



Trees in the centre of Warwick

A Short Walk



Warwick is well-known for a number of things, but not for its trees. In fact there are a number of interesting trees in the centre of town which can be seen from the street or in other spaces which are open free of charge. And seeing them is a pleasant stroll, both for locals and for visitors.

Start at the Tourist Information Office in Jury Street. On coming out of the main door turn left past the Old Court House and then immediately left down Castle Street. After twenty yards or so turn left again into Pageant Garden. Opposite you is a Common Pear (*Pyrus communis*), growing strongly. On your right is a huge Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*). This is not a native tree but was introduced by the Romans and now makes some of the biggest old specimens in England. Next to it, planted too close, is a young English oak (*Quercus robur*). Nearby is a good young Silver Lime (*Tilia tomentosa*). Also to be found here are Common Yew (*Taxus baccata*), three Common Limes (*Tilia x europaea*), a Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*), one Common Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) in one corner, a variegated Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), and a Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) from North America, with its curiously shaped leaves.

Leave Pageant Garden through the far exit into Castle Lane. From there you can see a number of trees in the Castle Car Park. Towards the main entrance are two Golden Indian Bean Trees (*Catalpa bignonioides 'Aurea'*), prominent in summer. Almost opposite you by the wall is a Hubei Rowan (*Sorbus glabrescens*), with white berries in the autumn. Further down by the wall is a Common Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) with red berries, and a number of Cappadocian maple (*Acer cappadocicum*), with distinctive and rather fat leaves.



Then turn right, keeping the Castle wall on your left, and head towards the car parking spaces. Here is a small group of the Bastard Service Tree (*Sorbus thuringiaca 'Fastigiata'*). This tree is quite widely planted in Warwick streets and is a cross between the Whitebeam and the Rowan, both native trees of the same genus.

Turn left and follow the Castle wall for a short distance past the other car parking spaces. Ahead of you are trees within the Castle – cedars, oaks and a good Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) with its cinnamon coloured bark. On the town side is a fine specimen of Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*). The tree just over the wall by the junction with Back Lane is the Small-leaved Azara (*Azara macrophylla*) from the Andes of South America. It is just about hardy here.

Turn right up Back Lane. Half way up on the left is a jumble of vegetation which includes vigorous regrowth of Wych Elm (*Ulmus glabra*). Elms now make quite substantial trees before eventually dying back to the base.



Turn left when you reach High Street. The Unitarian Chapel has a small garden in front. The prominent tree is a spreading Red Snake-bark Maple (*Acer capillipes*) from Japan, which is the most frequently planted snake-bark in recent years.

A few doors along is the Warwick Quaker Garden, which can be reached through the stone archway. Immediately on the left as you enter is a Garrya elliptica, known for its silk tassels. On the right is a saucer Magnolia (*Magnolia x soulangeana*) and beyond is what remains of a double line of Irish Yew (*Taxus baccata 'Fastigiata'*) with its distinctive upright form. Further down is a Black Mulberry (*Morus nigra*), another Magnolia and on the right a Flowering Crab (*Malus sp.*).

Leave the Friends Garden, cross directly over High Street and walk up Brook Street, keeping the Lord Leycester Hospital on your left. Here is the stump of what was once an historic oak, grown from an acorn from an ancient tree at Penshurst Place, which originally shaded the first Queen Elizabeth. On the left is another Snake-bark Maple.



The Master's Garden of the Lord Leycester Hospital lies beyond the oak and is open in the summer at a small charge. Through the wooden arch on the left is the Millennium Knot Garden, with beautifully pruned shrubs and a distinctive metal sculpture of the bear and ragged staff, the Warwickshire emblem.

At the end of Back Lane pause by the small Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum*). Then turn left briefly down Puckering's Lane, noting the Himalayan Birch (*Betula utilis*) in planters in the Bus station. Then continue up Brook Street towards the centre of town, passing a Whitebeam and then a Common Ash with particularly large leaves.



At the top turn left towards the Market Place. You will then pass a number of trees growing well in planters. First is a Flowering Cherry (*Prunus.sp*) and then a Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*), an ancient species whose leaves have no central spine. It is now quite common as a street tree, partly because of its upright habit. There are many pears, possibly the Chanticleer Pear (*Pyrus calleryana* 'Chanticleer'). This is an American selection which is now a standard item of street planting, known for its strong upright growth. As you reach the market you see a statue of Randolph Turpin the boxer, now in danger of being dominated by a London Plane (*Platanus x hispanica*), a tree too big for its situation unless pruned. The

planters in the Market Square include cherries, pears and birch remnants but the main attraction consists of olives, once far too tender for this climate but now surviving quite well.

At the top of the Market Place is the County Council building with a Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) in front, a debatable choice for the site. Then turn left. Nearby at the top of The Holloway is tree on its own - a Maple-leaved Crab (*Malus trilobata*). This is probably the rarest tree in the town and is also rare in its native habitat of the Eastern Mediterranean. It has white flowers followed by red/yellow berries. Here is the fascination of street trees. Who decided to plant this unusual specimen in this place and why? The answer is already lost in time. Mature trees opposite fortunately mask the brutalist car park.



Retrace your steps briefly and then walk down Old Square towards the Collegiate Church of St Mary, passing a small Golden Rain Tree (*Koelreuteria paniculata*) with its upright habit. This provides a green splash in an unpromising situation. Across the street from the Church is a small planting, now rather crowded.

Just beyond the church, at the top of Church Street, a gate opens into St Mary's Churchyard by a line of pollarded limes. Move down the Churchyard, passing the variegated Norway Maple (var. 'Drummondii') on your left and an Irish yew on your right. You then meet White Mulberry (*Morus alba*) with large serrated leaves, some unusually shaped. Next is a Pagoda Tree (*Sophora japonica*) from China, with criss-cross ridges on the bark. As you start to descend you meet a Weeping Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior* 'Pendula') and then a mature Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*), an American introduction that has been growing here for 400 years.

