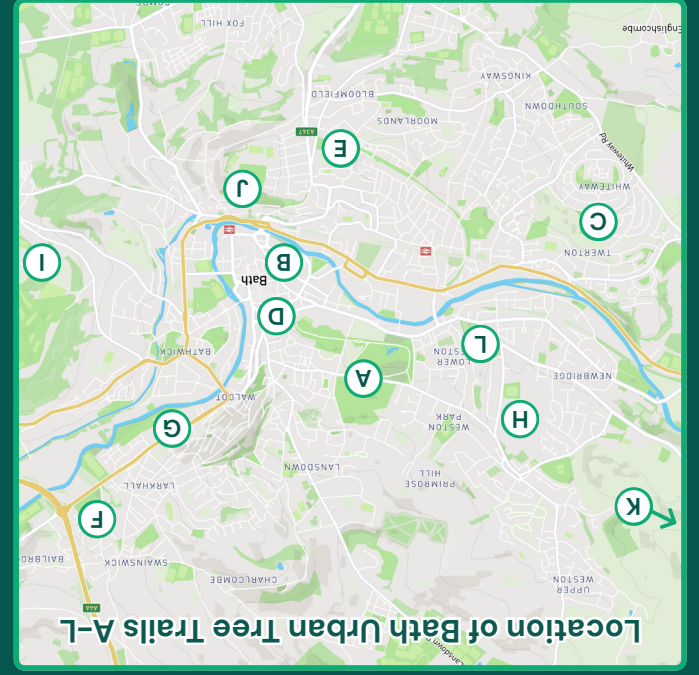


Start / Finish (W3W): Western end of Claverton St, Widcombe, BA2 4LE (shack.kept.digs)
Distance: 1 ¾ miles
Accessibility: Steps, rough grass paths, some steeper uphill sections, kissing gates
Bus: Bath Bus Station
Parking: City Centre car parks
Public Toilets and Refreshments: Widcombe Parade and Alexandra Park (20p)
Rest Points: Benches around the route and at the viewpoint
Features: Viewpoints, play area in Alexandra Park, Magdalen Gardens, Lyncombe Hill Fields



BATH URBAN TREESCAPE

Tree Trail J: Beechen Cliff Clamber Beechen Cliff & Lyncombe Hill Fields

Bath is a UNESCO World Heritage City with six attributes of Outstanding Universal Value, including the green setting of the city. There are many significant trees – in the parks and in the streets – which contribute indirectly to the World Heritage status and the wellbeing of the community.

Here is one of our Urban Treescape trails in digital and map form, where we share a selection of trees up and down Beechen Cliff. We invite you to follow our trail and enjoy the shapes and colours of each tree – their flowers, fruits, seeds, leaves and bark – and learn something about each one, while seeing the city from a different perspective.

A digital map is available at:
bathurbantreescape.com



1 COMMON LIME
Tilia x europaea
St Marks Burial Ground



A large vigorous tree unwisely planted in confined spaces where only drastic pruning controls its growth. Here it has engulfed the iron railings at its base. In summer, the whole base of the tree may be covered in characteristic ‘epicormic’ shoots, which emerge from buds under the bark of the trunk. Aphids are attracted to the flowers in July and excrete sugary honey-dew onto the heart-shaped leaves that turn black with sooty mould. Clusters of small round fruits hang from tongue-like bracts, but are usually sterile.

2 RED SNAKEBARK MAPLE
Acer capillipes
Holloway



Introduced from Japan in the 1890s for its bright green bark with vertical silver stripes, this may be the best example in Bath. Red winter buds release shiny green leaves on long leaf-stalks in spring. Yellow-green strings of flowers form during May, developing into bunches of small, paired winged seeds, ready for wind dispersal. The leaves turn red/yellow in autumn. Sadly snakebark maples are not long-lived and this specimen is beginning to show signs of age.

3 SYCAMORE
Acer pseudoplatanus
Holloway



Three similar-aged trees. Sycamore is a fast-growing large tree that seeds itself widely. The 5-lobed, leathery, dark green leaves have unevenly toothed edges and can vary in size as the tree ages. The fungus *Rhytisma* commonly causes black ‘tar spots’ on sycamore leaves. The flowers hang down like tails in April, forming paired winged fruit that fall and spin like helicopter blades.

