

Oak News & Notes

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL OAK SOCIETY, VOLUME 11, No. 3, WINTER 2007

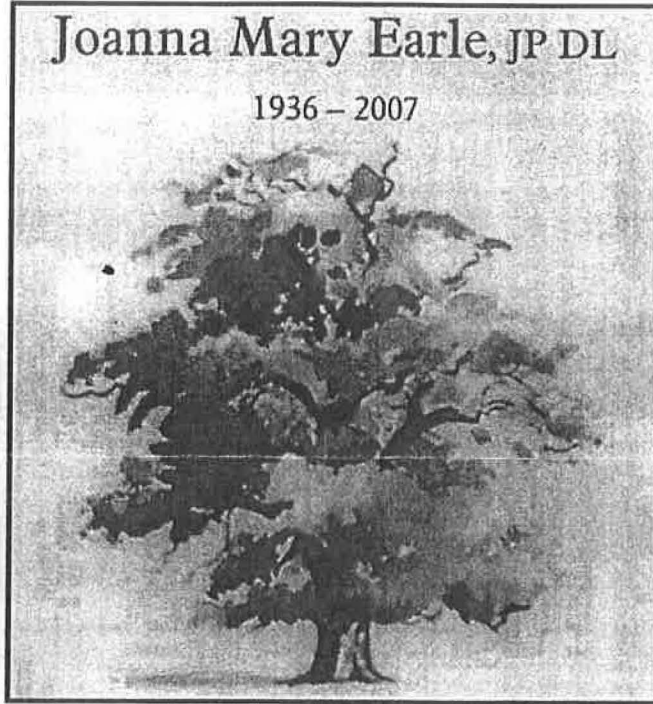
In Memoriam

Jo, like all other oak enthusiasts, looked forward to the autumn each year in anticipation of the latest collections of acorns which might be shared or traded among us. Sadly, however, this autumn was to be one of great sadness for all of us, and most of all for Richard, and the family. Jo was a long-term member of the Society, recently elected to the Board but soon obliged to resign as a consequence of her deteriorating health.

As a farmer's wife, Jo had long ago put down roots in the countryside, ably supporting Richard in the unceasing activities of Frankham Farm and involving herself in many of the associated country pursuits. This, in turn, was complemented by her enduring love of trees and plants, many of which flourished in her beautifully planned and maintained garden. The garden also served to attract friends and members of the public alike, thereby helping to raise generous sums of money for charity; her hospitality and sense of fun will be sadly missed by the members of the many societies and causes which Jo supported. It may be that Dorset has below average rainfall because Jo would frequently ask whether we had rain and explain that they were running around with buckets, tending to her young oaks.

Joanna Mary Earle, JP DL

1936 – 2007



Members, who are not familiar with the formalities of life in England, may be curious about the initials

“JP” and “DL”, which Jo was formally addressed. They conceal very important commitments to the community which could also absorb much of Jo's time and attention. As a Justice of the Peace, Jo was involved in the front line of the administration of justice, that of the Magistrate's Courts: JPs are routinely required to impose penalties for the more modest offences and to refer upwards the more serious cases. As a Deputy to the Lord Lieutenant, Jo will have been a representative of Her Majesty, the Queen, at some of the

formal ceremonies within the County of Dorset, which are normally beyond the reach of the Royal Family. Both of these appointments clearly reflect the respect in which Jo was held by the wider community.

But as members of the Oak Society, we will all hope that the oaks which we shared and exchanged will long flourish where Jo and Richard planted them and that, when Richard walks around them, he too will recall rewarding memories of the visits and tours during which they were collected, and the many friends who enjoyed their company.

—By Dorothy Holley

The Society Needs Your Help— Membership and Inventory Management/

After years of loyal service, both our Membership Chair, Richard Jensen, and our Inventory Management/Distribution Chair, Ed Holm, have decided to step down and hand over the reigns of their respective positions to other Society members. The Membership Chair's activities include responding to queries about membership, processing both new membership applications as well as renewals, working closely with our Treasurer Bill Hess, maintaining membership records, updating the Membership Directory and managing its distribution. Currently records are maintained in FileMaker Pro, version 6. In the future, when the new Society website is on-line with its "for members only" links, duties may also involve ensuring that new members receive their passwords. Richard estimates that these activities require about three hours a week of work.

Inventory management and distribution involves keeping track of past issues of the Journal – including those issues that are the Proceedings of our Triennial Meetings – and mailing them out when requested to do so by Members of the Board. The mailing of current newsletters and journals is handled by the Newsletter and Journal Chairs. It would be best if this position is filled by someone in the US as mailing from the US is logistically necessary.

Both positions require limited storage space – about a file cabinet for membership materials and 25 cubic feet for storing past journals. If you are interested in helping out and contributing a bit of your time to the Society, please contact Richard Jensen (rjensen@saintmarys.edu) or Ed Holm (ed@thefamilyholm.com) for more information.

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Robin Hood May Return!

