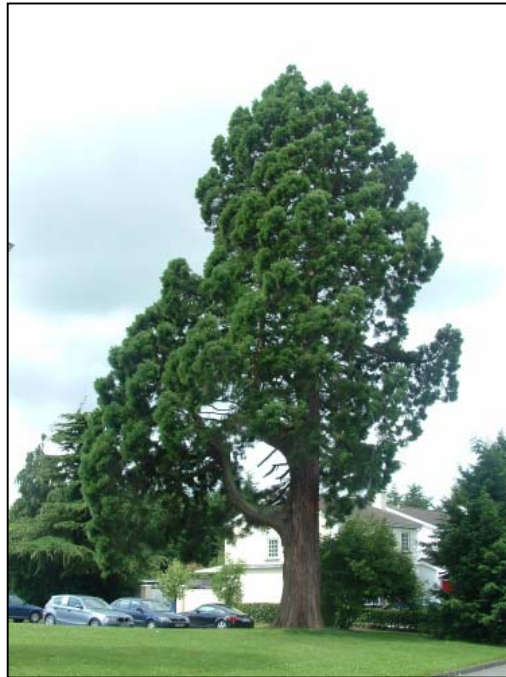


NAAS LOCAL HISTORY GROUP



CALIFORNIAN REDWOOD

Standing proudly on the green in the Paddocks Estate is a majestic tree that would grace the demesne of any stately house in Ireland. This redwood, known as a “Wellingtonia”, has been standing for over one hundred and fifty years and will stand for many more. The story of the tree is an interesting one and goes back to the eighteen hundreds when intrepid explorers were travelling around the world in search of exotic plant specimens. It was then fashionable for estates and big houses to plant trees and shrubs from the new world and beyond to grace their grounds and gardens. The redwood plants were brought back from the Sierra Nevada Mountains in America by an English botanist named William Lobb. The recognition and first description of the trees was published on Christmas Eve 1853 in *Gardener’s Chronicle England*.

The Paddocks tree would have been planted in the mid 1800’s when the landlord was Lord Carysfort and the holder John Doyle. There are in fact still two specimens in the estate. It is interesting to consider the significance of the name “Wellingtonia” which was given to the trees. They were named after the “Iron Duke” better know as the Duke of Wellington who had just died and who was born in Ireland. This type of Californian Redwood can grow to a height of fifty metres and with a trunk of up to fourteen metres. It is known for its great resistance to disease and can survive for thousands of years.

The oldest redwoods in California are thought to be at least three thousand years old. There is a suggestion that one particular collection of dead redwood stumps on an island in northern Canada may have been destroyed at the time of the Flood of Noah. So when we think of our heritage it is not only castles and towers that define our past but trees as well. It is paramount that we do our utmost to protect them for posterity.