



About Trees

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A Fresh Start

A lot has been happening recently and About Trees is launched with a bumper issue.

The HBTW network is entering a new phase. At the general meeting on 1st May we agreed to undertake projects in our own name as well as continuing to assist other local conservation groups. We will plant more fruiting hedges and other trees in local schools. We will shortly meet with schools to discuss requirements and we have already started talking to potential funders. We will survey hedgerows to ascertain whether any warrant protection. We also want to work with Havant Borough Council to plant more trees in public places.

We have a formal constitution based on The Tree Council model, we have applied for Community Network Membership of The Conservation Volunteers and insurance will follow shortly. We now need to increase membership of HBTW and raise our profile. Our aim is for every local conservation group in the Borough of Havant to include at least one member of HBTW so that we can share best practice, help with training and assist each other when needed.

I have tried to give a balanced view and include lots of good news with plenty of photos as well as some more controversial issues. Several local guided walks have been held to celebrate The Tree Council's Walk in The Woods festival and reports are included. Let us know what you think.

Terry Smith - Chairman

Tree Planting at Havant Public Service Plaza

At the beginning of May, seven trees were planted outside Havant Public Service Plaza, facing the roundabout:

- 3 X Prunus Snowgoose
- 4 X Columnar Oak "Koster"

The planting was organised by Ralph Cousins and funded by Postcode Publications and Havant Chamber of Commerce. Andrew Skeet of Norse South East did the planting.

Photo: Ralph Cousins



Proposed Tree Planting Partnership with Havant Borough Council

Following the discussion at the general meeting, we have proposed a partnership between Havant Borough Council and the Tree Warden network to plant more trees in the Borough.

We hear a great deal about the need to build homes and the Council is trying to meet the demanding house building targets set by central government. We also want to ensure we have a healthy natural environment to pass on to future generations.



Cherry blossom in Stakes Road, Purbrook.

Photo: Terry Smith

Brendan has spoken to Jamie Gargett, Manager of Tree Services (EHDC & HBC), who is fully supportive and is willing to devote some time to the project. Initially, we have suggested that we undertake to plant, say, five trees a year in each ward in the Borough, a total of 70 trees a year.

The cost of buying in, planting and after-care is estimated at £250 per tree. The Tree Wardens will undertake to get sponsorship / funds to support the project once the details have been agreed and the financial implications are known.

This is something that the respective ward councillors might want to support; they may like to suggest locations and make donations from their councillor allowance. In some cases, we might get schools and other sections of the community to take ownership for the project locally.

We look forward to supporting this exciting borough project.

Street Fighters

There is an interesting article on street trees on The Woodland Trust website. The article gives a brief history of street trees and outlines some of their benefits:

- ◆ Trees provide homes and food for birds, insects and other wildlife
- ◆ People exercise more and feel better around trees
- ◆ Trees intercept rain water and can slow floods
- ◆ Trees improve air quality by reducing air pollution, providing shade and have a cooling effect
- ◆ Houses are worth more and sell quicker on streets with trees
- ◆ Trees beautify our surroundings



Photo: The Woodland Trust

There are also interviews with a variety of people interested in protecting and managing street trees.

The article can be found at: <http://stories.woodlandtrust.org.uk/streetfighters/>

Main Points from HBTW General Meeting 1st May

- ◆ HBTW to organise activities in the name of HBTW as well as continuing to assist other local conservation groups.
- ◆ More planting in schools; Ralph Cousins knew of several local schools who were interested in tree planting. Malinda to discuss with Ralph and liaise with schools, possibly with the assistance of Wendy Gilbert.
- ◆ Events to include Tree Council annual campaigns: Walk in the Woods, Tree Care Campaign, Seed Gathering and National Tree Week.
- ◆ Hedgerow survey training arranged for 10th May. Sites under threat from developers to be given priority for hedgerow surveys.
- ◆ There are several woodlands in the Borough that would benefit from some attention and HBTW could be involved.
- ◆ Contact Havant Borough Council to see if we can work together to plant more trees.
- ◆ Join TCV. Membership includes free hosting of website using Word Press template.
- ◆ Obtain insurance, already agreed with Norse. Constitution and risk assessments required.
- ◆ Open bank account. Cheques to be signed by two people from, ideally, four signatories.
- ◆ Tree Council template constitution adopted with changes:
 - ◆ Committee Member position to be offered to the Local Authority nominee.
 - ◆ Quorum for General Meeting is at least six members (reduced from ten).
- ◆ Need to improve internal communication and raise the profile of HBTW. Issue newsletter. Communications Officer required.

