**A history of the Downs avenues**

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**1 Introduction**

The avenues on the Downs have not previously been considered in historical detail. There are in existence 21 different avenues with a combined distance of 9400 metres, and 890 trees of 21 species. There are four main sources of information about their past. There are photographs, but very few of them, and it usually impossible to judge the species. There are artists pictures which are often more concerned with creating a dramatic effect that accurate recording. There are maps, some of which ignore trees altogether, and some are imprecise. And there are the existing trees themselves whose girths give a reasonable idea of their probable planting date.

Avenues were first developed in France as a major decorative feature of large parks and estates. The idea of having trees in towns was impractical, but 17c urban expansion led in Paris, London and Bristol to the notion of the large square, with a grassed central area and surrounded by trees. The first in Bristol was Queens Square which is shown in Millerd’s map of 1673 surrounded by trees, as it is still today. The square had been built outside the city walls on a former rubbish dump close to high tide level, and became, until the 1831 riots, the most desirable address in the city. The only other site to have trees was College Green, outside the cathedral. This triangle of land had a double avenue along its central axis and single avenue on all three sides. It was elevated above the roadway. These two sites were for many years the only urban tree sites in the city.

The great estates around the city- Kings Weston, Blaise, Ashton Court, Sneyd Park, all adopted the fashion for having sweeping avenues of trees, and the oldest Common Lime avenue in Bristol is the double avenue on the approach to Kings Weston house that almost certainly dates from 1720 when the house was built. Redland Court also had a famous avenue approaching it and this has survived. Early pictures of these houses emphasise the importance of long avenues as part of their estate design. Elm trees and Lime trees were the two species most favoured. The Common Lime, a natural hybrid between two native species, the Large-leaved and the Small-leaved, was, and is still, notorious for producing masses of epicormic shoots. Nurseries discovered that these readily root and make saleable whips within three years. Limes have the advantage that they can readily be pruned and shaped, recover rapidly from being pollarded, and are very long lived, and slow growing in maturity.

Common Elms are similarly adaptable as they make root suckers that are also grow rapidly. They are less adaptable to management, but are a magnificent shape and size in maturity. It is probable that all early avenues were of these two species.

The Bristol Turnpike Trust was set up in 1727 by Act of Parliament, and grew to be the largest in the country responsible for 180 miles of road. It set up toll houses at all the main entrances to Bristol, and a complex charging system. This was inevitably unpopular, and many histories note turnpike houses being attacked by rioters. The group most affected was the coalminers of Kingswood, whose loaded coal waggons travelled down Two Mile Hill at minimum cost, and returned empty. The presence of cheap coal was a key to the rise of the Bristol brass, glass and clay pipe industries which were traded with colonists for sugar in the 17c.

The trustees of Turnpike Trusts used the money raised to improve road surfaces, build new roads, and install milestones which, today, are often the main evidence of a former toll road. The increase in road speeds were steady, and when John Loudon Macadam became director of the Bristol Trust in 1815 his road building system created a surface good enough to enable a stage coach to achieve an average speed of 12 miles an hour, bringing down the journey time to London from four days to ten hours.

It is probable that the two main toll roads across the Downs were lined with trees by the Turnpike Trustees partly as a guide. The Downs was a wide-open space, covered by a variety of tracks, pitted with deep quarries, grazed by up to 2000 sheep, and a part of the drove road system for moving livestock to market. The Downs was also crossed by the remnants of the Roman road, still a right of way, and a private road to the Ostrich Inn. In the dark, in snow, in fog it would have been easy to become lost, and an avenue was a simple guide across the unfenced surface. The earliest map, in 1746, shows both the modern Stoke Road and Westbury Road lined with trees, and it also shows a third road with an avenue. This was the toll road from Bristol that skirted Brandon Hill, came up Constitution Hill, through Clifton, and across the common land round the Clifton Camp to cross the Downs on a direct route to the top of Stoke Hill. This road still has its avenue, but it ceased to be used for traffic at some point in the 18th century. The toll road was diverted along the line of Ladies Mile to join the Stoke Road at what is now the Water Tower.

