



Kett's Heights Tree Trail

Prepared by the
Friends of Kett's Heights for
Heritage Open Days 2020



heritage open days

Kett's Heights Tree Trail

This trail is intended to show that even on a relatively small site such as Kett's Heights, there is a variety of trees and shrubs. It is not intended to identify every tree, nor to give a detailed botanical description.

Although many of the trees that you will see growing have been self-sown rather than consciously planted, they are under active management. The management plan for the site includes proposals to manage the woodland areas in order to develop a greater mix of woodland tree species, develop a community orchard and thin out trees in certain areas, in order to allow more light and create a more varied habitat.

Any major tree work is undertaken in winter (outside the bird nesting season), with the Friends of Kett's Heights doing regular practical work on the site throughout the year.

The trail starts and ends at the entrance to Kett's Heights halfway up Kett's Hill. Please note that there are steps in various locations without handrails.

The entrance path (nos 1-4) has relatively shallow steps and from there part of the route can be followed in reverse to the viewpoint (near no 15) with no more steps.



Kett's Hill



Tree trail route in blue, other paths in pink. Map contains Ordnance Survey data
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1 : Elder

On the right as you enter Kett's Heights is a small tree, below larger ones. The elder tree is known for its culinary uses. The white flowers in spring are used for elderflower cordial, and the later dark berries for elderberry syrup and wine.



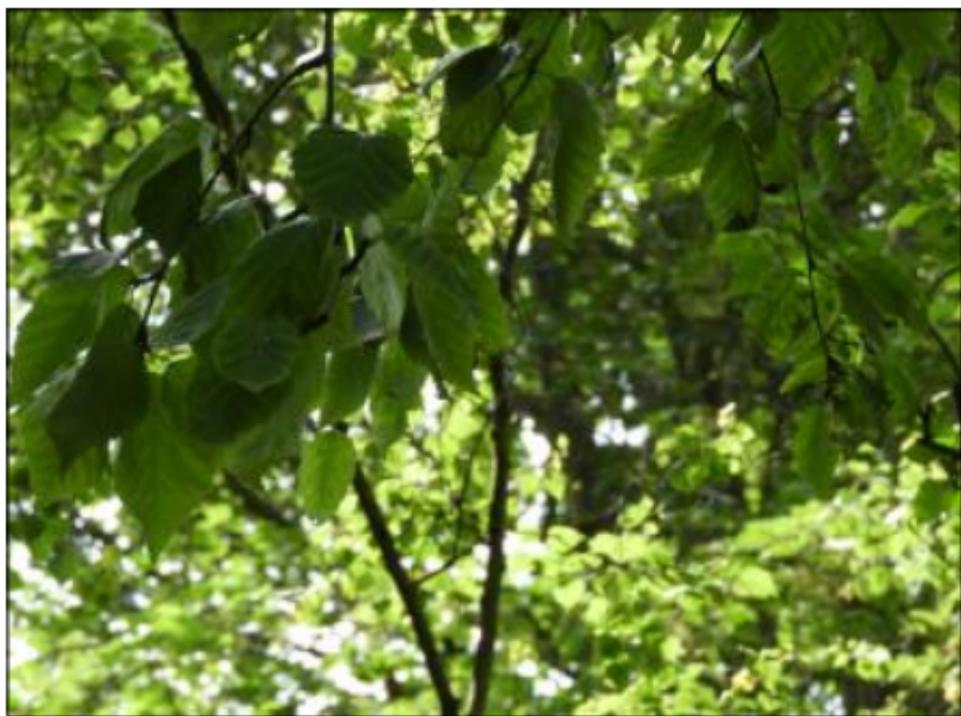
2 : Sycamore

One of the most common trees on the site is the sycamore. It seeds readily and it grows fast, so it can be very invasive. A lot of work in the 1980s, when the site was taken over by Norwich City Council, was to remove sycamores, and it remains a major issue now, as they have been allowed to re-establish since then.



3 : Silver birch

A group of silver birch trees can be seen on the right as you walk up the entrance path. They have a light bark, which sheds layers like tissue paper. The flowers are catkins, found in April and May.



