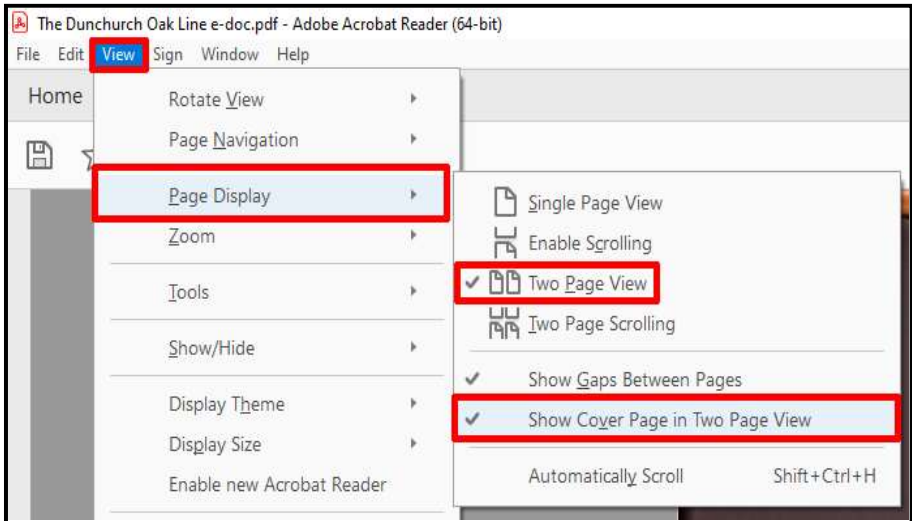


THE DUNCHURCH
OAK LINE

This pdf copy is best opened on a lap-top or desk-top with a screen big enough to view two pages side by side.

You may want to use the following read set up:



THE DUNCHURCH OAK LINE

A contribution to “The Queen’s Green Canopy”
project.

Instigated and compiled by
MIKE JUDGE, MBE
and assisted by many friends.



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The Dunchurch Oak Line

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Introduction to “The Dunchurch Oak Line”

This book has been put together with narrative and photographs to tell the story of “The Dunchurch Oak Line”. It is a “live” document and villagers are invited to add comments, correct errors and to up-date it with words and pictures to track the progress and development of a project that will continue to evolve, not just over years, but we hope, for decades.

Loose leaf additions of pictures and text printed on A5 size paper, (approximately 15 x 21 centimetres, or 6 x 8 inches), can be added.

I hope you will find this book both interesting and informative and that future generations will understand the context of the creation of “The Dunchurch Oak Line”.

The first part of this book is about the Oak Line, showing the trees and people involved in their planting. It also includes a number of pages devoted to the planting of the Coronation Oak.

The remainder of the book is devoted to general information about oaks, and other trees, in and around Dunchurch and further afield.

Mike Judge, MBE. Trustee of Dunchurch Sportsfield and Village Hall. Organiser and compiler of this book.

January 2024

The beginnings of the project

In the autumn of 2021, there was an interesting story in the local press about a group of schoolchildren planting trees as a contribution to “The Queen’s Green Canopy” project. I was immediately seized by the idea, so I spoke to Rugby Borough Council’s ‘Tree man’, David Gower, who advised that Dunchurch was a favourable site for planting Oak trees and encouraged me to go ahead.

I had in mind a line of oak trees and quickly got the support of the Trustees of the Sportsfield and Village Hall. We agreed on the siting of the Oak Line, which was parallel to the recently restored wall of the garden of Bilton Grange School, which is adjacent to the Sportsfield’s football pitch.

Next, I contacted a number of organisations in the village whom I hoped would be sponsors of what I described as a “Capability Brown” project. “The Oak Line” would not mature in our

lifetimes but would be appreciated by our children and grandchildren.

Fortunately, they all embraced the project and agreed to the £100 sponsorship. The site could accommodate 10 trees but I had 11 sponsors - more of this later! We pressed on and in the spring of 2022 arranged a ceremony at the Sportsfield for the planting, attended by sponsors, helpers and interested villagers.

The “draw” and first planting at the Sportsfield

Dawn broke spectacularly clear and sunny on Saturday the 19th and Sunday the 20th March 2022 over the Dunchurch Sportsfield and Village Hall, (or so I’m told!). Anyway, when I arrived at the field about 1pm it was unseasonably warm when I met up with “Thumper” Phill Freeman, responsible for driving the huge pine stakes into the ground aided and abetted by “Spade Men” Rob Collings, Paul Le Poidevin and Keith Brushett, (all carefully supervised by “Idle Jack” Mike Judge!)

A number of Sponsors and supporters joined in once their position along The Oak Line had been settled by drawing numbered tickets. Alfie was particularly keen to show his Headmaster, Mr. Joss Andrews and other schoolmates, how to do it, and soon we were all prepared for the planting ceremony after many months of preparation (actually just a few weeks!)

The usual team turned up an hour or so before the scheduled 2 p.m. start. They dressed the holes with soil improver, (manure), and some stuff to encourage root growth, and teased out the roots of each tree to ensure a close fit to the support posts. They also dressed the line with Union Jacks. It really did look splendid!



The oaks have arrived!

When sponsors and more supporters assembled, we had a draw for which tree each sponsor would plant in their pre-selected hole. The sponsors that were able to attend the draw and planting included Pat Townshend (the Vicar of St. Peter's church) and lots of friendly faces from members of the Women's Institute, Friends of Dunchurch Society (FODS), Trustees of the Village Hall, Festival Group, Pantomaniacs, and the Parish Council.

Representatives and supporters of almost all our other sponsors, (including Alfie with hair slicked back and wearing his best suit), soon had the planting completed, and each tree was finished off with the ceremonial "golden" spade.

Organiser and MC Mike Judge, dressed in his normal understated way, (Oh yea!), then thanked everyone for their huge community support for this truly "Capability Brown" legacy project and his support team, (who had in truth done all the heavy work)! (As usual!). There were special thanks to his fellow Trustees for allowing the creation of this unique "Dunchurch Oak Line".

I commended the work of FODS as collaborators of the project who will help to oversee the continued good health of the oaks over the next crucial couple of years.

FODS were the perfect collaborators because it was they who, in 2019, brought home the prestigious award of Dunchurch being voted the Best Large Village out of the 7 counties in the Heart of England Britain in Bloom competition.



The draw to decide which sponsor gets which tree and its position in the line.



