Welcome to Keele University

Keele has one of the largest campuses in Europe and is situated in 240 ha. of landscaped grounds of which some 120 ha. are farmland. Of the remainder, about half is woodland while the rest comprises the campus buildings and sports fields. The landscape we see today owes much to the work of Ralph Sneyd (1793-1870) who began planting on a grand scale in 1830, after inheriting the estate from his father. Throughout the period of its construction, the University has been careful to preserve as many of mature trees as possible and has maintained an ongoing programme of tree planting. In 2005, the University embarked on building up a collection of Flowering Cherries as a focus for the arboretum and now has one of the largest of its kind with over 150 varieties.

The walks presented in this leaflet should enable you to see many of the interesting trees at Keele, points of interest being indicated by numbered circles. Most of the trees referred to carry a name tag while all trees have a plastic numbered tag. Using our website, you can identify the tree from this number.

Details of all the trees, plants, birds and other fauna at Keele can be found on the Arboretum website:

http://www.keele.ac.uk/arboretum

David Emley and Peter Thomas

Car-parking

Pay and display machines are available for the use of all visitors during daytime hours until 5.30pm. Evenings and week-ends are free.

Visitors to the University are welcome to make use of the walks and tours included in this leaflet. The University cannot, however, guarantee that its grounds will continue indefinitely to be as described in this edition, nor can it be held responsible for any injury suffered while undertaking unaccompanied exploration of those grounds.
The Woodland Walks

Three colour-coded trails, two circular (red and blue) and one an extension (orange), start by Keele Hall and cover the lower reaches of campus. The red trail has an all-weather surface but parts of the other two can be soft underfoot so suitable footwear is advised. Please take care by open water. Where possible, trees mentioned in the text have labels affixed to them. The red trail takes about an hour.

A. Take the path that leads down to the left of Keele Hall and bear left along the far side of Lake 1. On the left of the path is a Giant Redwood Sequoiadendron giganteum. Notice the soft, fibrous air-filled bark, designed to protect the tree from forest fires. Notice too the small excavations, some with bird droppings. These are the roosting sites of Treecreepers. On the lake side of the track is a deciduous Swamp Cypress Taxodium distichum which is related to the Dawn Redwood but the leaves are alternate on the branch rather than opposite as in the latter species. Note too the orange, stringy bark.

B. Continue past some Scots Pines Pinus sylvestris and a Deodar Cedar Cedrus deodora on your left and Japanese Maples on your right until you come to a path on your left. Here on the left are some Western Hemlocks Tsuga heterophylla with rather Yew-like leaves and a small, long-needled Ponderosa Pine Pinus ponderosa. A little further on the left is a small Medlar Mespilus germanica and on the right a large Grey Poplar Populus canescens with a heavily sculptured bark and white fealty undersides to the leaves which are quite spectacular in the sunlight.

C. Continue past the old boathouse and the dam on your right until you reach a magnificent Fern-leaved Beech Fagus sylvatica ‘Asplenifolia’ on your left. The leaves are deeply dissected, quite unlike those of Common Beech Fagus sylvatica; one of which is growing behind it.

Continue along the path until you meet the main path. Here, you can turn right, cross the dam and return to Keele Hall. Our walk continues left following the blue trail.

D. On your right is Barnes Dell. Here there are a number of unusual trees including Handkerchief Tree Davidia involucrata, Katsura Tree Cercidiphyllum japonica, Deciduous pseudocamelo, Rauli Nothofagus procer, Judas Tree Cercis siliquastrum, Witch Hazel Hamamelis mollis and various Maples. Note also the large arum-like plant Skunk Cabbage Lysichitum americanum growing by the stream.

E. Continue along the path and make a small diversion to the right to stand on the dam between lakes 4 and 5. Lake 4 is covered in yellow-flowered Fringed Water-lily Nympheoides peltata while on the left, below the dam, is a large Caucasian Wingnut Pterocarya fraxinifolia. Note thread long thread-like flower stalks, wingnut-like fruits, frond-like leaves, and the way in which it suckers.

Continue a short way along the path where you can bear right and continue around the far side of the lake and back to Keele Hall, following the blue trail. Note that this section is not suitable for wheelchairs or those needing a flat path.

F. 100m along this path, on the right, is a small collection of ash trees including Narrow-leaved Fraxinus angustifolia, Red F. pennsylvania, Manna F. ornus, Caucasian F. oxycarpa and, of particular note, Oregon F. latifolia with its woolly leaves and hairy twigs.

