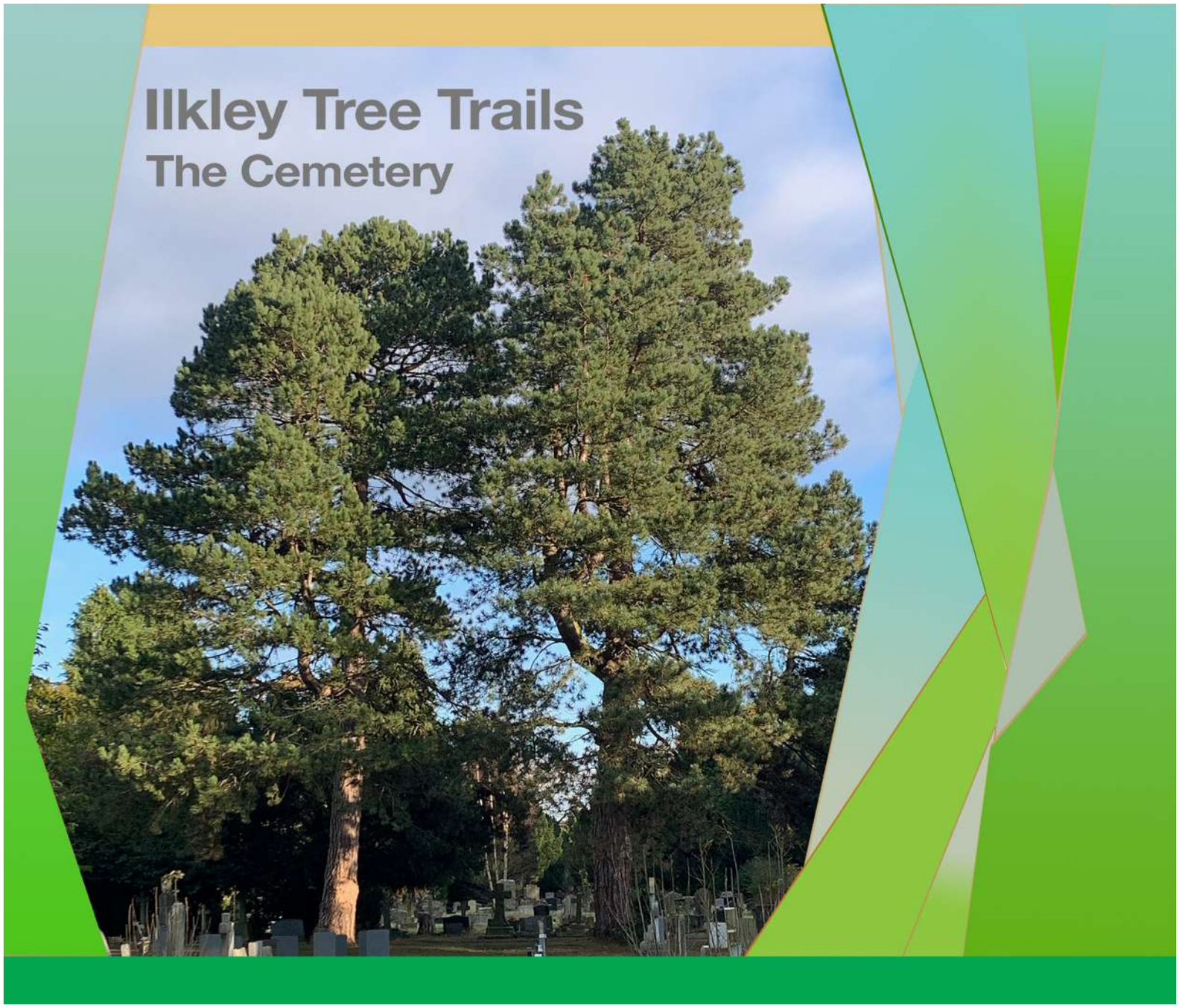


The cemetery is Victorian, opened in 1878. It was laid out with 2 chapels and wide walkways dividing the burial areas. The walkways were lined with trees, mostly conifers and other evergreens, but there are also a variety of deciduous trees along its boundaries and planted as memorial trees.

