



TreeStory

**A HISTORY OF LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
THROUGH ITS TREES**

SCHOOLS ACTIVITY BOOK

**OPEN
EYE
GALLERY**



Made possible with

**Heritage
Fund**

Background

We're inviting you to participate in creating a history of Liverpool City Region through its trees.

Back in late 2020, Open Eye Gallery and dot-art started inviting the public to create a history of Liverpool through its trees, using personal stories and photography.

Trees are the perfect vehicle through which to tell a story of the region – they share its resilience, strength and its diverse and fascinating story. In these times of global crisis, we all benefit from taking a step back and seeing our own experiences in a wider historical context. The city and its trees have survived war, disease and many other hardships; this pandemic is just the most recent.

We started by asking a broad cross section of people, from historians to tree professionals to family members, to share a story about a tree that was important to them. Eight of these were selected and photographer Andy Yates was commissioned to produce images of these important Liverpool trees. These photographs show trees from a few years old to over 1000 years old – so already we are starting to build a picture of the trees that have affected us and our city region as it was founded, has grown, thrived, declined and thrived again. We hope the project will also encourage us to engage with and be more aware of the trees and green spaces that enrich our lives.

You can find more tree stories here:
treestory.me

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Front cover image: Monkey Puzzle Tree by Wirral Hospitals' School student

ACROSTIC POEM

Acrostic Tree Poem: Choose a tree for example... a sycamore or any other tree you like and follow this template to write a poem!

In an acrostic poem, the first letter of each line spells a word. The first word is related to the subject of the poem

For example, for the line starting with S, you could write "Sunny sycamore"

Consider the story of the sycamore tree or any other tree you have chosen – consider how long the tree has been here. What has it witnessed?

Now have a go at writing an acrostic poem which could help a reader visualize your chosen tree and what this tree might mean to the Liverpool City Region... adapt the below to another chosen tree if needed... for example if you chose an oak instead...

O _____

A _____

K _____



S _____

Y _____

C _____

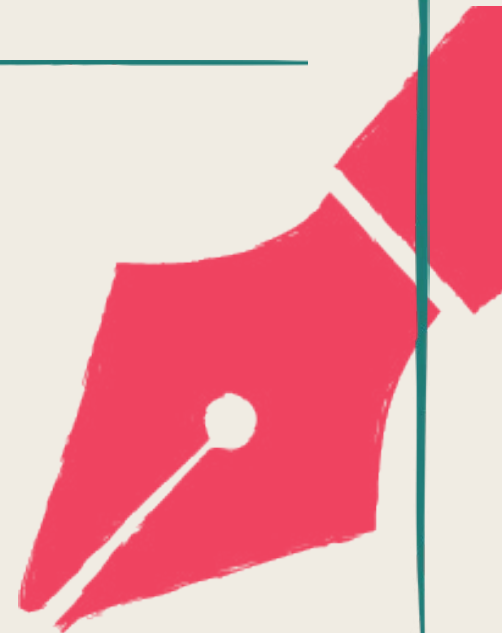
A _____

M _____

O _____

R _____

E _____



TREE MANIFESTO

Write a manifesto for our trees in the Liverpool City Region to protect our climate future

Manifesto from times of Crisis

We'd like to move between and beyond worlds of art, so we can address each other and a larger public.

- This is a historic moment, yet people are trying to be normal
- Let's envision what we want and transform vision into action
- We will assert our right to slow down - taking time for individual and collective wellbeing and the wellbeing of the planet
- We will transform our systems of living, working, extracting, consuming, ravaging, destroying, avoiding, denying
- We will strive to ensure that everyone - as well as our environment - is cared for and valued, and that we move towards a more equal and just society
- We want to act collectively, welcoming everyone's strengths, skill and perspectives
- Or just...

Binge!

Consume!

Avoid!

Deny!

Extract!

30 July 2020

Many of you will have heard about the different ways we can make noise about the negative impacts of climate change, and you may have followed the personal journeys of young activists such as Greta Thunberg

There are many ways to get your own voice heard, one way is by writing a manifesto. A manifesto is a written statement of the beliefs or aims of a person or group – often a governmental party. Yet, politicians are not the only ones who deserve to be heard – you do too!

Write a short manifesto outlining the rights of local trees and green spaces (for example, should they be protected from being cut down?) and your own aims and beliefs about the climate future. A manifesto asks the question, "What do you believe?"

In bullet point form, outline what you believe about the role of trees in the Liverpool City Region and your climate future. Consider your own well-being and that of future generations whilst writing your manifesto... On blank paper form 6-7 bullet points into a manifesto that can be shared with others!