Our committee currently consists of Chairman (Terry Smith), Co-ordinator (Malinda Griffin) and the local authority appointee. We have vacancies for:

- ◆ Treasurer
- ◆ Communications Officer
- ◆ Committee Members X 2

The constitution requires a minimum of six committee members although there may be vacancies, provided there are at least three people on the committee. If you are interested in joining the committee or would like to know what is involved, please contact Terry Smith at: hbctreewardens@gmail.com

Havant Borough Tree Strategy

A Havant Borough tree strategy is being prepared and if we have ideas to contribute they will be considered. If you do have any suggestions, please send them to hbctreewardens@gmail.com so that they can be combined into one submission.

Hedgerow Survey Training

This was an inspirational and informed four-hour session presented by Jon Stokes (Programmes Director of the Tree Council).

HBTWs had two main reasons for asking for surveying training:

- ◆ To record 'Important', ie historic and species-rich, hedgerows to protect them from development threat.
- ◆ To be able to audit the condition and the identities of species present prior to planning how best to manage and enhance a hedgerow, deciding a 'prescription' for future well-being of the hedge and the range of biodiversity species it contains.

Jon provided a wealth of information; he mentioned a recent case in Portchester where the age and importance of a hedgerow had halted a development. He suggested that HBTWs might formulate a map of Important Hedgerows in Havant Borough and how a Hedge Surveying Team might record the state and condition of local hedges to improve biodiversity and local appreciation of the cultural and visual importance of hedgerows.

The first 'theory' part of the afternoon focused on how the Hedgerow Regulations (1997) provide the starting point for establishing if a hedgerow is protected from arbitrary removal, and whether it is potentially 'Important' and can be given robust protection by the local planning authority, similar to a TPO for trees.

See: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1997/1160/contents/made>



After a snatched lunch, the group spent time looking at hedgerows, and seeing with new eyes the various tree and shrub species that I, for one, had failed to notice before. For example, Jon pointed out huge, veteran bullace/damson trees in the footpath from Wade Court to Langstone Harbour and a stretch of elm and wych elm along the coast to Pook Lane.

Photo: Malinda Griffin

During Hedge Survey training with The Tree Council, we visited this unusual tamarisk hedge at Warblington, thought to have been planted around 1850. Tamarisk is native to drier areas of Eurasia and Africa and usually grows on saline soils. These trees are next to the sea and believed to be the biggest in Britain.

Photo: Terry Smith



Our next step will be to put Jon's guidance into practice and prioritise Borough hedgerows for surveying.

Malinda Griffin, Coordinator HBTWs, would be delighted to hear from you if you're interested in joining the volunteer Hedgerow Surveying Team, or can suggest hedgerows we should give some attention to.

Malinda Griffin

Bat Roost Damaged by Fire

This is a summary of a report in The Telegraph online on 5th May.

In March, fire fighters were called to Hollybank Woods, Emsworth to extinguish a fire in a dead tree, believed to have been a bat roost. On the evening of the fire a local landowner had challenged teenagers causing trouble on his property. He told them to go on some land in front of the farm where the tree was and said they could make a den and smoke cigarettes there. A couple of hours later his wife saw smoke and called the fire brigade. He thought the teenagers had no idea it was a roost for bats.

Greenfield land next to the woods has been earmarked for development and Havant Borough Council is awaiting a planning application from developers, who are currently consulting residents. There is some local opposition to the anticipated 260 new homes, with some hoping that development could be prevented due to a large maternity roost for Bechstein's bats. Any development would have to protect the bats, as well as provide buffering to the woods. It is estimated that there around 1,500 Bechstein's bats in Britain.

There was a suspicion among some locals that the fire may have been a deliberate attempt to dislodge the bats. The developers insisted that the proposed development had been carefully designed to ensure that Bechstein's bats, as well as other wildlife, are not disturbed but, in fact, 'managed' so they can thrive.

Walks in the Woods

Walk in the Woods is The Tree Council's festival to encourage everyone to enjoy trees and woods during the month of May.

Friday 11th May - Hollybank Woods, Emsworth

Malinda led a group of children (plus parents) from the Long Copse Lane and Hollybank Lane area into Hollybank Woods for a guided walk.

The focus of the walk was on exploring the reasons why trees are cut down or coppiced – Hollybank Woods is a portion of the once great and continuous Forest of Bere. This was important woodland for noblemen hunting wild boar and deer, and for local peasants to graze their animals and forage what food and timber they could.

Traditional woodland practices ensured a continuing harvest of a range of timber. Coppicing, for example, created a cycle of renewable timber crops from the re-growing shoots out of the cut stools. Birch and Sweet Chestnut can be cropped for faggots, withies and fencing stakes on a 3 to 4 year cycle, while oak can be coppiced over a fifty-year cycle for beams and main timbers.



