

Easton Village Newsletter

March 2024

Issue 221

Easton Flora - The Oak Tree - Quercus

Charles Nixon



We are all familiar with the magnificent oak tree which grows widely in the Northern Hemisphere. But did you know there are some 500 species of oak and that some are evergreen?

The Village Millennial Oak, which is situated on the bank of the brook opposite the Church is an English or Common Oak. The bark is light grey and deeply furrowed affording shelter to many insects. According to the Woodland Trust no other species of tree in the UK

supports a greater diversity of life than an ancient oak.

It has distinctive round-lobed leaves with short leaf stalks, long, yellow hanging catkins which distribute pollen and its acorns are 2 to 2.5 cm long, on long stalks and in cupules (the cup-shaped base of the acorn). As it ripens, the green acorn turns brown, loosens from the cupule and falls to the canopy below, sprouting the following spring.

The trunk, which expands towards the base, is said to have inspired the design of the Eddystone Lighthouse! The quality of the hard wood led it to become the material of choice for the Royal Navy which was often described as "The Wooden Walls of Old England" as its strong oak ships provided a wooden defense around the country; and whose official quick march is "Heart of Oak".

Famous Oak Trees

Oak trees can grow to 40 metres over hundreds of years leading to many stories. One of the most famous English oaks in the country is the Major Oak in Sherwood Forest – thought to be over 800 years old.

There are also many tales linking oak trees to the monarchy, from the Royal Oak in Boscobel Wood in which the future King Charles II was said to have hidden from the Roundheads in 1651, to Queen Elizabeth I's Oak in Greenwich Park. According to legend, this ancient oak grew near the site where Queen Elizabeth had a picnic.

Mythology and symbolism



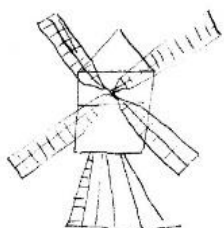
The oak was sacred to many gods, including Zeus, Jupiter and the Celtic Dagda. Each of these gods ruled over thunder and lightning, and oak trees are often hit by lightning as they are the tallest living feature in the landscape. Druids practised rituals in oak groves and cherished the mistletoe that grows in oak-tree branches. And the link to royalty goes back to ancient times – ancient kings and Roman Emperors wore crowns of oak leaves.

Today, 'The Royal Oak' is the second most popular pub name in Britain (with over 400 counted in 2023). How times have changed!

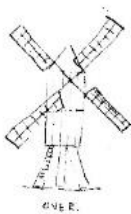
Easton's post mill; the oldest post mill in the country Beth Davis

There were over 10,000 small wind mills in England, one almost in every parish. Most

were small post mills constructed by the village carpenter and blacksmith in a traditional way using the best timber from local woodland. The post carried a buck (a box-like structure) with the sails, and inside the grinding stones and mill machinery. The buck rotated around a stout oak post turning the sails into the wind. The post mill was usually sited on a mound or a crest of a hill to catch the wind. The Easton mill was named Windmill Hill and it was somewhere near the Ellington parish boundary. Easton post mill was built in 1568/70. It then stood in the corn fields where families were tending their own strips of land using oxen for ploughing and donkeys to carry the loads. In the seasons they sowed and harvested their crops in a way that is illustrated in early documents showing the mills in the open landscape. In some Cambridgeshire churches there are scratch drawings of post mills.



Scratch drawings of post mills



Post mills in England were a medieval creation back to the 12th century, their

development is linked with the 18th century industrial revolution. The post mill used wind power to drive the sails, turning the wind shaft and brake wheel. Cogs on the brake wheel united with the drive wheels of the mill stones called 'stone nuts' turning the runner stone over the bed stone grinding the seeds of corn. The corn was gravity fed from the corn bins to the flour sacks. The precious flour was carried away in hempen sacks- after paying the miller.



The miller, carpenter and blacksmith were local village men with considerable experience in working the mill, maintaining the sails, and balancing the milling machinery—amazing. I have seen them working on mills in Cambridgeshire when as a local Authority we grant aided the work on preserved mills in the 1990s. We know of the carpenter and blacksmith, John Rowlett,

and the miller Shadbolt who lived in Easton. The story of Easton mill is yet to be told in an Easton publication this summer. The mill was well travelled and can be seen today northwest of Cambridge. The picture above shows Madingley Mill formerly located at Ellington and before that at Easton. (Photo -Martin Davies)

Annual Parish Meeting - 21st March 2024 - 7.30pm - St Peter's Church

At the Annual Parish Meeting the Chair of the Easton Parish Council reports on events of interest and importance during the past year in the village. Other village organisations also give an overview of their activities during the year. The Annual Parish Meeting is an open meeting for all members of the Parish who are also welcome to ask any question on anything considered important to the residents of the Parish.

Should anyone require any particular item to be included or wish for any more specific information please contact me by 08/03/2024 - the clerk to the Parish Council.

The meeting will be followed by refreshments and a short presentation by Brian Davis regarding his 60 years of Conservation work in Easton. All are welcome and the Parish Council looks forward to seeing everyone on the 21st March.

email: clerk_eastonpc@yahoo.co.uk or telephone: 01480 890332 to leave a voicemail

Coffee, Cake & Chat

Vicki, Clare, Pam & Caroline

Please come and join us again at church for our next coffee morning on Monday 4th March, from 10.30 - 12.00. We have a special St David's day cake coming for the village and our grateful thanks go to Kathy for this. Pam, Caroline and I will be rustling up some other Welsh themed goodies for you too! We really hope to see you



59 Club

John Maith.

The winners of the final two rounds for 2023/24 were Jeanette Charlton in December and Iris Brooker in January. The winners this year in order were John Hill, Linda Maith, Claire Hindmarsh, Val & Nick Harris, Brian Davis, Caroline Perry, Ron Sinclair, Malcolm Halliday, Claire Lawrence, Andy Burton, Jeanette Charlton and Iris Brooker. I have just about completed my rounds for the 2024/25 period and would like to thank everyone for your continued support. The first draw will be on Saturday 24th February so good luck. The winning number, as usual, will be the bonus ball in the National Lotto draw on that Saturday.

Church Services in March

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|-------------------------------|--------|-------|--|
| Sunday 10 th March | Easton | 9.30 | Parish Communion |
| Sunday 24 th March | Gather | 9.30 | Easton -Walk to Spaldwick for shared celebration at 11.00 at St James |
| Sunday 31 st March | Easton | 15.00 | Easter Service |

For further information on Church Services please visit

<https://www.kymchurch.org.uk/wp2/index.php/church-services/>

Rector: Rev Philip Howson Email: revphiliphowson@icloud.com

Phone -01480 869081

AND FINALLY.....

-New Delicatessen nearby.

Little Italy has finally opened on the Harvard industrial estate near Kimbolton . The delicatessen which operated online in covid has opened this month (February) It has a fresh meats and cheese counter plus groceries and a cafe. Open Tuesday to Friday 10-3pm.

<https://littleitalyuk.co.uk>

-Lost Keys found down Spaldwick Track. Please contact me and I will put you in touch with person who has them.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER IS THURSDAY 25th MARCH 2024