

## Thought for the week

ic Harmer, Pastor  
Evangelical Church

usually quote Albert but something I read made me think. discoveries and influence key part in the ment of atomic power. back some years later he on its impact saying: "The y of atomic power has everything except human only I had known that, I ive become a tker."

such a sad conclusion to even if we may think it is The whole of history is y the consistent failings of ature. In the early 20th many Europeans were d that humanity had corner and that we were ur more violent nature s civilisation had a ig effect. rst World War, the y of which we mark this red that to be a forlorn w at this point it may seem effect of this article is to us and give no hope – and rselves there really isn't have confidence in. The ace struggles to overcome selfish instincts. ble is very realistic in its ent of human nature but at time doesn't present us peless picture. It tells us olution has to come from ind that change is possible an't bring it about s. ed the humility to accept is the only one who can s from ourselves.

# Distinctive city trees a mystery to the experts

TREES can be impressive because of their height, spread, leaves, blossom, shape or whatever. The most striking Canterbury trees meet none of these criteria as they, frankly, seem to have something seriously wrong with them.

You cannot miss them – an enormous swelling of the lower section of the main trunk is covered with unsightly bulbous growths. Experts don't agree on exactly what these trees are. Some, including staff at Kew Gardens, insist they are Oriental plane trees (*Platanus orientalis*) whilst others, including the Natural History Museum Identification Service, see them as a clone of the London plane (*Platanus x hispanica*).

We have five large specimens – you can see them in Westgate Gardens, in the cathedral precincts, by the castle, behind Furley Page solicitors (partly visible from Beer Cart Lane), and in Old Dover Road. There may be others – do let us know if you spot any.

## Way we were

David Lewis  
Canterbury  
Historical and  
Archaeological  
Society

What the Canterbury five have in common seems to be a viral infection that produces the distorted growth. This has given them (and others like them elsewhere) the common name of Baobab plane, named after trees in Africa with the same general shape. The Westgate Garden tree is massive – a circular metal seat fixed round the base in the early 1900s has apparently been subsumed into the trunk and is now invisible.

How come we have five versions of the same tree, all showing signs of the same viral infection? One likely source is the Victorian

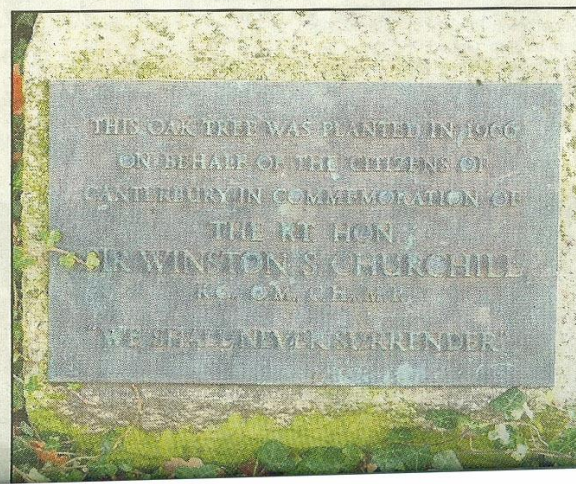


**STRIKING:** The mighty plane tree in Westgate Gardens impresses all those who come to look at it

nurseryman William Masters, who ran his Exotic Nursery on what is now Pound Lane car park, and another nursery on the Sturry Road.

His extensive catalogue certainly included several varieties of plane trees, including what he called *Platanus orientalis*. Source of the infection is hard to judge. The Pound Lane site included a water spring with memorable properties. Apart from curing asthmas, coughs, catarrh, consumption, gout, scurvy, vapours, "all sorts of stoppages", scabs and itch, it had an oily surface, felt "very fat" between the fingers, smelt like sulphur, tasted "masculine and austere", and coloured the tongue black. One spoonful apparently had the effect of a "moderate dose of opium".