**2 Species structure of the avenues in 2017.**

Four species at present dominate the avenues. **Small-leaved Limes** make up 31% of the total, and there was originally a substantial planting c 1980 to replace the Huntingdon Elms that were killed by DED. Some of these early trees have grown very well, and achieved girths of up to 240cm, an annual growth rate of 6cm pa. This is greatly in excess of the normal assumption that trees grow at 2.5cm pa, and lime trees normally at a slower rate. It is clear that this rule is probably appropriate for trees that are a century old, but that young trees can grow much faster. There has been a continuing policy of filling gaps wherever they occur with Small-leaf Limes. They are the main species on Ladies Mile, Circular Road, Downleaze, Roman Road and Upper Belgrave Road.

**Common Beech**, including 25 Copper beech trees, make up 25% of the total. Young Beech trees planted c1980 are the main species of the Ash Wood Avenue, and the Old Toll Road, and the Promenade has Beech trees dating back to the 1930s, but many of the trees are c 1950 or later.

**Horse Chestnuts** form 15% of the total. This includes some 20 Red Chestnuts, which for the most part have not grown well, and probably date back to c 1930. Chestnuts dominate Saville Road and Westbury Park road, and the oldest trees were recorded first in 1900, but there are a substantial number of younger trees that have been put in successively as replacements, some as recently as 2000. That was before the Chestnut Leaf Miner Moth reached this country (2005) and because of the way they damage the leaves Indian Chestnuts are usually now planted as replacements.

**Common Lime** forms 14% of the total. This species is no longer used because of the twin problems of clearing epicormic growth annually, and the sticky excretion of the aphid that infests them in mid-summer. They form a large proportion of the trees on Westbury Road, Stoke Road, and the Zoo avenue, but there are very large old trees, with girths over three metres, on several other avenues, and these may be the remnant of a former avenue. The trees around Clifton College were planted in 1862, and they have girths lying between 280 and 330 cm. That suggests a growth rate of around 2.0cm pa. But they were severely pollarded twice, in 1920 and 1950, so that maiden trees would have a rather faster growth rate. There are twelve trees that are part of avenues that have girth of over three metres, and hence may well date back to the middle of the 19century.

The remaining 15% of the trees in the avenues are made up of 24 species, which I will comment on briefly in alphabetical order.

**Ash** trees occur in seven avenues, and four of them have girths of over three metres, implying an age of over a century, and the possibility that they formed part of previous avenue. One is a massive stump on the Westbury Road, only just alive, but similar in size to a number of veteran Ash trees scattered across the Downs. It is not clear how these trees were able to become established when 2000 sheep were grazing the Downs.

**Black Walnut.** A North American tree, three of which are part of the Old Toll Road. Their size implies they were planted at some point before the second world war.

**Elms.** There is the solitary last Huntingdon Elm at the southern end of Ladies Mile, and a survivor Wych Elm a few metres north of it. There is a strange small elm close to the junction of Ladies Mile and Circular Road, and a single young Resistant Elm is part of the Westbury Park Road avenue. This is a species originating in America believed to be resistant to DED of which five were planted on Clifton Green in c 1980. They have not done well, but the species has been planted at several other sites in Bristol. And there are a number of elm suckers, some probably Common Elm, and some probably Wych Elm, which are about forty years old, have resisted outbreaks of DED, and are all set to become major trees.

**Field Maple.** A single tree is part of the Clifton Down avenue on Clifton green.

**Hawthorn.** A single tree at the top of Ladies Mile looks as if it was a sort of remnant at the end of the Huntingdon Elm avenue, and it was left.

**Holm Oak.** A very old double trunk Holm Oak dominate the corner of Circular road by the Peregrine Watch Point, and leaves no room for a new tree to be planted beside it.

**Hornbeam.** There are six Hornbeams planted in five avenues, and they rather look as if they were planted accidentally and should have been beeches. The one on Clifton Down by Proctors Fountain is spectacular.

**Hungarian Oak.** 14 were planted in 2016 to fill gaps in Saville Road and Upper Parrys Lane. This species is, arguably, in maturity the most magnificent of all the oaks. They are the only ones in Bristol.

