# Two men convicted for deliberate felling of iconic Sycamore Gap tree in Northumberland



The destruction of the iconic Sycamore Gap tree has stirred deep sentiments across the UK, becoming not just a crime incident but a national tragedy. Situated next to Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland, this beloved sycamore, featured in the 1991 film **Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves**, symbolised both natural beauty and cultural heritage for nearly 200 years, drawing countless visitors eager to capture its essence in photographs.

On the early morning of September 28, 2023, during the tumultuous weather of Storm Agnes, this landmark was felled in what authorities described as a "deliberate act of vandalism." Two men, Daniel Graham and Adam Carruthers, were later arrested and charged with criminal damage, shocking the public with their reckless disregard for such a cherished tree. The act was not merely an isolated incident but viewed as reflective of a broader culture of mindless destruction. Prosecutors described it as an “arboreal equivalent of mindless thuggery,” an outrage against the very fabric of the community's identity.

During their trial at Newcastle Crown Court, compelling evidence emerged against the two men. Prosecutors presented video footage taken from Graham's phone, alongside metadata and GPS tracking that linked them directly to the scene. Despite their attempts to divert blame, including conflicting testimonies, the overwhelming digital evidence catalysed a swift conviction. The jury found both men guilty after just five hours of deliberation, as public disgust mounted over what many viewed as a senseless act for amusement. The estimated cost of the tree's loss approached £622,191, while damage to the adjacent Hadrian’s Wall was also significant, amounting to approximately £1,144. Sentencing is set for July 15, 2025, with both facing potential prison terms of up to ten years.

The aftermath of this tragedy has revealed signs of nature's resilience, as experts noted small shoots sprouting from the tree's stump as early as August 2024. Despite the loss, there remains a glimmer of hope that the Sycamore Gap tree may one day regenerate. This development has sparked a sense of optimism and has been embraced by wildlife advocates keen to preserve the tree’s legacy.

In response to the vandalism, various heritage organizations have mobilised efforts towards regeneration and preservation. The National Trust, alongside other groups, is collecting seeds from the original tree to propagate new saplings. As part of a broader initiative, 49 "Trees of Hope" have been planted across the UK to honour the legacy of the fallen sycamore and other causes tied to environmental restoration. This proactive stance emphasizes a shift toward better stewardship of the natural landscapes that shape community identities.

The Woodland Trust has since advocated for a Heritage Trees Bill designed to safeguard significant trees from similar acts of destruction. The call for legislative protection reflects a growing awareness of the need for stronger measures to preserve landmarks that hold deep cultural and historical significance. As the nation grapples with the aftermath of this loss, the Sycamore Gap tree's legacy will undoubtedly lead to more robust discussions on conservation and the enduring importance of protecting natural heritage.

In the wake of the tree's felling, the local community and nature enthusiasts have voiced their outrage, united in their desire to see such acts of vandalism eradicated and to uphold the integrity of the environment. Moving forward, the story of the Sycamore Gap tree serves as a poignant reminder of the fragility of natural treasures, overshadowed by individual recklessness. A commitment to preservation and awareness may ensure that such a tragic episode does not repeat itself, allowing future generations to experience the beauty and cultural significance that landmarks like the Sycamore Gap tree truly embody.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4
2. Paragraphs 4, 5
3. Paragraphs 3, 4
4. Paragraphs 3, 4
5. Paragraph 4
6. Paragraphs 1, 2
7. Paragraphs 2, 3, 4

