

# RADFORD ARBORETUM PLYMSTOCK

## A SHORT GUIDE



WINNER OF  
BRITAIN IN BLOOM COMMUNITY AWARD  
2008 AND 2009



PART OF PLYMOUTH TREE PARTNERSHIP  
[www.plymouthtrees.org.uk](http://www.plymouthtrees.org.uk)

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Situated in what was the North Park of Radford House, Plymstock, home to the Harris family from Tudor times and later to their Bulleel successors, is one of Plymouth's most beautiful parks where a fine Arboretum has been established. Due to the collapse of the Harris Bank the house was sold in 1917 and sadly demolished in 1938. In 1956 much of the North Park and its environs was transferred by the new owners to Plympton Rural District Council, which controlled Plymstock at the time.

In 1974 the Radford Heritage Group, an autonomous group of the Plymstock & District Civic Society, after a hard battle with the City Council to prevent the listed Radford Lodge from being demolished and replaced by modern development, obtained permission from the Council to plant an Arboretum from the Lodge to the Lake. Fund raising began in earnest and the following year a dedicated group of voluntary workers was enlisted and 150 trees were planted. Some of the donors planted their own trees aided by workers from the City's Parks Department. Many of those trees died in the drought of 1976. Much of the fine work was ruined by winds and vandals and sometimes theft.

In spite of the magnificent generosity of the public, groups and individuals, and grants from the Council, finances were always a problem. This was greatly eased in 1991 by the formation of a Group of Friends, unable to offer to work, but happy to subscribe £1 per annum to help expenses. New Friends are always welcome. Voluntary workers, now very few, are still a vital part. In 1994/1996 the Heritage Group produced, with the aid of Plymstock School, brochures recording the trees of Radford. In 1999, to commemorate the 25th Anniversary, the Friends produced a small book (now out of print) entitled *25 Years of Radford Arboretum*, which includes, as well as maps, names of trees, and donors, a history of the House and family. In its heyday, Radford House was one of the finest in England, frequented by such worthies as Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh and, during the Civil War, members of the Grenville family.

In the Year 2000 more than 20 trees were planted to

Commemorate the Millennium. These included an Evergreen Scarlet Oak (*Quercus coccinea splendens*), Golden Maple (*Acer pseudoplatanus worlei*) and various shrubs.

A Millenennoum Yew (*Taxus baccata*) for the Parishes of Plymstock and Hooe was planted, together with a Millennium Oak (*Quercus robur*), but the Yew has had to be transplanted to another part of the Parish because it has suffered criminal damage. A European Olive (*Olea europaea*), which was grown in a garden in Hooe, was given to the Arboretum in 2001 to be a symbol of peace after the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> that year. Sadly, over the years the Arboretum has lost many friends and some are commemorated with various trees around the Park. These include an English Oak (*Quercus robur*) in memory of Dr Andy Stevens, who was the City of Plymouth's first Nature Conservation Officer.