4 : Walnut

The large tree at the northern end of the lower green is a walnut, origin unknown. It has a regular crop of nuts, but if you want any, pick them when they are green, as the squirrels feast on them later in the year, and you are most unlikely to find any ripe nuts.



5 : Sallow

In the middle of the lower green is a sallow, a form of willow. It was cut down a few years ago after a branch fell off, and is now demonstrating regrowth. Cutting trees to the ground for regrowth is coppicing: cutting them to head height is known as pollarding. There are trees elsewhere on the site that have been cut down and would regrow as coppice if they weren't being eaten by deer.



6 : Horse chestnut

Go along the lower path, past the pond, and among the large trees on the right is a horse chestnut, or conker tree. It is easily recognisable by the large leaves, and the later fruit, but as can be seen from the photo, the leaves tend to die early in the summer.



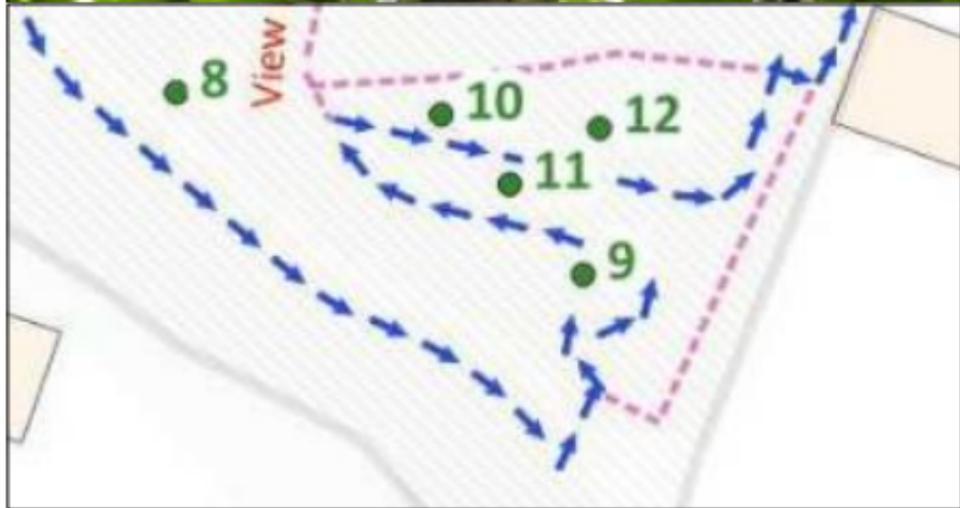
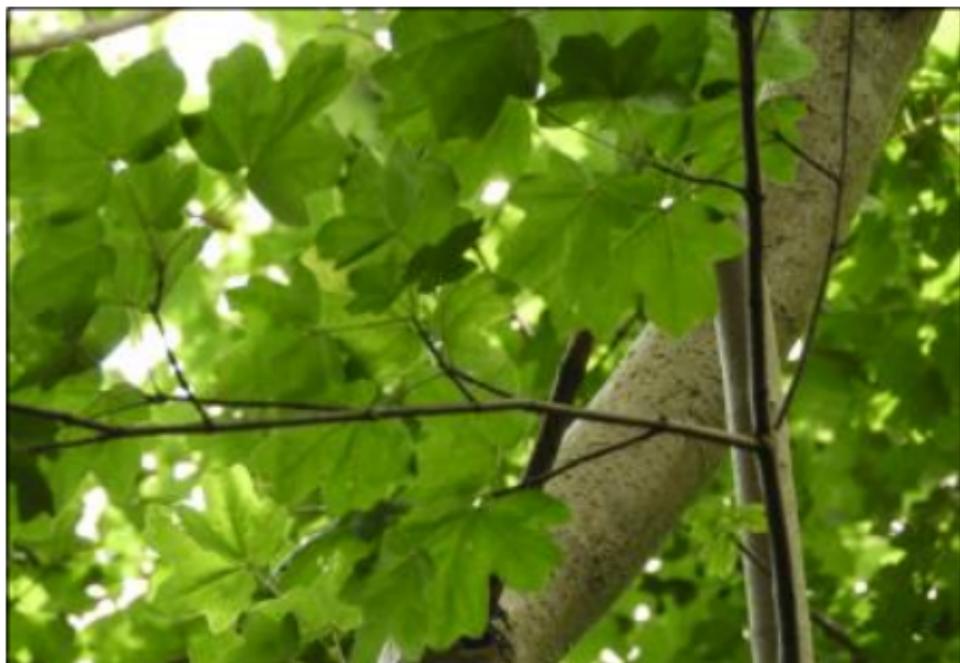
7 : Beech