G. Follow the path past the Norway Spruce Picea abies plantation on your right and Hybrid Larch Larix x eurolepis on your left until you reach a track coming in from Lynmes Road on your right.

H. Among the Norway Spruce are four Giant Redwoods. The walk can now be shortened by taking the track on the right up though the trees. Look out on the left for a Douglas Fir Pseudotsuga menziesii and, surprisingly, a Handkerchief Tree.

I. Lake 6 is now overgrown so, continuing along the track, you reach Lake 7 where there are the remains of a waterwheel in a building. On the right of the track is a plantation of Hybrid Larch while on the left some Hybrid Black Poplars Populus x canadensis and Wych Elm Ulmus glabra.

J. Continuing along the track, the stream is in a small gully which is covered in Bluebells Hyacinthoides non-scripta and Wild Garlic Allium ursinum in the spring.

K. Follow the track as it bends sharply to the right and climbs steeply up the hill. This was once known as Beech Clump because of the large Beech trees planted here. These have been replaced by younger trees, The hill was artificially raised by Sneyd to improve the view from the Hall!

L. Follow the track down the other side and bear round to the left. On your right is a plantation of Hornbeam Carpinus betulus and Hybrid Larch, while on your left, as you near the stream, is a grove of Roble Beech Nothofagus obliqua.

Follow the track left until you reach Lake 5 again and continue along the blue trail, past Lake 4 and Barnes Dell until you reach Lake 3 where we pick up the red trail again. Those needing a flat path should return on the right-hand side of lake 3.

M. Lake 3 is covered with Yellow Waterlilies Nuphar lutea in summer and is a good spot for Grey Wagtail and Kingfisher. On the left of the track is an Ash-leaved Maple Acer negundo, while to the right is a Tree of Heaven Ailanthus altissima and a Western Red Cedar Thuja plicata.

N. At the bottom of the lawn is a group of two Giant Redwoods and a Noble Fir Abies procera. To the right of the track is a Holm Oak Quercus ilex and behind that a Cedar of Lebanon Cedrus libani. The recently renovated Lake 1 has already attracted Coot, Little Grebe and Mandarins.

O. Follow the path towards the Hall until you reach the White Well, formerly a water supply for the Hall. To the side of it is a Pagoda Tree Sophora japonica.

We continue southwards, following the orange trail markers; the path from here on is uneven and can be quite muddy and is not suitable for wheelchairs or those needing a flat path.
Upper Campus Walk

The walk starts in the Chancellor’s Building car-park and takes about an hour but can be shortened at several points. It mainly follows surfaced paths, but you may want to walk on the grass in parts so suitable footwear is advised. Many of the trees referred to have name tags affixed to them.

From the car-park walk round the building and stop opposite the entrance to the Leisure Centre.

1. Here is a magnificent hybrid Sessile x Pedunculate Oak Quercus x rosea, one of the finest trees on campus. It is around 150 years old.

2. On the lawn by the MacKay Building is a Common Beech Fagus sylvatica. Note the shiny leaves and compare them with the Hornbeam at location S later.

3. Head towards the Dorothy Hodgkin Building and behind the two huts is a large Turkey Oak Quercus cerris that pre-dates the university. This non-native sams evergreen tree is distinguished by its narrower-green, deeply lobed and glossy leaves, long whiskers around its buds and ‘hairy’ acorn cups. There is a smaller tree close by.

4. Make your way between the Hornbeam and Chancellor’s Buildings. On your left is a large Sweet Chestnut Castanea sativa – note the spiraled grooves on the trunk. On its left is a group of our native Cherry Prunus avium. Lining the sides of path that goes to the car-park are flowering cherries, part of the Keele collection of over 150 varieties. In front of the Tennyson Building is a group of two Dawn Redwoods Metasequoia glyptostroboides.

5. Between the Hornbeam Building and the Walter Mobley Hall is a magnificent Hornbeam Carpinus betulus, one of the finest in North Staffordshire. In front of it are a Small-leaved Lime Tilia cordata and a Caucasian Lime Tilia x euchlora.

6. Make a small detour to the left. In front of the Walter Mobley Hall is a Silver Lime Tilia tomentosa and three of our native Large-leaved Limes Tilia platyphyllos on the other side of the path in front of the Moser Building is a small Maidenhair Tree Ginkgo biloba.