The trail starts from the Beanlands Parade entrance closest to the river and takes a circular route around the cemetery, visiting 37 trees on the way and ends at the gates on Beanlands Parade, close to the start. It takes about an hour.

A map marking the location of each tree is on the back page of this booklet.

Enter the cemetery from Beanlands Parade at the unmarked entrance between the main gated entrance and the river path. Immediately to your L is a pair of (1)

1. Small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata*

Native to S and central England but now rare in the wild. Our other native limes are Common (18) and Large-leaved (8). All 3 have heart shaped leaves with serrated edges and a lopsided base. Those of the small-leaved tend to be smaller but this is not a good distinguishing feature – better are the flowers and fruits, which in small-leaved point in all directions, even straight up, whereas in the other 2 always hang down.

Heart shaped leaf

Fruits pointing up

Go across the open area. On your L, before reaching the perimeter path is (2), a tree with three stems

2. Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*

Many of our native ash trees are affected by ash-die back but this one looks healthy. Each leaf is made up of 9-13 long pointed leaflets. The tree is easy to identify by its black leaf buds which can be seen particularly well in winter. This tree has no 'ash keys' – the winged fruits that hang down like a bunch of keys and are dispersed by the wind - so may be a male tree. Ash is one of the last trees to come into leaf in spring and one of the first to lose its leaves in autumn.

Ash leaves

Black buds

Cross to the bend in the perimeter path. On your L is (3) and next to it a row of six Sycamore (4) interspersed with two Copper beech (19)

3. Horse Chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum*

Non-native. Introduced to the UK in the late 16thC from Turkey. Its large leaves are made up of 5-7 leaflets and the flowers are on large upright 'candles', each flower white with a yellow centre at first, but the centre turns pink/red after pollination. In summer this, like many of our horse chestnuts will probably be visited by the leaf miner moth, new to the UK in 2002 but now widespread. It lays its eggs on the leaves and after hatching the caterpillars enter the leaf and eat through its internal tissues, turning the leaves brown well before autumn.

Horse chestnut leaf

Horse chestnut flower

Leaf miner damage

4. Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*

Non-native – probably introduced by the Romans. Each leaf has 5 lobes and many coarse jagged teeth around its edge. It has hanging spikes of yellowish flowers in spring, which become winged fruits called samaras, often known as 'helicopters' because of the way they spin when dispersed by the wind. Very widespread, sometimes considered a weed, but is tolerant of pollution and attracts many aphids which are a food source for insects and birds. Black spots often appear on the leaves in summer -'Tar spot'- caused by a fungus. It does not harm the tree but the leaves may fall early. It only occurs where the air is fairly clean – the fungus is sensitive to sulphur dioxide and will not grow where sulphur emissions are high.

L-Sycamore leaf

R- Sycamore bark

Far R -Sycamore fruits - samaras

The first tree on the R of the path is (5)

5. Holly *Ilex aquifolium*

Native, widespread. Evergreen. You might not immediately recognise this as holly as it has very few prickly-edged leaves. Prickly leaves are a defense against browsing animals but are expensive for the tree to make, so higher up the leaves are smooth. Holly used to be planted for these leaves which were an important source of winter fodder. This is a female tree as it has berries.

Holly leaves

Continuing along the path, on the far corner of the junction with the green path on the R is (6)

6. Irish yew *Taxus baccata* 'Fastigiata'

Non-native. First discovered in County Fermanagh in 1780, and is a mutant form of Common yew (13). Evergreen. It grows very erect with very dark green leaves, which unlike Common yew grow all around the stem. Widely planted in cemeteries in preference to Common yew because of its growth form. All true Irish yews are female and are clones of the original Fermanagh tree. They produce red fruits, 'arils', which look like berries. All parts of a yew are poisonous except for the flesh of the aril.

