

Storm!

The devastating winds of January 25 tore down around 50 trees on the Faringdon House estate, and on the top of Folly Hill. More trees were so damaged that they will have to be felled.

One giant sycamore grazed the side of the Folly tower as it crashed to the ground, and another fell right across one of the footpaths. In the middle of the hilltop plantation, several trees had fallen together in a domino-effect.

Ironically, the disappearance of trees on the hill has actually opened up the view from the Folly Tower to that originally envisaged by Lord Berners.

In the garden behind Faringdon house an ancient yew tree was uprooted. In the park, one enormous tree toppled to the ground exposing a vast root structure and a crater eight feet deep. Another narrowly missed the boathouse as it fell by the lake. Amidst chaos was beauty, for one tree collapsed amid a dazzling display of early snow-drops

A number of Scots pine, larch and fir trees were snapped off like mere twigs, some six feet above ground level. Huge limbs from mature chestnut trees littered the ground alongside the Lechlade Road.

Clearing up the debris will probably not be completed until the spring. Estate manager Chris France is already making plans for a re-planting programme, which he hopes may attract grants. A forthcoming meeting of the newly-formed Friends of the Folly will also be discussing re-planting on Folly Hill.

The devastation caused by the January gale is something not seen for generations at Faringdon House, for it escaped even the hurricane of October, 1987.



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