

# OUR VILLAGE TREES: 2



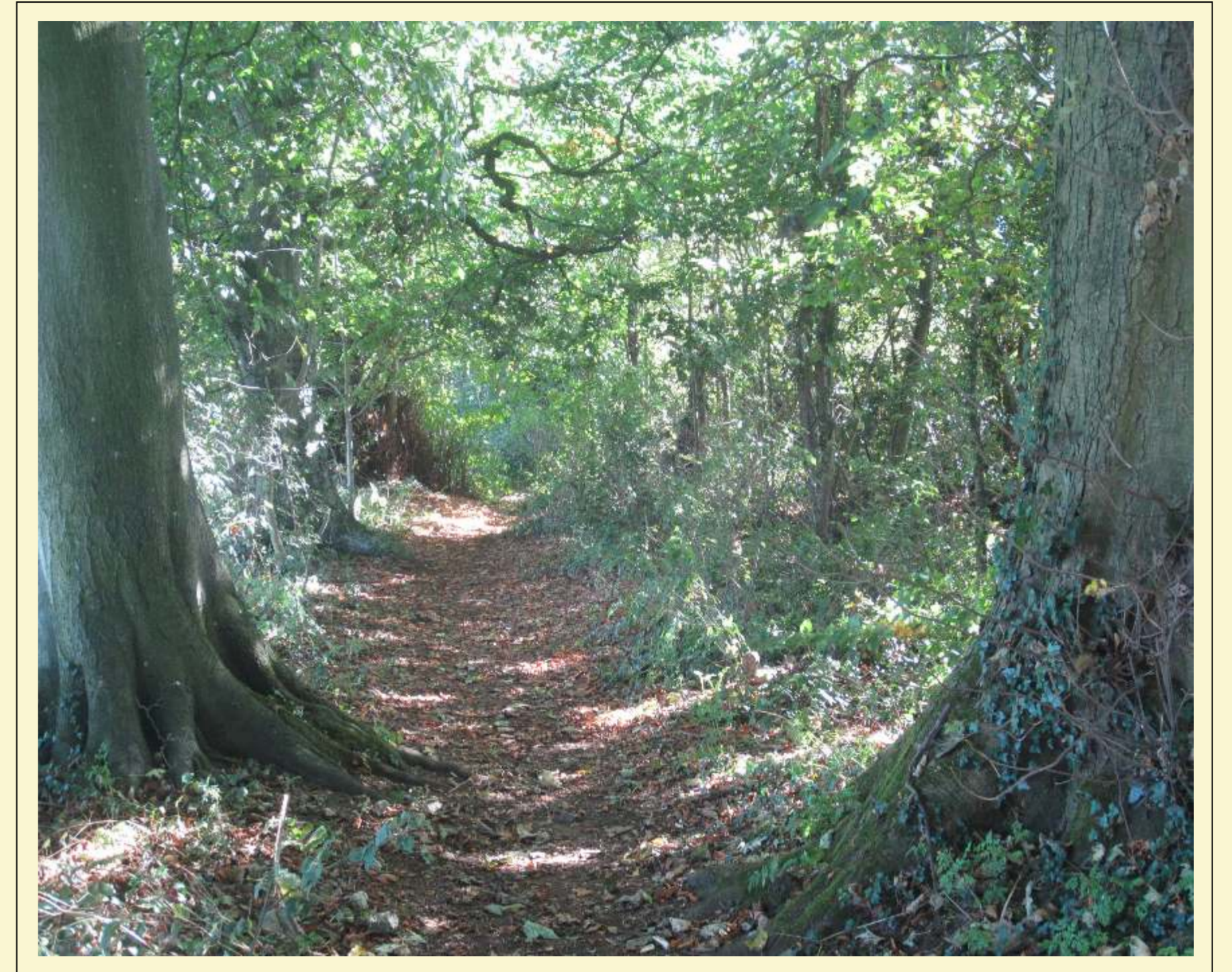
The horse chestnut tree dominating this photograph was tended for a purpose. Its job was to keep the Waltons' butchers shop cool. By the time it was felled in 1998, when the shop had closed and the area was being cleared for building Walton House, the trunk had grown round the metal railings to completely enclose them.



This willow tree at the bottom of Paines Hill caused havoc in 2009 when it fell across the road, taking power lines with it. Winter storms were not the culprit, but a lack of rain and abundant foliage.

SAL July 1983. Paul O'Sullivan quotes a letter from Cherwell District Council after much concern is expressed about the felling of trees along the Beeches footpath, shown on the right (extracts below):

*I have been informed that an application is being made to the Forestry Commission for a licence to fell 23 beech and horse chestnut trees situated to the north of the school playing field at Steeple Aston. The Fountain Forestry representative estimated the age of the trees at 150-200 years and stated that internal decay of the trunks, degeneration of the structure and the close proximity of a well-used footpath had dictated the felling proposal. The felling licence will therefore be conditional on the planting of approximately 80 trees of approved species. Whilst I am sure many of your parishioners will be saddened by the loss of the feature I hope they will understand that trees like people do decline in old age. The safety of people using the footpath is of paramount importance to the owner and he had taken a decision which although soundly based will I am sure be the cause of some consternation in the village. The new trees will grow on for 100 - 125 years providing a similar feature to that which has existed on the site for over a century.*



The WI planted this Rowan tree on Southside in March 2000 to celebrate the Millennium. Roderick Nicholson was on hand to offer advice, in particular to suggest that members utter words of encouragement to the tree to grow strong and healthy as they pass by.

In March 2000 Nick Brown organised the Steeple Aston Millennium Apple Tree Project. The aim was to encourage people to graft and plant heritage varieties in their gardens. For many this must have been most successful as it was then decided to buy an apple press for the village. Jennifer Cawood led this group of enthusiasts. By the summer of 2013 the press had been bought and tested, and it was demonstrated at the Flower Show.



The plaque was put in place on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2014. Obviously the WI members are not shy when it comes to talking to trees in a public place.



Grange Park was, of course, before it was laid out as a housing estate, exactly that - a park. The Grange's owners had created a belt of trees and shrubs around the estate through which was a gravelled walk, known as the Poly walk (for polyanthus). The 1876 auction map above shows this route clearly.

In due course the trees matured, and by the time Cherwell District Council gave permission for the new estate to be built, they were considered worthy of protection - a Tree Preservation Order covers the entire belt. The estate was consequently designed to incorporate the trees.

Correspondence in SAL in 2015 testifies to the problems this now causes, as CDC refuse permission to householders in Grange Park for huge trees to be lopped or removed altogether, despite the problems they cause.