Irish yew

Beyond the Irish yew the path is lined on the R side by Portugal laurel and Common yew - better examples will be seen later. On the L of the path, opposite (6), its branches hanging over from the riverside path, is (7)

7. Wych elm *Ulmus glabra*

Native. More common in the N. The leaves are large, toothed, and oval-oblong with a sudden point at the tip and an asymmetric base with the longer side often overlapping the very short stalk. They feel rough, like sandpaper. The flowers appear very early in spring, before the leaves, and once pollinated become fruits with a seed in the centre of an almost circular wing. It has been less badly affected by Dutch elm disease than English elm but may still succumb once tall enough to be on the flight path of the beetle that carries the fungus.

Wych elm

Wych elm leaf

Wych elm fruits

The next tree on the L, directly behind an Irish yew is (8) and beyond it more Sycamore

8. Large leaved lime *Tilia platyphyllos*

The leaves are hairy all over and feel furry. The stems are also hairy. The flowers/fruits on this tree can be seen high up and all hang downwards. Limes were often planted to line avenues in stately homes or memorial gardens or to line urban streets. They were often pollarded (pruned at head height to restrict growth)– the limes in Ilkley memorial gardens were managed in this way until about 1980- or pleached (trained and pruned to form a rectangular elevated wall -like a hedge on tall sticks)- e.g. the entrance avenue at Arley Hall, Cheshire.

Hairy stems of Large leaved lime

At the next path junction, on the L is a tree growing on the riverbank which hangs over into the cemetery (9), and on the far R side of the junction a de-limbed tree (10)

9. Ash with severe dieback (L)

10. Weeping ash - severe dieback (R)

Ash-die back is caused by a fungus that usually enters via the leaves at the top of the tree, spreads down through the twigs, then into the branches and to the trunk, eventually killing the tree. So the early signs are discoloured leaves, then bare twigs in the crown, followed by progressive death of branches. The tree responds to the stress by putting out new growth from the trunk. The diseased branches become brittle and may drop suddenly so, as with the weeping ash here, branches are often lopped for safety reasons. The dead/dying tree is still a valuable resource for wildlife.

Continue along the perimeter path. At the corner, on the R is (11)

11. Variegated holly

A cultivar of common holly (5). Holly was sacred to the Druids and Christianity has adopted it - the prickly leaves symbolise the crown of thorns, the red berried Christ's blood and its evergreen leaves life everlasting.

Next to the holly, in the grass, is a fine Irish yew and beyond that two mature pyramidal conifers (12). Go across to the nearest one. Please respect the graves en route.

12. Lawson cypress

Chamaecyparis lawsoniana

Native to California. Evergreen. The foliage is in lacy flat sprays with tiny scale-like leaves. Easy to confuse with Leylandii but the ball-shaped seed cones are much smaller – pea-sized. They are green to start with and mature to brown. If you crush the foliage it smells of parsley. The male cones, produced in spring, are dark pink and disappear once their pollen is released.

leaves and cones

male pollen cones

Beyond and to the R of the two Lawson cypresses is (13)

13. Common yew *Taxus baccata*

Native. Evergreen. The leaves are in two flattened rows, one on each side of the stem. This is a male yew – it has no red 'berries' (arils – see (6)) but in winter/spring has small yellow-green balls on the twigs which are the male cones and when ripe release showers of pollen. Well known for making excellent longbows, a more recent use has been for the anti-cancer drug taxol.

yew leaves

male pollen cones

Just beyond (13) in the direction of the chapel is a very large, spreading conifer (14) whose trunk is surrounded by gravestones

14. Monterey cypress *Hesperocyparis macrocarpa*

Native to the Californian coast but widely planted in S and SW of UK, especially on the coast as it is salt tolerant. Evergreen. It has a short trunk and many branches and the foliage is in 3D sprays, with tiny scale-like leaves. The crushed foliage smells of lemons. The male cones, produced in spring, are yellow and soon disappear, and the female cones, which take about 2 years to mature, are round, about 3cm across, and have a slight ridge on each constituent scale.

