

## HOW TO FIND US

Kings Weston is in the north of Bristol and has good public transport links with the City Centre.

**BUS** 25 mins from the Centre on route No.s 40/41. Bus stops at Shirehampton Road golf course.

**TRAIN** 15 mins walk from Shirehampton station.

**CAR** Public car park is on Shirehampton Road. The closest postcode is BS11 0UN. 10 mins from Junction 18 of the M5 on the B4054.



## KINGS WESTON ACTION GROUP

The Kings Weston Action Group has been set up to protect the Kings Weston Estate, fight for its future, and protect its past. We are an active group of volunteers formed from local people, users of the parkland, and conservation professionals who want to see the future of a unique place secured. We hope to forge a new future for the parkland and to develop the grounds into a first-class green space for everyone to enjoy.

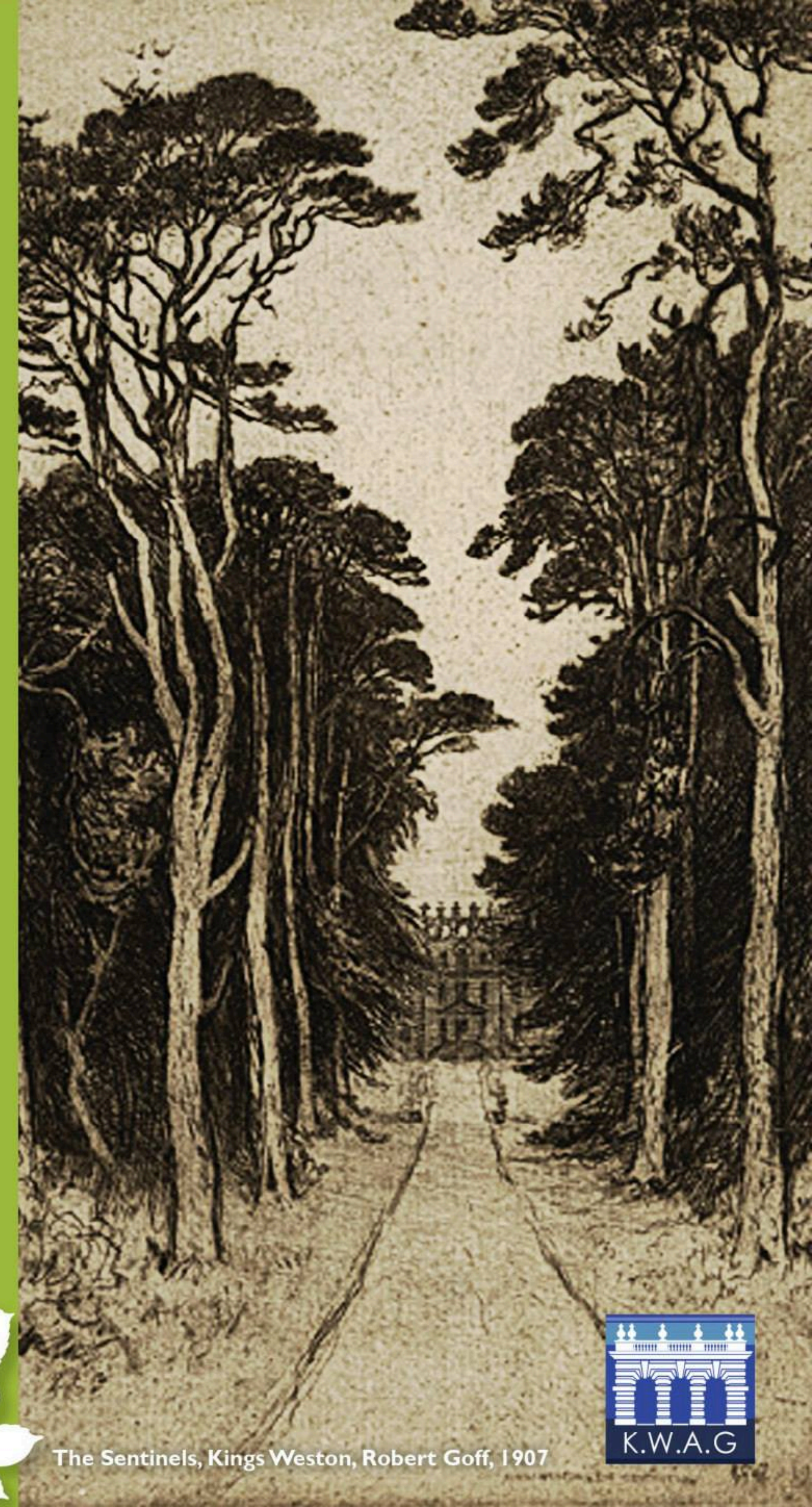
We aim to work closely with the community, the city council, and groups and organisations with a shared interest in the promotion of the historic importance of the park. We are active in undertaking maintenance and conservation work, lobbying the Council, helping to inform new conservation and improvement plans, help monitor the conditions of the grounds and historic house and garden buildings, and identifying and applying for funding to achieve our goals.

