

Now return to the start of your walk and continuing on the west side of the path is Tree (16) Holm Oak, a species which was introduced in the 1500's from the East Mediterranean and is an evergreen. Tree (20) Common Holly is dioecious and in this instance female as it does produce berries. This tree is semi-mature and as it evolves – its leaves below a height of 10 feet will produce spikes in order to deter cattle from eating them whilst at the greater height the leaves have no spikes.

Tree (22) Purple Maple is native to Japan, Korea and China and is a popular, deciduous tree in gardens for its attractive palmate leaves which have five or more lobes all radiating from one point.

Tree (24) Manna Ash is native to Spain and like the Mountain Ash has pinnate leaves. The tree is dioecious, meaning that male and female flowers typically grow on different trees although a single tree can also have male and female flowers on different branches.

Like the Maple trees – Ash trees produce fruit that takes the form of wings that can fall and fly and in this case are called samaras.

Ash is one of the toughest hardwoods and absorbs shock without splintering. It is the wood of choice for making hand tools and sports handles including hammers, axes, spades, hockey sticks and oars.

A sugary extract can be extracted from the sap of the Manna Ash – hence its English biblical name – by making a cut in its bark.

Tree (32) Red Oak almost concludes the walk and is a very different tree species when compared to the Holm Oak. It was introduced from North America and is the state tree of New Jersey. It is a deciduous broad-leaf tree with spiked leaves which fade from green to red before falling in the Autumn

St Peter's Church Burnham Tree Trail



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David and Fiona Burridge for the considerable work they undertake to keep the churchyard looking so beautiful. Bucks. Council undertakes the basic grass cutting but David and Fiona provide the special touches which ensure that the churchyard always looks cared for.

They would welcome any offers of help – please just make contact with the Cornerstone Office.

Welcome to your journey through the trees in the southern churchyard of St Peter's Church Burnham. We are sure that you will soon realise that there is both a unique and remarkable collection of trees that many of us have walked through many times and given almost no thought as to both the diversity and similarity.

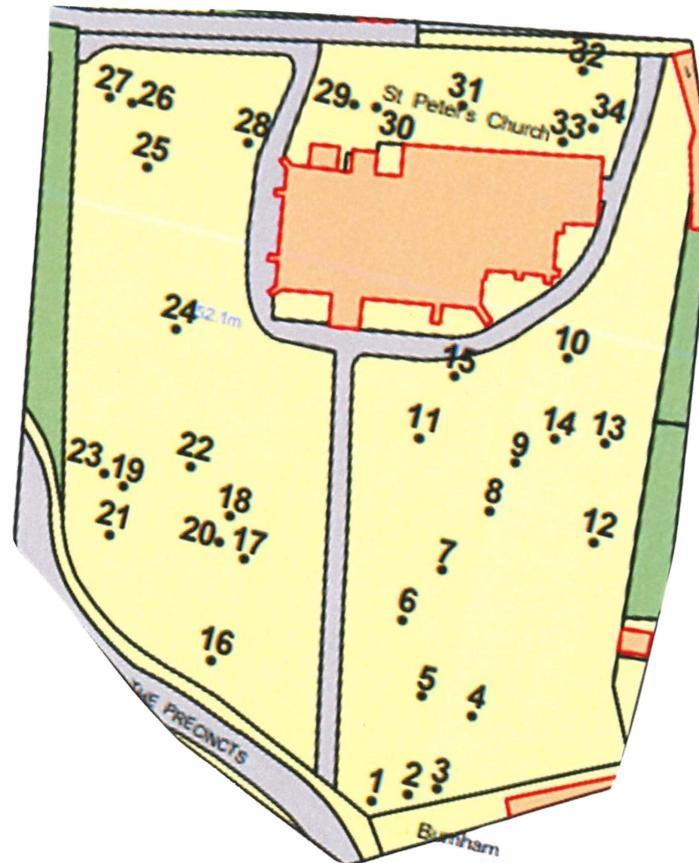
We have identified 34 trees on the map and there are 12 differing types of tree, 8 are singular trees, two are pairs and the remaining 22 are either Irish Yews (of which there are 15) or Common Yews (of which there are 7).

Rest assured – you will be an expert on Yew trees very shortly! The Irish Yews all tend to have a similar shape whilst the Common (meaning native) Yews are present in all shapes and sizes. We start our walk at the southern end of the churchyard and walk in the area to the east of the path before returning back to the start again and journeying through the west side of the path and then around the north side of the church before finishing at the path in Church Street.

Trees (1) and (2) are young Silver Birch trees with their distinctive bark which is used in the tanning of certain kinds of leather. Silver Birch is classed as monoecious meaning that both male and female flowers (catkins) are found on the same tree.

Trees (3) and (21) are both Mountain Ash (or Rowan) trees. The first is a young tree and the second more mature but its trunk is on the lean. There are also a few young Rowan trees not marked on the map. The leaves are compound and pinnate, meaning that they have opposite pairs of leaflets and a terminal leaflet.

The tree produces hermaphrodite flowers meaning that they carry both male and female reproductive organs and fertilise themselves. Its wood is used to make divining rods which are used to find water sources. Trees (4) (12) (15) (25) (26) (27) and (33) are all Common Yew trees and as mentioned previously are of a variety of shapes and sizes. When you arrive at tree (25) you will see the most beautiful bark which is one of the highlights of the walk. The tree symbolises strength and endurance and has a timeless quality which is appropriate for its setting.



Yew is classed as a dioecious conifer which means that it has separate male and female trees. It is the female trees that produce berries and the extra load on the tree means that female trees tend to grow more slowly than male trees. Note especially the straight, small needles with pointed tips that grow in two rows on either side of the twig. Unlike many other conifers – Common Yew does not actually bear its seed in a cone. Instead, each seed is enclosed in a red, fleshy, berry-like structure, known as an aril, which is open at the tip. It is claimed that cows were deterred from grazing in churchyards because of the toxic properties of yew trees. Anti-cancer compounds are harvested from its foliage and used in modern medicine.

Tree (5) Deodar Cedar is the tallest tree in the churchyard at a height of 20 metres. The tree species was imported from 1740 onwards from North West India and is also monoecious.

Trees (6) (7) (8) (9) (10) (11) (17) (18) (19) (23) (28) (29) (30) (31) and (34) are all Irish Yews and are all descended from one Irish tree which appeared around 1780. Apart from its distinctive overall shape note that its needles are small, straight but curved and darker than those on the Common Yew. And, in addition, the needles grow around the twig in a kind of spiral. Again, this yew species also has the aura of eternity and also resurrection in that new trees can grow from its fallen branches.

Tree (13) Wild Cherry is another example of a hermaphrodite meaning that male and female reproductive parts are found in the same flower. Tree (14) Field Maple is also a native tree and a cluster is also present in Burnham Park. Its leaves grow in pairs opposite each other on a twig and have five lobes.