

THE MENSTON TREE TRAIL

Introduction

This tree trail is designed to give you a gentle walk whilst drawing attention to trees along the way. We give you some information and interesting facts about trees as you follow the trail and point out significant trees within the village. A route map is included with this trail leaflet. You will need to link to web sites and books to find more about tree identification and other amazing tree facts. Links included at the end of this trail leaflet.

Trees are a major part of our landscape and contribute to the health and wellbeing of all us in Menston. They are the largest and longest living thing on the planet, giving us the oxygen we breathe, food, shelter and materials to create the places we live and work. Trees are great to look at, they also clean our air, cool a warming climate, absorb noise and provide homes for thousands of different insects, birds, animals and plants. Enjoy these trees because they contribute to our community and help make Menston a great place to be.

Tree Trail Information

The circular route begins at Kirkland's Community Centre and Library on Main Street, the walk is on paths along streets, quiet tracks, and paths through the green spaces of Menston, returning to the start. The walk will take about one and a half hours and is 1.5 miles/3km long. Please respect property and privacy and take care when walking along and crossing roads. We hope you will enjoy looking at Menston's varied and delightful treescape. Map below with this trail leaflet.

Tree Trail

Starting with your back to the Library at Kirklands Community Centre.

To the right of the car park entrance are two trees planted to mark the Millennium, an Oak tree planted by Menston Retired Men's Forum and a Horse Chestnut planted by Menston Gardeners Club. The Oak may live over 900 years if the old saying is to be believed - 300 years to grow, 300 years it stays, 300 years to die.

To the left of the car park entrance are 5 magnificent Horse Chestnut trees which date from about 1920. They were to be removed in 1961 to make way for a memorial garden but a local campaign saved them. To the left of these is a Copper Beech.

Leaving Kirklands go left along Main Street then turn first left on Cleasby Road.

You will reach Miss Porritt's field on the left with its magnificent 170 year old Horse Chestnut tree. Horse Chestnuts have spectacular candles of spring flowers which when pollinated by insects produce nuts or conkers in autumn. On a twig where a leaf has fallen you can see a perfect horse shoe complete with seven nail markings. Is this why it is called a Horse Chestnut?

Porritt's Field was given to the people of Menston by Miss Porritt who lived on Cleasby Road and quietly helped a lot of people in Menston.

Now return to Main Street and continue left towards the Park.

Just past the first lamp post there is an Autumn Cherry which flowers from November to March. You then pass 4 Sycamores outside Elmet Grange. As you enter the Park notice the 2 trees on the right which were planted by 4th Menston Brownies on 17th November 1979 during "Plant a Tree Week". They are a Cherry and a Weeping Pear. The Cherry tree on the left was planted by the Brownies on 20th December 1984 to mark their 75th Anniversary in 1985. Also there, in a little raised area, is a Mountain Ash planted in memory of Michael Grady in 1981 – "To give pleasure to the people of Menston".

Follow the path across the Park.

At the back of the Children's Play Area (behind the picnic table) you will find a Metasequoia Glyptostroboidea or Dawn Redwood planted in June 2012. This species of tree can grow to be one of the largest of all trees in the world, largest dawn redwood recorded was in China at about 50 meters (165 feet) tall and 2.2 meters (7.2 feet) wide. Note to the left the large Poplar trees and a big Weeping Willow growing in the grounds of Menston Hall. Elsewhere in Menston Park, given to the people of Menston by the Butterfield family, you can find a tree planted to commemorate Queen Elizabeth II 90th birthday a Red – Twigged Lime adjacent to Leathley Avenue. There is also a Red Oak (unmarked) planted on the 10th birthday of Menston in Bloom. Throughout the park you can enjoy seeing oak, sycamore, alder, cherry, ash, lime, crab apple trees, hawthorn and many other species of trees. The park would be a good location to undertake some of the suggested activities.

After walking around the park turn left down Leathley Avenue or stay in the park by the tennis courts and walk downhill, noting the many trees that line the park's edge.

The most numerous tree is the Sycamore, a member of the Maple tree family. The Celts of Gaul are thought to have introduced the Sycamore from central Europe and its familiar helicopter seeds were ground into flour for gruel. The most famous Sycamore tree is the Martyrs' Tree in Tolpuddle Green, Dorset. Believed to date from the 1680's it was the meeting place in the 1830's of the Tolpuddle Martyrs who formed the first agricultural trade union.

Continue down Leathley Avenue and carefully cross Station Road to view the 'Railway Garden' on the junction.

The 'Railway Garden' has been adopted by Menston in Bloom and there are 3 White Barked Silver Birches (*Betula Jacqronntii*), planted in 2007 along with a decorative Mountain Ash and other Birch species.

Walk along Station Road towards the station.

On your right the trees form a living boundary, a hedge. Between 1603 and 1850, 500 Acts of Parliament were passed forcing the enclosure of common land with hedges. This hedge is likely to date from the 1890's. The most common trees and shrubs in hedges are Oak, Ash, Blackthorn, Field Maple, Hawthorn, Hazel and Elder. The greater the variety of plants in and around the hedgerow, the better it is for wildlife. This hedge does a good job of screening the railway line.

Just beyond the station, turn right down Westbourne Drive.

Note the large Copper Beeches in front of the new Abbeyfield building. Not all trees have green leaves, these Beech trees have copper leaves that are attractive throughout the year. The purple pigments called Anthocyanins, mask the green chlorophyll. If you find a leaf which has been growing in the shade you may find the green chlorophyll showing through.

Note the large Willow at the junction of the path to the station and Westbourne Drive. In Spring Willow have downy seeds which can blow a great distance, distributing the seed widely, making this tree a 'pioneer', often the first to colonise a tree free location.