Look at this example manifesto created by Creative Carbon Scotland ©

Aim to write around 6-7 bullet points in your own manifesto as well!

HAIKU POEM

Haiku Tree Poem: Choose a tree you find interesting or feel drawn to in the Liverpool City Region and use this template to write a poem!

A Haiku poem is a traditional Japanese poetic art form which consists of three lines

The first and last line of the Haiku poem has five syllables, and the middle line has seven syllables

There are seventeen syllables in total in a Haiku poem



AN EXAMPLE POEM HERE BY POET MICHAEL NEWMAN

Wind carrying seed (5 syllables)

sycamore helicopters- (7 syllables)

sister spinning wool. (5 syllables)

(Count the syllables whilst reading each line to see how it is done!)

Haiku poems usually focus on nature and in particular single moments in nature and can typically be read in one breath

Writing a Haiku poem can be like an act of mindfulness by focusing on a set subject and image. This can be beneficial for well-being and strengthening a relationship with the poetry subject – in this case, your special Liverpool City Region tree!

In the space below have a go at writing your tree-themed Haiku...



TREE VIGNETTE

Writing a tree vignette: Reading an image – telling a story...

Write a vignette on blank paper based on an image of a Liverpool City Region tree (this can be taken on a device or even just from memory):

In writing, a vignette is a short passage that uses imagery to describe a subject (in this case our tree) in greater detail, by using descriptive language... see T.S Eliot's example above...

To get started select one or more focal points of the image to focus on (for example, the branches at the bottom or top of a tree)

Keep in mind you are trying to help a reader visualise the tree if your image was somehow lost... Could your passage help describe the tree in its absence?

Remember in photography a vignette is an intentional effect to highlight certain aspects of an image, can you try and mimic this effect using only your imagination and words?



VIGNETTE EXAMPLES

Vignette is a brief story that focusses on one moment or event

Rhapsody on a Windy Night by T.S. Eliot

Every Street lamp that I pass
Beats like a fatalistic drum
The street lamp sputtered
The street lamp muttered

Example of a vignette story by T.S Eliot ©

FLASH FICTION

Flash fiction or micro-fiction is a short piece of writing that usually lives up to its name and shows the reader a strong “flash” of a story. Take your reader right to the centre of a scene

Select any tree in the Liverpool City Region and think about its heritage – its location, and key events that may have happened during the lifetime of your chosen tree such as World War II or even Covid-19

In Celtic mythology, many trees hold different meanings, research any folkloric links your tree may have. Perhaps you could give your flash piece a folk twist if you are stuck for ideas...



Tip: Start by jotting down ten words/images/feelings that crop up when you think of your chosen tree, then develop a story from there using the prompts above too...

[illegible]

TREE MEDITATION



Write a simple three-line meditation connected to a Liverpool City Region tree and an image of it:

Meditation is simply taking time to reflect on the moment. It can help you relax and release worries by focusing on a single object or mantra...

Try writing a meditation for others or even simply for yourself!



MEDITATION EXAMPLE

Line 1: Imagine you are sitting at the foot of a sycamore tree and its helicopter seeds fall down gently like worries falling away from you

Line 2: Picture yourself as a small bird flying over a big city and you come to a soft pause in your flight and rest upon the branches of some sycamore trees. You stop and close your eyes and soak up the peace

Line 3: Visualize the bird feeling held and secure and safe nestled between sycamore tree branches... now it feels safe and rested again it is free to fly away on its next adventure...

DIGITAL STORYTELLING

Create a 30-second digital story which captures the essence and history of any tree and think about what it may mean to you and the broader community in the Liverpool City Region

You can use a phone or other equipment – you may want to add texture and layers (just like a tree!) to your digital story by using a mix of media from video to audio or by incorporating images and or text into your story

Think intuitively, there are no hard and fast rules, this is your story to tell about your relationship with the tree, so do it your own way whether that is through a simple video clip, or something more multilayered



Themes to consider:

Be a tree detective: it is often said to create a story first you must learn about the main character... in this case, your chosen tree. Think about the tree's history, age and its cultural significance to the Liverpool City Region and the local area

Draw up a time map charting any interesting events that may have happened during the tree's lifetime locally. If the tree could tell us what it has witnessed over the years, what stories would it tell?

Consider the tree and its role, and think about the importance of public access to green space for your health and well-being...

Think about how the tree makes you feel... jot down the first three words that come to mind. Perhaps you might come back to visit the tree when you are older. What new stories could you tell each other?

