5. Follow the path to the right between the two lakes and then carry on to cross Marshal’s Lake Bridge. After the bridge turn right and follow the path, bearing right over a second bridge. Where the path divides, take the right fork. Pause at the bottom of the Sunken Track.

High winds are one of the biggest hazards in tree collections. Falling trees and debris kill people, although fortunately 1987’s Great Storm was mostly overnight. Forestry England shuts Bedgebury if the wind reaches a certain speed. It’s a big decision to make, but it keeps visitors and staff safe.

6. Go up the Sunken Track and turn left onto the path known colloquially as ‘Dove Ridge’. Find the fallen tree off to the left near a picnic table.

The well-loved feature in front of you was a victim of the 1987 storm. Generations of children have played on this fallen tree since it crashed to the ground in 1987. Sometimes, where it’s safe, we leave fallen timber as a play feature and as a habitat for wildlife.

7. Find the multi-stemmed sequoia on the left-hand side of ‘Dove Ridge’ immediately opposite a main path junction. One of the three trunks has been reduced so you can only see two clearly now.

Can you spot the original stump from which these three trunks are growing? These redwoods re-grew after the original tree fell because of the very high wind speeds along this ridge in 1987. Oddly, not all the redwoods along this path suffered a similar fate – the ones behind you somehow survived the storm. We don’t know why!

8. Turn right onto a path sloping gently downhill to head back towards the Visitor Centre lake. Turn sharp right at the bottom and walk towards the Redwood Glade.

The US Forest Service took pity on Bedgebury after the Great Storm. Bedgebury lost so many redwoods that the US Forest Service sent some young replacements. You can see these to your left. These kind gifts are growing well, already forming an impressive ‘tunnel’ of trees that leads to the more established trees further into the Redwood Glade.

From here, you can now choose to explore further in to the Pinetum or retrace your steps along the path back to the Visitor Centre.

We hope you enjoyed our “Great Storm” walking trail. Why not head to the Bedgebury Café now for a hot drink and a delicious slice of cake!
The Legacy of the Great Storm of 1987

The Great Storm of 1987 was an act of nature that changed Bedgebury’s landscape forever and still influences planning today. Follow this trail to discover how.

Where to start the trail

1. As you enter the Pinetum from the car park, turn left at the first junction above the lake, and walk away from the Visitor Centre. Follow the path downhill, then round to the right and continue straight ahead for 80m. From the bench on the right, look across the lake to the Visitor Centre.

Why are most of the trees behind the Visitor Centre the same height?

They all date from 1987! The Great Storm blew over nearly all the trees on that slope. There is a silver lining though: the chestnut regrowth is now coppiced regularly to feed the Visitor Centre’s woodchip boiler.

2. Look at the spruce to the left of the path after the zig zag, just behind the picnic bench. It is a Farrer’s spruce Picea farreri (in this case a variety from Burma, thus the black label states Burman spruce) and it has wonderful purple cones in spring.

The 1987 storm blew over the only Farrer’s spruce in the UK. Why was this a blessing?

It made people produce new specimens of this endangered species, by grafting material from the fallen tree. Bedgebury nurtured the youngster in front of you and reared the replacement for the original tree at Exbury Gardens.

3. In Dallimore Valley, just past the ‘Botanic collections - Their role in society’ board, head towards the first open area of young trees planted in cages, on the left-hand side of the path.

The 1987 storm made Bedgebury mix its trees up.

Bedgebury’s planting schemes used to place trees of the same type together. However, this increased the risk of losing all the trees in one big blow or to disease. Now Bedgebury’s trees are planted together with others from the same geographical area, not the same species.

4. Continue along this path, passing Reflection Lake on your right. Look to the left of the path, just before the right turn into the path that runs between the two lakes.

The storm also taught Bedgebury where best to plant some trees.

Lessons were learned from the Great Storm when the slope to your left was planted. The 1987 storm demonstrated that this area gets battered by south westerly winds, so when this ex-agricultural land was planted, Bedgebury included big Norway spruces (more commonly used as Christmas trees) at the top of the slope, to act as a windbreak to protect the rest of the trees.