L- scale-like leaves

R- mature cones

Head N towards the perimeter path (see map). You will pass between two tall conifers - on the L is (15) and on the R (16)

15. Western red cedar *Thuja plicata*

Non-native, from N. America. Evergreen. The foliage is in glossy, flattish, droopy 2D sprays, with scale-like leaves enclosing the stems. There are white markings on the duller underside. The crushed foliage smells of pineapple. The cones are flask-shaped and stand up on the branches.

droopy spray

upright cones

white markings on leaf underside

16. Nootka cypress *Callitropsis nootkatensis*

Non-native, from N. America. Evergreen. The foliage is in close, steeply hanging, dull, dark sprays but if you stand by the trunk and look up you can see the sky. The scale-like leaves have slightly spreading points which make the sprays feel harsh when rubbed backwards and there are no white markings underneath. The pollen cones are yellow. The female cones (<1cm) have prominent spines.

foliage and pollen cones

Nootka cone

Spreading points of Nootka leaves (L) compared to Western red cedar (R)

As you approach the path look ahead and slightly L to see (17)

17. Portugal laurel *Prunus lusitanica*

Non-native. Evergreen. Very common throughout the cemetery. Very glossy, finely toothed, thinly leathery, flat leaves. Long tails of creamy white flowers in spring, followed by berries which ripen to purple-black. The berries are poisonous to humans.

Portugal laurel in flower (above) and with berries (R)

Turn R along the path. You will pass two big trees on the L with many shoots around their lower trunks. The first is (18) and the second another (8)

18. Common lime *Tilia x europaea*

The leaves are rather flimsy and quickly become hairless except for whitish/buff tufts on the underside at the vein junctions. Common lime arose as a hybrid between the small and large leaved lime. It produces a forest of shoots around the base and sometimes higher on the trunk -called epicormic growth – though may not be obvious as the council often removes it. It has very sweet smelling flowers, attractive to insects.

Common lime - downward pointing fruits

Continue along the path and at the end go straight ahead past the memorial plaques in the grass. After about 30 metres on your L is (19)

Copper beech leaves

19. Copper beech *Fagus sylvatica* 'Purpurea'
A cultivar of Common beech, native to the SE but planted all over the UK. The leaves are oval with a pointed end and wavy edges with a fringe of tiny hairs. The purple colour is due to anthocyanin in the leaves. All beech leaves have the potential to be purple but the gene for this is usually turned off.

Beyond this tree are a number of small scrubby trees (20)

20. Elder *Sambucus nigra*
Native, very common. Fast growing, short lived, and often rather untidy looking. The leaves have 5 (sometimes 7) oval, toothed leaflets which smell unpleasant when touched. It has white, highly scented flowers in spring, followed by berries that ripen to purple-black. These are edible if cooked. An elder planted by your house is said to keep the devil away.

Elder flower and leaf

Ahead of you is a huge conifer (21)

21. Bishop pine *Pinus muricata*
Native to Californian clifftops and islands. Evergreen. Twisting branches, needle in pairs and up to 15cm long, stiff and slightly twisted. The identification is not certain as there are no readily visible cones to help (those of Bishop pine are very characteristic, with a spine on each scale) and some of the needles are in groups of 3 not 2

Bishop pine

Needles in a 2, a 3 and compared with Scot's pine

Continue around the edge of the open area. Here is a row of fairly recently planted memorial trees. The first is (22), the second (23)

22. Kashmir rowan *Sorbus cashmeriana*
Native to W Himalayas. The leaves consist of 15-21 serrated leaflets. It has big white berries which stay on the tree long after leaf fall.

Kashmir rowan

23. Aspen *Populus tremula*
Native. The leaves are roundish with big wavy teeth. The leaf stalk is flattened at right angles to the plane of the leaf which allows the leaf to quiver in the wind, so the leaves rustle even in a light breeze.

