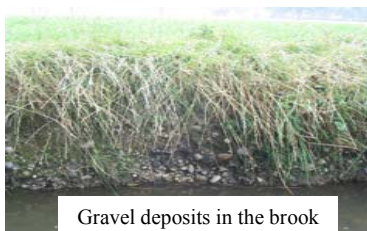


The Landscape

About three million years ago Britain was in the grip of an Ice Age. Glacial deposits of gravel were left on the higher areas in Elmdon. The underlying geology is mudstone which is an impermeable clay (the reason why the park can be so wet under foot). Alluvial deposits from when the brook was much larger can be seen today.



Gravel deposits in the brook



Elmdon Park lake

The lake was man made and the brook was diverted to feed it. Evidence shows that the brook would have run through the woodland adjacent, and

this area would have been much wetter probably dominated by Alders and Willows. The brook now leaves the lake via a weir and then rejoins it's original course.

Mature Oaks in the park denote old field boundaries. Ridge and furrows from old ploughing for agricultural use are visible, some from when Elmdon was used for growing potatoes in the war and some much older. It is these older features that have proved of most interest and the management of selected areas has changed back to hay meadows to encourage wildflowers.

Elmdon Park Today

The Park is a very well used, public open space offering a range of formal activities including a free tennis court, a children's play area and a proposed trim-track (2005). There is an ornamental lake where we welcome responsible feeding of the wildfowl. The area of woodland next to the lake is designated as a Site Important for Nature Conservation. A pond was created to help with drainage from the slope of the park and this has several species of dragonfly breeding in it. There is a marked "History Walk" and nearly half of the park's area is a Nature Park, created from agricultural land.

NC/GAF 2005

References

Much research has been carried out into the history of Elmdon, including the following:-

Holden E. The country diary of an Edwardian lady.

Farmer G. A Biological Survey of Elmdon 2004.

Beaven S. F. Damson by the pound, memories of a Warwickshire family.

Sherriff A. J. Elmdon past and present.

Friends of Elmdon History walk guide.



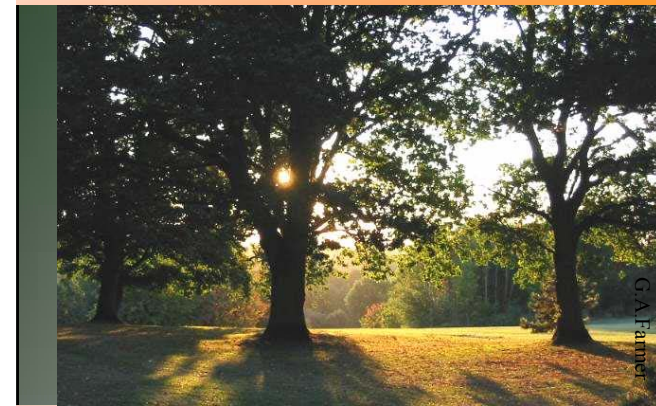
Mute Swans at dawn—Elmdon Park lake

G. A. Farmer

For more information contact
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Solihull Park Rangers Guide To

Elmdon Park A Brief History



G. A. Farmer

**TAKING A WALK IN
ELMDON PARK IS LIKE
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TIME. THIS HISTORIC
LANDSCAPE COMBINES
FORMAL RECREATION,
NATURE AREAS AND
SOCIAL HISTORY IN 150
ACRES OF BEAUTIFUL
PARKLAND.**



Early Days

The first documented, human occupation in Elmdon was about 800AD. Their first task would have been to clear the land for farming.

The settlement was successful, having a mention in the Domesday Book. Recorded as *Mannour of Elmddune* held by Turchil of Warwick. The name Elmdon is Saxon in origin, meaning "Hill of the Elms". So in those early days would we have seen Saxon houses in Elmdon and the surrounding area?

It is believed that a Tudor manor house was pulled down to make way for a three-storey Georgian mansion.

This was completed in 1795 by Isaac Spooner.



This grand dwelling had 15 bedrooms, a library, entrance halls and was furnished with the finest decorations of the time. It would have been a most impressive building, dominating the skyline.



Elmdon Park today, looking up towards the site of the manor

The Estate

The estate grew, with worker's cottages being built. There was also a schoolhouse, a large stable block with gun room, a saw mill and blacksmiths around the area which is now the car park by the church.

An ice house kept food fresh, which was grown in the walled garden. Even large glass houses once stood, filled with exotic fruit !!



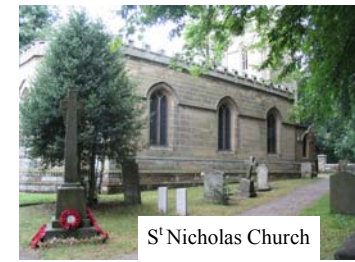
The pond next to the walled garden, is thought to have once been a fish pond, circled with yew trees, rhododendrons and iron railings.

The circular brick pond in the walled garden was used to store water for the crops. And the lake in the main park supplied ice for the ice house. Water was pumped from the lake to the Manor using a hydraulic ram which would have been very advanced for the time.



The lodge was built between 1851/1861 and this was the main entrance to the hall from the Coventry Road. This was built from the same stone as the hall. The Grange or Rectory was built in 1803 and Isaac Spooner's son William was the occupant. He remained rector for fifty four years, and was the Archdeacon of Coventry.

St Nicholas church of today is four hundred feet above sea level, and is built on the site of an earlier Saxon church, built in 1239. The one you see today was rebuilt in 1780 by Issac Spooner.



The estate would have been thriving when the Alstons owned it in 1840. To increase revenue game shooting became popular with their gentry friends. It would have been a very busy and growing area at this time.

The hall and 115 acres was sold to Solihull Urban District Council, by Mr. W Walters of Olton. The Manor had to be demolished in 1956 due to rotten staircase, roof and a general derelict state.

The land around the estate in the late eighteenth/ early nineteenth century was one of golden fields, hay meadows and managed hedgerows, giving home to wildlife we have lost not only here, but in some cases nationally. Corncrakes, Snipe, Turtle Doves, Lapwings, Spotted Flycatchers and Barn Owls to name but a few were seen regularly around the Elmdon estate, Elmdon Heath and Bills Moor area, which is now part of the Rover plant.