7. Heading back up the path, on your left, in front of the William Smith Building, is a group of three Dawn Redwoods Metasequoia glyptostroboides.

8. In front of the Huxley Building is a group of three American Red Oaks Quercus rubra; much planted around campus for their autumn colours.

9. To the side of the Huxley Building is a Hybrid Catalpa Catalpa x hispida. Flowering in late August, it is a hybrid between the American Indian Bean Tree Catalpa bignonioides (which grows in the Chancellor’s Building courtyard) and the Yellow catalpa Catalpa ovata from China.

10. Follow the path to the ring-road. The Holly hedge behind the car-park was once one of the finest in the country. Planted in 1769 it was 200m long and 5m high. It is a roosting site for finches in the winter.

11. Crossing the road and passing Sneyd House we come to one of the largest Sweet Chestnuts on campus. It is part of a 500 year old avenue which extends along the Terrance and is all that remains of the driveway to the first Keele Hall built in Elizabethan times. By the ring-road is a Luscombe Oak Quercus x hispida – a hybrid between Cork Oak Quercus suber and Turkey Oak. It is a grafted specimen, the line of the graft being clearly visible.

12. The Terrace overlooks the walled garden with distant views southwards across the Mo to Mosh Hills – a former haunt of Charles Darwin. Backing the Terrace is the line of Sweet Chestnuts referred to in 11.

Continue down the steps, past the Clock House, noting the Yew Taxus baccata on your left, and head towards Keel Hall which was rebuilt in the 1850s by the design of Anthony Salvin.

13. On your left is a Sweet Gum Liquidambar styraciflua, a Pin Oak Quercus corynea, a Scarlet Oak Quercus palustris and, overlooking the Hall, a False Acaia Robinia pseudoacacia. Look carefully and you will see a beech tree growing out of it!

14. By the fountain is a Cedar of Lebanon Cedrus libanii. Like many of its type it has lost branches due to heavy snow falls. To the side of the Hall is the restored Italian parterre garden with beds of heather, lined with Box Buxus sempervirens.

15. Close by is a Common Lime Tilia x vulgaris. It is a hybrid between our native Small-leaved and Large-leaved Limes and, whilst it can form a magnificent tree, it is prone to aphids which produce a ‘nail’ of sticky honeydew. Near the weather station is a stand of Lawson Cypress Chamaecyparis lawsoniana.

16. Following the path down to the lake; on your left is a golden form of the Irish Yew Taxus baccata ‘Fastigiata’. The lake was originally two and Sneyd combined them into one, the excavated spoil being used to build the embankment on the far side. Planted on this is a Giant Redwood Sequoiadendron giganteum, Swamp Cypress Taxodium distichum and a Grey Poplar Populus canadensis. You should follow the Woodlands Walks trail to see these.

17. At the foot of the lawn are two young Giant Redwoods and a Noble Fir Abies procera. To the right of the track is a Holm Oak Quercus Ilex and behind that a Cedar of Lebanon. The recently renovated lake has already attracted Coot, a pair of Canada Goose, Little Grebe and Mandarin Duck.

18. Continue alongside the lake until you reach the White Well, formerly a water supply for the Hall. To the side of the William Smith Building, is a group of three Chestnut Castanea sativa; one of the finest in North Staffordshire. In front of them, is a 500 year old avenue of the Dawn Redwoods Metasequoia glyptostroboides.

19. Continue until you reach the entrance to Keele Hall. On your left is a large Turkey Oak Quercus cerris; one of our native conifers.

20. Cross the road and head towards the Chapel. On your left, beside the library is a Red Horse-chestnut Aesculus x carnea, a Monkey-puzzle Acanthus and a young Foyglovo Tree Paulownia tomentosa.

21. Passing some Dawn Redwoods on your left you reach a Scots Pine Pinus sylvestris with Western Hemlocks Tsuga heterophylla in front of them, Sitka Spruce Picea sitchensis and a single Douglas Fir Pseudotsuga menziesii.

22. Heading towards Chancellor’s Building, by the side of the Chapel is a row of Romans Sorbus aucuparia. They produce red berries in the autumn.

23. Passing through an avenue of Beech you reach the Chancellor’s Building and a Copper Beech. Note the Norway Maples and Cherries that line the ring-road to the Tawny Building.

24. Between the Chancellor’s Building and Tawny Building is a row of Whitebeams Sorbus. From the Library courtyard to complete your walk.