Aspen

Between and slightly behind 22 and 23 is (24)

24. Silver birch *Betula pendula*
Native. It is an elegant tree with drooping branches. The leaves are triangular and coarsely toothed and the stems and twigs are hairless. The white bark develops rough black diamond shapes with age.

L - silver birch leaf

R - silver birch bark

The next memorial trees are (25) and (26)

25. Ornamental cherry *Prunus sp.*
Non-native. Cherry is easily recognised by its bark which has distinctive horizontal marks, sometimes orange as here. Leaves are large with coarse teeth and have 2 red spots at the leaf base – these are nectar glands that attract ants and other insects to the tree which help protect it against harmful pests. This tree has pink flowers - those of native cherry are white.

26. Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*
Native. Leaves similar to Kashmir rowan but fewer leaflets –11-17, and its berries are smaller and red. Also called 'mountain ash'- it grows well at altitude but is not related to the Ash. Many of the trees on Ilkley moor are Rowans, seeded by birds which eat the berries.

Cherry leaf

Nectar glands

Cherry bark

Rowan

Beyond and set back from the rowan is a tree whose trunk is white with many lumpy black growths and to the R a big old tree with whitish bark, both (27)

27. Downy birch *Betula pubescens*
Native. A more upright tree than silver birch and more common in the north. The bark is greyer than silver birch, often with horizontal banding. The leaves are very similar but tend to be more rounded at the base and the serrations less coarse, though they can be difficult to distinguish on leaf shape alone. The stalks and twigs are hairy when young– a good distinguishing feature -but the hairs gradually wear off.

L & far L -
Downy birch

Leaves and hairy stems

The next memorial trees are (28), then two cherries, then (29), (30) and a weeping cherry.

28. Field maple *Acer campestre* Native. In the same family as Sycamore and like Sycamore has 5-lobed leaves, but those of field maple are smaller, are a darker, shinier green and have only a few rounded teeth. They produce similar fruits but the wings on field maple samara are almost in a straight line, whereas in Sycamore they are at 45 degrees to the horizontal.

far L & L - field maple leaf and samaras

R- Hawthorn Paul's Scarlet

29. Hawthorn *Crataegus laevigata* 'Paul's Scarlet'
We have 2 native Hawthorn – Common and Midland. The first is very common in our area, the latter in S and Central England. Both have abundant white flowers in May (Midland may be pinkish). The leaf shapes are slightly different - Common is more indented than Midland. The red fruits, called haws, look the same but Midland contains 2 seeds, Common only 1. This tree is a cultivar of Midland, widely planted for its pretty deep pink/red flowers.

30. Saucer magnolia *Magnolia x soulangeana*
Magnolias originate in Asia and the Americas. They are one of the oldest flowering plans in the world – fossilised magnolias have been dated to 95million years ago. The flower bud is covered by a hairy bud scale. When the bud inside starts to swell in spring the bud scale splits and falls off. There are many varieties; this one has deep pink tulip-shaped flowers and is deciduous.

L -Magnolia flower and bud scale

R - Magnolia leaves

Continue ahead then turn into the corner by the fence for (31)

31. Common osier. *Salix viminalis*
Native to the SE but found throughout the UK. It is the best willow for basket making as it has strong flexible stems. Usually found on riverbanks or other wet places. The leaves are very long, thin, pointed, and are dark glossy green on top with felt-like silvery hairs beneath. The leaf edges are finely serrated and rolled slightly inwards. Osier can absorb heavy metals without apparent detriment so is planted to clean up contaminated areas.