Do you use the estate? Do you live close by? Or do you just admire the historic house and grounds? If you share our ambitions or would like to get more involved please get in touch and join in.

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## KINGS WESTON ESTATE TREE TRAIL



The Sentinels, Kings Weston, Robert Goff, 1907





# KINGS WESTON TREES IN HISTORY

In 1679 Sir Robert Southwell bought Kings Weston house and the estate that surrounded it. Sir Robert was an important man in his time, Secretary of State for Ireland, President of the Royal Society, and was part of the courts of King James II and King William III. He was renowned for his wisdom and patience and had many friends. Sir Robert was quick in designing the gardens around the old mansion. He laid out and planted formal walled courts close to the house. He also extended his garden out into the landscape with long avenues of trees and less formal paths through Penpole Wood. Some of the same trees he planted can be seen along the great avenue today and form the oldest avenue in Bristol.

Sir Robert had strong connections with the English colonies then developing in North America. His friends there sent him back newly discovered seeds, plants, and trees for him to grow at



Kings Weston. Look out for the False Acacia trees close to the house that may be the descendants of Sir Robert's own planting.

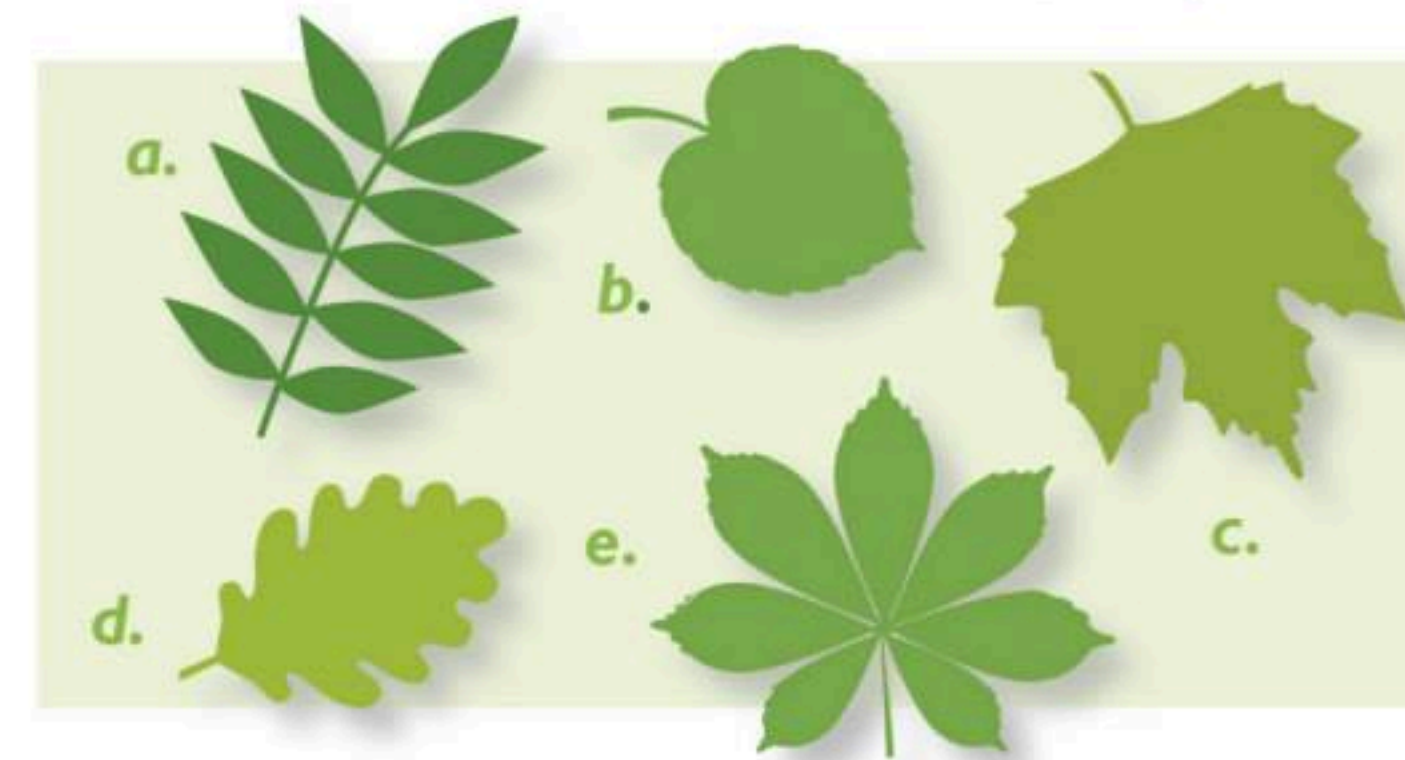
The landscape of Kings Weston has changed as frequently as fashions in garden design. Soon after Sir Robert Southwell died his son Edward began ambitious plans to update the estate. He demolished the old mansion and rebuilt it into the grand house we see today. After 1720 he swept away his father's formal gardens and added new ornamental buildings such as the Echo. He also extended the park to the south as far as the Avon and north where Lawrence Weston is now built.