The school supporters were very proud of all of the trees and were here admiring the FODS Oak in its original position at the Sportsfield.



The Headmaster, Mr. Andrews,
directing operations.

The children were then invited to remove the two Union flags in front of oak number 5, The Queens Oak, sponsored by the Sportsfield and Village Hall, to reveal a beautiful plaque commissioned by the Royal British Legion, commemorating Her Majesty's Platinum Anniversary through her Queen's Green Canopy Project. A powerful and heartfelt, (though not necessarily tuneful), "a cappella" rendition of the National Anthem followed along with a rousing "Three Cheers for Her Majesty".

The final act of the afternoon was another fine British Traditional one, a cuppa and a biscuit! (Thank you, Sue, Helen and Pat!).

Thank you to all our sponsors, supporters and helpers contributing to what we hope will come to be regarded as a truly historic event in our village.

We all need to pitch in to show off our wonderful village at its absolute best!

A few days after the planting ceremony we were advised that from time to time the football field

migrated further up the field and therefore the trees would have to be relocated! In the short term this was to our garden where they continued to prosper until we were able to replant them at a second permanent site.

The move to The Heath

Shortly afterwards, as Keith Protheroe and I left the Sportsfield, we looked at “The Heath” as a prospective site and saw the potential of replicating the existing crescent of mature trees.

Following a meeting organised by Sue and Tony Kember with the Rugby Borough Council arborist, Dave Gower, it was agreed that we could plant “The Dunchurch Oak Line” on The Heath.

Those of you familiar with The Heath will know there are two paths leading from the Waring Way end towards the village, one roughly following the road and the other arcing into the field, with a couple of benches. It is this latter crescent that The Oak Line was to follow.

The replanting ceremony was held on Saturday 21st May 2022 on The Heath which turned out to be another hot day and was attended by sponsors, helpers and interested villagers. Union Jacks were displayed at each tree and in the centre of the line we displayed a plaque,

commissioned from the Royal British Legion, indicating our support for The Queen's Canopy and celebrating her glorious 70-year reign!

Thanks must be extended to the devoted team who dug holes, applied growing compound and compost, applied mulch, banged in the support posts, and carried watering cans daily in the hottest days that followed.

The Oak Line will develop into a historic and iconic feature of The Heath, enhancing our village and a perfect complement to the magnificent Dunchurch Beacon, both really great legacy features worthy of celebrating Her Majesty's Platinum Anniversary.

Happily, "The Oak Line" formed part of FODS 2022 entry in the Royal Horticultural Society's Large Village Britain in Bloom UK Finals competition, in which we won a "Gold". We were also presented with two awards from the Heart of England competition, as well as a Gold; we were the Large Village Category winners!



The "Golden Spade" to celebrate the planting.

TREE NUMBER ONE

**“THE DUNCHURCH SCHOOLS’
FEDERATION OAK”**

**WE ARE PROUD TO SPONSOR OUR OAK.
WE ARE DEDICATED TO THE EDUCATION
AND DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE TO
HELP THEM ACHIEVE THEIR POTENTIAL.**

**WE HOPE THAT GENERATIONS OF
CHILDREN WILL GROW AND FLOURISH LIKE
OUR OAK.**



1. The School's Federation Oak

TREE NUMBER TWO

THE PANTOMANIACS OAK

**WE ARE DELIGHTED TO HAVE OUR OWN
OAK IN THE LINE.**

**OUR YOUNGER MEMBERS WILL
HOPEFULLY SEE THEM MATURE AND
GROW AND BE GLAD TO BE PART OF THIS
HISTORIC FEATURE.**

“OH YES WE WILL”



2. The Pantomaniac's Oak

TREE NUMBER THREE

THE BAPTIST OAK

**IN PRAISE OF GOD FOR OUR NEW CHURCH
BUILDING.**



3. The Baptist Oak

TREE NUMBER FOUR

THE DUNCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL OAK

**ENHANCING THE BEAUTY AND
CHARACTER OF DUNCHURCH, WHILST
ALSO PROVIDING A SIGNIFICANT
CONTRIBUTION TO IMPROVING OUR
ECOLOGY.**

**THE "DUNCHURCH OAK LINE" WILL PROVE
TO BE AN ICONIC FEATURE IN THE
VILLAGE PROFILE FOR MANY YEARS AND
GENERATIONS TO COME.**



4. The Parish Council Oak

TREE NUMBER FIVE

THE QUEEN'S OAK

**THE TRUSTEES OF THE DUNCHURCH
SPORTSFIELD AND VILLAGE HALL ARE
DELIGHTED TO JOIN OTHER COMMUNITY
GROUPS IN SPONSORING A TREE IN "THE
DUNCHURCH OAK LINE".**

**IT WILL BECOME AN OUTSTANDING AND
ICONIC FEATURE AT THE HEART OF OUR
VILLAGE FOR DECADES TO COME.**



5. The Queen's Oak (DSVH)

TREE NUMBER SIX

**THE FRIENDS OF DUNCHURCH SOCIETY
OAK**

**THE "DUNCHURCH OAK LINE" MATCHES
IDEALLY WITH THE ASPIRATIONS OF OUR
ORGANISATION FOR OUR VILLAGE.**

**WE ARE PROUD TO HAVE COLLABORATED
WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SUCH A
HISTORIC PROJECT.**



6. The Friend's of Dunchurch Oak

TREE NUMBER SEVEN

THE DUNCHURCH AND THURLASTON WI OAK

HAVING RECENTLY ACHIEVED THE
NOTABLE 100TH ANNIVERSARY, GIVING
OUR SUPPORT TO A PROJECT THAT
SHOULD STAND FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER
100 YEARS MATCHES OUR ASPIRATION
TO MATURE AND FLOURISH ALONGSIDE
OUR OAK.



