

9 Walk straight ahead until you are starting to pass the pub entrance and, on your right, you will see some steps leading into "The Rookery". This is a Wildlife Heritage Site. Here there are many Oaks. Wander round and enjoy them.

10 You may come across a clump of branches all seemingly coming from one point in the ground. This is a coppiced Ash. Coppicing is a traditional method of harvesting wood where trees are repeatedly cut back to ground level allowing new growth shoots to spring up which will be left to grow until they reach a useful length, and then the cycle begins again.



11 Step out of The Rookery, turn left on to the path and then right. As you go through the gate, note the branches angling in many directions on the tree to your right. This is a characteristic of the Pedunculate Oak.

12 Now pass along the path at the front of the house and note the stunning shape of the large tree edging the lawn. This is the famous Cedar of Lebanon of Prospect Park. Pause to enjoy the wonderful views over the Kennet Valley.



13 As you move on, you will see down the slope to your left Silver Birch (Betula Penda), identifiable by their silvery-white peeling bark.

14 Follow the path down right of the bowling green, noticing away to your right the line of Scots Pines leading down to the Bath Road.



15 The path now reaches a grassy area and close by is a newly planted tree. This is a Sessile Oak planted in 2019 to commemorate the now lost Verdun Oak planted in 1919. Keep walking to the left and you pass a row of magnificent old Oaks with views up to the Mansion House on your left.

16 Enjoy the winter life in the pond and, keeping going, you will encounter ahead on your left one of the most characterful large Oaks (17) in the park. Follow the tree line and more Oaks round and you will see the car park ahead. From there make your way back to the starting point.

17



Useful information

How to get there:

To reach the Start point from the Town Centre, take the 33 bus outside St Mary's. The bus stops right by the Start point. Otherwise, there is usually some parking in the park Car Park or use street parking.

Practical points:

The walk takes about one hour (Unless you stop for a hot drink at The Mansion House!) Not suitable for wheelchairs or light buggies.

Be sure to wear stout walking shoes.

Reading Tree Wardens:

You can find out more about us and forthcoming events at <http://www.readingtreewardens.org.uk> or on Facebook at "Reading Tree Wardens". This is one of seven urban tree walks developed by Reading Tree Wardens. The other walks are at Caversham, Coley Park Meadow, Tilehurst, Redlands, Town Centre and the Thames Riverside. You can download them from our website.



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Winter Tree Identification Walk

PROSPECT PARK



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Identifying trees on your Winter Walk

Trees are so distinctive that, even in Winter, they give us botanical clues as to which species they are: their shape, silhouette, bark, berries and fruit, dried leaves twigs and buds, and even sometimes flowers. This walk will help you as you go along to start becoming familiar with these characteristics and get to know Prospect Park's beautiful trees.

START at the corner of Tilehurst Road and Liebenrood Road and walk along the pathway towards the buildings.



1 You are walking through an avenue of Beech trees (*Fagus Sylvatica*). You can tell by the Beech nuts on the ground as well as on the branches: brown, three-sided and enclosed in pairs in a prickly case.



2 At the end of the path on the right stands a rare columnar Beech tree (*Fagus Sylvatica Dawyck*). Apart from its shape, it bears normal Beech leaves, flowers and nuts.

3 Ahead of you, as you cross the crossing, look to your right and left and notice a row of young trees. These replace the diseased Horse Chestnut trees and are rarely seen Chestnut leaved Oaks (*Quercus Castaneifolia*). They are fast growing and more resistant to disease.



4 Turn right into the avenue and proceed past the buildings on your left. Note the stunning white bark of the Himalayan Birch trees (*Betula Utilis*), which grow smaller than the traditional Silver Birch.

5 As you continue along the avenue, looking to your right you will see tree trunks left in the park. Felled trees provide a valuable habitat for many species of insects, fungi, mosses and lichen. These are important to conserve because the biodiversity of the woodland will increase as a result.



6 As you move on, still looking to your right, you will see one large and two smaller upright trees shaped like a candle flame. Look at the base and you might see some leaves. They indicate they are Oaks and the silhouette tells you they are Cypress Oaks (*Quercus Robur Fastigiata*).



7 As you move on, to your left you will see a tree that looks like a blue-grey Christmas Tree. A valuable tree in a winter landscape, this is the Blue Atlas Cedar (*Cedrus Atlantica Glauca*), a native of the Atlas Mountains in North Africa.

8 Just behind is another green Cedar. Its ascending branches help distinguish it from other Cedars as an Atlas Cedar.