Just beyond the horse chestnut at the side of the lower path is a large beech tree. Beech is fairly easily to identify from its leaves, and has small nuts.



8 : Field maple

Beyond the steps coming down from the viewpoint there is a steep slope above the path. This has a range of trees, including the field maple, from the same family as the sycamore, but a smaller-growing tree. In autumn the leaves can turn a vivid yellow.



9 : Holm oak

At the end of the lower path turn up the first set of steps and then take the path that goes left and then right and left around bends. On your left just beyond the second bend is a holm oak, an evergreen member of the oak family.



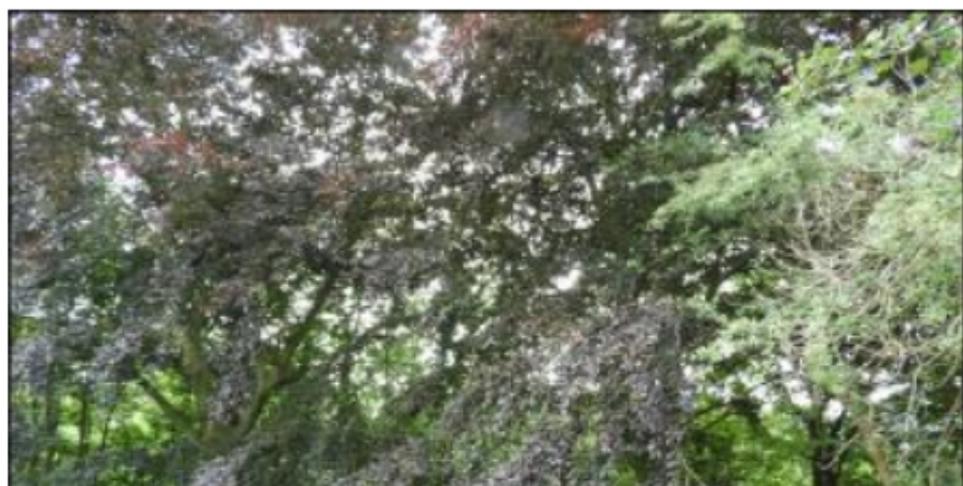
10 : Hazel

Continue on the path and up the steps, turning right at the top. In the area now on your left we are establishing a grove of hazel trees, using two that were there, and had been cut back and adding others from around the site. Hazel trees produce nuts, and are also good for growing straight stems, which is why they are often coppiced.



11 : Copper beech

Above the path at this point are the branches of two magnificent copper beech trees. Their origin and age are unknown, but they can be seen clearly in a photograph in the 1940s Norwich City Plan document.



12 : New fruit trees

In the area above the path here, and on the upper green and the terraces below, we have established more than 20 new fruit trees, with assistance from Norwich Fringe Project and a grant from the Trees for Cities charity. The trees are local varieties of apple, cherry, pear and plum. Their blossom is a fine sight in spring.



