

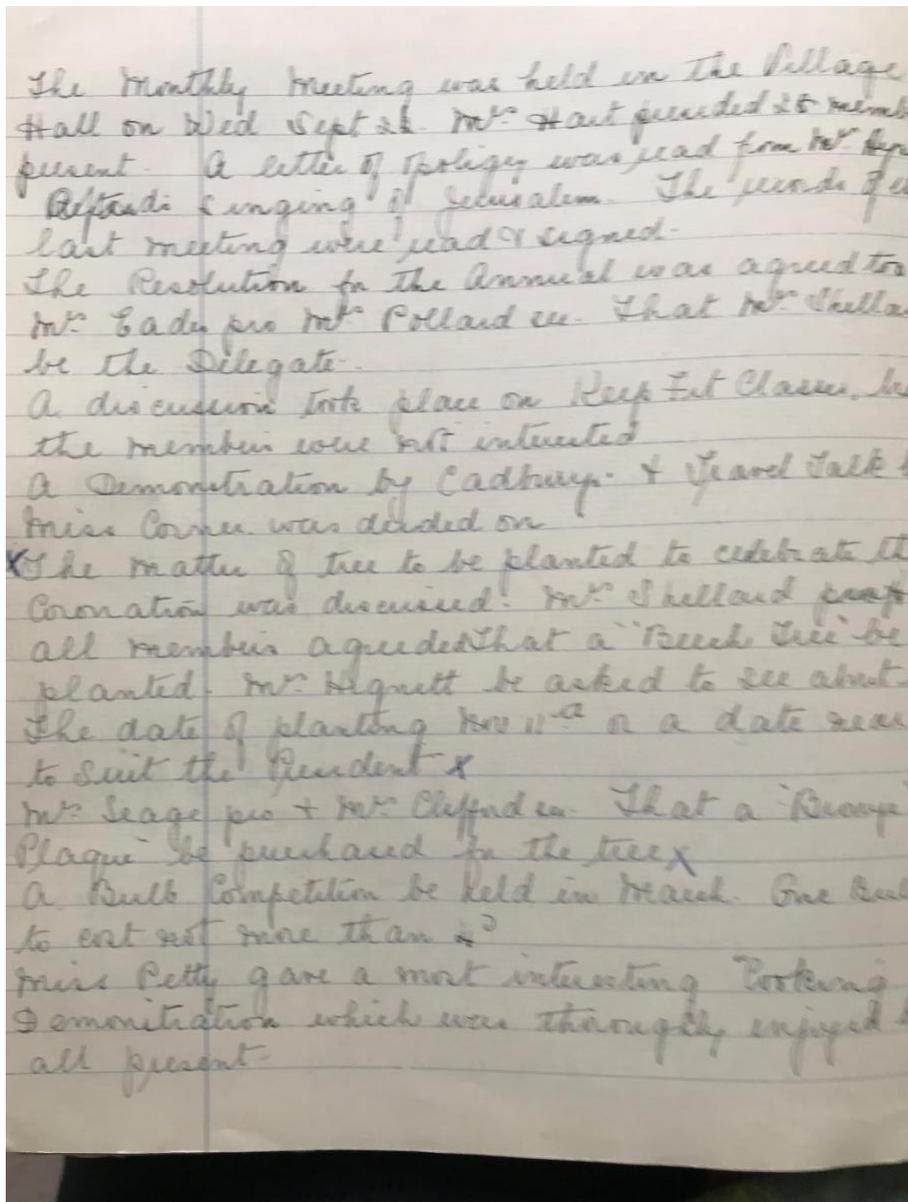
The Beech Tree, Main Street, East Farndon



The magnificent beech tree, which stands at the top of Main Street, was planted on 14th November 1937. The members of East Farndon Women's Institute (WI) decided to plant a tree to commemorate the coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. The coronation took place at Westminster Abbey, London on 12th May 1937. George was the second son of King George V and Queen Mary, and therefore second in line to the throne, but he became King on 11th December 1936 when his brother Edward VIII abdicated.

At a meeting of East Farndon WI in September 1937, it was decided to plant a beech tree with a plaque, and we are fortunate to still have copies of the original WI diaries. The diaries were kindly loaned by Mrs Marjorie Houlston (WI Secretary), and permission to use the three copies below was kindly provided by Mrs Jean Westwood (WI Chair).