The Southwell family were fond of planting and there are many references to new trees being planted and old ones cut down or replaced throughout the Eighteenth Century. The last of the Southwell's, the 21st Lord de Clifford, is known to have planted thousands of trees across the park and up over Kingsweston Hill. We can be sure that the Deodar Cedar close to the house was planted by him when it was first introduced into Britain. The circle of lime trees was probably also planted by him in the early 1800's when Jane Austen wrote about the park.

The estate was sold in 1834 and the new owners, the Miles family, continued in the tradition of developing the gardens with a particular focus on planting newly introduced specimens from North America including the Wellingtonia or Giant Redwood, other evergreen trees and the White Oak, unique in Bristol. Philip Skynner Miles also rejuvenated the old avenues with new trees probably felling many aged Elm Trees that were regularly advertised for sale for timber in the 1850's. His son Phillip Napier Miles and his fashionable wife Sybil were responsible for planting the oriental gardens around the Echo at the end of the Victorian era.



Q. Can you identify these leaf shapes?



After the Second World War the estate was almost abandoned to nature and ash, sycamore and laurel have grown unchecked, suffocating parts of the historic gardens. Today Kings Weston has landmark trees from all periods of its history and it's now a public park managed by Bristol City Council. Although a lot has changed since it was a private garden it's now open for everyone to enjoy.



**Inset, above left:** Philip Skynner Miles, Victorian industrialist, planter and owner of Kings Weston.

**Above:** The Echo Walk, 1973 after most trees had been felled during WWII and had only just begun regenerating.



Kings Weston circa. 1710, by Johannes Kip



Q. Can you find the type of tree an acorn comes from?



This tree trail is a walk of 1.5 miles that will take you past some of the most interesting trees at Kings Weston. All trees mentioned should have an identification tag to match the information given in this guide. The real highlights of the collection are outlined in the green boxes.

**1: Single leaf ash** – *Fraxinus excelsior diversifolia*. Leaves of Ash usually grow in distinctive 'leaflets' but this variant is unusual as its leaves are single large leaves.



**2: London Plane** – *Platanus x europaea*. Spain, introduced 1680. The only one on the Kings Weston Estate. Popular urban trees and there are many in the City. Notice the size of its leaves and mottled bark. (Pictured right)

Notice a number of young Common Elm Trees (*Ulmus procera*) on your right as you enter the park from the car park. There used to be many mature elms, which were killed by Dutch Elm Disease.



**3: Cedar of Lebanon** – *Cedrus libani*. Lebanon, introduced 1638. A majestic tree but not in the best of health. As with many of the evergreen trees you will see at Kings Weston these were very popular in the Victorian era. This one dates to about 1850. (Pictured left)

**4: Norway Maple** – *Acer platanoides*. Europe, introduced 1683. Planted by the Parks department in the 1970's this tree has an attractive deep purple coloured leaf.

**5: English, or Common Oak** – *Quercus robur*. Native. This oak is about 150 years old. Look out for Oak Apples, woody spheres caused by tiny wasps that lay their eggs on the stems and alter the tree creating swollen wooden homes for their larvae.



