

OAKS ON POSTCARDS

Pauline B. Topham
Dundee, United Kingdom

A display of 40 postcards spanning the 20th century illustrates both the development of the postcard itself and the interest taken in individual oak trees. Postcards became important in Britain after 1903 when post office regulations allowed a message alongside the address. Social and economic factors favoured the use of postcards. Special trees, including oaks, were among the wide range of objects of local interest that were featured on the cards. Production techniques changed over time, and where postmarks are illegible, help to date the card and thus, document the tree.

The connection to the trees featured on postcards might be historical, with legendary figures such as Robin Hood pictured, or literary, or even invented for tourism purposes. The largest trees of all in the great English forests were commonly portrayed, including trees in the New Forest, Savernake Forest, and Epping Forest. The Major Oak in Sherwood Forest was featured so often that it is possible to trace ideas of tree conservation from the changes in the images over time.

Postcards of cork oaks from Corsica and Portugal have been used to promote tourism in the Mediterranean area during the last 20 years. Oaks have also been featured on educational postcards produced by museums and national parks.

Information gleaned from postcards may be able to provide additional details about locally significant oaks and inspire people in other countries to investigate if historic postcards can shed light on their oak resources.





THE DUNERIES, ROBIN HOODS LAROCK

E.F. H.



Quartered Oak, Pittfour

R.G.J.