



# The Beale Arboretum

Polly Andrews has been for an uplifting walk and a good lunch

If you regard London as being confined within the M25, you will be surprised to discover that we have our own arboretum.

In 1963 Edward Beale planted out with trees the 35 acres surrounding his property. Today, a few feet from its entrance off Cockfosters Road south of Junction 24, a small temple stands as a memorial to this visionary man. It also marks the start of the imposing lime avenue which sweeps up and round to the handsome white house, built in 1868, which is the West Lodge Hotel.

Several of the magnificent trees on the Main Lawn beyond the terrace pre-date Edward Beale's planting. The English Oak is thought to be well over 200 years old, while the Strawberry Tree, dating from 1760, is the oldest in the Collection. The branches of the fine Cedar of Lebanon are all still in position and the Giant Redwood is potentially one of the largest living things in the world.

The route around the park can best be comprehended from the Main and Lower Rides. The former provides a fine view of the white house, and notable along this route is the Black Walnut with its dark, diamond-ridged bark; its wood is used for gunstocks. Also prized for its timber is the European Ash whose straight grain makes it good for bows and snooker cues.

The Arboretum is proud to host the National Collection of European Hornbeam, another strong, close-grained wood, as well as that of the Taxodiums, whose diversity is suggested by varietal names such as Cascade Falls, Little Twister and Minaret. The superb display of Autumn colour is concentrated around the Maple Glade.

Visitors may wander the Arboretum on weekday afternoons; a map showing the highlights is available from the Hotel's reception Desk.

[www.bealeshotels.co.uk/westlodgepark](http://www.bealeshotels.co.uk/westlodgepark)