**6: Deodar, or Himalayan Cedar** – *Cedrus deodara* Afghanistan, introduced 1831. This tall ornamental evergreen marks the start of a lime avenue leading into Penpole Woods. Planted circa 1850. (Pictured left)

**7: Avenue of Common Lime** – *Tilia x Europaea*. A naturally occurring hybrid between the Small-leaf and Large-leaf Limes. These may have replaced those lost in a terrible storm that ravaged Kings Weston in November 1859. Local newspapers reported "Scores of fine elms are down, sometimes six or more in a row"

**8: Copper Beech** – *Fagus sylvatica purpurea*. Rich dark purple leaves which begin as bright green buds in spring, but quickly change. Notice the historic graffiti carved into the smooth bark.

**11: Turkey Oak** – *Quercus cerris*. S. Europe, introduced 1735. Faster growing than native species and a popular parkland tree. Easily confused with other oaks, but their leaves are more deeply toothed, and acorn cups distinctively spiny.

**12: Coast Redwood** – *Sequoia sempervirens*. N. America, introduced 1843. Another popular Victorian import from the western USA these conifers are the largest trees in the world in their native habitat. This one is less than a century old. It was planted around the edge of Jubilee Clearing which has now become overgrown.

**13: Morinda Spruce** – *Picea smithiana*. Afghanistan, 1818. Another rare tree in Bristol brought to the UK from the foothills of the Himalayas. It has attractive pendulous branches and long pine cones which you might find on the ground close by.

**14: Yew** – *Taxus baccata*. Native. There are many yew trees planted along the main path through Penpole Wood which correspond with the locations of lost woodland "saloons". In the Georgian era the wood was part of the formal gardens around Kings Weston House. Hundreds of Yew saplings were brought to Kings Weston in around 1680 by Sir Robert Southwell. He sent his servants to the Forest of Dean to collect saplings and he wrote about these expeditions to his friend John Evelyn at the Royal Society. Evelyn was the foremost tree expert of his day and advised Sir Robert on planting his estate.

Like many trees on the steep and dark north-facing slopes of Penpole Wood the yews have grown exceptionally tall to compete for the precious sunlight.

## TREE TRAIL MAP



**19: Bird Cherry, Hazel, Raspberry, and Mock Orange.** Along this section of path you will find trees and plants in the understory that provided fruits, nuts and pleasant scents. These were planted for the enjoyment of visitors to the gardens.

**20: Wych Elm** – *Ulmus glabra*. Native. This twisted specimen is unlikely to grow into an impressive tree. Its roots are between the concrete bases of WWII huts built for troops.

**21: Avenue of Limes.** This is the oldest avenue in Bristol. It's probably the same row of trees that is seen in an early engraving of the estate of 1710. Although some trees have been lost or replaced you can tell the older ones by their buttresses spreading out from the trunk close to the ground.

Divert left from the main drive where the steel railings lead downhill, and number 22 is a short distance on the left.

## KEY

- Parking
- Bus Stop
- Cafe
- Grassland
- Woodland
- Historic Feature
- Route
- View
- Building

**25: Deodar, or Himalayan cedar** – *Cedrus deodara*. Afghanistan/ Pakistan, introduced 1831. Almost certainly one of the very first of these trees to reach Britain in 1831 from the foothills of the Himalayas. 'Deodar' derives from the word 'timber of the gods' in Sanskrit. This one would have been planted by Edward Southwell, 21st Baron de Clifford. A visitor of the time remembered "The Great Enjoyments of Lord de Clifford when at home was planting shrubs and trees. Many thousands were placed at his direction. I can picture him now as I often saw him: a little insignificant looking man riding a very quiet horse followed by John Webb his favourite groom to superintend operations".

**26: Holm Oak "Evergreen oak"** – *Quercus ilex*. S. Europe, introduced circa 1500. This is one of the better examples of this species at Kings Weston. They are recognisable by their dark waxy evergreen leaves. There are many more planted across Kingsweston Hill.

**27: Common Oak, Beech & Sweet Chestnut.** Attractive mixed woodland of gradually maturing trees. This area lost most of its trees in WWII. A large Scott's Pine can be found on the south side of the path.

**28: Holly** – *Ilex Aquifolium*. Native. This large holly tree may have survived from earlier gardens. The laurel bushes close by are also remnants of ornamental planting from at least the 19th Century. Notice this holly has very few sharp pointy leaves.

**29: Cappadocian Maple** – *Acer cappadocicum*. Asia, introduced 1838. The only maple that regenerates through suckers. You can see many of them around the main tree. Part of Oriental-style gardens around the Echo planted in the late Victorian era which once included bamboo and Japanese Knotweed!