Trees play a vital role in combating climate change and provide a safe habitat for many different species. Think about the tree in its past, present and future life. What might that overall life look like?

You may choose to focus on one or several of the suggested theme ideas for your digital story

FAVOURITE TREE

Trees are vital for the planet, they provide oxygen, store carbon, stabilise the soil and they give life to the world's wildlife. They also hold many personal memories to us from climbing them as a child to reminding us of our loved ones.

Do you have a favourite tree?

Why is it your favourite tree? Is it colourful, is it an interesting shape or do you like to climb it? Does it remind you of someone?

Photograph your favourite tree from far away, close up and a different angle (from below or from above).



FROM FAR AWAY

Photograph the tree from far away

Can you capture the whole tree in one image? Move back and forward until it fits into your camera screen.

Where is the tree located? Photographing it from far away helps you set the scene and capture the environment the tree is in.



FROM CLOSE UP

Photograph the tree from close up

Are there any interesting details or features of the tree? Does the bark have an unusual pattern, are the leaves an interesting colour or is there moss or fungi growing from it?

Get close to your tree and capture it's detail.

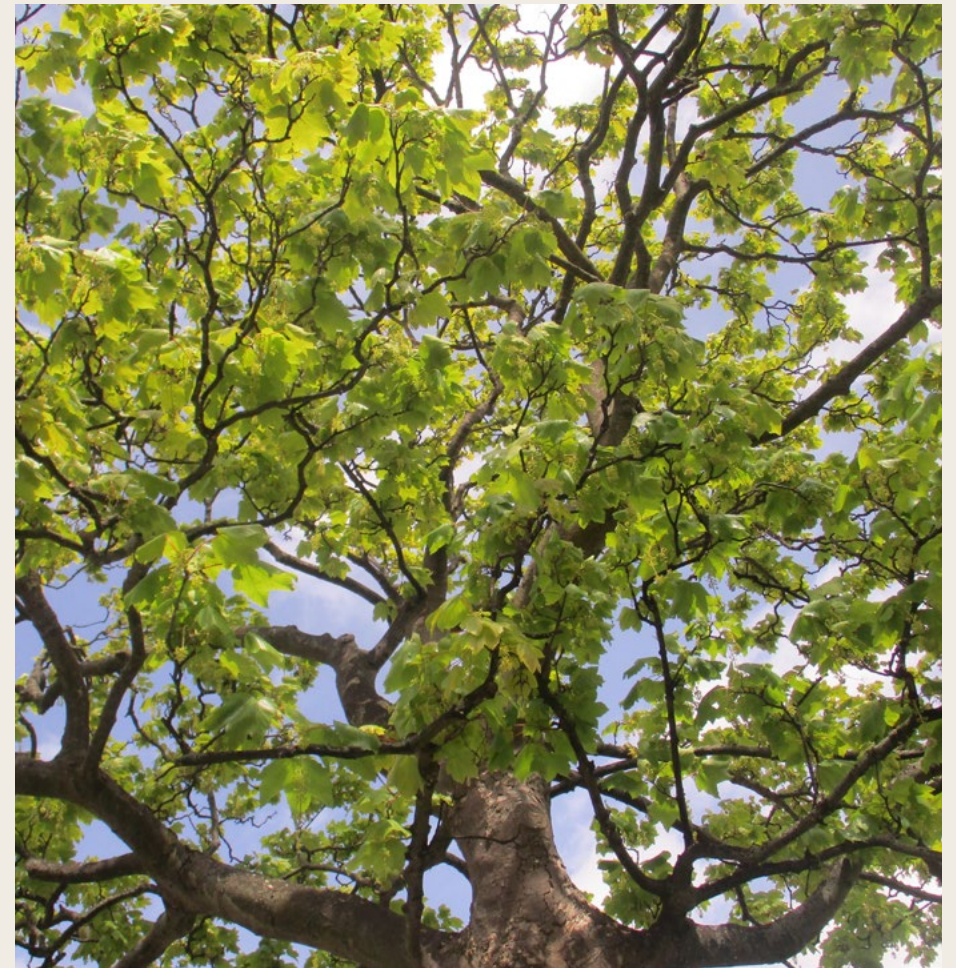


FROM BELOW OR ABOVE

Photograph the tree from above or below

Can you get above or below your favourite tree? Photograph it from different positions and find your trees best angle.

What attracts you to the tree? Is it the leaves or long branches? Use the sky as your background and photograph the leaves or branches and show the contrast between the colours.

