

Little Downham's Avenue of Trees

The Festival of Britain was held in 1951 to showcase Britain and its achievements. It was timed to celebrate the centennial of the Great Exhibition of 1851 and to give the people a feeling of successful recovery from the war's devastation, as well as promoting British science, technology, industrial design, architecture and the arts. Although London was the centrepiece of the event it was a national celebration and many villages in Cambridgeshire marked the occasion in their own ways.

When Little Downham Parish Council turned down a proposal to plant an avenue of trees to commemorate the Festival of Britain, Parish Councillor B. Easy threw out a challenge. "I'll provide the trees myself," he declared. He soon gained the support of other councillors and outsiders.

And so it was on the afternoon of Tuesday 6th of March 1951, that the first of thirty trees were planted by the main road to the east of Little Downham. There were to be in all, ten maple, ten almond and ten flowering plum trees.



Councillor A.W. Chambers (Chairman of the Parish Council) said, at the ceremony, that he would like to thank Councillor Easy for providing the trees. He also thanked Councillors G.W. Green and R.W. Parson and Messrs. C. Hobbs and H. Martin for their contribution towards the maintenance of the young trees. Councillor Chambers had himself made a material contribution towards the scheme.

Mr W.B. Chambers promised to supply a seat nearby so that people might sit and watch the trees grow. It was proposed that a plaque bearing the names of the benefactors be set up in the vicinity of the trees. Councillor Chambers said that the trees, which would beautify the entrance to the village, would be appreciated for years to come. Two of these seats were placed on Church Green and another seat was placed on Townsend Green.

Over the years some of these trees have succumbed to age and disease. Some of the Almond trees were replaced 2003 and they are now an established part of the village scene.

Robin Pearl