**30: Japanese cedar** – *Cryptomeria japonica*. Japan, introduced 1842. This tree would have been planted in about 1893 when all things Japanese were very fashionable. Sadly since then it's been damaged and lost its top but has sent out new growth from below. (Pictured Left)

**31: Sweet Bay** – *Laurus Nobilis*. Mediterranean, introduced 1562. Attractive and aromatic evergreen whose leaves are often used in cooking. One is planted on either side of the Echo.

**32: European or Austrian Black Pine** – *Pinus nigra*. S. Europe, introduced 1835. Planted at Kings Weston circa 1850 when other evergreens also arrived on the estate. Native in Southern Europe but now naturalised and growing wild in the UK.

**33: Tree of Heaven** – *Ailanthus Altissima*. China, introduced 1751. A Chinese tree that spreads easily via suckers. Notice a number of small saplings springing up around a much larger tree. The leaves are often mistaken for those of native Ash but this was one of the first introduced species to arrive in Britain from China in the Georgian era but probably from the Victorian oriental-themed planting.

**34: Beech** – *Fagus sylvatica*. Native. A mature tree planted in about 1850 to mark the eastern end of the Georgian viewing terrace.

**35: Lucombe Oak** – *Quercus x hispanica*, Southern Europe. A naturally occurring hybrid between the Turkey and cork oak, but bred in the UK by accident in 1762.

**36: Sweet Chestnut** – *Castanea sativa*. There are several giants along the South Walk interspersed with more Cedar of Lebanon. Note the deep ridged bark that spirals up the trunk, a characteristic of older Sweet Chestnuts.

**37: Turkey Oak** – *Quercus cerris*. S. Europe, introduced 1735. A handsome large tree planted along the South Walk to replace an earlier avenue that enjoyed views down over the house. (Right)

**38: Large-Leafed Lime** – *Tilia platyphyllos*. Native. A native tree, but planted here as an ornamental parkland tree. Wide heart-shaped leaves and finely ridged bark.



**39: Horse Chestnut** – *Aesculus hippocastanum*. S. Europe, introduced 1616. In Spring the tree produces tall conical pink and white flowers, whilst in Autumn the spiky seed pods containing conkers drop on the unwary!

**15: Norway Spruce** – *Picea abies*. Europe, introduced circa 1500. The traditional Christmas Tree.

**16: the Circle of Limes.** Although some have been lost, this close-planted circle of Lime trees is still almost complete. These trees encircle a Georgian viewing mound which once looked out across the Severn to Wales. In the 1940's it was the Scout's chapel where they came on Sundays when camping in the woods.

**17: Copper Beech** – *Fagus sylvatica purpurea*. One of the largest beech trees at Kings Weston is now almost hidden high up above the laurel bushes. Once it would have stood as a specimen tree surrounded by open parkland.

**18: Jeffrey's Pine** – *Pinus jeffreyi*. N. America, introduced 1852. Rare. This is one of only two in Bristol! Look out for the extremely long needles and pinecones on the ground below.

**22: Common Oak** – *Quercus robur*. Native. Probably is the oldest tree on the Estate and pre-dating the present Kings Weston House. Probably planted in the early 1700's.

**23: Ash** – *Fraxinus excelsior*. Native. After WWII Kings Weston was neglected and many ash saplings seeded themselves across the park. This collection growing up through the end of the terrace is typical.

**24: Black Locust** – *Robinia pseudoacacia*. America, introduced 1636. In 1685 Edward Randolph wrote to Sir Robert Southwell promising he "shall engage some of my friends there (in New England) to find out some varieties to send to your grounds at Kings Weston." He sent back specimens of "Black Locust Tree" which Sir Robert shared with his friends. This tree sends out suckers and regenerates when cut down and it's likely that these trees behind the house are distant relatives of those planted 400 years ago. (Pictured right)



**9: Wellingtonia "Giant Redwood"** – *Sequoiadendron giganteum*. North America, introduced 1853. Planting Giant Redwood became popular in the Victorian era. This one dates to about 1860. Notice the spongy bark. In the wild this protects the trunk of the tree from forest fires so it can regrow unharmed. (Pictured right)

**10: White Oak** – *Quercus alba*. North America, introduced 1724. This rare tree is the only one of its species in Bristol, however it is extremely common in its native habitat of North America. Not actually white its name derives from the very pale green of its leaves. (Pictured left)