**Indian Horse Chestnut.** Ten were planted in 2016 on Westbury Park Road to replace Horse Chestnuts that had died.

**Large-leaf Lime.** There are at least 21 of these. Some form part of the replacements for the Elms, especially on Ladies Mile, and the distinction between them and the small-leaf Limes has yet to be established with certainty. But they also form the avenue along Westbury Park path, where there are eight trees with girths between 300cm and 470cm, and they are probably the oldest trees on the Downs, though they do not appear on any maps. There are also two of a similar size on Westbury Road.

**Norway Maple.** Fourteen of these were planted as part of four avenues, probably as infills, in c 1960. They grow rapidly.

**Oak.** A well grown Common Oak forms part of the Circular Road avenue.

**Plane.** Three well grown young trees can be found in three avenues, all presumably planted as reliably fast-growing trees to fill a gap.

**Silver Birch.** There are three examples of this inappropriate species being planted in a gap.

**Silver Lime.** There are nine trees planted in Ladies Mile. They have grown faster and with a better shape than the Small-leaf Limes, and it is perhaps a pity there were not more of them.

**Silver Maple.** There are three examples of this attractive fast-growing tree planted as replacements in the last forty years.

**Sycamore.** There are five examples, two variegated, one a Purple Sycamore, and two normal.

**Tree of Heaven**. There is one young tree on Clifton Down avenue on Clifton green.

**Tulip Tree**. Three were planted on Clay Pit Road in 2017.

**Whitebeam.** Four are planted on Westbury Road in front of a 1960s development, presumably put in because the original trees of the avenue were removed during construction.

**Yew.** A single tree is effectively part of the Circular Road avenue, though clearly planted itself.

**3 A note on growth rates.**

Avenues are formal constructions, and quite often it is possible to discover precise evidence of the date when they were planted. There are a number of memorial trees with dedications on the Downs and I summarise the evidence about growth rates that they provide. Essentially all trees have to increase in girth every year, and the normal rate over long periods of time is 2.5cm a year, which implies a growth ring of 4mm a year. Young trees clearly grow faster than this, and the rate will be controlled by weather conditions, soil fertility, competition with other trees, and the degree of management, especially pollarding. Different species also have different growth rates.

**4 The history of each avenue.**

**1 The Old Toll Road**

This road was the original toll road from the Clifton Turnpike gate, at the top of what is now Bridge Valley Road, to the Old Halt at the top of Stoke Hill. The road went on to Shirehampton. The road was part of the system of 180 miles of Turnpike roads established by the Bristol Turnpike Trust Act of 1727.

The Hammersley map of 1746 records an avenue along its length across the Downs, which still exists today despite the fact that the road ceased to be used at some point in the 18th century. The present avenue is 800m long. It has 67 Beech trees of which 25 are Copper, which are randomly distributed. They majority were planted c 1980, though four were replacements in about 2000, with girths of around 100cm. In addition, there are ten young Beech trees planted in 2016. The site is very exposed, and the Beeches have a rather stunted appearance, a contrast with tall thin Beech trees along the Promenade. The Beeches were all planted as replacements for the Huntingdon Elms that formed the avenue from 1880, but were killed by DED in c 1976.

There are five other species in the avenue. The oldest is a veteran Ash tree, which blew over in 2017, and may well have been in existence before the Huntingdon Elms were planted, and thus Ashes may have formed the avenue a century earlier. There are two Common Limes, both with branches sweeping to the ground and rooting, which are probably a century old, and are roughly the same date as the Huntingdon Elms. There are three Black Walnuts, a rare N American species of similar date. Three Norway Maples were probably planted in error in 1980, as were two Variegated Sycamores and a Purple Sycamore. There are several areas of scrub developing which need clearing.

