

NEW SCULPTURE IN ELMS FIELD

The Wokingham Society has installed a new statue, only the second in the town centre, in the park in Elms Field. It was officially unveiled on Thursday 23 January 2020 with the Town Mayor, Councillors, Lady Elizabeth Godsal (former High Steward and President of the Society) and other guests in attendance. The sculpture is dedicated to the memory of Isobel Jocelyn Elliston Clifton, who left a substantial bequest to the Society on her death in 1998. A brief account of the statue and its design, as well as short biography of Isobel Elliston Clifton, are attached.



Left: The sculpture



Right: Society Chairman Peter Must, with the Town Mayor, Thrussells (the Sculptors), and Jane Bonney, the artist



Guests at the unveiling of the statue

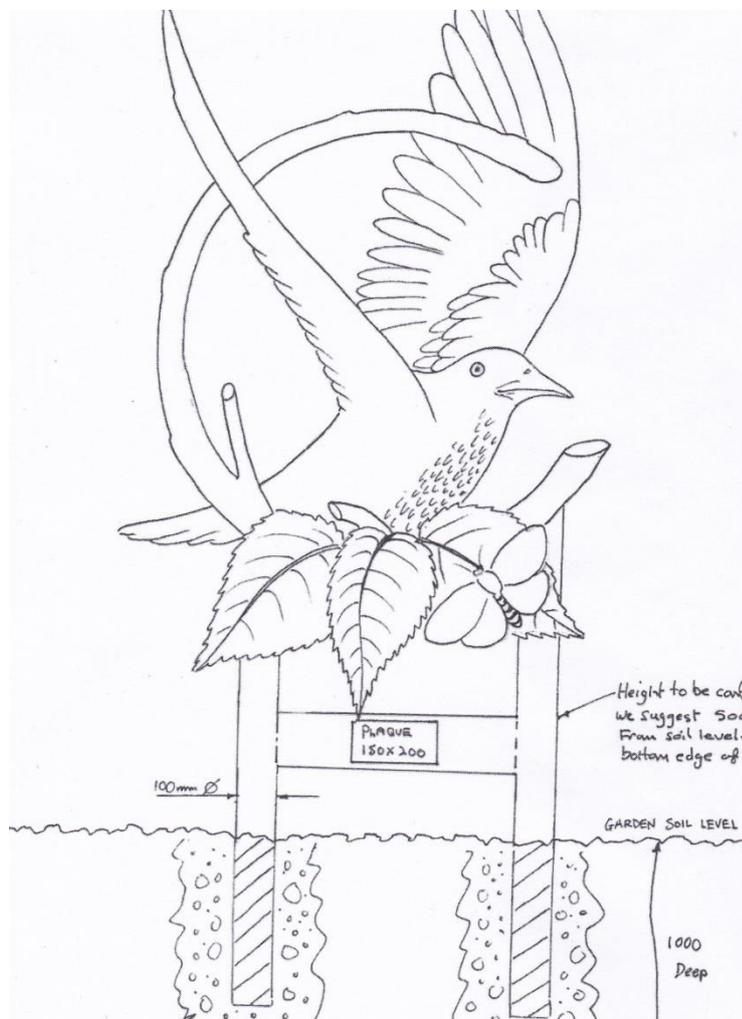


The statue, based on a design by local artist Jane Bonney and made by sculptors Thrussells, incorporates representations of the English elm, a song thrush and the white-letter hairstreak butterfly, all of which are at risk and were often seen in Elms Field. The sculpture therefore pursues the theme of conservation both in nature and in the aims of Isobel Elliston Clifton.

The Society wishes to thank the Town and Borough Councils for their assistance in delivering the project and McLaughlin and Harvey for helping in its installation.

Jane Bonney's design

Thrussell's working drawing



The new sculpture in Elms Field, dedicated to Isobel Jocelyn Elliston Clifton

In providing a sculpture in Elms Field that reflects the local plant and wild life at risk, the Wokingham Society is also commemorating its benefactor Isobel Elliston Clifton, whose bequest to the Society in 1999 was made, according to her executor, because “she hated the growth and development of Wokingham with a passion. She felt that the only body likely to do anything helpful for the town was the Wokingham Society”. The theme connecting statue and benefactor is thus one of conservation.



Isobel Jocelyn Elliston Clifton was descended from a line of farmers and inn keepers in Huntingdonshire but her father Arthur emigrated to South Africa, where he met and married Jocelyn Isobel Locke-Waters from Adelaide, South Australia. Isobel was born on 20 Sep 1915 but her father died in 1919 when he was only 40, and her mother in 1926, aged 41.

Isobel left South Africa after her parents died and came to Wokingham to live with her uncle, John Henry Elliston Clifton, solicitor and Town Clerk. Her secondary education was at Cheltenham Ladies' College,.

Isobel qualified as a solicitor in 1943, with the encouragement and support of her uncle, and joined the new practice he had established in Broad Street, .

In 1946 she was elected as an Independent member of Berkshire County Council for Berkshire East and was re-elected in 1949 and 1952. She served on the Planning, Health, and Road Safety Committees.

Isobel became one of the founder Governors of St Crispin's School when it opened in 1953.

When her uncle John Henry died in 1960 Isobel inherited his house and offices at Allan Lodge, 29 Broad Street, now the Broad Street Tavern. The practice had by then been renamed Clifton Ingram after Rupert Ingram joined it in 1955. Isobel later gave up her legal practice and for a while ran an estate agency from her house.

Isobel became the first female Clerk to the Tax Commissioners for the Wokingham Division, a post she relinquished when she left the town in the 1970s, moving to Farnham in Surrey “as the developers moved in and the population swelled”. One of her last acts before departure was to buy up a strip of land to stop the development of housing on Elizabeth Park in the Norreys Estate.

Isobel Clifton died in Farnham in October 1998.