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# Berwickshire News

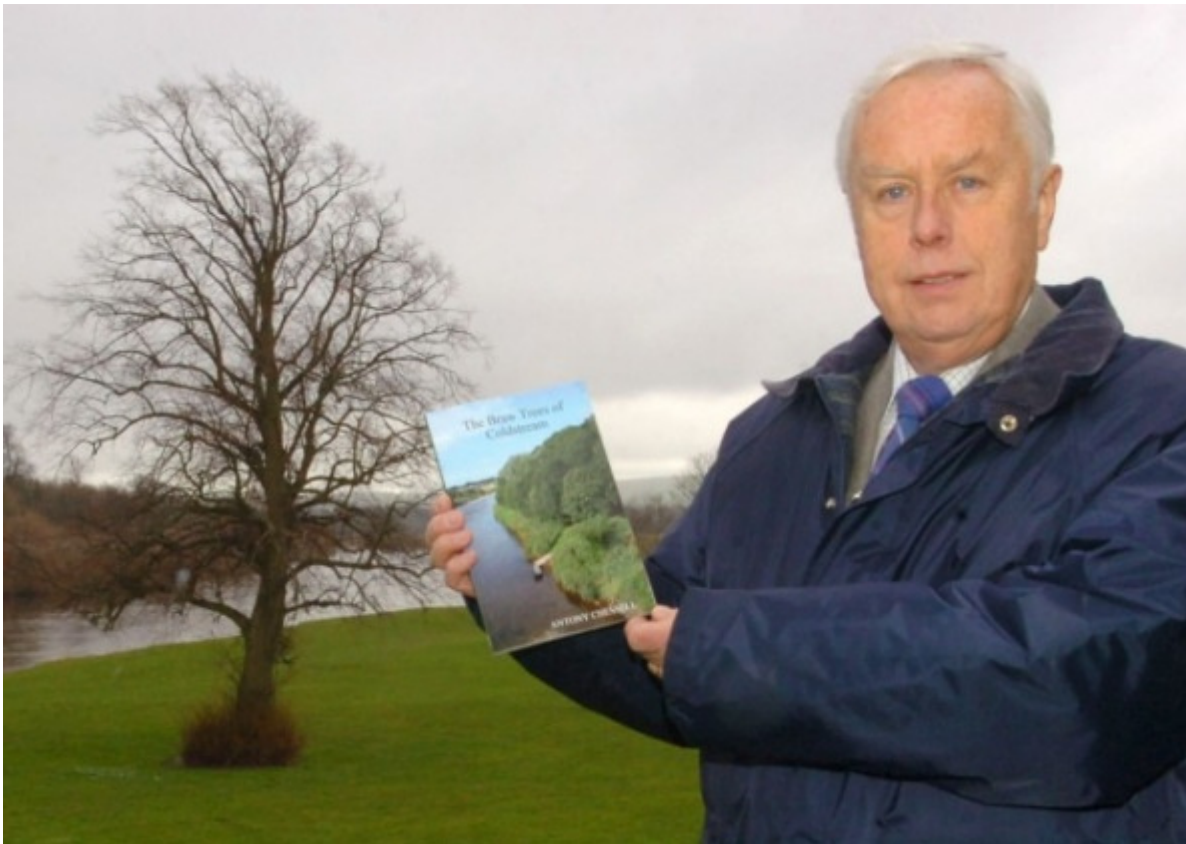
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## An ageless tale of Coldstream's braw trees

Tuesday 22 March 2011



Antony Chessell with book 'The Braw Trees of Coldstream'

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fascinated by his Coldstream surroundings Antony Chessell is now onto his second book about the area - this time focusing on the town's 'notable', 'veteran' and 'ancient' trees.

A Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, Antony moved to Coldstream six years ago and his interest in the town's wealth of different building styles led to his first book 'Coldstream Building Snippets: 'Cans, Quoins and Coursers'. The book describes many of the town's old buildings, the surrounding area and the visible building techniques that were used.

Now his second book 'The Braw Trees of Coldstream' provides the background for trees in and around the town and their setting within the Scottish Borders on account of their age, historical connections, location, or appearance. There is information on native and non-

native trees and on the usefulness of the selected species for ornamental or practical purposes.

"It is intended to be an 'easy read' and, above all, a book for 'potterers' like my 'Coldstream Building Snippets' for which it is really a companion volume." said Antony, who describes it as "a living version of a listed buildings inventory".

This compilation of local trees came about after Antony became involved in recording data for the Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Hunt in 2009 which was set up to identify and map the most special, notably interesting, ancient and veteran trees.

"It went on from there and I chose trees that appealed to me.

"There's the really well-known Flodden tree at the Hirsel (a sycamore planted to commemorate those who died at the Battle of Flodden in 1513), the lime tree on the Tweed Green, various beeches, oaks, sweet chestnut, crack willow, wellingtonia and cedars."

The Hirsel sycamore stands 28 metres tall and has a diameter of 207cm. Experts suggest that it is between 300 and 360 years old, although local folklore has it that this tree was planted to commemorate those who died in the Battle of Flodden in 1513.

From the yew trees that surround the 6m (20 feet) high obelisk put up in memory of William Home, Lord Dunglass, son of the 9th Earl, who was killed in the American Civil War in 1781, to the lone lime tree that stands on the Tweed Green at the site where many of the Scottish noblemen were buried after the Battle of Flodden, Antony has painstakingly unearthed information on a huge variety of worthy trees in the town.

Included in 'The Braw Trees of Coldstream' are the 105 trees given to Sir Alec Douglas Home for his 70th birthday by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to commemorate all the countries he visited while Foreign Secretary. Many of them are planted around the walled garden and across the estate.

Antony's book clearly appeals to the Douglas Home family and Sir Alec's daughter Lady Caroline Douglas-Home has written the foreword for the book.

"In writing his excellent 'Coldstream Snippets; Cans, Quoins and Courses' Antony Chessell wrote of a subject of fascination to me," said Lady Caroline Douglas Home.

"In 'The Braw Trees of Coldstream' he has hit on an even longer interest. That the proceeds from both books are going to the community centre completes a trio of reasons why I am delighted to be writing this foreword. My interest in trees was partly inherited but probably ignited mostly by living in a house in Birgham with a garden full of some definitely 'notable' trees.

"There was a very large wellingtonia, the bark of which meant it doubled as a punch bag, a venerable beech which was a wonderful anchor for swings; several enormous limes with skirts which rabbits climbed into and made burrows through; old oaks and elms which houses nesting barn owls and many, many more.

"I loved them all, whether with their spring growth meaning summer was round the corner, in full summer plumage showing what incredible varieties of green there are, or as magnificent 'skeletons' against autumn and winter skies. Whatever the season trees really are beautiful and worth studying. This book is a truly fascinating introduction to some of the trees in and around Coldstream, or wherever one is in the countryside.

"Antony has covered most aspects of them with professionalism, appreciation, feeling and readability. Follow him and discover them, and more, for yourself."

The book is priced £6.99 and yet again Antony has kindly donated the net proceeds to the Community Centre - his first book 'Coldstream Building Snippets: 'Cans, Quoins and Coursers' raising £365 for the centre and looks as if it is the first in what could well be a series of interesting the Coldstream area.

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'The Braw Trees of Coldstream' is available from Coldstream Crafts, Market Street, Coldstream; Homestead Gift Shop, The Hirsell; Coldstream Community Centre; and in due course will be available at other outlets in Coldstream.

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