**2 Stoke Road avenue.**

This avenue appears in the Hammersley map of 1746. Today it is a mix of 22 Common Limes and 21 Horse Chestnuts, and three Red Chestnuts. The oldest tree is a Common Lime with a girth of 360cm, implying a possible planting date of c 1860, and the average girth of both Limes and Chestnuts is 200cm, suggesting that most of the present trees date from c1930. Two Silver Maples are replacements dating from c 1970, and two Small-leaf Limes were planted in c 2000, and another eight planted in 2016. Just by the café there is a veteran Ash, not on the planted line, with a girth of 310cm implying a planting date of c 1900. The avenue is interrupted on the north side by the Water Reservoir, which is screened by Holm Oaks. Several of these have recently been removed and some are multi-trunked, but they have girths of up to 400cm, implying an origin around 1850, when the site was constructed. James Malcolm, a Londoner visiting Bristol in 1807, describing a visit to Kings Weston, states that this road was then shaded by Elms.

**3 Westbury Road avenue.** This avenue stretches for 1400 metres, and is probably the longest avenue in Bristol. There are 82 Common Limes and 42 Chestnuts, 28 of them Red. It too features in the 1746 Hammersley map.

The oldest tree in the avenue is a Large-leafed Lime with a girth of 400cm, implying an age of 200 years. There is a splendid Ash stump which is all but dead, but with a girth of 350, and there are three Common Limes with girths of over 350cm, implying an origin in about 1860. The majority of the mature trees were clearly planted around 1900. There are six younger Common Limes planted in front of a block of flats just before the quarry, presumably replacing earlier trees when the flats were built, and they date from c 1980. Close to them, on the avenue line are four young Whitebeams that were probably around 2000. There are nine Small-leaf Limes, planted as infills, three in 2016 and the others c 2000. There are five young Norway Maples and one Silver Maple and the avenue still has 16 gaps in it.

**4, 5. The Promenade and Clifton Down North avenues.** Historically the first evidence is the Donne Map of 1826 showing a single line of trees running for a short distance down the western side of the turnpike road, known as Clifton Down, to the new Tollhouse, built in 1822. By 1855 the Ashmead map shows that the Promenade had been created, and lined with trees, and by 1900 the avenue was complete up to Clifton Camp, and a double line of trees had been added on the eastern side of Clifton Down. The 1945 aerial photo shows a number of trees missing from that part of the avenue, and it seems probable that many of these trees were part of the post war planting.

The present magnificent mature Beech avenue originated before the war, but has had to be added to frequently. The main avenue consists of 75 Beech trees and one Hornbeam, planted in error. The largest tree has a 350 cm girth. The wide variation of girths, down to 40cm, shows that there has been an almost continuous process of replanting to achieve the present avenue. The site is now sheltered by the adjoining woodland, and young trees have of necessity grown rapidly in height, so that the appearance is very different from the Toll Road. There are about 15 trees that are clearly pre-war, but the area did receive bomb damage, and there was a big replanting in c 1950 and about 15 trees date from then. Another 15 date from around 1980, 16 from the late 1990s, and 20 from the present century. Summer droughts have been the main reason for the failures of new planting. At present there is only one tree that looks sickly, though in 2017 a 60 year old tree suffered a collapse in a freak summer gust. The avenue finally peters out up the hill as the woodland around Clifton Camp begins to dominate.

**6 Clifton Down Road avenue.** The triangle of land housing Proctors Fountain is confusing because its NE side, effectively the bottom of Canygne Road, is named Clifton Down Road, as is its SE side. Before 1976 The NE side had an avenue of Elms and they have been replaced by five Small-leaf Limes and one younger Large-leaf Lime. The largest has a girth of 240cm, a formidable growth rate of six cm/pa. There was an avenue along the SE side, but there is no longer, though the huge Copper beech at ST 5659 7374, the largest Beech on the Downs, could well date from c 1860, and be the last remnant of that avenue.

**7 The Zoo avenue.**

This short avenue runs along northern edge of the old road that marked the boundary of the Downs. It is 150 metres long, and consists of nine Common Limes that probably date back to 1860 and five Small-leaved limes planted to fill gaps in more recent times. It runs from the Zoo entrance right along to Northcote Road, and originally it extended up to The Avenue. At the eastern end there are large gaps, and the fact that the Zoo rents this substantial section of the Downs for car parking has ensured that trees that were there in 1949 have been lost and not replaced. It is first mapped by Lavars in the 1887. The Common Limes have the same girths as those around Clifton College that were planted in 1862 when the school was founded.