7. The Women's Institute Oak

TREE NUMBER EIGHT

ST PETER'S OAK

**CELEBRATING A CONTINUOUS PRESENCE
AND MINISTRY TO THE GLORY OF GOD IN
DUNCHURCH FOR OVER 1000 YEARS.**

**WE ARE SO PLEASED TO JOIN WITH OUR
COMMUNITY FRIENDS TO SUPPORT A
WONDERFUL LIVING PROJECT, HOPEFULLY
DESIGNED TO LAST CENTURIES INTO THE
FUTURE.**



8. The St Peter's Church Oak

TREE NUMBER NINE

THE FESTIVAL OAK

**THE DUNCHURCH FESTIVAL GROUP,
FOUNDED IN THE MID-70'S, EXISTS TO
BRING FUN TO THE COMMUNITY AND TO
BENEFIT VILLAGE GROUPS AND
ORGANISATIONS.**

**WE DONATE ALL OUR PROFITS TO LOCAL
GOOD CAUSES AND WHAT BETTER CAUSE
CURRENTLY THAN CELEBRATING HER
MAJESTY'S PLATINUM ANNIVERSARY BY
HELPING TO CREATE WHAT WILL
UNDOUBTEDLY BECOME A HISTORIC AND
ICONIC CRESCENT OF "ENGLISH OAKS" AT
THE HEART OF OUR VILLAGE.**



9. The Festival Oak

TREE NUMBER TEN

THE FUTURE OAK

**TODAY'S SCOUTS ARE PROUD TO INVEST
IN THE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE NEXT
GENERATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN
DUNCHURCH.**



10. The Scouting Oak

The Coronation Oak

Of course, the celebrations associated with the planting were short lived as Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II died on the 8th September 2022.

The immediate accession to the throne by King Charles III meant his Coronation would be planned in the months ahead and we decided to add a ‘Coronation Oak’ to our project. So, the issue of the 11th oak tree was resolved!

The Guides, who had always wanted a tree of their “own” would now have the privilege of sponsoring the “Coronation Oak”.

The Coronation of King Charles III was on Saturday 6th May 2023. The village celebration was scheduled for the eve of Coronation Day and before that ceremony commenced a very enthusiastic crowd of Guides all took turns with the “Golden Spade” and “The King Charles III Coronation Oak” was well and truly planted. “God save the King!”

TREE NUMBER ELEVEN

THE CORONATION OAK

WE ARE HONOURED TO SPONSOR THIS PARTICULARLY PRESTIGIOUS OAK AND LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING IT DEVELOP AND MATURE, EVER HEALTHY AND PART OF THE COMMUNITY, JUST LIKE OUR ASPIRATIONS AND PLANS FOR OUR GIRLS IN GIRLGUIDING!



11. The Coronation Oak (Guiding)



All the guides helped plant their
Coronation Oak.



**The Oak Line in it's new location at
The Heath ready for planting.**



Marilyn Greenwood “assisted” by 2 year old Thora Judge.



Rob Collings and Les Pearce put the finishing touches to the planting.



Our youngest supporter, 1 year old
Harrison Judge



Mike with grandchildren, Harrison and Thora checking the plaque.



Lynne Brushett and Jane Ewington
admire the Scouting Oak



Keith and Lynne Brushett inspecting
the FODS Oak



Barbara Collings and Ann Gilbert, ladies of the W.I. casting a professional eye over “their” oak.



Rob Collings, (in the hole), with Sue and Keith Protheroe trying to bury him.



A metre-wide mulching area for each tree.



And afterwards a sit-down.



“I hoped it might look like this”.



Three generations, Mike and Patricia, Simon and Ria,
Thora and Harrison Judge.



The oldest and the youngest supporters,
Mike (82) and Harrison (1)!

Aftercare

After one of the hottest and driest summers and autumns for decades, a key group of Oak Line supporters (Phill Freeman, Rob Collings, Keith Brushett, and Dave Watson) generously gave up time and effort to water “The Line,” often twice a day! Carrying watering cans from their homes and hauling the occasional bowser to keep our trees in good order. Our thanks are due to them.

Later in the summer, I was contacted by Gavin Callard from neighbouring Onley. The former “Tree Man” at Warwickshire County Council, he offered advice, particularly concerning the amount of mulch around the base of each tree. He suggested we need to dig a circle about a metre wide and 4 inches deep for each tree. This would mean having to water only once per week in the driest months, albeit at 25 litres each time! Very helpfully, he offered to speak to contacts to get a lorryload of mulch for us, free of charge, and have it delivered to his house and then delivered to us as necessary. Ironically, we had to wait a while after a lot of rain, but Rob Collings

excavated the turf and soil in preparation, leaving it in situ around each tree. We then had a week or more of sub-zero temperatures, so that every spadeful of turf and soil was frozen solid! We prised the turfs apart, and Gavin placed a generous depth of mulch around each tree. The next morning, still freezing, Rob Collings gathered all the frozen turf and soil and filled a dangerous dip in the ground close to the WI Centenary tree!

Job done! The trees are looking healthy, and Gavin will be back next spring to check on the health of the trees and give us advice on any pruning, shaping, or care needed.

Many, many thanks to all our sponsors and supporters.

The revered oak

Our oaks are of the genus *Quercus Robur*. Known as the common oak but also by several other names, including English oak and Black oak, it is described by the Royal Horticultural Society as a large, deciduous tree potentially reaching a mature height of between 20 metres and 40 metres, with a magnificent broad crown and strong branches beneath. The tallest oak ever recorded is the Mingo White Oak, *Quercus Alba*, which stood in Mingo County, West Virginia, and reached a height of over 200 feet (61 metres).

What does the oak symbolise in the UK?

Strength.

“Heart of oak are our ships,
Heart of oak are our men;
We are always ready,
Steady boys steady!

We’ll fight and we’ll conquer again and again.”

This is the chorus of the well-known song written for the London stage by William Boyce with

words by David Garrick. The tune is the official march of the Royal Navy.

Since earliest times the oak has variously symbolised:

- Longevity
- Strength
- Stability
- Endurance
- Fertility
- Power
- Justice
- Honesty

What wonderful attributes to be forever associated with our Dunchurch Oak Line!

In Oliver Cromwell's time, couples were wed under oak trees.

Thanks to its distinctive leaves and acorns, the oak tree is one many people will recognise. That's why the oak leaf has been the logo of the National Trust for England and Wales since 1936. It is the chosen emblem of many environmental groups, including the Woodland Trust.

There are even four references to the oak in the Bible in the context of strength and stability.

The oak also has various healing properties, including antidiarrheal, astringent, anti-microbial, and anti-inflammatory.

Oak planking was commonly used in the construction of Viking longships in the 9th and 10th centuries. It has also been prized since the Middle Ages for the interior panelling of prestigious buildings like the debating chamber of the House of Commons.

Notably, in Europe, oak has been used in the construction of ships, especially naval men-of-war, right up to the 19th century.

