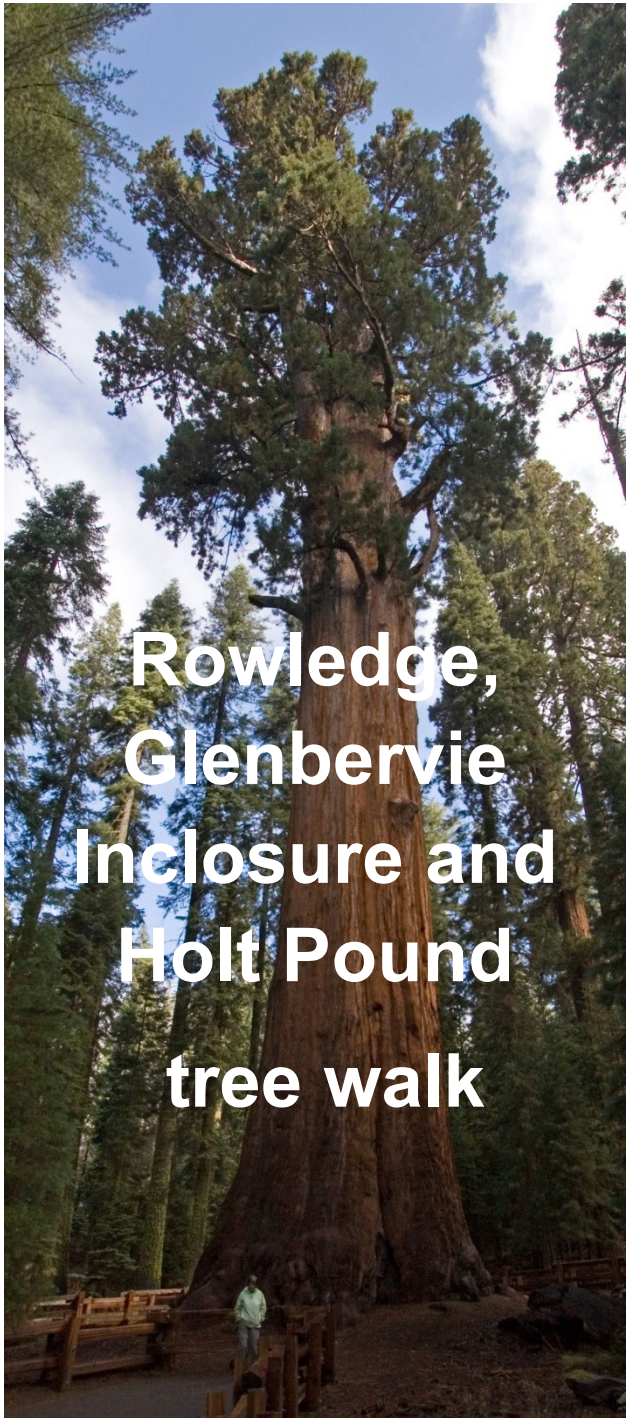

# Rowledge, Glenbervie Inclosure and Holt Pound tree walk

This walk is approximately 2.5 miles in length, parts of it over rough ground, starting and ending at the Rowledge Recreation Ground car park in School Road. You will stop and admire magnificent examples of eight species of tree, have the opportunity to identify many more, and also to reflect on tree-related issues, such as ‘wilding’ and tree preservation.

Rowledge and Holt Pound are perched on the eastern edge of Alice Holt Forest, and were settled originally to exploit timber as a fuel and as a structural material. As the timber industry has modernised this area has lost much of its commercial importance but has become a tree museum. This is true not only of the neighbouring Glenbervie Inclosure, maintained by Forestry England, but also of the gardens adjoining it, that have been owned by forestry folk and planted with their favourite species.

*You start the walk halfway along School Road, outside the entrance to Rowledge CE Primary School. Go south as far as the Bowling Club entrance, opposite which you will find a large property called Woodlea. There are a number of trees on this property that are special but we will focus on two that can be seen from the road. As you face Woodlea, at the right hand corner, by a driveway leading to other houses, you find a group of seven black pines:*

**Black pine** *Pinus nigra*

Also known as Austrian or Corsican pine, it is triangular when young, becoming flat-topped with age.