**8 Ladies Mile Avenue.**

This avenue is 900 m long running from the top of Fountain Hill to Stoke Road. It now has 98 Small-leaf Limes, nine Silver Limes, two Large-leaf limes and five Common Limes, which are much older than the rest. The oldest has a girth of 310cm, and it has a great mass of epicormic shoots about half way up the trunk that makes it distinctive. It may have existed before the Huntingdon Elms were planted. The other Limes were all planted in the c 1980 as replacements for the Huntingdon Elms killed by DED and have girths of around 190 cm and a maximum growth rate of around 6 cm pa. There are nine younger trees planted c 2000 as replacements. The Silver Limes have grown taller and have a better candle-flame shape. The Large-leaf Limes also tend to be bigger than the Small-leaf. There are also two Norway Maples possibly planted in error and a Hawthorn. There is also a young Wych Elm that clearly survived the disease, with a girth of 150cm but is now looking sickly. At the southern end, close to Fountain Hill is the last remaining Huntingdon Elm with a girth of 250cm, implying an age of about 100 years.

Ladies Mile became the main turnpike road from Clifton at some point in the 18th century. It is clearly marked on the 1840 Tithe map, but the first indication of an avenue came in 1880, which was when the Huntingdon Elms were planted.

**9 Saville Road Avenue.**

Saville road was built in 1877 at the suggestion of Alderman Proctor. It has a fine avenue of 58 horse Chestnuts which are first mapped in 1900, and do not appear on the 1880 map. The largest of the trees has a girth of 510cm, and is the largest girthed tree on the Downs but there is evidence that Chestnuts grow at five cm/pa when young. Some of them are dying and to fill the gaps nine Hungarian Oaks were planted in 2016. There are also three old common limes and a young Plane tree. These are quite uncommon on the Downs, but are useful in that they grow faster than most other trees. Since 2005 Horse Chestnuts have been attacked by an alien micro-moth, the Chestnut Leaf Miner Moth. They lay eggs in the young leaves, and the grubs eat out the layer between the upper and lower leaf surface, pupate and then emerge as moths. As a result the leaves are covered in brown blotches, and by September it often looks as if the trees are dying. There is actually no evidence that the moth damages the tree, but it makes them so unattractive that, when Horse Chestnuts die, they are now being replaced by Indian Horse Chestnuts. The main difference is that these flower in June rather than April.

**10 Westbury Park Road Avenue.**

This is another Horse Chestnut avenue running for 500 metres. At its northern end there are trees on both sides of the road, but as the area narrows this is reduced to one side. There are now 21 Horse Chestnuts, nine of them are around 80 years old, planting date 1930; seven are around 50 years old, planted 1950, and four were planted since 1980. There are ten new Indian Chestnuts planted in 2016 as the older trees are beginning to die. Three other species form part of the avenue; a Hornbeam, a Silver Birch and a Resistant Elm. The earliest mapped evidence is in the 1894 OS map.

**11 Westbury Park path Avenue.**

This avenue lines the pedestrian path that runs from close to the zebra crossing of Westbury Road to Westbury Park Road. It is 300 m long and lined by twelve magnificent Large-leafed Limes. Their girths vary between 260cm and 470cm with an average of 340cm. There are four grand trees which could be 200 years old, and then nine trees younger trees that are probably 150 years old. Three Small-leaf Limes were planted in 2016 and there are a fine Ash, a Silver Birch and a Red Chestnut that also form part of the avenue. The earliest mapped evidence is from the 1894 OS map.

**12 Clay Pit Road Avenue.**

This 200 metre avenue on either side of Clay Pit Road was originally all horse Chestnuts, and was clearly planted at the same time as the Westbury Park Trees. There are now seven trees left. Four have girths of between 350 cm and 400 cm implying an origin before the second world war, and two trees from about 1950 and one planted in 2000. In 2017 three Tulip Trees were planted where Chestnuts had been felled, and there are still two gaps to be filled. The earliest mapped evidence comes from the 1894 OS map.

**13 Upper Parry’s Lane Avenue.**

This road is now a coach park, but it has an avenue of 17 Horse Chestnuts with girths lying between 310 cm and 190 cm, suggesting a post war planting. There is also one Red Chestnut and in 2016 six Hungarian Oaks were planted in gaps. The avenue is first mapped in 1894.

