

## A WALK ROUND THE BEALE ARBORETUM

The Arboretum was started in 1963 by my Grandfather, Edward Beale, then chairman of the family firm owning the hotel, on the recommendation of Derek Honour, trees adviser to the G.L.C. Edward developed and promoted the Arboretum enthusiastically for the rest of his life. He was helped at the planning stage by Derek Honour and Frank Knight (former director of R.H.S. Wisley), and in the planting and maintenance by Frank Hillier and Michael Helliwell, who served as head gardeners for 17 and 11 years respectively. Our 800 species of trees from around the world are planted here around the 35 acres of the West Lodge Park Estate.

A stroll round the Arboretum can start from the brick pillars of the **entrance 1**. Just inside the entrance the path turns sharply left past the large **Swamp Cypress**, which was planted in the mid-19th century, and to the left of the steps. The first section of the Arboretum is the **Pinetum 2** containing most of the collection of coniferous trees. Notable among these are: the Brewer's Weeping Spruce with its long curtains of foliage, the Dawn Redwood a deciduous conifer which was known only from the fossil record until living specimens were discovered in a remote valley in China in 1941 and the Bhutan Pine with its soft needles and long, thin cones. To the left of the Pinetum is the main part of the **National Collection of Elaeagnus 3** a genus of shrubs that are particularly useful in exposed, windy situations and coastal locations. The Pinetum continues past the Elaeagnus bed with several interesting Cedars.

The left fork in the path at the Copse leads past some unusual fruit trees: the Medlar and Mulberries. Further along this path is a group of Larch. To the right is the **memorial 4** to Edward Beale and behind this is a group of Incense Cedars. The grass ride back towards the Hotel leads past several Witch-hazels and the unusual *Symplococcus paniculata*, which bears metallic blue berries in the autumn. Regaining the path and turning left at the Tupelo, whose glossy leaves take on a fiery glow in the autumn, leads past the **Dogwood group 5**. Beyond the Dogwoods is the **Mountain Ash 6** and Whitebeam collection, this genus of large shrubs and small to medium trees bear an abundance of brightly coloured berries, with their excellent autumn foliage colour and frothy creamy-white spring flowers; these are worthwhile trees for any garden. In front of the woodland walk is a row of Red Oak and Scarlet Oak, these North American trees live up to their names with spectacular autumn displays.

Just past the thorns is the **National Collection of Hornbeam cultivars 7**, these are cultivated varieties of the dominant local native woodland species which would have covered large areas of Enfield Chase when this was a Royal hunting park. The path continues past the cut to the main lawn to the Shrubbery. A **Wellingtonia 8** dominates this bed. In its native California this tree can attain 84m height and a mass of 2,500 tonnes making it the largest living organism ever to inhabit the earth, at 150 years old this one is a relative baby! To the left of the path a little further along is a small group of **Magnolias 9** including Magnolia 'Exmouth', this is unusual in the genus in being evergreen and flowering from late summer to early winter. Beyond the Magnolias near the Woodland Walk are the **Wing Nuts 10**, relatives of the Walnut, which bear long tresses of the winged fruits giving them their common name.

Taking the path to the left leads past the **Maple Glade 11**, this provides one of the highlights of the autumn in the Arboretum as the chlorophyll is reabsorbed from the leaves to reveal the full range of fiery colours. From the corner of the Maple Glade the Lower Ride leads past the Ashes to the **Biblical Wall 12** which is planted with trees and shrubs with a biblical connection such as the Fig and Crown-of-Thorns. Returning to the path and taking the right fork leads through the hedge of 50 pleached **Hornbeam 13**, planted to celebrate the Beale family's 50 years at West Lodge Park, into the Ceanothus and Buddleia beds. The California Lilacs are mostly evergreen shrubs that bear a profusion of flowers in shades of blue (occasionally white) throughout the year.

Returning to the main path and turning left leads to the Main Lawn. The northern end of this lawn is dominated by a **Cedar of Lebanon 14**, in common with many of the very large conifers this was planted in the Victorian period. Across the path in front of Cedar Lodge is a planting of Antipodean shrubs, this sheltered position gives some protection to these slightly tender plants. A little further along the path on the right is the **Killarney Strawberry Tree 15** which is over 200 years old. Although in the heather family the fruits of this tree resemble a strawberry and although they are edible they are not particularly pleasant tasting. This path leads back to the Arboretum entrance and the trip round the Arboretum is complete. Why not visit at different times of year and see how the trees change with the seasons?

Andrew Beale      Grant Cook      Paul Baynes/Andrew Swales  
Managing Director      Estates Manager      Garden Team



# THE BEALE ARBORETUM

at  
West Lodge Park  
Hadley Wood  
Hertfordshire



