

Number
TEN
Summer
1985

The Harborne Society

NEWS

Your TREES at risk!



Buzz, buzz, buzz - glanced at the alarm clock - 7.30 am! The continuous irritating high pitched noise awakened me from my occasional Saturday indulgence, a lie-in! It set the scene for the remainder of the day:-

7.45 am Walked down the road to find two chain saws attacking an attractive group of mature trees. Spoke to the workmen who assured me that routine maintenance only was being carried out.

9.00 am First tree topped and reduced to trunk and main branches like a three fingered gesture!

9.30 am Contacted local Landscape Architect and met on site. Advised that the trees were neither diseased nor dangerous. The only attention needed was careful thinning to cut out a few dead branches.

10.00 am Spoke again to the workmen to ascertain owner and name of contractor.

10.10 am Telephoned Contractor's office several times - no reply (no wonder - it was Saturday!)

10.30 am Spoke to occupants of building and understood instructions given by London office.

11.00 am Contacted City Engineer's Department to obtain emergency telephone number to see if Tree Preservation Orders applied - no joy!

11.30 am Returned to site and asked workmen if they would consider less drastic action so as to maintain the overall shape of each tree.

Sunday Kept a watchful eye on proceedings.

Monday Telephoned Contractor at

his main office - 'We are just carrying out normal maintenance work'.

End of

Monday Two unsightly trees, one tree felled, remainder being tackled in a more sympathetic way.

Why should this story concern us? Because trees are an essential part of our natural heritage. They:

- enclose and create spaces of infinitely different character,
- screen both the eyesore and the cold wind,
- provide an ecological haven for insects and birds,
- soften the built environment; imagine the Harborne Tenants without trees!
- are objects of intrinsic natural beauty, (and so the list goes on).

What can we do to conserve our trees?

Firstly, we can aid our City officials by providing local knowledge to develop and enforce Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's).

The overall aim of such orders is to ensure that trees visible to the public are kept as an amenity. (Details of the way in which TPO's are applied and operate are to be found in an excellent leaflet 'Tree Preservation - a Guide to Procedure' available from the City Planning Department or Her Majesty's Stationery Office - all Society members should have a copy!).



mature

dismembered

disfigured

thinned

The effect of Tree Preservation Orders is:

- to protect a significant tree or desirable group of trees on a site about to be developed.
- to ensure that trees are neither lopped in an unsightly way nor otherwise felled or damaged.

Whenever a site is developed by building, the owner, developer or architect has to submit plans showing the existing trees and, if appropriate, TPO's are issued through the statutory planning application process.

Contravention of TPO's through unauthorised topping, lopping or felling without proper prior written consent is punishable by fines of up to £2000 per tree.

Trees in Conservation Areas, other than those covered by TPO's, are also protected in a similar way under the Town and Country Amenities Act 1974.

Secondly, we can help to ensure that both our own trees and those in our locality are properly pruned when this becomes necessary.

The experts refer to 'tree surgery'; this implies that trees are thinned selectively so that shape and character are preserved even if decayed branches have to be removed.

Too often trees are reduced to stumps from which watershoots then grow to destroy their natural form.

Thirdly, this Society should identify trees which are important to Harborne.

Trees among which we walk and a sin-

gle tree which acts as a visual focus to a street are both examples that should be noted. Old and young alike can take part in a survey to extend the Tree Registry kept by the Local Authority.

Fourthly, we should ensure that Harborne's stock of trees is not diminished. As buildings occupy more land, or trees mature and die, programmed replanting should take place. The excellent work of the City Parks' Department should be emulated by land owner and developer alike.



The link between most of Birmingham's suburbs and the City centre is through areas of densely packed red-brick Victorian terraces. Our journey to and from Harborne is through a residential area dominated by mature trees - a virtual urban green belt. *Let us keep it this way!*

Eric Abbott

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Little did I think when I retired as your Chairman in 1982 that I should be taking up the office again in 1985. I am both honoured and delighted to do so.

Last May we celebrated our 25th Jubilee with a very successful party at the Clock Tower. It was a source of inspiration to us all to remember the happenings and achievements of the last 25 years. Let us hope that the next 25 will be as productive.

Although there is now a break in our programme until September, the various committees are still hard at work organising events and keeping a watchful eye on Harborne's interests. The Social Committee has arranged a

very inviting series of future meetings and the Technical Committee has made many representations on your behalf. All this work is shouldered by a fairly small number of people. I am sure that among you there must be others willing to help. Please do offer your services. We have recently set up a new working group to produce the newsletter so perhaps this might interest you.

You don't have to be an expert to help, but if your time is limited, do please try to come along to our monthly meetings. We have some very good speakers and we do also keep you informed of all matters affecting Harborne. We value your opinions for our aim is to truly represent what Harborne people want.

See you on September 11th.

MARY ABBOTT, *Chairman*

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TECHNICAL COMMITTEE WORK

Mr. Micheal Perraudin. Chairman, Technical Committee.

The arrival of summer in Harborne this year has been accompanied by a high level of activity - sometimes welcome, sometimes rather less so - from those keen to redevelop parts of the area. The most obvious signs of such activity are the Safeways extension and the demolition opposite the Green Man, where a fairly restrained office development will replace not only the unlamented Hughley's Bakery building but also the much more lamented Victorian shops housing distinctive small businesses. This comes after last years construction of the ugly Bryant's/Macdonald's block; and it is likely to be followed soon by demolition of 6 more small 19th century shops further up the High St.(157-167), a site owned by Scrivens the opticians.