As children most of us learned that Robin Hood lived in Sherwood Forest and hid among the trees there whenever the evil Sherriff of Nottingham came looking for him. Friar Tuck, Little John and the rest of Robin Hood's band of Merry Men had no trouble eluding the bumbling Sherriff and his henchmen since the dense and majestic oaks of the King's official hunting ground offered abundant cover and numerous places to hide. Today, however, Robin would have a more difficult time hiding in Sherwood Forest as so many of the trees have been lost and many more are dying.

For those not familiar with Jolly Old England and Tales of the 13th Century outlaw, Sherwood Forest is a real place in Nottinghamshire County less than 100 miles Northwest of London. The Forest once covered about 100,000 acres, but today its core is down to a mere 450 acres, with some other patches spread throughout the rest of the County. As with so many of our forested landscapes, development, agricultural conversions and tree harvesting have greatly reduced the extent of the original Forest. Even with what's left of Sherwood Forest, not all is well and a number of groups and organizations are concerned that the ancient oak monarchs are dying at an alarming rate and that few small oaks are becoming established to take their place. Experts say something must be done to save the Forest.

As a result of this concern, 15 organizations have joined forces to develop a rescue plan. If all goes well this effort will be funded by a \$100 million grant from the BIG Lottery, a branch of the UK Nation-

al Lottery that provides funds to good causes. The Sherwood Forest Project is competing with 4 other projects with the winner to be declared in December 2007.

According to Park Rangers, Sherwood Forest has one of the greatest collections of venerable oaks in Europe – with some trees that are more than 900 years old. Currently 997 ancient oaks stand on the 450 acres. About 450 are still living, and of

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those, 250 are good shape, while the other 200 are particularly vulnerable. The remainder are standing dead trees but are still valuable to the forest because of the many different animals they support. But the ravages of time are taking their toll on the trees that are still alive. And now there is fear that climate change may be contributing to even more rapid losses. On average about one of the veteran oaks a year is lost, but this past year seven came down, four on a single night as a result of high winds during a February storm.



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If they are awarded the grant, organizers say they will use the money to bring the forest back to life. Presently, due to mortality and the lack of natural regeneration, the old oaks are often isolated, threatening not only the sustainability of the forest as a whole, but adversely affecting the countless animals that depend on the forest for food and shelter. If funded, the grant would support the planting of 250,000 oak seedlings so that the current old oaks become part of a self-sustaining forest that will renew itself and meet the ecological functions of its myriad inhabitants.

Whatever the result of the lottery competition, let's hope that the means will be found to restore and maintain Sherwood Forest. Perhaps then Robin Hood will return. We certainly could use someone who could help transfer some of the world's wealth from the richest of the rich to the poorest of the poor.



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Oak Open Days in Austria and Italy September 17-21, 2008

The first-ever Oak Open Days in Austria and Italy will be held this coming September. It will coincide with acorn drop so it will be an excellent opportunity to collect acorns from the numerous species we will see and visit. The tour will begin at the Vienna Airport 'Schwechat' on September 17 where we will meet and assemble. The next day we will embark on a two-day tour to native and planted oak forests in Leitha Gebirge, south of Vienna. Our guides will be Mr. DI Franz Starlinger and Mr. Dr. Georg Frank from the Austria State Forests, Department for Oaks and Native Forests. Species we will see will include *Quercus petraea*, *Q. robur*, *Q. cerris*, and *Q. pubescens*.

On September 20 we will board a bus for a one-day trip to the area of Trieste in Italy where we will visit the *Arboretum Miramare* and view *Q. cerris*, *Q. pubescens*, *Q. pubescens* ssp. *virgiliana*, and *Q. ilex*. We will end the day with a tour dinner at the hotel.

The following day, September 21, we will take a one-day trip to Osoppo Italy to see the most north-eastern habitat of shrubby *Q. ilex* and *Q. pubescens*. Afterwards we will return to Austria and visit the young arboretum of our host and Lifetime International Oak Society member Max Schöeffmann, located next to the town of Villach, where we will conclude the tour. Participants can then spend another day before departing, or catch a train from Villach back to Vienna or travel a short distance to Klagenfurt where there is an airport.

At present this schedule is tentative and there may be changes. In any case, the complete program with hotel addresses will be available in either May or June, 2008. If you have any questions, please contact Max Schöeffmann at the mailing and email addresses listed below:

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Society Products for Sale

We still have some tee shirts and tote bags from the Dallas Conference for sale. The tee shirts were designed by Dan the Oak Man and have a wreath of white oak leaves and acorns enclosing a colorful bird with the words "Fifth Oak Conference". These can be purchased for the remarkably low price of \$10 plus shipping. International Oak Society pins are also available. Contact Bill Hess (phone 931-839-6518; e-mail wjbahess@frontiernet.net) to order.

Arboretum Manager Sought

Starhill Forest Arboretum in central Illinois holds one of the most extensive *Quercus* collections in North America. The Arboretum is in transition to a public (college) facility and ready to add a manager / future director. This will be a career position for the right person and will require versatile skills and interests. Please inquire via www.StarhillForest.com



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