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://stories.jobaaj.com/news-updates/world/the-fall-and-rise-of-sycamore-gap-a-tale-of-vandalism-justice-and-renewal> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://apnews.com/article/517a911bc158fc04b1013ea8dcb79a29> - Two men, Daniel Graham (39) and Adam Carruthers (32), were convicted of criminal damage for felling the beloved Sycamore Gap tree in Northumberland National Park, England. The iconic tree, made famous by the film 'Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves,' was known for its picturesque setting along Hadrian's Wall and held deep sentimental value. The men were found guilty by a jury at Newcastle Crown Court based on compelling digital evidence, including metadata, GPS tracking, and a video of the tree being cut down with a chainsaw. Although both denied involvement and offered conflicting accounts, the prosecution argued they committed the act together for amusement. The chainsaw and a suspected 'trophy' wedge of wood remain missing, but images on Graham’s phone linked him to the scene. The tree's destruction has been condemned as a 'mindless act of destruction.' Sentencing is scheduled for July 15, and both men face potential sentences of up to 10 years in prison. The tree was valued at around £620,000, with additional damage to the wall estimated at £1,100.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/men-guilty-felling-much-loved-british-sycamore-gap-tree-2025-05-09/> - Two men, Daniel Graham (39) and Adam Carruthers (32), were found guilty of criminal damage for cutting down Britain's iconic 'Sycamore Gap' tree in September 2023. The beloved sycamore, around 200 years old, stood near Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland and was featured in the 1991 film 'Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves.' Its destruction provoked national grief and anger. Prosecutors described the act as a deliberate and 'mindless vandalism,' supported by video evidence from Graham's phone. The felling also damaged a portion of Hadrian's Wall, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The men denied involvement but were convicted after the jury was shown evidence, including footage and messages that revealed they celebrated the global reaction. The motive for their actions remains unclear. They are set to be sentenced on July 15. Despite the loss, signs of regrowth were observed at the tree's base, giving hope for natural recovery.
4. <https://apnews.com/article/a7a57a2cd4dba12661405b1786a63192> - In a high-profile trial in London, prosecutors accused Daniel Graham, 39, and Adam Carruthers, 32, of deliberately cutting down the iconic Sycamore Gap tree near Hadrian's Wall in northern England. Referred to by the prosecution as the 'arboreal equivalent of mindless thuggery,' the act allegedly committed for amusement sparked widespread national outrage. The tree, a cultural landmark valued at over £620,000, was destroyed on September 28, 2023. Prosecutor Richard Wright pointed to damning digital evidence, including a video of the tree's felling taken from Graham's phone and sent to Carruthers, with metadata placing it at the scene. Further messages between the accused seemingly showed them boasting about the act. Though both men denied involvement and blamed each other, with Graham suggesting he was framed and Carruthers downplaying the tree's significance, forensic analysis linked a wood wedge in Graham’s possession to the felled tree. The iconic tree's destruction also caused damage to the adjacent UNESCO World Heritage Site. Jurors are set to deliberate on the charges of criminal damage, as both defendants plead not guilty.
5. <https://apnews.com/article/b8d55c84fdd96d25f9349f038620fbc8> - Deliberations have begun in the UK trial of Daniel Graham, 39, and Adam Carruthers, 32, accused of cutting down the iconic Sycamore Gap tree near Hadrian's Wall in northern England on September 28, 2023. The men deny two counts each of criminal damage. A jury at Newcastle Crown Court began deliberations but has yet to reach a verdict, with proceedings set to continue. The felled tree, though neither the largest nor oldest, was a beloved landmark featured in the 1991 film 'Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves' and valued for its picturesque setting. Prosecutors allege the act was committed as a prank during a storm, causing over £620,000 in tree value damage and £1,100 to the historic wall. Evidence includes a video taken from Graham’s phone at the scene and shared with Carruthers, along with digital data linking Graham’s car to the site. The prosecution argues the defendants carried out a 'moronic mission' and later reveled in their notoriety. The defense claims innocence and mutual blame, with each trying to deflect responsibility onto the other. The trial began on April 28, and jurors are under direction to reach a unanimous verdict.
6. <https://apnews.com/article/774b0524334bde595f5dbd68504646c7> - Two men in their 30s were arrested and released on bail in an investigation into the felling of the famous Sycamore Gap tree in England. The sycamore, approximately 150 years old and located near Hadrian's Wall, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was cut down between September 27 and 28, causing damage to the historic site. The tree gained fame from its appearance in the 1991 film 'Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves' and was a beloved landmark and photographic subject. Previously, a 16-year-old boy and a man in his 60s were also arrested and released without charge. The local community and nature enthusiasts across Britain have expressed outrage at the act of vandalism. The tree has been removed in sections and stored by the National Trust, with the stump protected to check for potential regrowth.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2023/oct/05/felling-of-sycamore-gap-tree-damaged-hadrians-wall-inspection-reveals> - The felling of the Sycamore Gap tree near Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland, England, has led to damage to the adjacent UNESCO World Heritage Site. Photographs show that the tree landed on the wall during the felling. Historic England has conducted a preliminary inspection and identified damage to Hadrian's Wall. A further archaeological appraisal is planned once the site is considered safe. Northumbria police arrested a 16-year-old boy and a man in his 60s on suspicion of criminal damage after the attack.