It has been the principal material used in the construction of timber-framed buildings and remains so today.

It is a favourite with manufacturers of fine furniture and veneers.

Oaks have been a national symbol of strength and endurance for over 500 years. It was often

used by a local lad, William Shakespeare, in his writings to convey heritage and power.

The oak remains a symbol of our history, traditions, and the beauty of our countryside. It is also associated with nobility and patriotism; it has been adopted as a symbol by nations, states, and regions throughout the world. Perhaps the oak's major contribution to the planet is probably unknown to all but entomologists and arborists, and it is this: oak trees provide shelter, food, and breeding spaces to an amazing 2,300 wildlife species.

So, our own oak line will not only add beauty to our village but will also substantially contribute to the haven for multitudes of wildlife.

The oak is truly an amazing tree; it can reach a colossal height, live a conservative 200 years, and, exceptionally, live very much longer.

King John's Oak is an 800-year-old veteran English oak tree in the medieval deer park at Shute in the West Country. The Woodland Trust reports that the Marton Oak in Cheshire, the Bowthorpe Oak near Bourne in Lincolnshire, and the Big Belly Oak in the royal forest of

Savernake, Wiltshire, are all purported to be over 1000 years old. These trees have been around since the time of William the Conqueror! The “Major Oak” near Mansfield in Nottinghamshire is probably the most famous resident of Sherwood Forest, after Robin Hood, of course. It is arguably the best known and certainly one of the biggest oak trees in Britain, with a canopy spread of 28 metres, a trunk circumference of 11 metres, and an estimated weight of 23 tonnes. The Major Oak was selected as one of 70 ancient trees from around the UK which took their place in the Queen’s Green Canopy.

Scientists studied a single oak for one year. Their example was a great survivor over 400 years old. Its girth was 19 metres, and its height was 35 metres. They calculated that the tree created 700,000 leaves! This oak tree pumps out 58,000 litres of oxygen on a summer’s day; 240,000 litres would be enough for you or me for one year!

Salisbury Cathedral Spire, the tallest in England, has oak at its heart and is 800 years old!

The wreath on our late Majesty's coffin included myrtle, roses, and other cut flowers from the Royal Estates, each conveying a particular significance. However, to secure the structure and integrity of the wreath, it was supported by oak branches, further signifying strength and love.

On King Charles III's coronation day, we were all entranced by the Gold Coronation Coach, which transported the newly crowned King from Westminster Abbey back to Buckingham Palace. Less well known was the black and gold-trimmed coach that took him from the Palace to the Abbey earlier; much of the construction of that coach was oak, reclaimed from HMS Victory when she was decommissioned after the Battle of Trafalgar. A symbolic and very early example of recycling!

Close to Blenheim Palace, there is an oak tree 1,046 years old! Close by, there is a stand of similarly ancient oaks, some of the very oldest known. Clearly, there is something in their genes that accounts for their longevity. That being the

case, arborists have been collecting the glut of acorns, which climatic conditions have encouraged, and are growing them on to produce hundreds, if not thousands, of saplings that will hopefully develop into mature trees over the next hundred years, just as we have planned with our Oak Line.

A more local oak of note is the original centuries-old “Midland Oak,” (Warwickshire Oak) that grew in Leamington Spa; it was reputed to mark the centre of England. There is a much younger oak tree at this site now; nearby, a plaque states that it was planted about 1988, grown from an acorn saved in 1967 when the old tree, which had died, was cut down.

The new King Charles III 5p piece features an oak tree leaf on the ‘tails’ side of the coin. The eight coins, from 1p to £2, are all designed to show the importance and precariousness of the natural world.

“An oak tree leaf signifying its role as a rich habitat for biodiversity in woodland areas and an

association with monarchy of the past.” As we have noted in various paragraphs in this volume!

There is one more use, which may be of contemporary interest! Oak barrels (usually made from White Oak, *Quercus Alba*) are well known for their use in ageing wines and spirits.

(Compounds such as vanilla, clove, spice, and char add complexity to the aroma and taste, and the porous nature of oak wood allows for the gradual introduction of oxygen into wine, resulting in a smoother, rounder finish.) Now some craft breweries are using oak barrels that once housed bourbon, whisky, wine, or, to a lesser extent, brandy, sherry, or port, looking for new and unique ways to enhance the flavour of their beers.

No wonder the oak has been greatly revered for so many generations!

Trees in and around Dunchurch

We are indeed very privileged to live in a village mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086).

From the physical evidence of St. Peter's Church to other clues scattered around the village over the last several hundreds of years, we have monuments, buildings, and geographical features like "The Heath," descriptive of the heathland countryside that, many years ago, stretched from Dunchurch all the way to Coventry and Warwick. We are fortunate to still have some magnificent buildings around the Square, the thatched cottages on Southam Road and The Heath, plus the superb former country houses and Hunting Lodges overlooking the Leam Valley, like Bilton Grange and Dunchurch Park. If you get a chance to visit the grounds of these latter two, you will be treated to seeing some truly magnificent trees from all around the world, indicating our love of trees over the centuries.



Morning mist in Dunchurch Park.



The sun setting in Dunchurch Park.

Overlooked, however, are some wonderful aged trees, some apparently springing up naturally, others planned, and some more recently, to commemorate people, events, and celebrations, which we pass completely by without noticing. The Scots Pines along the Coventry Road from Dunchurch are a case in point; they are said to have been planted in 1749 to mark the Holyhead Road across Dunsmore Heath. They still show a certain style when approaching our village. Similarly, we have the magnificent avenue of elms leading up to the house named for them.

Elsewhere, there are some very prominent trees, some less so. At the end of Cawston Lane, on the triangle of land behind the bus shelter, (formerly known as the Heath Pit and a local eyesore), now stands a really picturesque copper beech planted to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of King George V and Queen Mary in 1935. An equally impressive tree is the horse chestnut, immediately outside The Old Forge, close to the crossroads in the village. It is understandable, but incorrect, that this tree is sometimes taken for the ‘spreading chestnut tree’ of Longfellow’s “The Village Blacksmith” poem.



Taken in the 1910s, the Scots Pines on the Coventry Road as they looked in their prime.



The remnants but still rather magnificent!



More of the old Scots Pines on Coventry Road.



An avenue of elms leading to “The Elms”!



A truly statuesque 1935 Silver Jubilee Copper Beech celebrates the reign of King George V and Queen Mary.



