

Requiem for a Tree: Boy, 16, Arrested After Felling of Famous Sycamore Gap Tree [C2]

L'abbattimento di questo albero di 300 anni dal Vallo di Adriano ha scosso la società inglese. Più che un atto di vandalismo su un'icona del paesaggio dell'Inghilterra settentrionale, il gesto è visto come un crimine che rivela la decadenza sociale del Paese.



A sixteen-year-old boy has been arrested on suspicion of causing criminal damage in connection with the [felling](#) of the three-hundred-year-old Sycamore Gap tree in the north of England. Officers arrested the teenager amid an [outpouring](#) of sadness over the destruction of the [landmark](#), which has been a [feature](#) of the site at Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland for hundreds of years. The boy is in custody and assisting officers with their [inquiries](#), Northumbria police said on Thursday. Locals and national park authorities said they were "struggling to see the logic" in the destruction of a sycamore which had long become "part of this area's DNA" and had gone through thousands of changes of seasons. The tree, believed to have been about three hundred years old, was made famous when it appeared in the 1991 film Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves, starring Kevin Costner. Police said they believed the [felling](#) had been a deliberate act of vandalism.

Superintendent Kevin Waring of Northumbria police said on Thursday: "This is a world-renowned [landmark](#) and the events of today have caused significant shock, sadness and anger throughout the local community and beyond. "An investigation was immediately launched following this vandalism, and this afternoon we have arrested one suspect in connection with our [inquiries](#). "Given our investigation remains at a very early stage, we are keeping an open mind. I am appealing to the public for information to assist us – if you have seen or heard anything suspicious that may be of interest to us, please let us know." Police officers and [park rangers](#) at the scene said they believed the tree had been [sliced skilfully](#) with a [sharp chainsaw](#) by someone who knew what they were doing. Locals said they heard nothing during the night [due to](#) high winds from Storm Agnes – and woke to find the tree [split](#) from its [stump](#). Andrew Poad, general manager at the National [Trust](#), said he was at a loss about who would have reason [to chop the tree down](#). He said: "We have ups and downs [with members of the public] but not to a degree anyone would do something like this. It's a reason better known to themselves." He added: "It's part of this area's DNA, that's what I'm struggling with. I can't see the logic in what's happened." Tony Gates, the chief executive of the Northumberland national park authority, said staff at the visitor centre had been in tears after arriving in the morning and finding the famous tree felled. He said: "Everyone's just in shock. It's one of the most iconic landscapes in the country. When we feel that sense of loss, how do we perpetuate the legacy and create a real sense of [meaningfulness](#)? "There have been lots of really good ideas from the community already and so we need to be open and hear those. Whatever happens next needs to be with the consent and [ownership](#) of everyone." Kimberly McGuinness, the police and crime commissioner for Northumberland, was also at the scene. Like many people in the area, she also had a personal connection to the tree as her wedding invitations had [feature](#)d an image of it. "I can't understand why anyone would do this. It's like stealing [joy](#)," she said. She was not the only one for whom it was considered more than just a tree. Many people paying a visit said they had a deep personal connection to it. Leanne Scudamore [got engaged](#) at the tree in 2016, the same year it was voted tree of the year in a Woodland [Trust](#) competition. She said: "It's a huge thing for us. I had loads of missed calls

and messages this morning, everyone is just so angry. It's really, really sad. They literally murdered one of Northumberland's [landmarks](#), I'm absolutely furious." "There are a lot of people in my situation with an emotional connection to it. It has a special place in our hearts. Apart from the emotional side, it's devastating for businesses, too, [who rely on](#) the tourism." The Twice [Brewed Inn](#), a stone's throw from the site, has offered a £1,500 bar [tab](#) to anyone with information that leads to the arrest and conviction of the person who carried out the offence. The pub's logo is an illustration of the tree and it had been just about possible to see the [landmark](#) from its windows. Michael West, a retired teacher who lives in one of the houses closest to where the tree had stood, said he wished something positive could come of it. "There are lots of highly skilled people in the area and artists [and the like](#). In Japan, when a tree falls down, they [stick](#) it in the ground. Maybe they could do that." The National [Trust](#) said it would be collecting [seeds](#) and taking cuttings from the tree. Poad said: "It's a sycamore so the [stump](#) could try to regrow but of course it won't be the same." Published in The Guardian on September 29, 2023. Reprinted with permission.

Glossary

- **inquiries** = indagini
- **park rangers** = guardiani del parco
- **sharp** = affilata
- **Brewed** = preparare, fermentare
- **split** = separare
- **stump** = tronco
- **skilfully** = abilmente
- **Inn** = locanda, osteria
- **chainsaw** = motosega
- **Trust** = fondazione
- **got engaged** = compromettersi
- **who rely on** = dipendere da
- **and the like** = e cose simili
- **felling** = abbattimento
- **to chop the tree down** = abbattere
- **outpouring** = sfogo
- **ownership** = approvazione
- **joy** = felicità
- **tab** = conto
- **landmark** = luogo storico
- **sliced** = tagliare
- **due to** = a causa
- **meaningfulness** = consapevolezza
- **stick** = conficcare
- **seeds** = semi
- **feature** = caratteristica