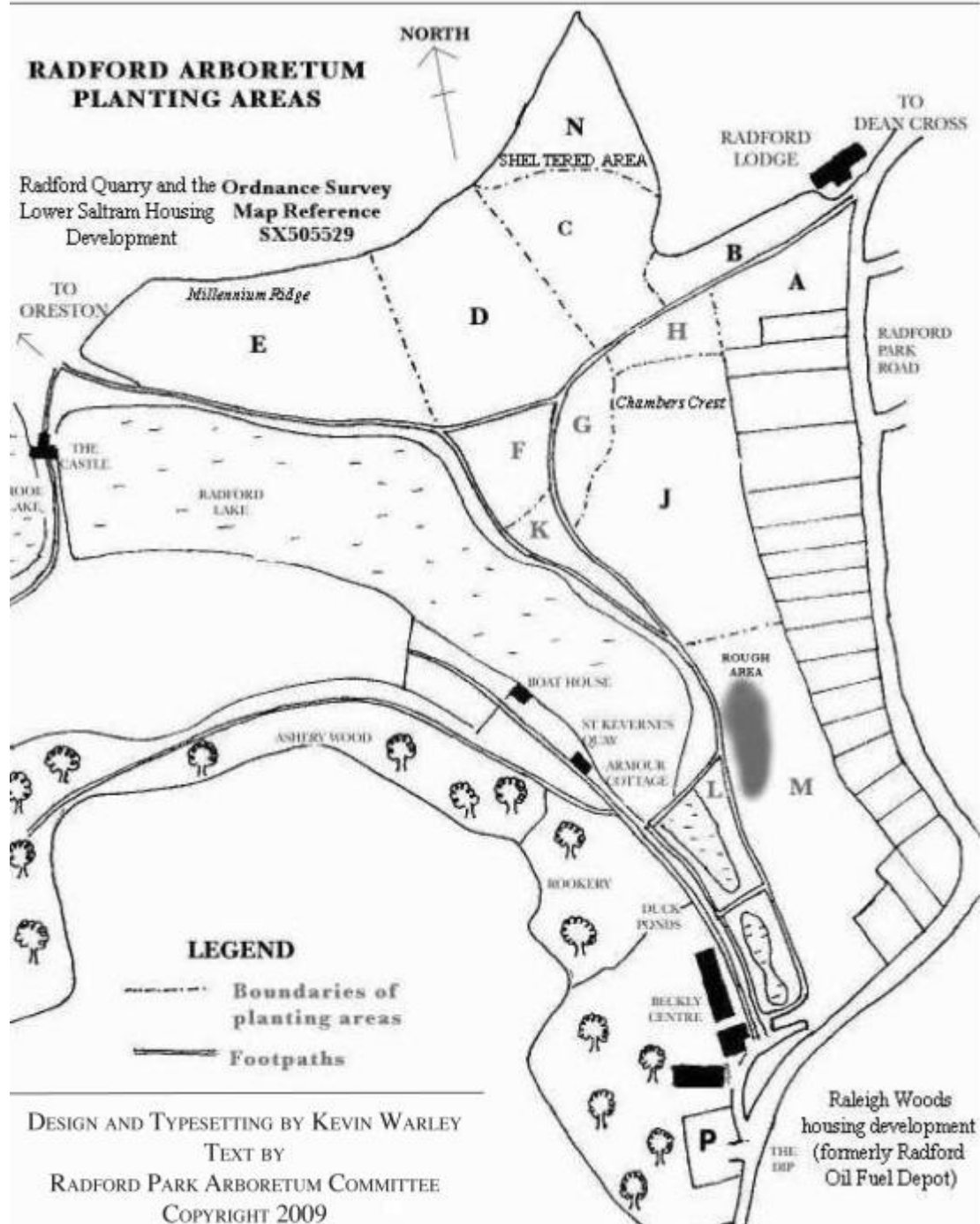
The Arboretum has received various gifts of trees planted and grown on in private gardens. The largest is a Foxglove Tree (*Paulownia tomentosa*) that was grown from seeds gathered in Mount Edgcombe Park and the most recent being three English Oaks sown by squirrels in a garden in Plympton and brought to the Park in December 2008, continuing the traditions of the Elizabethan land owners.

The soil overlays limestone rock which prohibits the growing of trees and shrubs which flourish on acid soils. It has been the aim of the Radford Heritage Group to obtain at least one tree to represent each species that tolerates alkaline soil. This aim has almost been fulfilled and there are over 170 varieties growing. In addition, there are collections of oaks (16 varieties), mountain ash and whitebeams (10), crab apples (11), cherries (13), poplars (7) and various beeches.

The Arboretum, although experiencing a mainly mild climate, suffers from very strong winds and gales which damage and even kill some varieties. It is the policy of the Arboretum to keep dead trees in place to allow colonisation by insect life. One tree which has suffered from the weather is the Wellingtonia and is featured in the book *Plymouth's Favourite Trees*, now available.

## RADFORD ARBORETUM PLANTING AREAS

Radford Quarry and the Lower Saltram Housing Development  
Ordnance Survey Map Reference SX505529



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## SOME PROMINENT TREES

### AREA A

Tulip Tree  
False Acacia  
London Plane  
Irish Yew  
Acer davidii

### AREA B

Crab Apple Malus  
Golden Lawson's Cypress  
Judas Tree  
Ceanothus  
Mespilus germanica  
Tree of Heaven

### AREA C

Flowering Cherries  
Rowans  
Walnuts

### AREA E

Incense Cedars  
Swedish Whitebeam  
Willow Leaved Pear

### AREA F

Purple Sycamore

### AREA G

Two English Oaks  
Common Beech  
Two Contorted Willows  
Chilean Orange Ball Buddleia  
Winged Spindle Tree  
Hibiscus  
Cedrela  
Mountain Snowdrop Tree

### AREA H

Foxglove Tree  
Box Elder  
Wild Cherry

### AREA J

Wellingtonia  
Willow Leaved Pear  
Maidenhair Tree  
Paper Barked Birch  
Handkerchief Tree  
Golden Maple

### AREA K

Holm Oak  
Norway Maple Crimson King  
Winters Bark

### AREA L

Poplars  
Swamp Cypress  
Willow

### AREA M

Copper Beech  
Three species of Lime  
Plymouth Pear  
Myrobalan Plum  
Indian Bean Tree  
Gutta Percha Tree  
Monkey Puzzle  
Japanese Red Cedar

### AREA N

Brown Turkey Fig  
Cabbage Palm  
Honey Locust