The impressive horse chestnut tree outside
The Old Forge in black and white days.



The same, but leafless, in the early spring of 2023.

Near the War Memorial and also in the area bordering the lower path of The Heath are a number of poignant plaques at the foot of a variety of decorative trees commemorating people and events close to the heart of our village.

If you make your way from Vicarage Lane towards the top end of the Sportsfield, access is gained via a narrow, often muddy path. BUT right at the start of the path on the right-hand side, is one of the most wonderful trees in our village. It is an ancient oak, which is calculated (by measuring its girth) to be around 275 years old. Its life span, therefore, covers the whole of the Industrial Revolution, predates the writing of the American Constitution, and was already maturing when the French Revolution occurred. Surely, we should honour this tree by naming it "Colossus," (coincidentally the name of a Man-of-War in Nelson's fleet at the Battle of Trafalgar). Just further along the path on the right-hand side are two more oaks, one immediately before the pedestrian gate and the other inside the field. They are both between 150 and 200 years old, venerable Victorians.



Plaques commemorating neighbours friends and events.



I have named this the "Colossus Oak". It is the largest and oldest I have been able to find in Dunchurch - around 300 years old!



Nearby Colossus, two more old oaks.



Daventry Road as you never imagined it!



A wonderful mature oak at Rugby School
Sports Field on Barby Road.



A "classic" Warwickshire oak
seen from Barby Road.

A more recent addition to the village stock of important trees is the Millennium Oak found immediately to the left of the main gate entrance into the Sportsfield and Village Hall. It was planted by Chairman of Trustees Paul Smith in the greatest downpour of rain that year. Now approaching 30ft in height it will soon dominate that area, a fitting commemoration.

In the spring of 2022, St. Peter's Church, in collaboration with the Friends of Dunchurch Society (FODS), planted 30 British native saplings as part of the late Queen's Green Canopy initiative.

All the saplings were sourced from the Woodland Trust and were planted in the field adjacent to the churchyard. There were 10 each of rowan, silver birch and wild cherry. Later, 30 more saplings were added, a mix of dog rose, hawthorn, hazel, crab apple and dogwood. In the summer of 2023, Andrew from the Woodland Trust accompanied a FODS representative to inspect the newly planted saplings. His comments were positive and he gave a thumbs up to how and where they had

been planted and the good growth they showed. He was especially impressed to hear the saplings had received a blessing from Rev. Pat Townhend! FODS continue to inspect the saplings to ensure they thrive and provide vital shelter and food for wildlife for many years to come.

Also worth a mention is the apple orchard off The Hall Close in Dunchurch. This area is the property of Rugby Borough Council (RBC) but was managed for a period of time by FODS. At the request of FODS the Royal Horticultural Society identified that most of the 24 apple trees were of the Bramley's Seedling variety. It is believed, these were used to supply the kitchens at Dunchurch Winton Hall School.

With the permission of RBC and with advice from the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, FODS introduced bird boxes and also undertook to record the wide variety of wildflowers growing there - 35 in total plus 4 types of other trees. A full list, together with photographs, may be found on the FODS website:

<http://friendsofdunchurchsociety.org/friendsofdunchurch/wild-flowers.htm>



The "Millennium Oak" in the grounds of Dunchurch Village Hall and Sportsfield.



Members of FODS and St. Peter's Church came together to plant saplings as part of the late Queen's Green Canopy initiative.

Oak in our homes

Most of the really old houses in the village have a relationship with ancient trees. However, the evidence is often hidden away in lofts and roof spaces, and those providing support structures are often covered by brick walls, plaster, or panelling and so cannot be seen.

However, the opposite considerations are to be found in many of the thatched properties, and a glance at any sales notice for these properties will include a phrase like “contains a wealth of exposed beams.”

In our own cottage, (17th, 18th, and 19th centuries), we are fortunate to be able to recognise the heavy central beams retrieved from breakers yards around Plymouth, Portsmouth, or Bucklers Hard. Here, the warships and large merchantmen were decommissioned, and the valuable oak was sold off for building materials.

Henry VIII had demanded a massive shipbuilding programme in view of the Spanish and French

aggressive intentions. As a result, most of the mature oaks had been cut down for shipbuilding. HMS Victory required 6,000 oaks to complete!

Oak and elm were the major building materials for houses and cottages, and so the wood was recycled from the decommissioned vessels.

Huge loads of oak beams were loaded onto ox carts and undertook the 150-mile trip to the Midlands on rough tracks and byways to be used locally.

The main beam in our lounge, (about 15 inches square), has a number of random notches, clearly at one time interlocking with other substantial beams, and curiously, the smaller ceiling cross beams radiating from it in our ceiling have a kind of bend in them that would have been used to shape the prow or stern of a ship. An ever-present and somewhat romantic reminder of the past and a contemporary link with “The Dunchurch Oak Line.”

A tree for you

This book of “The Dunchurch Oak Line” is also a celebration of trees.

If you are lucky enough to have a garden of any size, then I assure you, there is a tree for you. Talk to your local garden centres, compare their recommendations’, (and prices), and check out their suggestions on the internet. No matter how small, even if you only have room for a window box, there is a tree for you!

Opposite you see a 50-year-old bonsai, requiring only minimum attention.

Good luck!



A 50 year old bonsai!

Appendices

Appendix I Acknowledgements

Major thanks must go to the 11 Sponsors of “The Dunchurch Oak Line,” who responded enthusiastically to the project (and paid for most of it!). Also, to the Friends of Dunchurch Society, (FODS), our collaborators in this whole project, for their help and advice.

Thank you to the individual, family, and business sponsors who wanted to express their support. David Gower of Rugby Borough Council helped get the project sited on The Heath after having to move from the sportsfield. Our new friend, Gavin Collard, from Onley and former ‘Tree Man’ for Warwickshire County Council, gave us expert advice, carried out a seasonal prune, and provided and installed the deep and extensive mulch.

Excellent!

Thanks also to the Trustees of The Sportsfield and Village Hall, who supported the project from the start, and particularly Paul Le Poideven, who has acted as treasurer.

In periods of extremely hot, dry weather, Rob Collings, Phil Freeman, Dave Watson, and Keith Brushett helped keep the saplings watered and carried out running repairs. Well done, chaps!

I thank my family for their encouragement and support (and for keeping the dining room table clear for me), especially Simon, for unravelling the many mysteries of my laptop.