Westbourne Drive has a feast of trees; as you walk along consider the impact of trees in the gardens and along the railway line, their colour, shape and texture. Look out for the Hazel opposite Pear Tree Cottage, the European Larch next to a Silver Birch at the bottom of Park Road and there may be one of the few Elms surviving after Dutch Elm Disease, which nearly wiped them out in the 1970's. Larch trees are interesting in that they are a deciduous conifer, a cone bearing tree that loses its needles in Autumn.

After the last bungalow, turn left up the ginnel to where it opens up at the end of Fairfax Avenue, go through a narrow gap in the wall opposite the end of Fairfax Avenue to Victoria Avenue.

Along Victoria Avenue there are Cedar, Horse Chestnut and Lime trees.

At the T junction with St. John's Park turn left.

Amongst the many trees here, on the right you will see a flowering Cherry with an amazing twisted trunk, and on the left is a Yew tree.

Turn right up Fairfax Road's steep pavement. Cross Burley Lane and go up steps to St. John's Churchyard. Please respect the Churchyard as you admire the superb view to the Chevin and the many trees, both large and small.

In the Churchyard is a small Yew tree, a place where this tree steeped in folklore is often found. Yew trees can live for over 1000 years and are associated with life and re-birth from pre-Christian times. In pagan times they were one of the few native evergreen trees which were thought to hold the spirit of the woodland in the darkest times of winter. The Yew tree is also poisonous, so needs to be kept away from live stock. The very hard close grained wood is used in furniture and to make the English longbow, a powerful weapon in medieval times.

In the Churchyard you can also find a Crab Apple, a Hawthorn, a Holly, a Laburnum, a winter flowering Cherry, Maples and a Mountain Ash. Follow the right hand path taking the gently sloping path back down to Main Street, opposite the Menston Arms public house. Note the large Sycamores on your right complete with nesting boxes.

Turn right on Main Street, and make your way to Butterfield Park on the corner opposite Bleach Mill Lane.

Walking into Butterfield Park you will pass between two Hornbeam trees. A native tree to Britain its timber is very hard and has been used to make mill cogs and policemen's truncheons. The evergreen Lawson Cypress and Western Red Cedar are the obvious trees here, however if you look around you will find many more species including Cherry and Maples.

Butterfield Park is another greenspace donated to the people of Menston by the Butterfield family of Shipley. It was Clifford Butterfield who donated the parks to Menston in 1955 and there is a plaque which will tell you more. Owned by Bradford Council, much of its maintenance is by the volunteers in the Menston in Bloom group.

Turn right out of the park and walk back along Main Street.

Note the Golden Ash in the Jubilee Bed at the corner of Stocks Hill which was planted to commemorate the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee in 2003. On the corner of Croft Park, there is a Silver Birch, a Whitebeam and opposite, to the right of Waites, there is an amazing clipped train in the Yew Hedge. The art of tree clipping like this is called topiary.

If you still have energy, take the ginnel opposite St. Peter's Way to view the Lombardy Poplars in the circle at Croft Rise. These were planted when the houses were built in the 1970's and were topped in 2008. Return back to Main Street and admire the beautiful mature Weeping Birch in the garden of Willow House Farm.

In the school playing fields there are, from the school sign, a Hairy Birch, a Lime, a Norway Maple, a Rowan, a Pussy Willow and 3 Norway Maples in the corner of the field. In front of the school are 5 Silver Birch (*Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii*), donated to the school. The Silver Birch (known as the "Lady of the Woods") is one of the most graceful of trees and the shortest lived. It is steeped in folklore and superstition and is easily recognised by its white/silver bark. It symbolised renewal and purification. Bundles of Birch twigs (a broom) were used to drive out the spirits of the old year. It also represents fertility as it is one of the first trees to come into leaf and was danced around as a living Maypole.

Continue along Main Street to Kirklands Community Centre and Library.

Trees are amazingly complex perennial woody plants with many different qualities which contribute to life on Earth. We hope that you have enjoyed this trail and appreciated the many trees in all their forms. Remember we need trees because they provide clean oxygenated air, moderate temperature, remove carbon dioxide, stabilise soil, slow the flow of water in flood prevention, support wildlife and provide food, shelter, fuel, timber and many other sustainable benefits, even within the urban environment. Since the dawn of the earliest civilisations, trees have been an important asset and feature of towns and cities, and remain so for us all and our village!



MENSTON IN BLOOM 2021

Menston in Bloom is part of Menston Community Association.

To find out more visit; www.menston.org.

Activities you could undertake on this Tree Trail (Menston in Bloom is not responsible for web link content, or its accuracy.)

Tree Identification;- <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2020/03/tree-id-kids/> or <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/tree-id-app/> or <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/>

Colour match to nature;- <https://www.fantasticfunandlearning.com/color-matching-nature-walk.html> or <https://nurturystore.co.uk/nature-colour-wheel-activity-with-printable-colour-wheel>

Nature Detectives;- <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2020/03/nature-detectives/>

Autumn crafts;- <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2020/10/autumn-leaf-crafts-for-kids/>

Bark and crafts;- <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2019/11/tree-bark-crafts/>

Aging trees;- <http://www.tree-guide.com/tree-age-calculator> or <https://www.hungerfordvirtualmuseum.co.uk/index.php/15-artefacts/87-how-to-age-a-tree>

How to measure the height of a tree using a stick;- <https://schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk/Resources/Activity/How-tall-is-that-tree#:~:text=Measure%20the%20distance%20between%20your,same%20height%20as%20the%20tree>.

Learning with trees;- <https://www.edenproject.com/learn/for-everyone/outdoor-learning-with-trees>

Other nature activities;- <https://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/activities>

List the houses you pass named after trees or tree places eg wood, linden, magnolia,



Route of the Menston Tree Trail



The Menston Tree Trail route;-