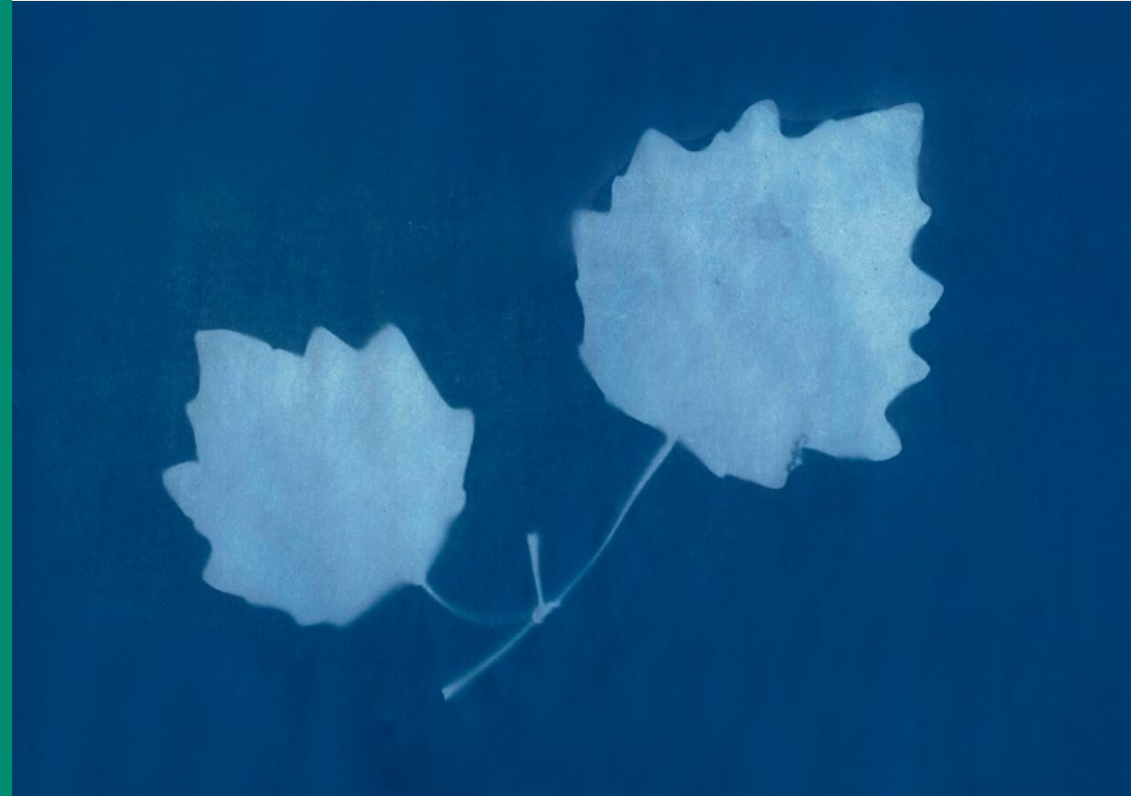


SOLAR PRINTING

This type of photography involves using a specially coated paper, covered in a light sensitive chemical, which exposes in sunlight from a light blue colour to a dark blue colour. This means when you place objects onto the paper, the light cannot get to these parts creating a negative image.

HOW TO GUIDE

1. Collect nature objects to use for your solar print. This could be leaves, flowers, weeds etc.
2. Create and arrange a composition of the objects collected from your nature walk and arrange on a sheet of Solar Paper.
3. Place the paper in direct sunlight for 4-5 minutes. If it's cloudy increase time to 10-20 minutes. You will see the paper changing colour to pale blue as it exposes.
4. Remove the objects and take the paper out of the sunlight.
5. Put the exposed sheet of paper in tap water and watch the image appear. After a couple of minutes remove the paper from the water and hang or lay flat to dry.



RECREATE AN OLD IMAGE



Does your school have any old photographs of trees in the school grounds?

Make a note of what you see in the image e.g who's in it? where was the picture taken? how was it taken? How does the tree look different?

Try to recreate the image

You can ask your classmates to model or you could cut out the old image and add to the new.



NATURE PHOTOWALK



What is nature to you? Is it trees, open space, water or animals.

Pick a place of your own choosing that you consider to be an example of nature.

Think about 'Who am I in relation to nature?' Explore subjects such as earth, sky, animals, plants and water and consider who you are within these spaces.

Go with whatever feels right and photograph your responses to your surroundings.

Look through your photographs and select 5 that best capture the space you have chosen to photograph.

SHARE YOUR STORIES



We would love to see and read your tree stories.

You can do this by visiting **treestory.me** and uploading your story to our TreeStory map.