

Robert Quixley 1928-2022

Acorns from Ewelme to National Trust properties in Cornwall

Ewelme News, Sept/Oct 2022



Left: Bob Quixley outside the School House.

Another link with Ewelme's past was broken on 28th June with the death of Bob Quixley at the grand old age of 94. Bob was born in the School House in 1928, the son of Robert Quixley the renowned headmaster from 1926-1949. Bob had retired to Cornwall but always held Ewelme close to his heart. The late George Cannon, when he was headmaster, remembers his first meeting with Bob when he asked if he could look round the School House. Bob resembled his father, being very tall and slim, and at one door he told George he could remember the time when he couldn't reach the doorknob! When we were preparing the 2000 Millennium Exhibition and village book Bob provided much information on the village through the 1930s and 1940s, especially his memories of the war years. His adventure, as a 17-year-old disguised as a New Zealand Air Force pilot for a clandestine flight to France in a Lancaster just after the war, is included in the chapter about the RAF and Ewelme in the book – *Glimpses of an Oxfordshire Village*.

At the recent Jubilee Heritage Exhibition, we featured five copies of Bob's watercolours he painted between 1947 and 1948, by comparing his past scenes of Ewelme with modern photographs.

Unfortunately, in his later years he was frustrated by failing eyesight, and latterly became completely blind. He would regularly phone for long conversations when I would read him the latest entry in the Ewelme News and report village events. He would send regards to the few people left he remembered, Cynthia Winfield, sisters Esme and Marie [Hutchins] and Marlene Edwards at Fords Farm - where he and his wife Sylvia would stay on visits. He would then travel round the village in his minds eye, remembering the houses and those who had lived in them, and would come up with new stories for the Archive. His last story is copied below.

Bob will finally come 'home', as his family have requested his ashes be placed in the churchyard just a few yards from where he was born. Those who had the privilege of calling Bob a friend will agree - he would have liked that.

From Ewelme acorns to oak trees in National Trust properties in Cornwall. As told by Bob Quixley January 2022

In 1975 Bob Quixley brought his two young sons (14 and 12) to Ewelme, so show them the village and the schoolhouse, his birthplace and family home for over 23 years.

At the viewing gate' at the top of Days Lane is an old oak tree where local boys had built a wooden lookout platform, now rotted away. Preoccupied with describing the beautiful scene before them, Bob did not notice his two boys busily stuffing acorns into their pockets; nor did he realise, that on their return home to Heamoor, near Penzance, they threw the acorns away into the grounds of their large garden. Over the years, three acorns defied the squirrels and grew into mature trees. Their shed acorns produced numerous saplings which also survived and grew along the 200 yard driveway.

In January this year some lady gardeners from the National Trust called to collect twenty saplings, between 12" to 18" high. These were to be planted in the grounds of one of the Trust's properties, Godolphin House, near Godolphin Cross, and others elsewhere in West Cornwall – probably at Trengwainton Garden which is an estate close by. Bob was delighted to donate these saplings and hoped that Ewelme oaks will flourish for many centuries in Cornwall.

Ewelme Village Archive