

Pitfalls of backland development and drainage

Yvonne Copeland and Richard Jannaway

The substantial mature trees lining Havant Road in Emsworth form the Gateway to the town adding to the beauty of the environment and the value of the houses. They were referred to by an H.M. Planning Inspector in the 1990s as contributing to the Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and are the reason for Havant Road being designated as a 'Road with Special Character' in the Local Plan.

Ever-present threat of development

As with other Victorian villas with large gardens elsewhere, there is always a threat of 'backland' development. An example can be found behind 103 and 105 Havant Road, where 103 is already flats and 105 is to be converted into two flats and four detached houses are being built on the mature gardens and orchard. Ninety mature trees and shrubs out of an identifiable 104 were removed.

Now 97 Havant Road has been sold and early in November, before local residents knew what was happening, bulldozers were on the site. The trees in the front garden, including mature Horse Chestnuts, a stunning large dark-leaved Cherry, mature garden shrubs and a large hedge, all went in a matter of hours while the back garden was also totally cleared except for a Black Poplar which is covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). On 16 November, the owners of 32 and 34 Nore Crescent (whose gardens back onto 97 Havant Road) applied for the TPO on the Poplar to be removed and for it to be felled. The exact nature of the planned development is not yet known and one wonders what might happen if other nearby residents were approached to sell off part of their gardens.

Drainage problems

The subsoil in the area is clay and sand with a number of underground springs. The villas on Havant Road have a drainage ditch incorporated in their front gardens. The drains in the area date back to the 1920s and the 1940/50s and are generally acknowledged to be incapable of meeting the existing demands of altered rainfall patterns, hard surface parking and increased domestic usage. For the last thirty years, the Texaco garage has been at risk of flooding and has had to install new drainage with two pumps ready to go at any time when the foul drains back up, necessitating pumping the water into the storm drains. For the last twenty years, the garage pit at 77 Havant Road has flooded but it now fills up more rapidly and in November was half full.

The earliest houses built on Selangor Avenue identified this as a difficult site with the need for deep foundations to cope with the high water table. Nearly all the rest of the properties in Selangor Avenue, Nore Crescent and Nore Farm Avenue, are bungalows, most of which are built on concrete floats. The building of the A27(T) also interfered with the flow of springs and streams south of the road and has been blamed for subsequent flooding of some residents' properties. After the clearance at 105 Havant Road, the gardens of adjoining properties became waterlogged.

One local resident, in a property which has never been flooded, was advised by their insurance and mortgage companies that they could sue the Council should development be approved which causes their property to flood because of inadequate drainage being installed. Whatever is built behind 97 Havant Road, drainage is a factor which can affect existing and future residents alike. A thorough hydrological survey of the whole area is needed before any more development is permitted.

Picture of bulldozed trees in front garden of 97 Havant Road on page 4.

Two Minutes Silence at the Emsworth Memorial

Virginia Wilson-Smith

Several members of the Emsworth Community Board gathered at the Emsworth Memorial (southeast corner of Hordean Road recreation ground) shortly before 11am on 11 November. We were soon joined by other residents who had decided they'd like to observe the silence at the Memorial and were pleased to find other people there. It was an impromptu occasion but very moving in its simplicity. There were no speeches, no words, just some local people paying their respects together in silence. Ken Gilchrist, Chairman of the Community Board brought some flowers which were laid on the sculpture. After the two minutes had passed, we chatted quietly and then went our various ways.

Our task now is to complete the Memorial Gardens so that by 11th November 2007, a larger gathering will be able to pay their respects to those from Emsworth who gave their lives in conflict, peace-keeping and aid, to further the cause of Peace and Justice in the world.

The Community Board is engaged in a fund-raising campaign to complete the gardens and provide a fitting site for the Memorial. If you feel able to contribute, please send your donation to Stephen Pearce, Treasurer, Emsworth Community Board, 8 Wensley Gardens, Emsworth, PO10 7RA making your cheque payable to the 'Emsworth Community Board' with 'Emsworth Memorial Garden' on the back.

Emsworth has a taste of Green Living

Ray Cobbett - Chairman of Hampshire Friends of the Earth

Keen to be green Emsworthians found plenty of inspiration at the recent 'Green Living Fair' held at International House on the Square. Organised by Havant and East Hampshire Friends of the Earth, the Fair set out to demonstrate ways in which we can all help the future survival of the planet.

Exhibitors included Havant Borough Council's recycling team and a company specialising in solar generated electricity, now rapidly expanding along with wind turbines as a source of renewable energy.

