Future Veteran Trees on Burnt Hill Common

1. Sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus) – 100
2. Holly Stool in Holly Clearing – 600+
3. Oak near path 42 – 400
4. Sweet Chestnut near Path 39 – 200+
5. Ash – 170
6. Yew – 200
7. Yew – 200
8. The Soldier’s Tree – 100
9. Oak – 200
10. Oak – 200
11. Oak – 150
12. Ash – 120
13. Beech – 150
This ancient yew is probably at least 500 years old. It is growing on the boundary bank which kept the deer inside the 13th century deer park and therefore shows the age of the bank. The bank would originally have had a high wooden fence on the top. The internal ditch made it more difficult for the deer to jump out.

This elegant beech is about 150 years old and probably became established during a period after the Napoleonic Wars when grazing by commoner’s cattle became less intense.

This gnarled sweet chestnut pollard is everyone’s idea of an ancient tree. It is at least 200 years old and may originally have been a low cut stub from which branches were harvested. At some point a single stem may have been allowed to grow to form the present tree.

A close neighbour of the above tree. Sweet Chestnuts provided durable fencing material and a valuable crop of edible nuts. This tree was probably established at about the same time as its neighbour and is at least 200 years old.

The Climbing Tree. Generations of Burnt Hill children have learned to climb on this tree. The Soldiers Tree. Because of its position in a deep quarry this sycamore has grown up – not out! It links us to a soldier who camped in the woods at the end of World War II and who, in an idle moment, carved his name and the title of his unit in the tree’s smooth bark. The carving reads ‘J. Ware 14th Army Tank Batt Sept 21 1945’.

This tree provided fire wood by being lopped at regular intervals at a height above the reach of cattle so that they could not browse the shoots.

This large dump of holly stems is a clone with all the stems growing from the same root system. Regular cutting for hundreds of years has developed this shape. Holly was cut in spring and stacked in ricks until the winter when it was fed to sheep and deer. Holly leaves are amongst the most nutritious of all tree foliage. In spite of the sharp points it is readily eaten by hungry animals. When the animals had eaten the leaves and the bark the dry sticks were sold for firewood. Nothing was wasted.

This is an example of a young tree being designated as a Future Veteran. Wild service trees are relatively rare in our area and are recognised by English Nature as indicating that the woods in which they grow are Ancient Semi-natural Woodland.

This oak tree was pollarded to provide regular crops of timber and firewood. Pollarding involves cutting off the stem of a tree at about 10 feet (3.0m) above the surface so that the re-growth is above the reach of cattle. A cow or a deer will walk a long way to graze fresh new tree shoots! This tree is about 150 years old.

Beeches were pollarded to provide regular crops of timber and firewood.