At the end of the Churchyard, by a row of limes, an iron gate leads into The College Garden. A major restoration took place in 1986 and many of the trees were planted at that time. Apart from the various cherries and hollies there are plenty of good mature trees to be seen. Starting from the left there is a fine Indian Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus indica*), which is far less frequent than the common Horse Chestnut. Near the path is another White Mulberry. Further back on the left are two good Cypress Oaks. Next to it by the far gate is a Copper Beech (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Purpurea'), which makes one of the biggest of all English broadleaved trees when fully grown.

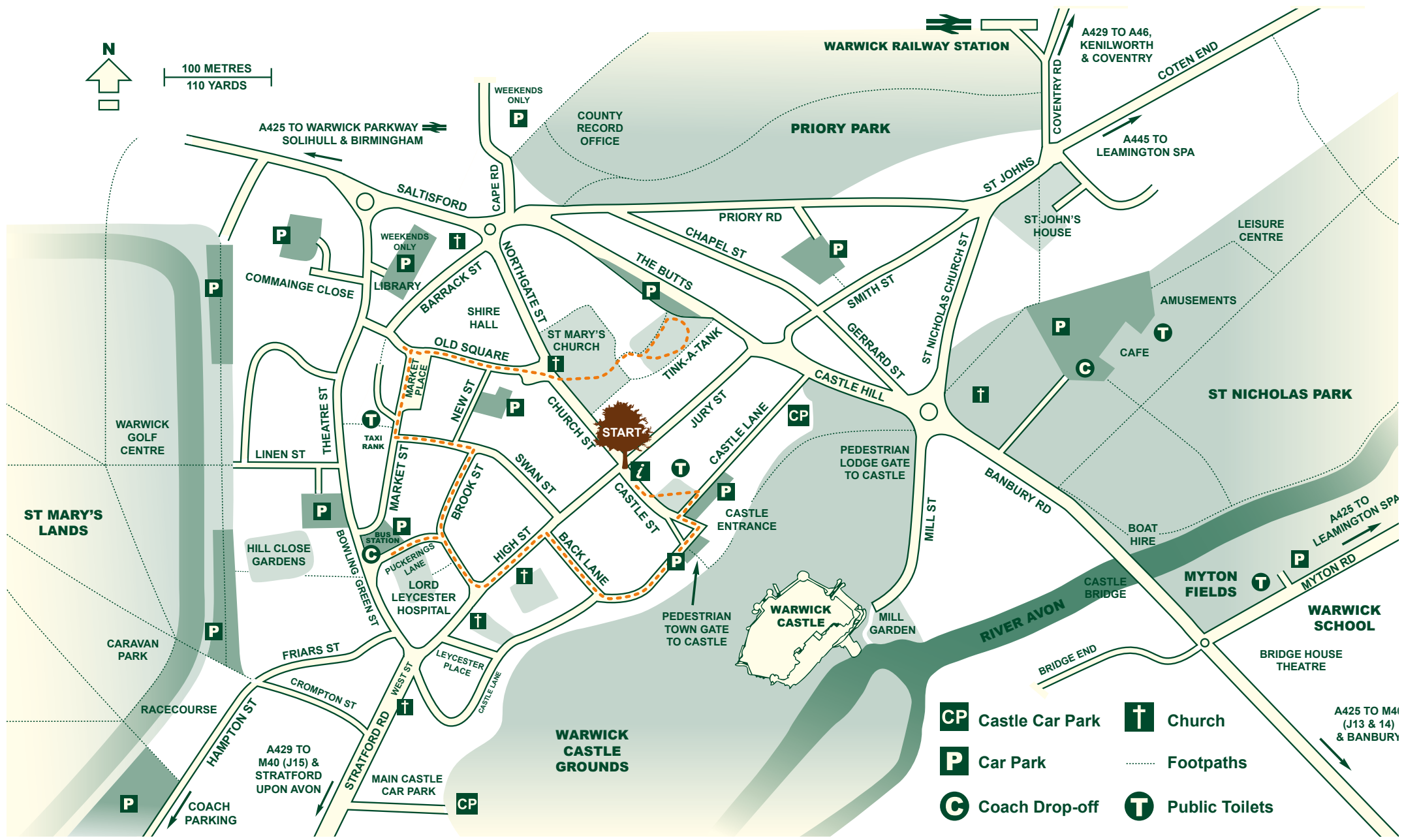


Moving to the right you may miss a Red Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus x carnea*), which is rather hidden towards the corner. Its crimson candles are prominent in late spring. Then comes a Sweet Chestnut and Tulip Tree. By the wall at the back is a Persian Ironwood (*Parrotia persica*), with a horizontal habit and flaked bark. It is one of the few trees whose wood sinks in water. You then pass a Yew before you reach the corner near the entrance with three specimens of the Silver Maple (*Acer saccharinum*) from North America, whose leaves are bright silvery-grey underneath. This is a frequent municipal tree which sometimes grows too big for comfort. Here we see the naturally occurring form, which is less common than the cut-leaved form 'Laciniata'. Beneath is a small Euonymus with red colouring in the autumn. And finally a Corkscrew Hazel (*Corylus avellana* 'Contorta').

Retrace your steps to the Church and then turn left down Church Street to where you started.



100 METRES
110 YARDS



- CP** Castle Car Park
- P** Car Park
- C** Coach Drop-off

- †** Church
- Footpaths
- T** Public Toilets

Thank you for taking the walk. Please let me know of any comments or questions.

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This tree walk was created by local resident David Howells with the support of

