
FEATURE ARTICLE

In Memory of

Apart from the well-known military rolls of honour in St Mary's and the Baptist Church and the bronze plaque on the Ridgeway, East of the A34, for the soldier killed there in a tank accident, there are many memorials around the Parish that now go un-noticed by passers-by.

Over the years, the people of East Ilsley have given a great number of gifts to the village in memory of loved-ones, benefactors or special events and some of these have become in turn memorials for the givers, for example the seat by the bus-shelter in Broad Street. This came from the old village school and was given by June Richardson as a piece of local history but now stands to remind us of June herself. Nearby the notice board was given by Jonathan Stone at the Hall in memory of his mother.

When Molly Keele died her son Kennedy made a gift of money for kissing gates to replace stiles on village footpaths. This opened up walks otherwise closed to the less agile. Another gate was dedicated to Bert Woodage who had given his time for years to work for the local community. The old farm gate leading to the Recreation Ground was replaced, set between two brick pillars with a stone topped brick seat attached to one of them. A commemorative plaque was fixed to the pillar but after a time the whole thing was so vandalised that sadly it had to be removed. Nearby, on the south of the Recreation Ground, is a seat given by Roger Huggins in memory of his wife June.

On the site of the old sheep pens, opposite Pen Meadow, Mrs Dudden gave the seat and had the area planted with flowering trees for her husband Warren, the butcher. In the same area in 1975, the Conservation Group placed a Sarcen stone bearing a plaque commemorating the historic sheep fairs. This was unveiled at the opening of the first revived "Sheep Fair" event, at the time the Group's part in the money raising effort for a village hall but since taken on by the village Sheep Fair Committee as a regular event. The carpet of snowdrops that comes up under the trees here every spring was planted by Mr & Mrs Chips Hibbert as a tribute to the village they loved and again this has become a reminder of them.

Another Mr & Mrs Chips landmark is the horse chestnut tree on the North bank of Stanmore Road before the Yew Tree Hill track, planted by them as a conker, on their engagement.

This is a photograph of them taken beneath the tree on their 60th Wedding Anniversary.



When Brian Cook died, his wife Shirley had plaques made to go on the walls of the Star, the Swan and the Crown & Horns. I don't think any of these has survived with weather, redecorating and change of ownership but the tree (*malus floribunda*) that she planted by the wheelchair access in the southwest corner of the pond still flourishes.

Next to it is the Amelanchier planted by Peggy Baker for her husband Peter. At the Chapel end of the pond verge is a standard red may tree, put in as a memorial but so far no one can tell me who by and for whom. Can anyone help? This is why I think a Register would be useful. The silver maple at the South end of the pond was planted by Maudie Cross MBE, on behalf of the Parish Council, for the Queen's Silver Jubilee. Later, another silver maple was planted on the Millennium Green in memory of Ann Farrimond, School Secretary for many years and Treasurer of most village groups, by her sister Joyce. It is on the Southwest corner of the green. Near the Eastern edge and beyond the three dedicated benches (C of E, RC and Baptist) is a tree for Horace Tuson from his wife Diana.

The last trees that I can think of are the two ashes planted for Arthur Bartholomew as part of the "plant a tree in '73" scheme. These are still thriving on the left of the West Ilsley road just after the Stanmore turning. I hope the present similar scheme will be as successful. If anyone is able to fill in the gaps and add to the list, I would be delighted to hear from you.

Mo Moulton