Black pine is widely grown in the UK both as a popular ornamental tree and in plantations for timber. Much like Scots pine, the timber is hard and straight-grained. The wood is used in paper manufacture as well as for general construction. In the UK, it is favoured over Scots pine for forestry.

*At the left hand end of the Woodlea frontage is another imposing sight:*

**Sequoia** *Sequoiadendron giganteum*

Also known as giant redwood, they are the most massive individual trees in the world. They grow to an average height of 50–85 m (164–279 ft) with trunk diameters ranging from 6–8 m (20–26 ft). Record trees have been measured at 94.8 m (311 ft) tall.

The oldest known giant sequoia is 3,200 years old based on dendrochronology. They are among the oldest living organisms on Earth. The bark is fibrous, furrowed, and may be 90 cm (3 ft) thick at the base of the columnar trunk. The sap contains tannic acid, which provides significant protection from fire damage.

While the home distribution of this species is now limited to a small area of California, it was much more widely distributed in prehistoric times, and was a reasonably common species in North American and Eurasian coniferous forests, and even as far afield as New Zealand and Australia until its range was greatly reduced by the last ice age.

*Continue south on School Road to the war memorial circus (where School Road meets Boundary Road, Church Lane and Cherry Tree Road). Turn right into Church Lane and walk down to no. 2, where you will find a hornbeam alongside a telegraph pole:*

**Hornbeam** *Carpinus betulus*

Romans used hornbeam to make their chariots because of the strength of the wood. The timber is a pale, creamy white with a flecked grain. It is extremely hard; in fact it has the hardest wood of any tree in Europe.

Male and female catkins are found on the same tree. After pollination by wind, female catkins develop into papery, green winged fruits, known as samaras.

A hornbeam hedge will turn orange in autumn but keep its leaves all year round, providing shelter, roosting, nesting and foraging opportunities for birds and small mammals.

*Continue down the lane, to a property on the left called The Hollybanks. On the right hand end corner of this property you find:*

**Lime** *Tilia europaea*

The common lime is a hybrid of two native species – *T. cordata and T. platyphyllos* – but now outnumbers both.

Both the male and female reproductive parts are contained within one flower. Flowers are white-yellow with five petals and hang in clusters of 2–5. Once pollinated by insects, the flowers develop into round-oval, slightly ribbed fruits, with a pointed tip.

Lime leaves are eaten by the caterpillars of many moth species, including the lime hawk, peppered, vapourer, triangle and scarce hook-tip moths.. Lime flowers are considered a valuable source of food for honey bees.

*Continue along Church Lane, through the Glenbervie car park and follow the track westwards to a 5-way junction.*

**Glenbervie Inclosure**

Alice Holt Forest is a royal forest. Once predominantly an ancient oak forest, it was particularly noted in the 18th and 19th centuries for the timber it supplied for the building of ships for the Royal Navy.

*There are two alternative tracks at this point. Either turn right/north and follow the wide gravel track or save a little time by proceeding straight ahead/west. These two paths merge again close to a signposted path to Lodge Pond. We could take this, but, for a little more exercise, follow the wide track a little further then take another path to the right, leading to the Farnham Anglers' car park and to the picnic meadow beside the pond.*

**Lodge Pond**

Aided by a dam at its north end, the Pond collects local surface water and is a haven for waterfowl. The permanent residents are mallard ducks, herons, moorhens and cormorants. There are frequent visitors as well, including common terns and great crested grebes.