Osier *leaves & top & underside*

Hanging over the fence of what was the Cemetery Gatekeeper's Lodge are (32), (33), (34)

32. Cotoneaster *Cotoneaster frigidus x watereri*
Non-native. There are about 400 species worldwide. This one is a common, vigorous and semi- evergreen species. Cotoneaster is a popular garden plant for its pink/white flowers and red berries, but is listed as an invasive weed as it readily escapes into the wild, the seeds spread by birds, where it smothers and outcompetes native plants

Cotoneaster

33. Corkscrew hazel *Corylus avellana 'Contorta'*
A mutant form of native hazel, discovered in a Gloucestershire hedgerow about 1863. It is a popular ornamental tree, planted for its sculptural quality in winter and particularly late winter when it is festooned with yellow catkins, but it is also disliked by many for its deformed summer foliage. It can only be propagated by grafting clones of the original hedgerow tree onto native hazel rootstock.

far L - corkscrew hazel leaves
L - Common hazel
above - corkscrew hazel in late winter

34. Ginkgo *Ginkgo biloba*
Non-native. Ginkgo is the last living species of an order of trees which first appeared over 290 million years ago. At the end of the Pliocene (about 2.6 million years ago) Ginkgo fossils disappeared from the fossil record everywhere except a small area in central China, where the modern species survived. It has very unusual leaves – fan shaped with veins radiating out into the leaf blade. The leaves turn yellow in autumn.

Gingko leaf

Turn R along the road towards the chapels. On the L just before the roundabout and on the R of the roundabout are two examples of (35)

35. Fern leaved beech *Fagus sylvatica* 'Asplenifolia'
This is a cultivar of Common beech. On the far side of the R hand tree the leaves are long, narrow, deeply serrated and dark green, quit unlike those of Common beech. On other parts of the tree the leaves are less deeply cut and some are a much more typical beech shape. These trees are chimaeras - ie a mixture of 2 cell types, the core being those of Common beech, wrapped in a thin 'skin' of mutant cells. The chimaera is usually stable but if a branch is damaged the new growth may revert to the core type. The tree can only be propogated by grafting.

L- fern leaved beech (2 leaf types)

R- *Common beech*

Turn L in front of the L chapel and take the path on the R. Soon on both sides are (36)

36. Cherry laurel *Prunus Laurocerasus*

Non-native. Introduced from SE Europe in 1576. Evergreen. It has larger, thicker, brighter green and more rounded leaves than Portugal laurel (17), of which there is an example just beyond the cherry laurel on the R, and another intertwined with the branches of the cherry laurel on the L. It has upright spikes of white flowers in Spring, followed by black berries which are poisonous.

Cherry laurel leaves and flower spikes

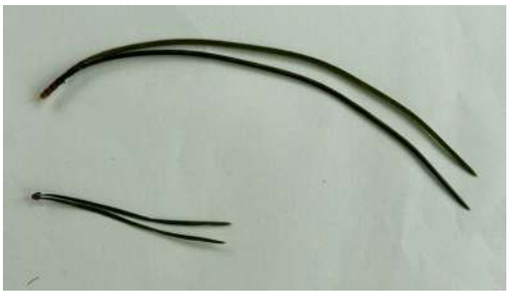
Portugal laurel

Continue along the path and when it turns L you will see two very tall conifers ahead (37)

37. Corsican pine *Pinus nigra* ssp. *Laricio*

Non-native. It was introduced in 1759 to S and E England as a forestry tree. Evergreen. Leaves in pairs,12-18cm long, slender and rather twisted. Our native Scots pine also has leaves in pairs but these are much shorter – 2-8cm, and the tree does not grow as tall.