The first diary entry details the WI meeting dated Wednesday September 21st 1937, held in East Farndon Village Hall. It states that the matter to plant a tree to celebrate the coronation was discussed. It was also agreed that a bronze plaque should be planted.



The Monthly Meeting was held in the Village Hall on Wed Sept 21. Mr. Hart presided 25 members present. A letter of apology was read from Mr. Hyslop. A letter of apology was read from Mr. Hyslop. The records of the last meeting were read & signed. The Resolution for the Annual was agreed to Mr. Gadsby pro Mr. Pollard con. That Mr. Shellard be the Delegate. A discussion took place on Keep Fit Classes, but the members were not interested. A Demonstration by Cadbury & Travel Talk to Miss Corner was decided on. The matter of tree to be planted to celebrate the Coronation was discussed. Mr. Shellard prop all members agreed that a Beech tree be planted. Mr. Hignett be asked to see about the date of planting Nov 11th or a date near to suit the President & Mr. Seage pro & Mr. Clifford con. That a Bronze Plaque be purchased for the tree. A Bunk Competition be held in March. One Bunk to cost not more than 2^p. Miss Petty gave a most interesting Cooking Demonstration which was thoroughly enjoyed & all present.

The beech tree was planted during the afternoon of Sunday November 14th 1937 by the President of the WI. The ceremony was recorded in detail in the third diary entry.

The second diary entry details the committee meeting held on Tuesday 7th December 1937. The question of placing the plaque around the tree was discussed, and it was decided to screw it on the ground. Unfortunately, over the years, the plaque has disappeared.

Committee Meeting was held on Tuesday Dec. 7th Mr. Hart.
aided. Those present Mr. Seage, Mr. Givens, Mr. Belton Mr.
Miss E. Gibson & E. Barber.
ords of last meeting were read & signed.
respondence. It was agreed the Herring Commutation should be
open meeting, as suggested by the Board.
Seage was elected to go to Northampton to the Annual Meeting.
Shellard being unable to owing to illness. The question of
placing of the Plaque was discussed & it was decided to
Mr. Seage to screw it on the ground. Pro by Mr. Givens Sec. Mr. Belton
Hart pro & Mr. Cole sec. That the children's party be held on Saturd
next. Pro by Mr. Givens. Sec. by Mr. Cole. That Mr. Beighton be
en 50. cigarettes for his kindness in digging for the tree etc.
was pro. by Mr. Cole sec. Miss E. Gibson. That the Library be open
stitute evenings. Miss Gibson asked to be relieved from take
Magazines. Mr. Seage gave an account of the Finance
which was quite good.
A. Shellard. Jan. 6.

The third diary entry relates to the committee meeting held on 12th January 1938, detailing the planting of the beech tree on 14th November 1937.