4 TWO WILLOWS
Salix alba, S. caprea
Calton Gardens



Two trees of the Willow Genus growing together. On the left, the vigorous shoots of the White Willow come from the stump of a tree that fell several years ago. The leaves have silvery down underneath that appear ‘white’ in a breeze. Yellow male and green female catkins grow on separate trees. On the right, the Goat Willow is also known as ‘Pussy Willow’, for the fur-like silky-grey buds seen on male trees in March before the leaves emerge. Unlike other willows, Goat Willow leaves are oval with a small bent tip.

5 COMMON BEECH
Fagus sylvatica
Calton Gardens



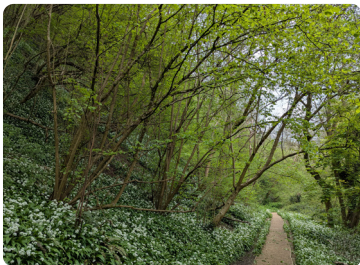
This massive old tree is a rare survivor of the redevelopment of this part of Bath in the 1960s. The bark is smooth and silver-grey. The oval leaves have wavy edges, turning from soft green in spring to orange-brown in autumn. Leaves stay on the tree through early winter. In some years oil-rich beech nuts (‘mast’) are produced, which in woodland was used as grazing for pigs.

6 ITALIAN ALDER
Alnus cordata
Calton Play Area



A tall, slender, impressive tree from southern Italy. It has glossy, heart-shaped leaves with shallow-toothed edges on long leaf-stalks. In spring fawn-yellow male catkins shed pollen on the wind that fertilises small, red female flowers on the same or nearby trees. After shedding seeds in autumn, the ovoid ‘cones’ become woody and stay on the trees with the old catkins until the following spring.

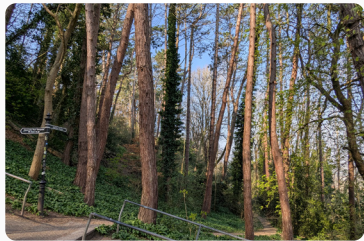
7 COMMON HAZEL
Corylus avellana
Beechen Woodland



Small native tree often coppiced (cut down to just above the base) to produce many stems used for stakes or fencing. The heart-shaped leaves have ragged edges and a rough, floppy feel. The pale yellow male catkins hang from bare branches in February, well before the tiny red flowers that

after fertilisation produce hazelnuts. These were a favourite food of prehistoric Britons, but today the squirrels usually get them first!

8 CORSICAN PINE
Pinus nigra
Beechen Woodland



Fifty of these pines were planted here in 1914 to help stabilise the slope, and as a nod to those planted in Bournemouth at the other end of the Somerset and Dorset Railway. Commercially used for its tall straight trunk. Leaves have pairs of slightly twisted, slender, grey-green needles. Cones are dull grey-brown and pointed in shape before the scales open to release winged seeds. It is similar in many ways to the Maritime Pine (tree 13) but the cones are smaller.

9 NEW PLANTING AREA: BLACK MULBERRY, WILD SERVICE TREE
Morus nigra, Torminalis glaberrima
Magdalen Gardens



This area above the path was planted in 2017 by B&NES after being cleared by volunteers. On the right, the Black Mulberry was introduced from W Asia in the 1500s for its edible fruit. In late summer, the large heart-shaped leaves hide raspberry-shaped fruit that turn sweet and purple when ripe. On the left, the Wild Service Tree is native to Britain and characteristic of ancient woodland. The unequal pointed lobes give the leaves a unique shape. Its fruit, called ‘chequers’, were used in making beer and in medicine.

10 JUDAS TREE
Cercis siliquastrum
St Mary’s Chapel, Holloway



A small, spreading, ornamental tree from the east Mediterranean, possibly named after Judas Iscariot or because it occurs widely in Judea. The grey-green leaves are a rounded shape and emerge after the pea-like, pink flowers that grow from twigs, branches and even the trunk – a phenomenon known as ‘cauliflory’. A long-lived tree, a print from 200 years ago shows this tree looking very similar to today. It must be amongst the oldest trees in Bath.