Or maybe William grew his plane trees on the Sturry Road site. This was constructed over settling tanks (known to overflow) which received



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## Fostering

You can change the future



The Bible is very realistic in its assessment of human nature but at the same time doesn't present us with a hopeless picture. It tells us that the solution has to come from outside and that change is possible but we can't bring it about ourselves.

We need the humility to accept that God is the only one who can rescue us from ourselves.

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Or maybe William grew his plane trees on the Sturry Road site. This was constructed over settling tanks (known to overflow) which received sewage from 3,000 soldiers in the Canterbury barracks, some no doubt with bowel disorders contracted abroad.

While on trees, let me draw your attention to a few others that shed light on the city's past. William Harvey (1578-1657), who showed that blood circulates round the human body, was educated at King's School. A Latin inscription, and two lime trees planted in November 1978 on the Green Court to mark the 400th anniversary of his birth, remind us of his Canterbury days. The trees were planted by representatives of the Royal College of Physicians and the Harveian Society.

Secondly, General Gordon, who died in 1885 defending Khartoum, lived at Broome Park in Barham between 1911 and 1916. He is remembered by a plaque and silver lime planted in the city cemetery.

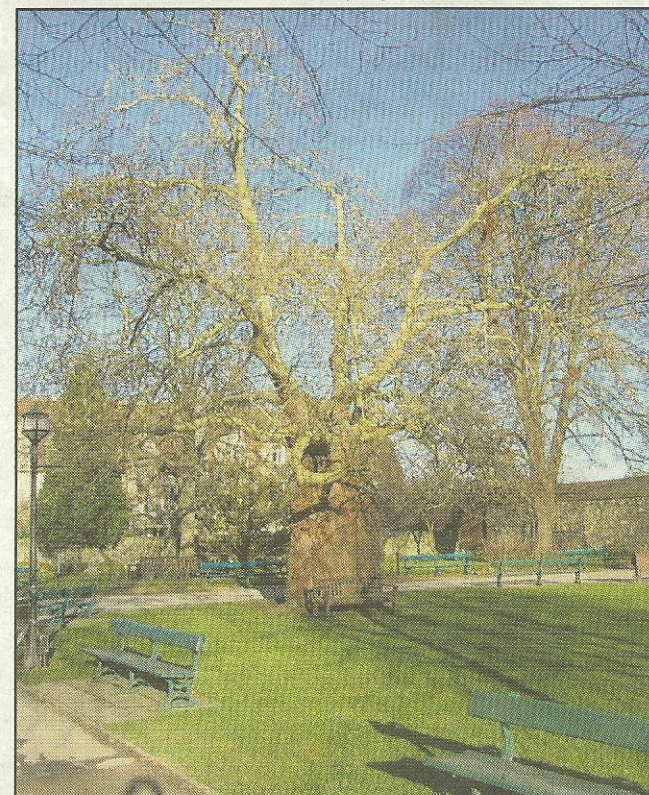
Last, and certainly not least, Winston Churchill is commemorated in a plaque by a spreading oak tree near Rheims Way. It reminds us that 'We shall never surrender'.

**MARKING THE GREAT WAR**

Are you part of a group that is researching First World War history or planning an event for the anniversary? Tell us at [canterburytimes.co.uk/ww1](http://canterburytimes.co.uk/ww1)



**GREAT MAN REMEMBERED:** The plaque for Sir Winston Churchill



**VENERABLE GROWTH:** The plane tree in the cathedral precincts



## Fostering

### You can change the future

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[www.kentfostering.co.uk](http://www.kentfostering.co.uk)  
**0845 330 2968**

#### Information Events

**Tuesday 18 March, 7pm-8.30pm**

Thanington Resource Centre, Thanington Road, Canterbury CT1 3XE

**Wednesday 23 April, 7pm-8.30pm**

Angel Centre, Angel Lane, Tonbridge TN9 1SF

**Saturday 17 May, 10:30am**

Lenham Community Centre, Groom Way, Lenham ME17 2QT

**Presentations begin at start time**

Quote 1403TS

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