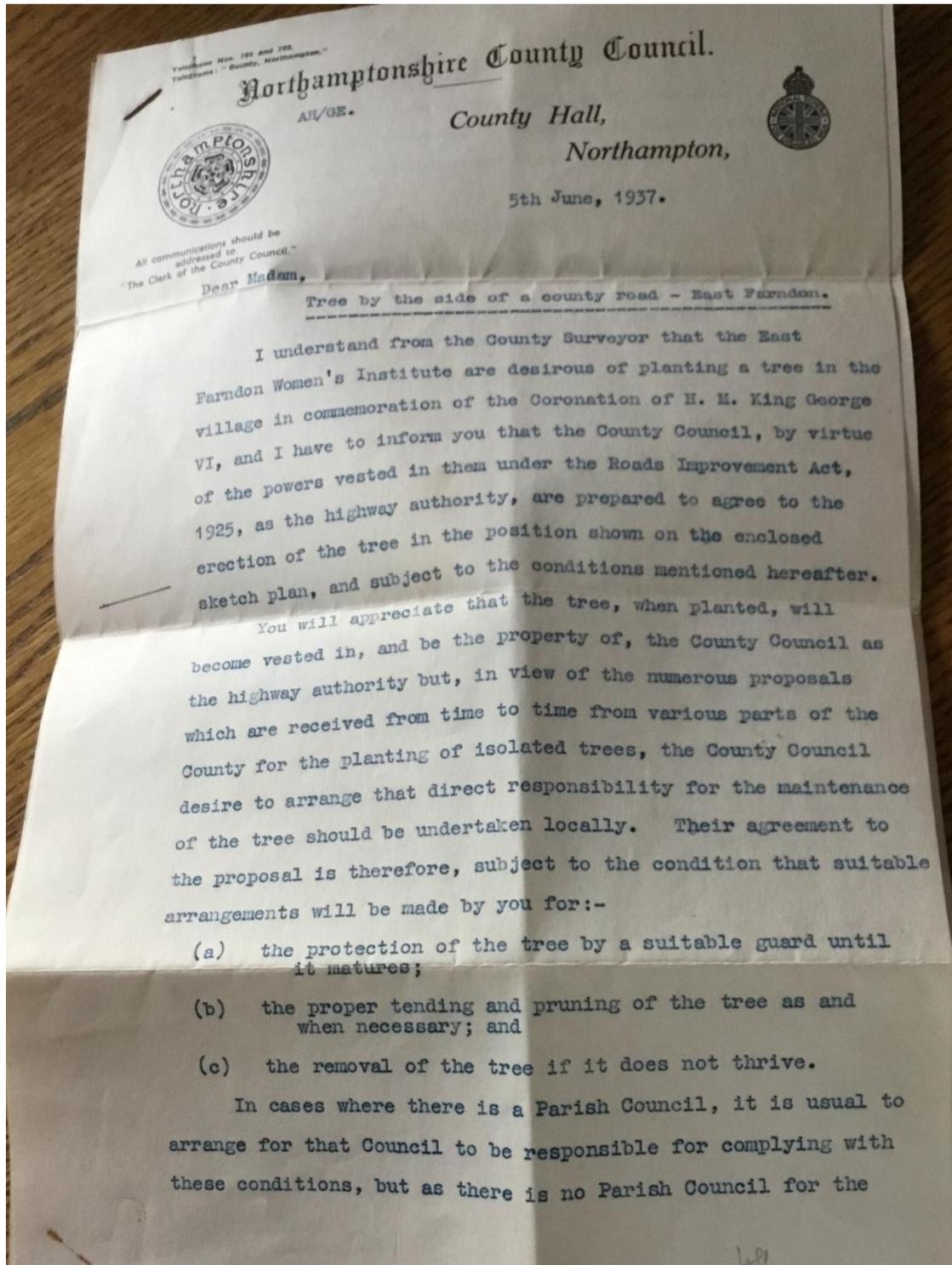
D. J. Hart
Jan 12th 1938

An interesting event took place on Sunday afternoon when the President planted a tree to commemorate the coronation. A number of villagers were present. Major Hignett accompanied Mr. Hignett. Mr. J. A. Hart made a speech welcoming them & saying that the tree was a token of their loyalty & esteem to His Majesty King George 6th & Queen Elizabeth. He hoped the C.C. in the near future would surround the tree & put a seat there. He went on to say how kind Major & Mr. Hignett were to take so much interest in the village although they had to. He thought the W.D. was a most excellent body of ladies. Mr. Hignett in a few words thanked Mr. Hart for the nice things he said about the W.D. She hoped the children would be care of the tree. The tree was then planted, most of members putting in a spadeful of soil. x

Rev. Meriman said he hoped the children would be as loyal to George 6th as the older people had been to his father George 5th. The National Anthem was sung. The Rev. Meriman gave the blessing. x

Update September 2021

We have kindly been provided with a copy of the following document, which was found when sorting through a box of East Farndon Women's Institute diaries. The letter is dated 5th June 1937 and is from Northamptonshire County Council giving permission for the beech tree to be planted. They also provided a map showing exactly where it should be placed.



