

A Great Loss to Bookham

A Huge Cedar Of Lebanon In The Grounds Of Grove House.

At the end of June, Great Bookham sadly lost one of its most magnificent trees, a huge Cedar of Lebanon in the grounds of Grove House. The tree was almost 120 feet (37 metres) in height, and at its most spectacular when seen silhouetted against the sunset.



[pic 1 – tree at sunset]

Bookham Grove Management Company expressed huge regret and deep sadness that this beautiful old tree had to be felled. The life of the tree had been prolonged by the addition of bracing ties to support

the upper limbs after storm damage a few years ago. Unfortunately, during storm Katy earlier this year, and despite the bracing, one huge limb measuring over 90 feet (27 metres) in length broke off and crashed to the ground, but fortunately did little damage. On further assessment by a specialist from Kew gardens, the tree was been deemed no longer viable due to the weakened structure and the extent of decay, and also its position close to the road.



[Pic 2 – broken branches]

The Cedar of Lebanon was introduced to Britain in 1638. The oldest one still living today was planted in 1646 by Dr Edward Pocock in the grounds of his rectory near Wantage in Oxfordshire. The species subsequently became popular with landscape gardeners and many were planted in parks and private estates in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Readers may remember the majestic cedar in the grounds of Highclere castle used in the title scenes of *Downton Abbey*".

The Grove House cedar was probably planted more than 300 years ago, before the house itself was built in the early 1700s. The main trunk had reached a girth of 6.25 metres (20.5 feet), making it the 12th largest known specimen in the country, and the largest in Surrey according to Thomas Pakenham in his book *Meeting with remarkable trees*’.

A substantial portion of the trunk and lower branches has been left as a memorial to this remarkable tree, and it is hoped that some of the timber can be used in creative ways to make benches and other items.



[pic 3 – after]

The Bookham Tree Wardens are also investigating the feasibility of planting a replacement tree as a legacy for future generations.