Much of the information regarding the historic oaks and trees mentioned in this book has been found by searching the internet. The main sites searched were Wikipedia and the Woodland Trust. The following web sites provided valuable information:

ourwarwickshire.org.uk for the Scots pines;
umborne.org for the King John's Oak; and
visitsherwood.co.uk for the Major Oak.

The historic sepia and black-and-white photographs, are reproduced with the kind permission of Warwickshire County Council and Rugby Borough Council Archives.

Thank you to Dr. John Hunter for the Judge family portrait pictures and to Barrie Lambert for the FODS and St. Peter's Church group photograph.

I have to add a very special "thank you" to Jane and Eric Ewington, who took all of the remaining photographs. Also, they have not only retrieved my original notes from deep within my laptop, thus enabling a coherent story line to be created, but have also reorganised the photos and narrative. This, in turn, will enable Eric to create a splendid electronic

version of “The Dunchurch Oak Line” available to everyone with an interest in our village.

Note: Copyrights of all images in this book are retained by the individual rights holders.

As an unreformed technophobe, I am amazed by the knowledge and skill involved and can only offer my sincere thanks to Jane and Eric on behalf of all those who take the time to read either version of “The Dunchurch Oak Line.”

As ever, it has been a great team effort, and I really appreciate everyone’s support.

Thanks to the ‘editorial team’ who corrected many of my errors and also for suggesting a more readable format. The members of the editorial team were chiefly Jane and Eric Ewington with Deb and Phill Freeman, Wendy and Rob Collings, Lynne and Keith Brushett, Jane and Dave Watson, Sue and Keith Protheroe and Sue Turner.

This book is entirely my responsibility, if there are errors or omissions, they are all down to me. If you wish to correct anything, please contact me.

(mabjudge@icloud.com)

Mike Judge.

Appendix II List of all sponsors

The oak tree sponsors

1. Dunchurch School's Federation
2. Dunchurch Pantomaniacs
3. Dunchurch Baptist Church
4. Dunchurch Parish Council
5. Dunchurch Sportsfield and Village Hall
6. Friends of Dunchurch Society
7. Dunchurch and Thurlaston Women's Institute
8. St. Peter's Church Dunchurch
9. Dunchurch Festival Group
10. Dunchurch Scouts
11. Dunchurch Girlguiding

Individual, Family and Business sponsors

Sue and Keith Protheroe

Laura, Mark, Daisy and Bobby Rozic

Tom, Katie and Lily Protheroe

Paul, Jane, Christopher, Frederick, Flora and Helen
Le Poidevin

Jamie Battista, Amie and Emma Beechey

Paula Twigger and family

Mike and Patricia Judge

Natalie Judge and Stephen Pietrzykowski

Mark Gilsenen, Maxine and Luchia Oatridge

Stuart and Catherine Hallahan

Wanda Fashions

Simon Patrick, Ria, Thora Mary and Harrison

Michael Judge

Veronica, Ian Lowe. Rhiannon James, Zachary
and Lyra Hallahan

Neil, Fiona and Charlie Stevenson

Rachel and David Schofield-Newton

Hannah and Alex Turnbull

Jack and Jenna Schofield-Newton

Annegret Morgon

Stefan at The Kitchens Inc.

Jane and Eric Ewington

Ruth, Paul, Emily and Sophie Kilborn

Anna, Robert, William, Logan and Ollie
Ewington

Appendix III The original invitation to prospective sponsors

The “Dunchurch Oak Line” Project

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

On behalf of the Trustees of the Dunchurch Sportsfield and Village Hall I am delighted to be able to invite your Organisation to sponsor a truly unique community project celebrating Her Majesty’s Platinum Anniversary.

You may have heard of “The Queen’s Green Canopy” which is a UK wide initiative for communities to plant trees to help celebrate her 70 year reign while benefitting the ecology of every region (more information on Queen’s Green Canopy.org).

Our plan is to plant “The Dunchurch Oak Line” at the top end of the Sportsfield, running in front of the recently restored, magnificent Victorian wall marking the border of Bilton Grange School. There is room for 10 Oaks which over the next 50 or 60 years should reach their mature height

of around 50/60 ft! So, this is a real “Capability Brown” legacy project and only the youngest in the village will see and appreciate the full majesty of the “Dunchurch Oak Line” - but the trees often live for 300 years, so many generations will benefit from our investment in 2022!

We are offering the sponsorship opportunity for £100 per tree (dependent upon the price and availability of trees) and to include stakes and ties. As a sponsor you would have the naming rights of “your” Oak, eg Festival Oak, St Peter’s Oak, The Parish Oak. You will be able to add a brief “Sponsor’s Dedication” and these will be recorded in a good quality book to be kept at the Village Hall or the Library. St Peter’s dedication might be “Celebrating more than 1000 years in Dunchurch”, The Baptist Church could say “Marking the building of our new Church” and the WI might reflect “On achieving more than a century in the community”, you choose.

Of the ten trees, three are already reserved – The Trustees of the Sportsfield Village Hall may well take up the honour of naming “The Queen’s

Oak” another is reserved for our friends in FODS who we hope will collaborate with us on this project. The third is reserved for the Parish Council who we hope will also wish to support this brilliant project. The remaining trees will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, so get your application in ASAP.

If things go according to plan we would organise a “Hole Digging” afternoon and invite each sponsor to bring along their spades along and join in, ahead of a later official planting ceremony with Sponsors and special guests celebrating the mass planting and unveiling a plaque. The planting season will end in late March, so we don’t have long to achieve all this.

If we are oversubscribed, we are already considering some options for the future.

To reserve your tree please complete and return the attached form.

Stay Safe,
Mike Judge.

“THE DUNCHURCH OAK LINE

Please print your name _____

And your Organisation _____

We would like to sponsor an oak as described in your letter.

If we are successful we understand further dates/details will follow.