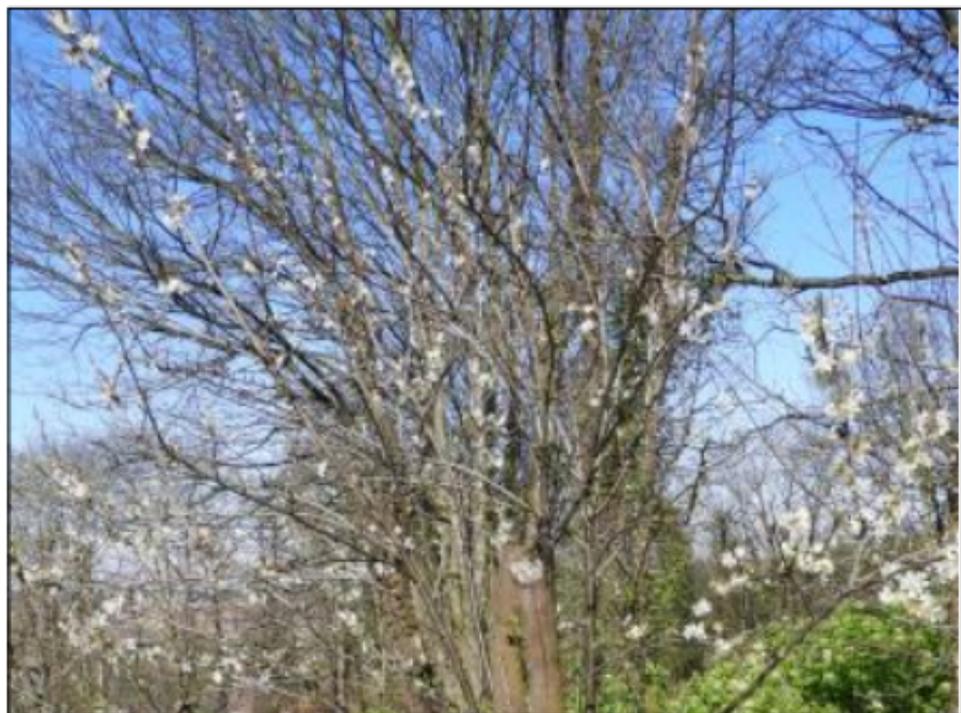
13 : Hawthorn

Make your way up towards the upper green. On your left at the junction of paths is where the Friends have established a herb garden in a former greenhouse area. The greenhouses were heated by a boiler which used gas from the nearby gasworks. Go on to the upper green and turn left. The large trees on your right are some of the many hawthorn trees on the site. These contribute to the display of blossom in spring.



14 : Common plum

Continue across the upper green with the remains of St. Michael's chapel on your left. The group of trees on the green is mainly common plum, one of the most common trees on the site. It flowers early, in March, and the fruits are like damsons. It spreads by suckers, or new shoots, underground. The Friends' aim is to manage the stands of trees so they are more like an orchard.



15 : Dog rose

At the end of the green, admire the view from the viewpoint and then turn right along the tarmac path with the wooden fence on your left. In the group of trees on your right are two large dog rose plants, resting on plum trees and growing to a great height. The flowers are pink or white and are followed by hips.



16 : Bird cherry

At the junction of paths at the end of the fence turn left. In the terrace on your left here are several bird cherry trees, They were once taller but were knocked down by another tree that was blown over in a storm. It has white flowers in April.



17 : Cherry

At the junction of paths as you come to the lower green, there are two trees ahead. The taller one, on the left, is a wild cherry, which we believe is self-sown and has grown in the last 30 years. It has a mass of white flowers in April followed by red cherries.



18 : Apple Warner's King

The other tree is an apple, Warner's King. This is a cooking apple popular in Victorian times and the tree appears similar to its present shape in photographs from the 1980s, so it is possible that it was planted when the gasworks established gardens here in the 19th century. The tree is popular for climbing on and picnicking under. It has a mass of blossom in spring.



19 : Oak

Turn left at the junction of paths to head back towards the entrance. The large tree on the right of the path is an English oak. Oak is a tree associated with Kett's rebellion, in particular the so-called "Oak of Reformation", but this tree is not old enough to qualify. There are numerous oak trees on Kett's Heights, and more germinate each year thanks to the actions of birds and squirrels in burying acorns as a food store and then forgetting where they've left them.



20 : Holly

As you make your way back down the path to the entrance look out for this large holly tree over near the boundary wall on the right. Although holly is best known for its berries, and its prickly leaves, it also has white flowers in spring to summer.





For more information about Kett's Heights and other guides to the site, and for information about the work of the Friends of Kett's Heights, visit our website

www.kettsheights.co.uk