The Fair was opened by journalist, Andrea Clair Smith, co-author of 'Save Cash and Save the Planet' (Collins £12.95) which is now into a second print run after selling 12,000 copies. Visitors were invited to make a personal pledge on greener living in return for a free low-energy light bulb. Eighty people accepted the challenge with pledges ranging from making fewer car and plane trips, buying a water butt to composting more.

'Hippos' that reduce water in WC's flew off the shelves. With Xmas on the way, the Fair Trade stall reported record takings for their tasty range of cakes, biscuits and chocolate. A Greener Living business from Southsea had a wide variety of eco products for sale ranging from eco toiletries and

cleaning products to eco paints and log makers. Fuel for the future attracted attention from drivers of diesel cars. A Petersfield company explained how a car could be adapted to use unmodified cooking oil to replace ordinary pump diesel.

Local conservationists were strongly represented by the award-winning Brook Meadow Conservation Group, Havant Borough Tree Warden Scheme, Friends of Hollybank Woods and the Emsworth Cycling Project. For the health conscious, natural therapies and free samples of herb teas provided by the Medicine Garden proved very popular.

'Food miles' have now been targeted by all the main supermarkets as customers recognise the true cost to the environment of imported food. More locally grown produce is the answer and if grown organically as well, there's a double bonus. A local 'veg box' producer was represented offering a home delivery service along with an organic gardening group from Chichester giving growing tips and a real live wormery from Hayling Island.

With Fair Trade cookies, tea and coffee donated by the Emsworth Co-Op and over 250 people visiting the Fair make it a favourite to join Emsworth's lengthening list of annual attractions.



Award for Havant Borough Tree Warden Scheme

Frances Jannaway

Havant Borough has been honoured at the Tree Council's celebration of 10 years of the Tree Warden Scheme during National Tree Week. Tree Officer Jamie Gargett, Emsworth Councillor Brendan Gibb-Gray and myself, coordinator of the Havant Borough Tree Warden Scheme, were presented with a plaque at a reception in the House of Commons on 29th November.

Havant Borough was the only local authority from Hampshire out of 14 local authorities from across the UK receiving awards.

The Tree Council is the lead tree campaigning charity in the UK. The Tree Warden Scheme has been sponsored by the National Grid since 1997 and is now attracting funding from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

Speeches by Baroness Andrews, Parliamentary Undersecretary of State, DCLG, Tree Council Chairman Sue Roe, Tree Council Vice President Brian Donohoe MP, and National Grid Director of Communications Isobel Hoseason stressed the importance of trees not only for our landscape, natural heritage and street scene but also for combating climate change, and contributing to our quality of life and sense of well-being. In short, trees are an essential part of our communities.

See 'Emsworth Tree Warden Scheme' on page 8.



Presentation of Plaque at the House of Commons. From left: Sue Roe, Frances Jannaway, Brendan Gibb-Gray, Jamie Gargett and Isobel Hoseason.

Official Opening of Emsworth Environmental Enhancement Project

Frances Jannaway

The Emsworth Environmental Enhancement project is nearing completion. The project includes improvements to the main Emsworth roundabout at the A259/North Street junction, the subway, railings, access to Palmers Road car park, Brook Meadow bridge and footpath, new direction signs around the town and new lampposts on the A259.

The project, funded by Havant Borough Council under the Central Government's Liveability Scheme, will be opened by the Mayor of Havant, Councillor Richard Brown at 10.30am on **Saturday 17th February**. Displays of this major Liveability project as well as other Emsworth Community Board projects will be on show in International House on The Square, 10am to 12 noon.

Emsworth switches on its Christmas festivities

John Tweddell



Santa rides into town.

Emsworth's Christmas lights ceremony this year attracted record numbers to celebrate the beginning of seasonal festivities in the town. The evening started with a carol service in St James' Church attended by a capacity congregation, including children from local schools, parents and residents. Santa and the Brass Ensemble then led the procession down North Street to St Peter's Square for the 'lights ceremony'.

The event, organised by the Emsworth Business Association, then got into a festive swing with music from the band, followed by a sing-along with 'Amba and YTA'. With over five hundred attending the celebrations, the crowd was provided with mince pies, oranges, hot dogs and mulled wine, kindly donated by local businesses. "The support for our annual Christmas festivities has been tremendous", said EBA Chairman Brendan Gibb-Gray, "not only from the residents of Emsworth, but importantly, local businesses who have made the night possible".

Over thirty local businesses, pubs and organisations, as well as Havant Borough Council contributed to the 'Christmas in Emsworth' event. The Rotary Club of Havant jointly planned the evening with the EBA as well as organising a collection for Emsworth First Responders.