11 COPPER BEECH
Fagus sylvatica ‘Purpurea’
Magdalen Gardens



Mainly planted as an ornamental tree in parks and gardens for its dark purple leaf colour. The names ‘Purple Beech’ and ‘Copper Beech’ are largely interchangeable, although some trees do have darker leaves than others. Beechen Cliff itself was named after the beech trees which dominated its slopes. They have shallow roots and are not ideal for stabilising steep slopes, which may be why the Council later also planted pines.

12 COTONEASTER
Cotoneaster sp.
Beechen Cliff path



A small ornamental tree or multi-stemmed shrub from the Himalaya that grows untidily and typically leans. The oval leaves are semi-evergreen. Insects love the plentiful flat-topped clusters of creamy white flowers in June. Later, conspicuous red berries appear and may last through winter, although they are popular with birds.

13 MARITIME PINE
Pinus maritima
Alexandra Park



Found on sandy heaths in England, where the soil suits its Mediterranean origins. It is most easily distinguished from other pines by its purplish bark. The wide crown has flat branches and long, stiff needles in pairs. Large cones persist in clusters, each cone scale bearing an upturned prickle. It was widely grown in France as a source of resin for the manufacture of turpentine.

14 SMALL-LEAVED LIME
Tilia cordata
Alexandra Park



This type of lime dominated lowland woodlands in Britain 5000 years ago but is scarcer now. The leaves are small and rounded with a pointed tip, finely-toothed edges and red hair tufts under the vein joints. Pale yellow, highly scented, nectar-rich flowers and the resultant small round fruits project from long green bracts at all angles, making the whole tree a striking pale yellow-green in early summer.

15 TINY FOREST
Various native species
Lyncombe Hill Fields



From the footpath you can see the tops of 600 young trees of 18 native varieties, planted very close together (2.5 trees per square metre) early in 2021. This is the first of three “Tiny Forests” planted by the Friends of Lyncombe Hill Fields, using the Miyawaki method and is intended to maximise the carbon capture possible from a small area of land. For a closer look, take the first path off to the left, where the main path bears slightly right. All three Tiny Forests are marked on the maps of the Fields, located at the entry gates.

16 FIELD MAPLE
Acer campestre
Lyncombe Hill Fields



A small tree native to the British Isles and Northern Europe, often found in older hedgerows and field edges, less commonly in woodland. Leaves are smaller than most other maples, five-lobed, with blunt tips and smooth edges, and turn eyecatchingly golden yellow in autumn. The winged seeds are in pairs, joined horizontally. The bark, divided into small plates, has attractive colours and textures. The wood is used for furniture, flooring and musical instruments.

17 WYCH ELM
Ulmus glabra
Lyncombe Hill Fields



An unusually large tree below the path, not yet affected by Dutch Elm Disease. The large, oval, roughly hairy leaves are asymmetrical each side of the very short leaf-stalk. Leaf edges are unevenly toothed, sometimes with obvious ‘shoulders’ but always a sharply pointed tip. Small purple flowers appear before the leaves, followed by bunches of seeds each set in a pale green flat disc; they make the tree stand out from its neighbours for a few weeks every spring.

18 DEODAR CEDAR
Cedrus deodara
Southcot Place



A massive, stately evergreen tree introduced from the Himalaya in the 1830s. Now commonly seen in parks and gardens throughout Britain. Twigs and shoots are covered in clusters of soft long needles, with the new shoots noticeably drooping down. Tall, grey-green male cones shed pollen in October. Mature female cones are barrel-shaped and sit erect on the branches.

19 SOUTHCOT CEMETERY
Lyncombe Hill



The gate to this Baptist burial ground is usually locked, but several interesting trees are visible through it. On the left is a tall, narrow Incense Cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*) from the Western US. Straight ahead is another American tree, a Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) with five-lobed leaves which turn deep purple in autumn and may remain on the tree until Christmas. Uphill on the right is a Handkerchief Tree (*Davidia involucrata*) from China. Large white bracts, like silk handkerchiefs, hang down in April. Later, seed balls may persist throughout the winter.