

Media Release: Trees planted at Lydiard Park to honour Second World War heroes

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Trees planted at Lydiard Park to honour Second World War heroes

A lasting tribute to the sacrifices made during the Second World War will be unveiled at Lydiard Park this weekend.

Eighty oak trees are being planted as symbols of strength, resilience and longevity to mark the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

Current and future visitors to Lydiard Park will be able to read about the country park's role in the Second World War on a specially designed display board. It was requisitioned as an American station hospital for the 101st Airborne Division, treating D-Day casualties. Lydiard Park later became a Prisoner of War hospital for up to 200 Germans and was also used by the Great Western Railway Home Guard for training.

The trees are being planted in a classical labyrinth format, with a circle of continuous concentric paths, 90 metres in diameter, bordered by eighty green and red oak trees.

Funded through the Government's Trees for Climate initiative, the trees have been supplied by the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust which will also oversee the planting this week with the help of local volunteers and community groups.

The 80 Oaks Labyrinth, located at the north side of Lydiard Park adjacent to Hook Woods, will be open to the public from this Sunday (16 Nov).

Last week, the Environment Secretary, Emma Reynolds, and Minister for Nature, Mary Creagh, visited the Swindon Borough Council-owned park to plant one of the oak trees.

Councillor Marina Strinkovsky, Cabinet Member for Placemaking and Planning, who joined the Government ministers, said: "The new 80 Oaks Labyrinth is a fitting tribute to the important role that Lydiard Park played during the Second World War.

"It is a poignant way to mark the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, creating a tranquil space in nature where present and future visitors to Lydiard Park can reflect on the service and sacrifices the Armed Forces made on our behalf."

Councillor Emma Bushell, Swindon Borough Council's Deputy Leader and Ambassador for the Council's Greener Swindon mission, said: "Lydiard Park provides a perfect, peaceful setting for the 80 Oaks Labyrinth and I am sure it will be appreciated by the thousands of families and visitors who flock to Lydiard Park throughout the year.

"Our green spaces across the Borough are so important and improving them with new tree planting is great news for the environment and supports our mission to build a greener Swindon."

Becki Mckinlay, Director of Engagement and Fundraising at Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, said: "We are honoured to have been involved in the partnership that has created this remarkable memorial at Lydiard Park.

"The 80 Oaks Labyrinth is a beautiful way to recognise the immense sacrifices of the men and women who served during the Second World War.

"Trees are a living, lasting tribute, and this project, supported by the Trees for Climate initiative and the dedication of our community planting groups, creates space for residents to connect with nature whilst taking time to remember, and helping to build a greener Swindon."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

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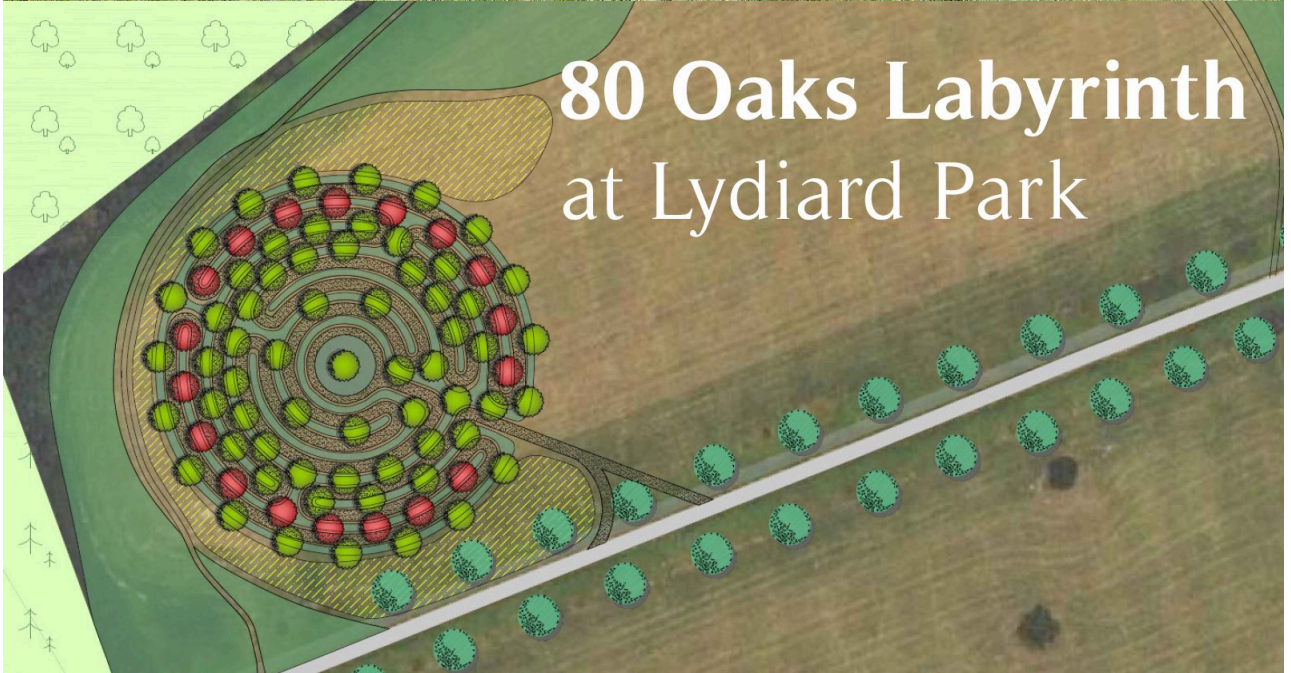
Event invite: The Council is hosting a small unveiling event, where the final tree will be planted, on Saturday, 15 November at 10am. If any media are interested in attending, please email cmountford@swindon.gov.uk by 4pm on Thursday, 13 November. Please do not publicise this event beforehand.

Images:

Picture 1: Environment Secretary, Emma Reynolds (pictured centre) and Minister for Nature, Mary Creagh (pictured right) planting a tree with Councillor Marina Strinkovsky, Cabinet Member for Placemaking and Planning (picture left) - please credit First Avenue Photography

Picture 2: Design of the 80 oaks labyrinth

Picture 3: Artist map of Lydiard Park





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