Signed _____

Date _____

Please return to mabjudge@hotmail.com

White Rose Cottage, 80/81 The Heath,
Dunchurch, Rugby, CV226RJ
(tel.no :- 02788 810253)

Appendix IV Financial records for the Dunchurch Oak Line

Expenditure

Item	Description	Value (£)
1	10 oaks including shipping and root grow	468.84
2	10 tree ties	20.90
3	10 tree stakes	37.80
4	Fertiliser	39.80
5	Tree guards	47.90
6	British Legion plaque	144.99
7	100 litres of bark	8.99
8	Manure	5.50
9	Numbers for the tree stakes	32.89
10	Italian leather album	93.60
11	Containers	30.00
12	10 Angled support stakes	31.00
13	Protectors for angled support stakes	11.99
14	King Charles III Coronation Oak	69.96
15	Root grow for Coronation Oak	6.00
16	Tree guard for Coronation Oak	3.48
17	11 Brass plaques	150.00

Item	Description	Value (£)
18	Photographic costs including 2 memory sticks, prints and adhesive	138.88
19	Parchment paper	11.99

Total expenditure		£1354.51
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Income from sponsorship

Item	Description	Value (£)
1	11 trees at £100.00 each	1100.00
2	Individual, family and business	102.00

Total Income		£1202.00
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Deficit		£152.51
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The deficit was kindly made up by one of our sponsors.

Appendix V Village Magazine articles relating to The Dunchurch Oak Line and The Coronation Oak

JUNE 2022 ISSUE 15

DUNCHURCH VILLAGE MAGAZINE

The Dunchurch Oak Line

By Mike Judge, Trustee of Dunchurch Sportsfield and Village Hall

The Dunchurch Oak Line project to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Anniversary (and a unique contribution to FODS representing the seven midland counties in the Royal Horticultural Societies' Britain in Bloom competition) received enthusiastic support from ten organisations in the village who each sponsored one of the ten planted oak trees. The original idea was to plant the trees at the far end of the sports field. Unfortunately, the proximity of the Oak Line to the football pitch does not take account of the possible migration of the pitch towards the ditch at the top end of the sports field and the Trustees have examined the possibility of re-siting the trees elsewhere on the field. Sadly, the constraints of the ownership of the orchard site (Rugby School/Bilton Grange) and the proximity of this land to the goal line of the football pitch and the boundary of the cricket pitch also precludes that site.

I am actively pursuing an alternative site in the village to try and maintain the integrity of the original plan and the sponsors will be kept informed as to the progress. In the meantime, the trees will be kept in good order.

Although I am sorry our original plan has not worked out as we had wished, I can assure you of our determined efforts to find an alternative solution and we will keep you posted on new arrangements.



See www.friendsofdunchurchsociety.org for more news

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The Dunchurch Oak Line

By Mike Judge, Dunchurch Sportsfield & Village Hall Trustee, and Oak Line Organiser

The Dunchurch Oak Line is alive and thriving in its new home – The Heath Green, adjacent to the magnificent Dunchurch Beacon. The young trees are already looking established and putting on new growth. The vertical support stakes have been supplemented by stakes hammered in at 45 degrees and along with improved ties allow adequate movement to strengthen the tree whilst ensuring it grows upright. A bark mulch has been added at the base of each tree to retain as much moisture as possible, especially during the dry and record-breaking temperatures experienced this year. Fortunately, our loyal watermen, Rob Collings, Phill Freeman, Keith Brushett and Dave Watson have been out checking on the health of our trees and watering them, sometimes twice a day. Many thanks are due to them and others who check the Line regularly.

The trees are quickly establishing themselves as a major feature and whether viewed from Tree 1, at the Waring Way end of the Line or Tree 10 at the village centre end, the trees already demonstrate the lovely sweep of the crescent we planned. This complements the existing trees that also follow the line of the footpath and over the years, a wonderful avenue of trees will emerge.

Thanks are due to our terrific sponsors, all of whom stuck with us after the initial set-back, and to our collaborators,

FODS, who helped to bring this project to fruition. The Dunchurch Oak Line is a wonderful commemorative project celebrating Her Majesty's 70 year reign, supporting not only 'The Queen's Green Canopy' but, is hopefully a valuable contribution to the FODS entry to the RHS Britain in Bloom 2022 competition and also supporting the village's nomination as the representatives of the Midland Counties in the Large Village category against entries representing the rest of the country. A great honour to have been thus selected in their first year of operations!

The book telling the story of 'The Dunchurch Oak Line' is currently being compiled with photographs of notable trees in the village (courtesy of Eric and Jane Ewington) and text being produced as quickly as my single finger typing can go! We hope to make it available for everyone to see in the library in due course.



Mike Judge at the planting of the Dunchurch Oak Line

Dunchurch Oak Line – Ten plus One

By Mike Judge, Trustee and Organiser

Since planting last year and receiving the devoted attention of 'The Oak Gang' during the hottest weather and consequent drought, the 'Oak Line' is, I am glad to report, in good shape.

We have benefitted from some expert guidance and support of new-found friend Gavin Callard from nearby Onley (former Arborist with Warwickshire County Council) who has checked the health and care of the trees and suggested and provided material for a much larger and deeper mulch collar around the base of each tree enabling us to water once per week in the drier season (albeit 25 litres for each tree)! Gavin plans to return in the spring to advise on pruning and any upkeep. Meanwhile, he has already assisted on the location of our latest project, 'The Charles III Oak', the addition of which will be a perfect complement for our existing 'Dunchurch Oak Line'.

Permission and helpful advice has also been sought from David Gower (no, not the cricketer but our

Rugby Borough Council tree expert) and Rob Collings has very kindly dug over the site. As you walk along the footpath from the village towards Waring Way, you will see the area adjacent to the WI Centenary Acer, approximately 20 metres across from the beacon.

I am liaising with our collaborating FODS colleagues who are organising an eve of the Coronation event, and plan for the sponsor of the tree to wield the 'Golden Spade' as part of that celebration.

Preparations are very well advanced and a bare-rooted oak tree has already been received and planted along with hormone rooting compound, in a very large and protected terra cotta container. The tree is currently preparing for the growing season which commences in a few weeks time, in anticipation of a fully-leafed tree ready for the planting on Friday, 5th May.

Be there for a wonderful historic occasion!

A misty morning Oak Line



See www.friendsofdunchurchsociety.org for more news

Formed by like-minded residents who love Dunchurch and its heritage and wish to protect and enhance its environment in order to make the village a better place to live in, work in and visit.