Coppicing and clearing holly creates glades, and also increases habitat for wildlife and woodland flowers: as a result, Hollybank Wood has a magnificent spread of native bluebell, and foxglove, primrose and wild garlic is also beginning to flourish (see photo). Brambles often grow around stools giving protection from predators to insects and small mammals.

Photo: Malinda Griffin

As the new stems grow out of the stools, the canopy closes, cutting out the light until the next cutting, but as newly coppiced areas are nearby various animal species will migrate there. Plants will die back until conditions are again right for them. (continued)

Neglected coppice and un-managed woodland are areas of low biodiversity. We are lucky that Andy and Andrew have the skill and dedication to make Hollybank Woods 'live' again.

Malinda Griffin

Saturday 19th May – Hilsea Lines, Portsmouth

I joined Portsmouth and Southsea Tree Wardens and Portsmouth Friends of the Earth for a walk in the woods around Bastion 3 at Hilsea Lines. There was a brief address from The Lord Mayor of Portsmouth who mentioned the Small Changes, Big difference initiative which will encourage Portsmouth inhabitants to walk 1 million miles, volunteer for 1 million hours, and lose 1 million pounds in weight. He also stated that 20 cherry trees of various sizes had been planted in Cosham Park.



Pete Roberts, Countryside Officer for Portsmouth City Council, led a group of 20 and linked the military history with natural history for a fascinating walk, starting at a bench made from sycamore planks cut from the site.

There are a number of very mature hawthorns, planted as defences, on the edge of the moat below the ramparts. Hawthorn was used as the forerunner to barbed wire.

The present Hilsea Lines were completed in 1869, which suggests some of these trees may be over 150 years old.

Photo: Terry Smith

The predominant trees are Elm, Sycamore and White Poplar; others include Wild Cherry, Holm Oak and Whitebeam. In the short distance covered I identified 20 tree species. Afterwards I walked through to Anchorage Park and added Blackthorn, Walnut and Weeping Willow to the list for a total of 23 tree species.

Terry Smith

Bank Holiday Monday 28th May – Johnston's Coppice, Purbrook

Six people, including three tree wardens and two tree enthusiasts from Purbrook, met for a walk in the Hampshire County Council nature reserve on a warm bank holiday afternoon. The threat of thunderstorms, which may have dissuaded some people, had passed and the expected light shower was no more than a few drops.

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Starting from the entrance next to the bus shelter, we walked along Purbrook Way admiring the lime trees and crossed the road to a field, where we saw a magnificent example of an oak tree allowed to grow to its natural shape. Around the edges of the field were a row of wild plum, several cherry trees, both with fruit forming, and elm.

Oak tree at Crookhorn.

A short way into Johnston's Coppice we stopped to discuss the recent hazel coppicing. Two methods were tried to see which was the more successful. Some stools were protected from deer with hazel trimmings. Someone had found the dead material too much of a temptation and set fire to one of them.



Protected hazel stools.

The next section was sweet chestnut which had been coppiced and left for many years to form some very large stands. We continued along the main path past birch, willow and some ancient oaks to the pond with an alder in the water next to the path.

We climbed the short hill out of the nature reserve and walked through to Woodsedge Pond. The area had been managed by Woodsedge Waders until the end of 2011 when the group disbanded. PAWARA Environment Group had taken over until 2015 and had laid a row of ash trees as a hedge to open up the view from the bench. Work had stopped after the hedge was vandalised and the area had become neglected.



We retraced our steps and, on the way back to the main pond, we admired some particularly tall ash trees. There are a large number of ash of various sizes in the coppice, some very mature, and no signs of dieback although there were some dead twigs on an otherwise healthy ash at Woodsedge Pond.

We followed a different path back, past some mature and uncoppiced sweet chestnuts with a good example of standing dead wood used as a home by woodpeckers. We used railway sleeper bridges to cross streams to finish on the track next to Purbrook Way. A final treat was a guelder rose in full flower next to the gate (see photo).

Report and photos by Terry Smith

Tree Damage to Play Area in Havant Park



Photos: Terry Smith

Some play equipment has been removed from Havant Park and the area has been fenced off due to surface damage caused by roots from a lime tree within the play area. There is another tree nearby and there is no obvious damage from the roots of that tree. Both trees are thought to be over 60 years old.

Removal of the roots would be harmful to these healthy trees that play a vital part in the landscape of Havant town centre. Havant Borough Council is considering the options to bring the play area back into use. We have asked the Council's Arboricultural Officer to ensure that the solution found does not involve harming or removing either of the trees.

