Chairman, Tiddesley Wood, logs and chips, work parties, general information, etc). Liz Stone, Bob Gillmor 01386 556685 (Treasurer, Tiddesley Wood Open Day and general information). Miriam Tilt (Secretary), John Holder (log deliveries), Sue Chandler (bird food and Christmas card sales), Jayne Bache (organiser local indoor events).

Newsletter edited and stuck together by Harry Green



Worcestershire
Wildlife Trust

Tiddesley Wood near Pershore

Log & wood chip sales

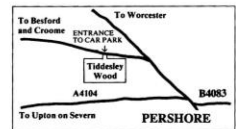
Sat & Sun 28th & 29th September 2019
Sat & Sun 26th & 27th October 2019
Sat & Sun 30th Nov & 1st December 2019
Sat & Sun 4th & 5th January 2020
Sat & Sun 1st & 2nd February 2020
Sat & Sun 29th Feb & 1st March 2020
Sales 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. each day

Sold in aid of wildlife conservation

Logs £6 a bag
Loose without bags £120 per cu metre (250-350 logs)
Loaded loose into trailers, car boots etc,
Any amount big or small.



Follow main road (B4084) out of Pershore towards Worcester. Turn left at top of Allesborough Hill following signposts to Besford & Croome. After c500 yds look for signs. WR10 2AD will get you near for Sat Navs.



www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk
www.tiddesley.org.uk

Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, Lower Smite Farm, Smite Hill, Hindlip, Worcester, WR3 8SZ tel. 01905 754919
Charity no. 256618 company no. 929644

FIREWOOD LOGS AND WOOD-CHIP SALES

Sales were very good last winter bringing a useful income for the Trust. Please buy from us and encourage others to do so!

Wood chips suitable for garden mulch, paths or chicken runs are usually available but please check first. £3 a bag or negotiable loose!

Home delivery of logs.

Our volunteer John Holder is able to make some local deliveries of logs. There will be a delivery charge. If you are interested please contact John on 07583 907636. We cannot promise to meet every request and whether or not a delivery can be made is entirely at his discretion.

VOLUNTEERS!

The log sales and Tiddesley Wood Open Day are run entirely by volunteers. We are always very pleased to welcome new helpers. Log sales certainly give you plenty of exercise stuffing logs into bags or loading them into trailers! If you would like to join the happy gang please contact Harry Green 01386 710377

zen130501@zen.co.uk for more information

ELM

Harry Green

There are three sorts of elm in Tiddesley Wood nature reserve. I have written “sorts” rather than “species” because, as we shall see, they are difficult to identify and hybrids occur.

There were once big English elms *Ulmus procera* at the south boundary of the wood that were ravaged by Dutch elm disease and although saplings still arise from the surviving roots, these are killed when the bark is thick enough to be attacked by the bark beetles carrying the disease. Young dead elms are a familiar sight in hedgerows. Elm bark beetles lay eggs under bark of dead elm, the larvae create tunnels as they grow and eat the decaying wood before pupating in a tunnel. On emerging the beetle is soon covered with spores from the fungus that causes elm disease. They emerge, fly, find, nibble and damage the crotches between trunk and branch of living elms. The fungus enters, grows and blocks the tree's sap conducting systems killing parts or all the tree. Fortunately the root system usually survives and saplings arise from it. English elms were once very familiar as big hedgerow trees. It is a suckering elm and many hedges still consist of one individual along a strip of hedge. Before elm disease English elm was highly invasive through suckers and given a chance would produce whole coppices from one felled tree or gradually invade woodland.

There are a few Wych Elms *Ulmus glabra* scattered throughout Tiddesley. They once grew to huge spreading trees, often with a short trunk and usually in woodland. It is moderately resistant to elm disease and individuals can become quite large before being killed. This is a coppicing elm with many stems arising from a felled tree stump or stool and it does not produce suckers

There is a third elm, smooth-leaved elm *Ulmus minor*, which is uncommon in Worcestershire and does not grow in Tiddesley Wood. There are occasional trees in the county, a few were probably planted in response to elm disease. They are non-invasive and coppicing, not suckering, trees. There are varieties within the group.

So far it seems easy – three main species. However, there are many hybrids, variants, clones and clusters of trees all differing slightly from each other. This large range of forms has probably developed from hybrids between wych and variants of smooth-leaved elm. They may produce abundant seed and form clusters within woodland. Here's where we find Tiddesley Wood's third sort of elm.

To even make a reasonable guess of the identity of an elm requires perfect leaves; these are ones from the sunlit tops of mature trees and are difficult to obtain! Coppice shoots and shaded branches produce a wide range of leaf sizes and shapes on the same tree.

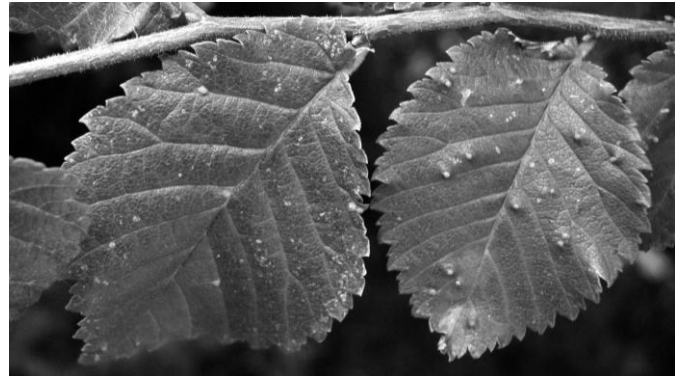
In the north part of Tiddesley Wood there is a large patch of coppicing elms. The leaves are too small for wych elm and far bigger than those of suckering English elm. The larger trunks and stems are covered with short, horizontal woody bars or burrs. They are unusual for Worcestershire – we don't know of any others – so what are they? Oliver Rackham's great book on *Ancient Woodland* leads to a best guess. Based on studies in East Anglia he illustrates the range of leaf sizes and shapes of elms from many woods. The Tiddesley elm falls in the middle of the range of intermediaries (hybrids) between wych elm and the smooth-leaved elm group and is named Lineage elm after the village where it was found.

The Trust has been aware of these odd trees with barred trunks for many years and of the seed dropped in abundance in some years. Although patchily damaged by elm disease, some trunks reach at least 40cm diameter and are probably 40-50 years old before getting elm disease. Nevertheless, some stools were dying back so a conservation measure became important. About seven years ago we ran a trial plot in which all stems were all felled to test how well they grew back as coppice. They were fenced off to protect them from

deer damage and they re-grew very well, producing a mass of stems. Encouraged by this the Trust coppiced a much larger plot four years ago, which also responded well and last winter (2018-19) the final plot was cut. These last are already sprouting well so this unique and unusual patch of Lineage elm is conserved.

Why are they there? Did somebody plant them years ago? Perhaps more likely there was once smooth-leaved elm in the wood that hybridised with wych elm to produce an intermediary very similar to Lineage elm. Some must have produced seed to enable the patch to grow. The coppice produced was probably used by local people along with all the other woody coppice species mostly to fuel the fires that kept people warm.

We have produced planks from some of the first-cut Lineage elm and plan to cut more from the recent felling. If any reader is interested in purchasing some please get in touch with me.



English elm from a hedge. The pale marks as galls caused by an aphid.



Wych elm leaf from Tiddesley Wood



Lineage elm leaf from Tiddesley Wood

Note that all elm leaves have an asymmetric base.