*Take the path from the dam uphill a short distance to a junction between two tracks where we turn left. This will lead you north, parallel to the A325 and the Bourne Stream draining from Lodge Pond. There are many fine trees, broad leaved and conifer, along this path. At the end you are faced by a barrier straight ahead but to the left is a dog-leg which allows you to continue in the same direction down to Fullers Road.*

*Arriving here turn left and look for the brown sign pointing the way to the Kiln Equestrian Centre. Turn right here into an unmade road which becomes a track. Stop at the point where this track turns sharp left. In the corner of the field to your right there is a large oak tree.*

**Tree preservation**

Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are used to protect selected trees where removal would have significant impact on the environment and its enjoyment by the public. They are made by local authorities (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) on individual trees, groups of trees or woodlands deemed to be a public amenity. They can apply to trees on either private or public land. A TPO extends to the whole tree, including roots, and prohibits felling, pruning or uprooting without council consent. The council will decide whether or not a breach of a TPO will lead to prosecution.

*Facing the oak tree take the narrow footpath to its left, down to a footbridge, then rising again up to Fullers Road. Turn left here and proceed to an unmade road on the right called Forest Glade. Follow this to the end where you will be able to enter the forest. Pick up the path just inside the forest that maintains the same southerly direction. You will see Rowledge Primary School through the hedge on your left. There will be a gap in the hedge that allows you to see the elm planted here to commemorate the efforts of all those who worked to keep the school open through the pandemic.*

**Elm** *Ulmus procera*

Once growing to lofty heights, but now more common in hedgerows, the deceptively named English elm was likely introduced by our Bronze Age ancestors. Mature trees grow to 30m and can live for more than 100 years.

Flowers are dark pink to red and hang in tassels, appearing between February and March. Once they've been pollinated by wind, the flowers develop into tiny winged fruits, known as samaras. These are dispersed by wind.

If you miss the young "feathered" tree in the school field there is another chance to see an elm when you come to Keeper's Cottage.

*Continue along the same path until it turns right, when, ahead of you, you will see a gate leading into St James' churchyard. A short distance through the gate the churchyard opens up and you will see a chestnut on the corner to your left.*

**Sweet Chestnut** *Castanea sativa*

This grand old tree is probably older than the church.

With long, yellow catkins of mostly male flowers, and with female flowers at the base, both flowers are found on the same tree. After pollination by insects, female flowers develop into shiny, red-brown fruits wrapped in a green, spiky case. The trees begin to bear fruit when they are around 25 years old.

It should not be confused with the horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), which has similar-looking nuts, but the leaves are completely different, with sweet chestnut having single, long, serrated leaves and horse chestnut having hand-shaped leaves with deeply divided lobes or 'fingers'.

*You are coming to the end of the walk and it finishes with two iconic English trees, the oak and the yew. Proceeding along the path towards the church there is a large oak to your right.*

**Oak** *Quercis robur*

The ruling majesty of the woods, the wise old English oak holds a special place in our culture, history, and hearts. It supports more life than any other native tree species in the UK; even its fallen leaves support biodiversity. They are large, deciduous tree growing up to 20–40m tall. As common oaks mature they form a broad and spreading crown with sturdy branches beneath. Oaks even shorten with age in order to extend their lifespan.

Oaks produce one of the hardest and most durable timbers on the planet. However, it takes up to 150 years before an oak is ready to use in construction. It has been a prized hardwood timber for thousands of years and is still used for flooring, wine barrels and firewood.

*At the end of the path turn right to skirt round the church and out to meet Church Lane. Turn left into Church Lane and notice a dilapidated cottage, Keeper's Cottage, on the right. Walk round the outside of this property to the yew alongside an overhead electric sub station.*

**Yew** *Taxus baccata*

Yews are one of only three conifers native to Britain. They have usually radiated out from churchyards. The world's oldest known wooden implement is a yew spear, believed to be around 420,000 years old, found at Clacton, Essex. Individual trees can live for thousands of years but they never grow particularly tall. Instead of a single trunk the base is a bundle of smaller ones, as if the tree keeps starting again every so often.

There are two genders. The males grow small cones which shed clouds of pollen in early spring, and from early September the females bear small, cup-shaped berries called arils. The arils, like most parts of the yew, are not for mammalian consumption, but in November you will often see the trees seething with thrushes and crows building up their fat stores for the coming winter. At the same time they are helping to distribute the seeds of the next generation of yews.

*Walk back to the war memorial, then left down School Road to bring you back to the car park where you started.*