**14 Rockleaze and Downleaze Road avenue.**

Rockleaze and Downleaze were a magnificent Victorian development of semi-detached villas. Rockleaze was developed in the 1860s and Downleaze in the 1880s. The first map shows an avenue in 1894, and this was almost certainly the Huntingdon Elm avenue that was mature in 1946, and was killed by DED in the 1970s. The replacement trees are 35 Small-leaved Limes, with the occasional Large-leafed Lime, which tend to grow slightly faster. There are also two young Horse Chestnuts and a Plane Tree. There is one stump, and one new Small-leafed Lime planted in 2016.

The 1894 OS also records an Avenue down Ivywell Road, which no longer exists. Today there is a Horse Chestnut, and a post war Silver Maple, but there has been no attempt to recreate the rest of the avenue.

**15 Circular Road Avenue.**

Circular Road was built in 1872 at the instance of Alderman Proctor. The avenue has 62 Small-leaf Limes planted around 1980 and stretches for 700 metres from the junction with Ladies Mile round to the parish boundary of Clifton parish. The first map is the 1894 2nd edition of the OS, and records the Huntingdon Elms which were planted in the 1880s, which also finished at the parish boundary. It is possible that the Merchant Venturers, who own this section of the Downs, paid for the Elms, and the council, which owns Durdham Down, did not have the money to complete the avenue. Many of the elms had vanished by 1946, probably associated with the use of this area for storing tanks prior to D Day. The Small-leaved Limes mostly have girth of around 180cm but there are a number of smaller ones at the southern end which must have been planted later. The oldest tree in the avenue is a Common Lime with a girth of 380 cm, and this suggests that it was already in existence when the Huntingdon Elms were planted. There are several other species incorporated in the avenue. At the southern end there is a very small and atypical Wych Elm, a Sycamore and a Yew tree, and on the corner by the Peregrine Watch Point a vast old Holm Oak dominates the bend. There are two Silver Birches and five Ash trees, and on the western side of the road a fine Oak with a girth of 300cm that is certainly pre-war. There are a number of gaps, partly to accommodate the running track., and one or two heavily ivy-infested hawthorns.

**16 Roman Road Avenue.**

This short cut off is so named because the Via Julia, built AD 60, was destroyed when the Water Reservoir was built in 1845, but part of the modern road is close to the original line. It is just 100 metres long, and is lined with twelve Small-leaf Limes and five Horse Chestnuts. Three of the limes were planted in 2016, the rest in 1980 and one of the Chestnuts was planted in the past decade. These trees all replaced a line of Huntingdon Elms along the road planted c 1880.

**17 Upper Belgrave Road Avenue.**

This avenue extends for 500 metres from Blackboy roundabout all the way down to the junction with Worral Road. It is composed of 24 Small-leaf Limes and two Horse Chestnuts. Back in 1880 the Huntingdon Elms stretched all the way up the edge of the Downs from Pembroke Road to junction with Whiteladies Road, but the south eastern section now has just two rather isolated Small-leaf Lime trees. There is an intrusive mass of scrub that actually forces a pedestrian out on to the very busy road close to the Worral Road crossing, and it is time that the full avenue was reinstated, and the scrub cleared. One feature is that, unlike almost all the other avenues, the trees in this avenue are separate by 35 metres rather than 20 metres, and this somewhat reduces their effect as an avenue. The death of the Huntingdon Elms in this avenue took place gradually over a number of years, and the policy was to replace with Small-leaf Limes as they died. As a result the northern trees are older than the more southern ones.

**Clifton Green Avenue**s.

Clifton Green has three existing avenues lining its paths and roads, and one that has almost vanished, but in the past there have been at least three more that have now vanished. The paths and roads that cuts across the green are of great antiquity, originally clearly desire lines, some given status by avenue planting, others becoming roads rather than paths.

**18 Clifton Green 1**. The most obvious is the 100 metre Lime avenue that runs along the path from the top of the Mall towards the Church. At the start at the top of the Mall there is a Hornbeam, probably planted in error for a Beech, then five large Common Limes, the oldest with a girth 310cm, suggesting an age of well over a century, followed by recent planting of five Small-leaf Limes, planted since 2000. This avenue was s first mapped in 1880.