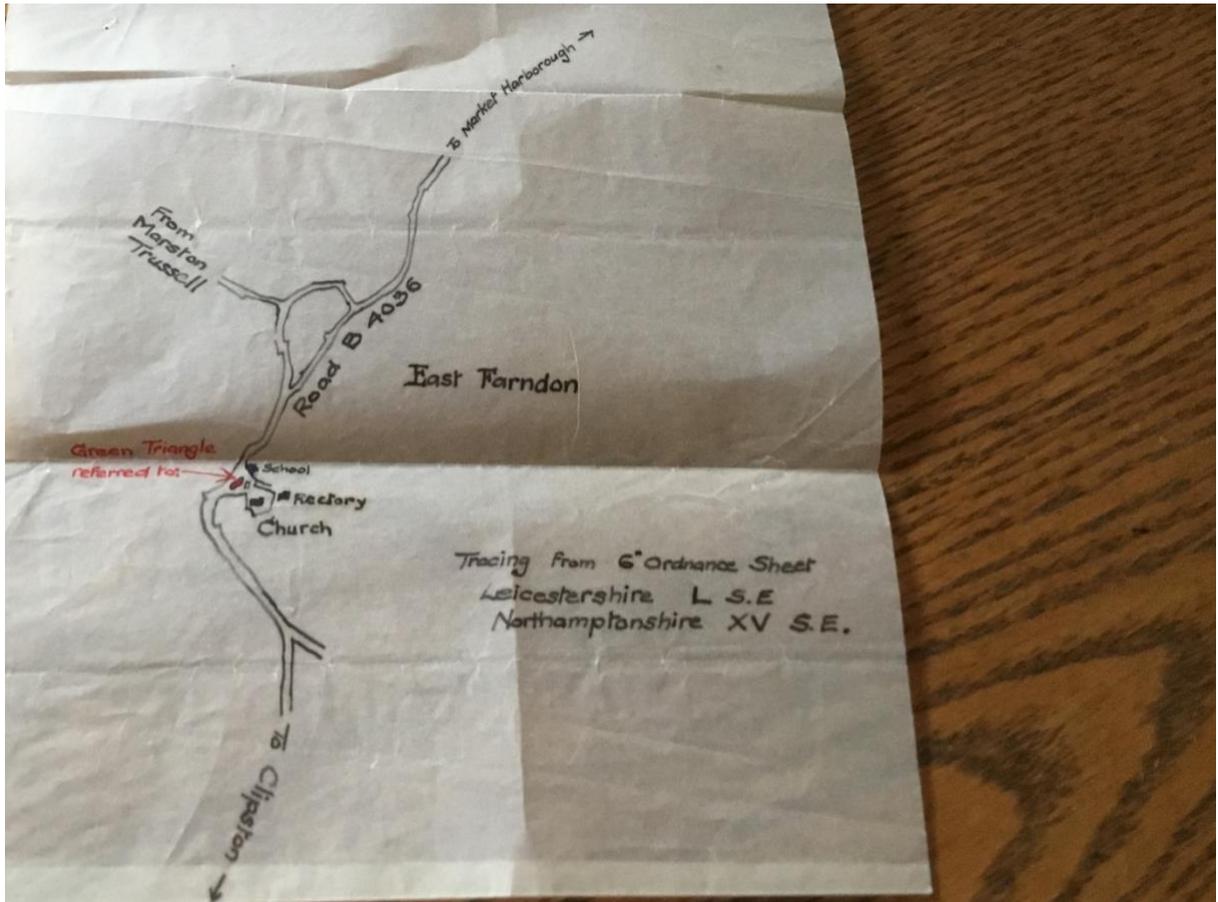
parish of East Farndon, I shall be glad to hear whether
you yourself will undertake to comply with these conditions,
and if not, who it is proposed shall undertake that
responsibility.

Yours faithfully,

A. H. ...

Clerk of the County Council.

Mrs. A. Shellard,
EAST FARNDON,
Market Harborough.



Rededication of the Beech Tree

Upon discovering the history of the tree, a new plaque was commissioned by East Farndon Parish Council. A rededication service was held on Sunday 10th November 2019, led by Reverend James Watson, and the plaque was unveiled by parish councillor Russell Burton.





*Planted on 14th November 1937
by East Farndon Women's Institute
to commemorate the coronation of
King George VI
and
Queen Elizabeth*

The current bench by the beech tree replaced an older one and was purchased in 2009 in memory of George Ilsley. George and his wife Marion lived in Harrington and were both lay preachers in the area. They were both professors at Nene College, Northampton (later renamed University College, Northampton). George often took the service at St John the Baptist's Church in East Farndon. He died in 2009, aged 79. The bench with its inscription was put by the tree in his memory, by way of thanks from the parishioners.



Written by Judy Hodgetts, February 2021. Updated September 2021