This new development will also be small-scale and not uninteresting (we made suggestions on its design, some of which will be heeded). But it is certainly inferior to the way the existing terrace could have been, if creatively refurbished. The older commercial buildings in the High St. can be profitably refurbished, as the recent excellent facelift at Rock Candy

Mountain has shown. We wish there was much more such work: too many of the older High St. shops are being allowed to deteriorate, with unpainted upper storeys and neglected backs, in a way which can only encourage the re-developers (and sometimes is probably encouraged by them).

The long-threatened David Cox house, Greenfield House, is one place locally where comprehensive refurbishment is now at last being planned. The site has been bought and plans submitted: we have not yet seen them, but hope that, under the City Conservation Officer's careful supervision, some-thing positive will result.

Another important prospective development is the major police headquarters intended for Rose Rd. Plans have now been published, but we have reservations: a three storey building in brick, glass and concrete, with up to 230 staff, plus dog pound, firing ranges etc. Quite apart from the design's neo-brutalist appearance, we fear the

plan as such is excessive for such a modest backstreet site and we are suggesting the police consider instead using part of the huge City owned Tennial Campus.

Two County Council traffic management schemes are also pending locally, a minor one outside Safeway's and a major one in War Lane. Here two roundabouts will be built, a large one by Fellows Lane and a small one by Tennial Rd.

Finally, a Planning Application for an Amusement Arcade at 158 High St. has now been passed, not by the City, who opposed it, but by the D.O.E. on appeal. This is regrettable, not only because of the exploitative and anti-social tendencies of such places, but also because it contravenes the City's Local Plan which seeks to limit the proportion of non-retail businesses in given sections of the High St. and thus undermines an important planning safeguard. We share the City Planner's dismay, but hope this setback will not deter them from maintaining - and improving on - their attitude of concerned intervention towards developments in the Harborne area.



THE HARBORNE SOCIETY COMMITTEE 1985 - 1986

Patron:	The Lord Bishop of Birmingham
President:	Miss A.M.Aston
Chairman:	Mrs.Mary Abbott 427 1378 37 Albert Road Harborne.
Vice-Chairman:	Dr.Mary Lambourne 426 1523 35 St.Peters Road, Harborne
Hon-Secretary:	Mrs.Jenny Buchan 426 4854 50 Margaret Grove, Harborne.
Hon-Treasurer:	Mr.William Curr 427 4084 23 Vicarage Road, Harborne.
Chairman, Technical Committee:	Mr.Micheal Perraudin 427 2119
Chairman, Social Committee:	Mrs.Jean Curr 427 4084

And Mr.Eric Abbott, Miss Ethel Ellis, Miss Thelma Hadley, Mr.Peter Miles, Mr.Roger Miles, Mr. Philip Simpson.

Meetings are held in St.Peters Church Hall, Old Church Road next to St.Peters Church and Onneley House in Court Oak Road on Wood Lane corner.

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LOCAL NEWS

Mr. Philip Simpson.

WAR LANE ROUNDABOUT?

The W.M.County Council recently announced (quietly) plans to start building a road improvement on War Lane in the autumn. The full plan involves a large roundabout for War Lane, Victoria Rd, Vicarage Rd, and Fellows Lane with a short piece of dual carriageway to a mini roundabout at Tennal Rd.

After local residents raised the alarm about the size and layout of the scheme the technical committee looked at it and has suggested a few alterations. Our ideas included moving it away from the houses, landscaping, a bus layby and most importantly improving pedestrian safety. We hope that the W.M.C.C. can adopt these suggestions to ensure that this is truly the improvement we are all so anxiously awaiting.

POLICE LIAISON COMMITTEE

We should like to remind readers that the Harborne/Edgbaston Area, Police/Public Liason Committee meet at the Clock Tower, Community Centre, High St,Harborne every two months and it is open to anyone who wishes to attend. If you have a problem you wish aired or just want to see how the Committee operates, please call and see us. The next meeting will be held at the Clock Tower at 7.00 p.m. on Thursday 12th September 1985.

ST.PETERS JUNIOR SCHOOL

With the 150th anniversary of this school due next year they are still pressing for the City to carry out the much needed repairs and are asking everyone to sign a petition. Copies of the petition are available from Mrs.J.Fisher,PTA secretary, on:- 4272997 or at Phil Simpson's house.

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THE HARBORNE SOCIETY PROGRAMME 1985-1986

All meetings commence at 7.30 p.m. unless otherwise stated.

1985

September 11th, Wednesday
St.Peter's

Watermills and Windmills
Mr.D.T.N.Booth

October 15th, Tuesday
Onneley House

Bournville Village Trust
Mr.P.F.A.Henslowe

November 13th, Wednesday
St.Peter's

Malaysia
Miss M.Bonell

December 10th, Tuesday
Onneley House

West Midlands Urban Wildlife Group
Mrs.J.Fifer.

1986

February 4th, Tuesday
Onneley House

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February 25th, Tuesday
College of Food and Domestic Arts

Annual Dinner

March 12th, Wednesday
St.Peter's

Moseley Old Hall
Mrs.M.Chand

April 15th, Tuesday
Onneley House

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May 14th, Wednesday
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