Corsican pine

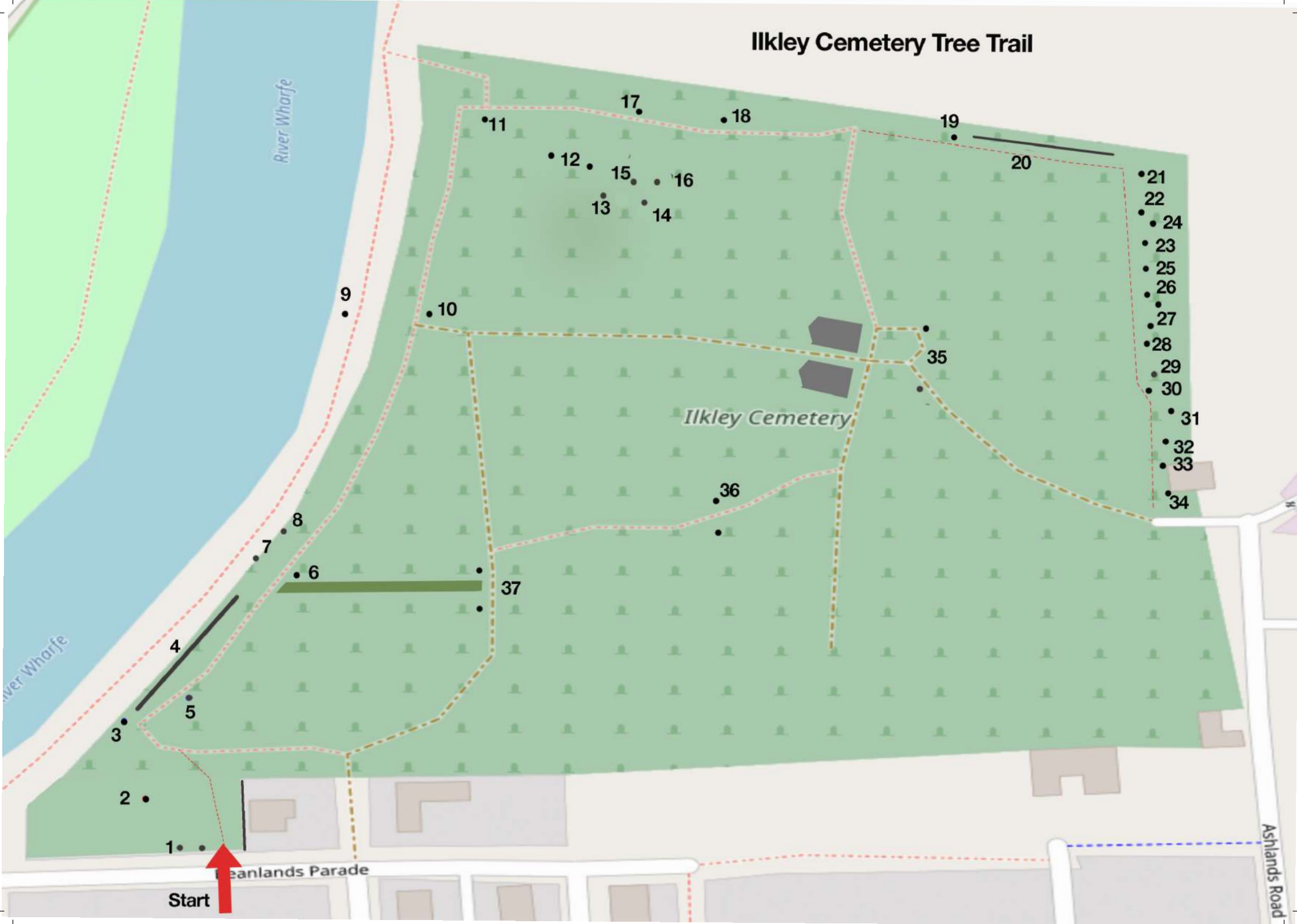


Top - Corsican pine
Bottom - Scots pine

Continue on the path and after it bends R take the next path on the L to the main gates. On each side of the gates is a golden variety of Lawson Cypress (12). The trail ends here.

This booklet has been produced by Sue & Neil Stevens in July 2024. We hope you have enjoyed your walk. Your comments are welcome via trees@ilkleytrees.org.uk

We would like to thank Bruce Brown of Wharfedale Naturalists for help with tree identification. There are 4 other Ilkley tree trails available from the Grove Book Shop or Ilkley Visitor Centre.


Ilkley Cemetery Tree Trail
River Wharfe
Ilkley Cemetery
Ashlands Road
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