

Easton Village Newsletter

Issue 147

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NATURE NOTE 98

Brian Davis



From childhood on, everyone recognises an acorn as the seed of a mighty oak tree. Actually, there are a great many kinds of oak trees in the world with the Latin name of *Quercus*; some, like the American red oak, have huge leaves, while others in Europe are more like low holly bushes with evergreen prickly leaves, but the acorns always look the same with their little cups. We have two native species of oak in Britain, the Common oak *Quercus robur*, which is the common woodland and wayside oak around here, with acorns borne on long stalks, and the Sessile oak *Quercus petraea*, with stalkless acorns, which is more common in western and

northern Britain. Both can grow to great age and size and have provided the principle timbers for house- and ship-building through the centuries. The biggest oak trees I know around here are in the grounds of Buckworth Palace and beside the A1 beside the flyover from Brampton to Grafham. But the oak tree on the Three Shires Way, just beyond the Easton Parish boundary, is a really fine example too with a girth at breast height of 3.8



metres or 12½ feet. I would guess this to be at least 200 years old, and since there has not been a wood in this area for a much longer period, one might hazard the possibility of a planting date of 1805 to celebrate the Battle of Trafalgar. Interestingly, it has a row of self-sown daughter trees of decreasing ages along the boundary, perhaps 45, 30 and 15, years old. Many years ago, an Oxford professor compared the number of different insect species that lived on oak with those on other kinds of trees. Oak came out top by far with 284 species followed by willows with 266 species, birch with 229 and hawthorn with 149. At the bottom of his list came ash, lime and holly with 41, 31 and just 7 species. He also looked at the pollen record of all these trees since the Ice Age and showed that the number of insect species

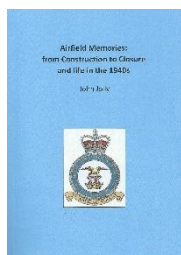
was a reflection of the tree's history in Britain. Trees that have been introduced into Britain by Man, such as hornbeam and horse-chestnut, have many fewer kinds of insects. This picture of a Knopper gall, taken in Easton this autumn, represents a large group of tiny wasp-like insects that lay their eggs in leaves or twigs or acorns and stimulate the tree to produce a range of distinctive growths, of which the best known are oak marbles and oak apples. The young stages grow within these cancerous tissues and emerge or fall to the ground in the autumn.

As I approach my century of Nature Notes, I wonder if anyone else in Easton would like to contribute articles – on whatever interest they would like to share? Jenny Hyde would be delighted to hear from you.

SUNDAY SERVICES FOR JANUARY

Sunday 1st (Christmas 2) 09.30 COV Parish Communion (Rev N Bland) 10.45 KIM Family Service (Rev S Bowring) 10.45 SPA Parish Communion (Rev N Bland) 15.00 STO Evensong (Rev S Bowring)	Sunday 8th (Epiphany Sunday) 09.30 TIL Family Service (Mrs. L Bowring) 09.30 EAS Parish Communion (Rev S Bowring) 10.45 KIM Parish Communion (Rev S Bowring) 16.30 SPA Messy Church (team)
Sunday 15th (Epiphany 2) 09.30 STO BCP Communion (Rev Dr. J Rawlinson) 09.30 COV Matins (Rev N Bland) 10.45 KIM Matins (Rev N Bland) 10.45 SPA Parish Communion (Rev Dr. J Rawlinson) 11.00 BAR Family Service (Mrs. L Bowring) 18.00 EAS Evensong (Rev N Bland)	Sunday 22nd (Epiphany 3) 09.30 TIL Parish Communion (Rev S Bowring) 09.30 EAS Morning Worship (Mr Mike Baker) 10.45 KIM Parish Communion (Rev R Lancaster) 15.00 KIM Evensong (Rev S Bowring) 18.00 SPA Prayer & Praise (Rev S Bowring)
Sunday 29th (Epiphany 4) 10.45 TIL Group Eucharist (Rev N Bland)	

AIRFIELD MEMORIES



As reported in last month's Newsletter, John Jolly received an award for his book on the origins, construction and development of Alconbury Airfield from 1937 – 1945. The 72-page book, which includes photographs and a map of Alconbury Airfield, has now been published and it is available directly from John or from Brian & Beth Davis (Brook House) at a cost of £7.00. John has kindly expressed a wish that 25p from the sale of each book should go to St. Peter's Church. At present, it is a "limited edition" (!) but more copies can be printed if required.

EASTON ANNUAL QUIZ

The annual Quiz Night will be on **11th February** 2017 (not the 4th, as originally planned). As usual, it will take place in Spaldwick School starting at 7.30 p.m. The cost will be £6.00 per head, plus the cost of the usual fish-and-chip supper. Tickets will be available early in the New Year. Why not make up a team (usually 6 people), or come on your own and help make up a team on the night!

VILLAGE WEBSITE

Don't forget to check the village website – www.easton.btck.co.uk – to find out what is going on in our community!



Copy for the February newsletter no later than Wednesday 25th January please.