

The Redwood Avenue

Camberley, Chobham Ridges, Surrey



This was an amazing surprise discovery. This incredible avenue of two hundred and eighteen Wellingtonia is near the town of Camberley, running parallel to the Chobham Ridges (B3015, which meets the B311 just north of where the avenue terminates). The avenue begins straddling Yockley Close at the southern end, passes along a park before going through walkways and reaching up near Upper Cobham Road (B311). A walk along it seems to last for ever and passes Redwood Drive (naturally...), and Longlands Way.

One point worthy of note is that despite the passage of almost a century and a half, very nearly all of the original trees are still standing tall and proud. This surely demonstrates the hardy nature and marvellous disease resistance of these trees - their only real enemy being lightning - and greedy land developers of course!

The picture does not do the avenue justice, but does at least show a small section of these superb trees.

Thanks to Duncan who sent us some very interesting information about this avenue: I can tell you this avenue was planted in 1865 by my great great grandfather, Frederick Street (1835-1906). He did this on behalf of Augustus Mongredien - the then owner of Heatherside House (a pretty house which still stands beside the B311, at the northern end of the avenue), with its associated tree and shrub nursery which extended over some 30 acres nearby of what was then the Bagshot Heath.



A brief history of Mongredien's nursery, and the planting of the avenue, is given in E J Willson's book *Nurserymen to the World* [published privately by Miss Willson in 1989; ISBN 0-9514364-0-6]

Larry also emailed to say "My parents were stationed in London from 1960-1964. During that time they rented half of a manor house known as "Yockley End" in Camberly, Surrey off London Road. The manor house, split into a duplex, had a driveway that was lined with redwoods. I don't remember the house, being only months old. I had the chance to visit in 1975 and those are the only redwoods I have ever seen - very cool as an American. They were huge. By that time the grounds had been subdivided for new homes - the tennis court, golf course, and most of the grounds were gone but the trees were still there. The stories I heard

growing up was that the trees were brought over from California in the late 1600's or early 1700's. Not sure how true that is.

Thanks Larry, yes, I guess the estate was divided up but I am pleased they retained the Redwoods. It is nice to have a record of people's memories of these old estates.



Giant Sequoia were only discovered in the 1850's by the Victorian plant hunters, so the stories you heard about the trees being brought over from California in the late 1600's or early 1700's were not accurate. People could easily be forgiven, however, for believing that they are much older than their actual years as the larger trees give the appearance of much greater age. If this avenue of trees was among the first to be planted in the U.K. that would make them now just over 150 years old - still babies of course!