**19 Clifton Green 2**. Secondly there is a Beech avenue running alongside the path from the top of the Mall to the top of Canynge Road for 100 metres. There are five large Beeches with girths around 270 cm suggesting a pre-war planting date, and four much smaller trees planted this century. There are also three Small-leaf Limes, probably planted around 1990.

**20 Clifton Down South.** Thirdly there is a line of trees running up the hill alongside Clifton Down, the main road, from the roundabout for 170 metres as far as the junction with Canynge Road. Historically this was mapped in 1880 as a well laid out avenue along this important toll road, but it now has an interestingly diverse list of species. The tone is however clearly set by a magnificent Common Lime, now isolated close to the roundabout, but with a girth of 320 cm, implying a planting date prior to 1900, and suggesting that this was originally a Lime avenue. The other species are three post war Norway Maples, a Field Maple, an unusual species as it grows slowly and to no great height; there is a large old Beech, part of the Beech avenue and two small-leaf Limed, part of the Lime avenue. At the top is a young Tree of Heaven.

**21 The Ash Wood Avenue.** This is a Beech avenue, planted to replace dead Huntingdon Elms in 1980. It is first mapped as a new avenue in 1880, when the Huntingdon Elms were planted. It runs for 300 metres parallel to the boundary wall of the Downs. It is hidden from view bv the veteran trees of the Ash Wood, and has a total of ten Beech trees, rather widely spaced at 30 metres apart, so that there is little sense of their being an avenue. In places the Ash Wood is advancing to absorb it, and it peters out towards the west, with gaps, and a young Hornbeam and a Small-leaf lime tacked on.

**5 Lost avenues.**

There is also the remnant of an avenue on what I call the Suspension Bridge Path which runs along the edge of the playground. A map of 1880 shows an avenue on either side of this path all the way down from Clifton Down to Sion Hill, but all that remains are a line of eight substantial Sycamores, with a maximum girth of 340 cm, suggesting an origin at the start of the twentieth century. There is also a young Plane, a rare tree on the Downs, two Beeches and a recently planted Oak that is not happy at all.

There are at least three avenues that once existed but have vanished. A Donne map of 1828 shows a double avenue running along what is now Bridge Road, opposite Gloucester Row. Between 1828 and 1882 there was a double avenue running from N to S on the narrow plot of land opposite Christ Church. There is a large old Common Lime with massive epicormic shoots on the edge of Clifton Park that may be a remnant of this.

And there are four Beeches, the largest with a 380 cm girth, along the diagonal path running from the top of Camp Road to the junction with Observatory Road, though no map shows a proper avenue here.

The very first avenue on the Clifton Green was created by Sir William Draper after he was appointed the first Conservator of the Downs in 1766. He built a mansion called Manilla Hall, named after his conquest of the Philippine Islands in the Seven Years War. And he planted an avenue that ran from the Clifton Camp down to his front door. There are two drawings from 1789 by Samuel Grimm that showing a line of rather wind-blown young trees at the top of Sion Hill from two different angles. The avenue can also be seen in the panorama drawn by Thomas Robotham in 1830 probably using the Camera Obscura in the Observatory. Sheet one shows Manilla Hall and a line of trees running down towards it, parallel to Gloucester Row. These trees are also clear on the Ashmead on 1828. On the right of the picture there is a clump of trees, and in Sheet 2 shows four wind-swept trees looking very similar to those drawn from Sion Hill forty years earlier by Samuel Grimm. None of the existing trees is old enough to have been part of this avenue.

Sir William **was** an interesting man, who not only captured Manilla from Spain during the Seven Years War, though it was given back at the pace treaty, but also drew up the laws of cricket, which was played regularly on the Downs at the Sea Wall site. Quite how this was combined with horse racing on the same site is uncertain. He also commissioned a memorial to those who died in the Seven Years War, and another in praise of William Pitt, and housed these monuments in his garden. When Manilla Hall was demolished for development in the 1880s these were placed where they are today on the Green.