FRIENDS OF
DUNCHURCH
SOCIETY (FODS)

Welcome

Since publishing our first issue of the Dunchurch Village Magazine, we have endeavoured to shine a light on the positive aspects of our village and in particular, its very rich history. One such article in our June 2019 issue included a *Rugby Advertiser* article from May 1935. This celebrated the Silver Jubilee of George V with the planting of a copper beech tree on the corner of Cawston Lane and Rugby Road on an area that had been referred to as 'the Heath Pit'

and 'an offensive eyesore'. This tree still stands proud on the green that surrounds it and in spring, the area has been further enhanced by a beautiful display of daffodils and in summer, a metal support with four hanging baskets sponsored by The Dunchurch Pantomaniacs. What became known as Jubilee Corner is now far from the 'offensive eyesore' it was once described, and we can



Wendy and Glynis on parade at the Spring Fair

be thankful to those folk who originally transformed the area by marking their own historical occasion by the planting of a tree.

How fitting then, the May Coronation of King Charles III should be marked by the addition of an English oak on the large green opposite the copper beech. This sits alongside the wonderful Oak Line planted last June to celebrate our late Queen's Jubilee. History may be some-

thing from the past but it is made in the present and perhaps in years to come, folk will be reading about our own tree-planting ceremonies and marvelling at the beauty of 11 established and sturdy oaks and wondering about the people who had put them there. (See page 19 for more details on the Coronation Oak.)

FODS News

Spring Fair Thank you to all the volunteers who worked to make

King Charles III, Coronation Oak

By Mike Judge MBE, Trustee and Organiser

As we move into the summer months, of special interest to us this year will be the first leaves on our Dunchurch Oak Line and the latest addition of His Majesty's Coronation Oak. You may have witnessed its planting on the evening of 5th May as a precursor to the celebration organised by our collaborator FODS.

We had an outstanding community sponsor for the latest tree which was purchased and nurtured in my garden whilst the site for planting was approved by Rugby Borough Council. We are now ready for the addition of the royal plaque!

Following the precedent of involving community groups for the planting of Her Majesty's Oak Line, we now have the opportunity of involving individuals, families and village traders in helping to sponsor brass plaques identifying all sponsors and recording their names in *The Dunchurch Oak Line* book. This is currently being assembled and should hopefully be on display in the library quite soon.



Mike Judge and Girl Guide helps plant the King Charles Coronation Oak

Our good friend Paula from Wanda Fashions has kindly agreed to act as the collecting point for all your donations. For just £1 your name will be added to all our generous donors in the book. If you wish to make a family gift you can have all their names displayed for just £3 and if you are in business in the

village, run a shop or a hostelry, you too could be included for just a £5 donation. To make the process as simple as possible, please print your name(s) on a sealed envelope containing your donation and take it to Wanda's.

Should there be any surplus funds when all plaques have been purchased, this will be passed to FODS to

help with the future upkeep of our iconic 'Oak Line'.

I do hope you will take the opportunity to be a part of this historical occasion which will leave a positive mark on our village for generations to come.

Many, many thanks for your support.

See www.friendsofdunchurchsociety.org for more news



Dunchurch Oak Line update

By Mike Judge

As the scorching heat of August began to decline and twilight descended, a shadowy figure armed with secateurs and a small saw flittered from tree to tree. As promised earlier in the season, he snipped here and there and occasionally sawed to heighten the canopy. Yes, it was our very good friend and arborist, Gavin Callard, from Onley who has also very kindly supplied and installed a depth of mulch around each tree to help retain moisture. Meanwhile, Rob Collings in particular, armed with his watering cans, supplements what the Good Lord provides in the form of rain, ensuring our trees develop appropriately. Gavin's report is encouraging and the

trees all seem to be making good progress, albeit at slightly different rates according to their slightly different ages and structures.

Many thanks to Gavin, Mark, Rob, Phill and Keith B for all their help on keeping 'The Dunchurch Oak Line' in such tip top condition.



Planted in an arc on The Heath Green, the sapling trees continue to thrive

The King Charles III Oak

Thirty dark blue 'Remembrance' crocuses, donated by an anonymous supporter, have been planted around the base of the King Charles III Oak. This was deemed a lovely way to remember Betty Green, a very dear lady and a supporter of many of the groups in the village. The crocuses should be visible by early spring

Mike Judge and Betty's daughter Sue plant 'remembrance' crocuses around the base of The King Charles III Oak



See www.friendsofdunchurchsociety.org for more news

The Dunchurch Oak Line Book

Situated on The Heath, this wonderful addition to our village will shortly have a book produced and printed to tell its story and that of other notable trees in the village. Below is an update on its progress by Mike who, from start to fruition, has been the driving force behind this project. Thank you Mike.

By Mike Judge, MBE

Helpful friends, (especially the Ewingtons) have been reviewing the book and commenting on errors or omissions as requested. There are just a couple of editors left to submit their observations before volunteer Jane Ewington works with me to reorder the text if required. I will then liaise with the library about a lengthy loan of the book so villagers may visit and look at it.

More significant in a way is the creation of an electronic version (e-book) by Eric Ewington, enabling you to download it and read at your leisure. We hope this too will be available in a few weeks.

As regards the new trees themselves, they are in good shape, most having shed their 2023 leaves and it is heartening to see the odd person checking the oaks out for signs of buds and potential growth. We are confident that our oaks are firmly enough established to withstand whatever the wintery weather may have thrown at them and reward us with fresh leaves, acorns, oak apples and new growth in the months to come!

The Return of the Missing Scots Pines!

In the Dunchurch Oak Line book, you will be able to see a number of references to the historic

Scots Pines which originally ran from close proximity to the Bilton Grange entrance and sporadically towards the M45 junction. Time and possibly some neglect have taken their toll and the appropriate authorities are being encouraged to restore and replace these splendid trees thereby enhancing the approach and exit from the village. Fortunately, the work has already commenced with the planting of two saplings on the green central reservation between Bilton Grange and the sportsfield. I am writing to WCC and thanking them for starting the project. Any offer of checking the trees and helping to water in hot weather or periods of drought would really support our appeal! Thank you.



A very healthy looking Scots Pine recently planted on the Rugby Road verge

Appendix VI Thank you

Thank you for reading The Dunchurch Oak Line, whether it was the hard copy in the library or the e-version at home. I do hope you enjoyed it.

Both are available free of charge to sponsors, villagers, and friends near and far. However, if you would like to contribute a modest amount to help with the maintenance of the trees, I would be very grateful and will add your name to the list of supporters. Simply drop your contribution in an envelope with your contact details to:

Mr. M.A.B. Judge, MBE

White Rose Cottage

80–81 The Heath

Dunchurch

RUGBY

CV22 6RJ

