

Memories

"As a 13 year old, Oakfield Farm was heaven. Wow! The memories are vibrantly clear, a lake full of frogs, miles of meadows filled with cows, horses and donkeys, trees that gave us Syringa berry ammunition for our catapults, goats that would try eat your trouser leg, and Aunty Daph's scones and whipped cream always in piles high enough to fill any starving clan of cousins. On Sundays, us city Bremners would head out to Oakfield—a big day ahead on the farm, so much to do. After being bruised from our attempts at rodeo cow riding, trying to catch the legendary huge barbel in the frog pond (surely Huck Finn had nothing on us), and chasing guinea fowl with our home-made bows and arrows, we would circle back to the farm house late in the afternoon for tea—a world that cannot do justice to the spread that Aunty Daph would provide. As I write this, I realise that I do hope Heaven is just a bit like Oakfield."

—Ross Bremner

"Twenty years on, we felt called to visit Oakfield again. So many amazing memories of this very special place lived on in our minds and we wondered if it would be the same. Much had changed, and we were amazed at how the old buildings had been transformed. The Rose Cottage where we spent our wedding night is now a fabulous bridal suite with all the mod cons, but it still felt homely to us. We were so delighted that the feeling of peace and tranquility which drew us to the venue so many years ago, is still a place of timeless beauty. I remember Matthew saying his vision was for children to stand in the place where their grandparents married—it could be soon now. Oakfield, we salute you!"

—Shane Longman

The Gift

"The oak tree fell at night and for some hours no one was aware of its passing. For nearly 120 years it had stood at the gate of the big field, its crown a landmark for miles around. For most of those years, a steam had meandered past its side, and a smaller companion, a walnut, had yielded an annual harvest.

No one spoke about the hurt and for weeks we avoided the death scene. Thoughts went down the long years that it had been "the oak", ours, a friend and joy to many. We had dreamed beside it, picnicked

there, passing by daily, always with a subconscious pleasure in its presence. We remembered the beauty of the tree. Majestic beyond belief in winter, the joy of catkins and bees in spring, and oh, the magic, magic of full moon in summer when the ducks circled silent on a silver dam and the glorious crown of trees curved black against the moon pale sky.

We visited that field some time later to find that nature had lavished yet another blessing—there was a slender oak leaping vigorously to the sky. Young, less demanding than the old giant—it must have been a seedling struggling in the shadows, and given its chance, it thrived in the sun. We could but pray that it would give to others the joy that we knew."

—Daphne Harrison

The Old Syringa Tree

(The Summerhouse verandah is now built around this tree, which is well over 85 years old)

Beneath this gnarled and twisted tree
In dappled shadow here I lie,
Looking upward at the sky,
Through the overlapping leaves,
Patterned pinnate intricacies,
Mosaic of many-shaded green
With the firmament between
Is my summer canopy

Every spring a lilac haze
Of sweetly-scented florets blow
Before the leaf-buds burst and grow.
Then berries cluster, golden-brown,
In sprays until they gentle down.
So throughout the year my tree
With varied awnings shelters me,
Giving pleasure all my days.

—Doreen Barfield

"Oakfield continues to draw visitors from afar and all who visit are touched by the special magic. It is our vision to continue this rich tradition of hospitality, but more importantly, we feel it is our duty to protect and share this very special place for many years to come."—Matthew Stubbs





A Time & A Place

