

Elm Tree falls on Church
by
Colin Such (2012)



Photo David Humphriss

There are very few natural disasters that have affected Lighthorne, with the exception of flooding. However, the church was badly damaged when a large old elm tree fell on it on Easter Monday in 1905. The parish magazine of May 1905 records the event.

On Easter Monday, at about noon, a very heavy crash was heard in Lighthorne village. It was at first thought that Mr. Robert Verney, [the rector] in one of his electrical experiments, had blown up his workshop. The Villagers were soon on the spot, and it was discovered that a large ash tree, in the churchyard, had fallen on the Church. Fortunately it fell on the east gable of the north aisle, which checked the force of the impact, or much more damage would have been done. As it was, some of the ridge tiles were displaced, a great number of tiles were shattered, and the gable of the north aisle with two of the crosses were broken, while some of the battlements of the tower were displaced. The work of restoration has begun, but we are afraid that the expense incurred will be considerable. It is only fair to state that the Rector had been warned that the tree was in a dangerous condition.



Lighthorne Church after the Wind Storm

Photo Colin Such

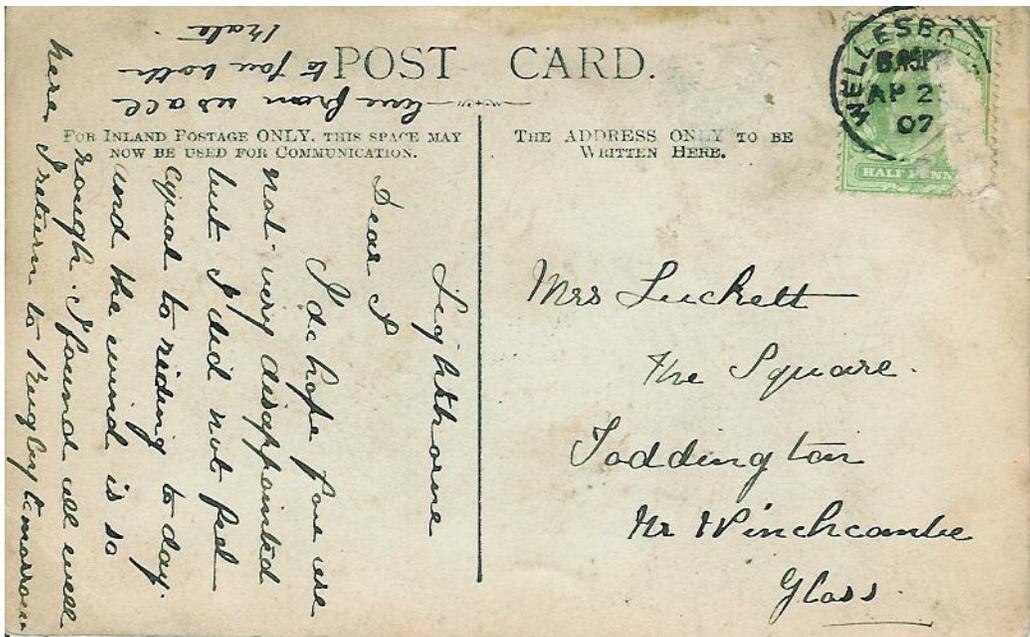


Photo Colin Such

The event was captured by a photographer who printed the image on a postcard. I have 2 copies of the postcard, one with a manuscript caption “Lighthorne Church after the Wind Storm” and the other with the caption “Lighthorne Church Easter 1905”. The former is postally used from Wellesbourne to Toddington, near Winchcombe, in Gloucestershire, in April 1907. Coincidentally the writer mentions windy conditions in Lighthorne, almost exactly two years later. The text of the message is as follows:

Lighthorne

Dear L

I do hope you are not very disappointed but I did not feel equal to riding today and the wind is so rough. I found all well here. I return to Rugby tomorrow.

Love from us all to you both

Kate