Thanks to Ralph Cousins for pointing this out.

Proposed Development – Old Bedhampton

Bargate Homes are proposing the development of approximately 3.71 hectares of Grade 2 agricultural land at Lower Road, Bedhampton for 50 dwellings. Agricultural land is classified into five grades, the best and most versatile land being Grades 1, 2 and 3a.

A Development Consultation Forum to consider the proposal was held in the Council Chamber, Public Service Plaza, Havant on Tuesday 23rd May. This was an opportunity for residents to find out more about the plans and for the developer to understand the expectations and concerns of Havant Borough Councillors and residents prior to submitting a planning application.

According to the plan, the dwellings fronting Lower Road will be set well back ensuring the majority of the hedge is retained although a section will need to be removed for an access road. The layout retains the farm track and tall conifer trees along the eastern boundary. Along the western edge, a new landscape hedge will provide mitigation for the loss of any breach in the hedge along Lower Road. The southern section of the site will be left to grass and wild flowers for recreation with a possible community orchard and allotments.

The pressure group Save Old Bedhampton strongly objected to the proposal and gave a list of reasons. Many of the concerns from residents centred around road safety. Lower Road was described as a high-banked sunken road with no refuge for pedestrians, an ancient road and a site of archaeological heritage.



Lower Road looking west.



View south across proposed development area.



Tall conifer trees along the eastern boundary.



Lower Road looking east.

Save Old Bedhampton have asked HBTW to carry out a hedgerow survey along the northern boundary of the proposed development site.

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment is expected to be submitted in support of any application.

A summary of the proposal and a map are available to view on the Development Consultation Forum page of the Havant Borough Council website.

Report and photos by Terry Smith

Branch News - Emsworth Tree Wardens

Spreading The Word



The Emsworth Tree Wardens work with the Friends of Hampshire Farm Meadow and, during the last planting season, replaced trees that had failed on the newly created copse in the centre of the meadow. The money for this was provided by the Emsworth Residents' Association and any visitor to the copse will see it emerging as a real asset to the area between Emsworth and Westbourne.

Photo: Yvonne Copeland

Among the others we work with is Richard Hitchcock who is a member of Greening Westbourne and, as a result of our contact, he has been able to encourage four Westbourne residents to become local Tree Wardens in West Sussex. As far as we know, this will be a first for Westbourne and the Emsworth group are meeting them to give an idea of their responsibilities.

Brendan Gibb-Gray

Diary Date

23rd June - Friends of Havant Cemeteries 'Heritage at Your Feet' Open Day

On Saturday 23rd June, The Friends of Havant Cemeteries will hold a 'Heritage at Your Feet' open day to celebrate the work of The Group at New Lane / Eastern Road Cemetery, Havant. Activities will include guided walks around the cemetery to highlight interesting and important graves and the natural history of the cemetery.

Talks will be given at The Spring (Havant Arts Centre) where there will be displays to explain The Group's work and the history of the cemetery. Additional activities at The Spring (10.00am – 4.00pm) will include opportunities for research with experienced local and family historians and a family tree activity for children.

Entertainment will be provided by Wickham Morris and there will be a performance by Rob Mills, celebrated Hampshire folk singer, including a song especially composed for the cemeteries. There will be an official opening by the Mayor of Havant at New Lane Cemetery at midday.



There are a variety of trees in the cemeteries, including several examples of Irish yew which, unlike common yew, has a distinctive upright appearance. All Irish yews originate from cuttings of a single tree in Florence Court, County Fermanagh. The tree is believed to be a mutation of the common yew and was found as a sapling on the slope of a nearby mountain by a local farmer in 1780.

Photo: Terry Smith

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The Open Day is part of a project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund which includes replacement gates and a bench in the Dissenters' section and additional information boards for the Dissenters' section and the triangle of land outside the cemetery on the corner of Eastern Road and New Road.

<https://www.friendsofhavantcemeteries.org.uk/>

Tools Storage

As we intend to plant more trees, we are likely to need tools and we will need somewhere to store them. Does anyone know of any secure storage we could use?

Newsletter Contributions

Please submit newsletter contributions to hbctreewardens@gmail.com

Photographs illustrating articles or photographs on their own (with captions) would be appreciated. If you are not the photographer, please check you have permission and say who is so that credit can be given. To keep file sizes manageable, please avoid sending high resolution images.

Deadline for next issue: 23rd June

Would you like your own copy of this newsletter?

If this newsletter was forwarded to you and you would like to request your own copy, please send an e-mail to hbctreewardens@gmail.com

Membership of Havant Borough Tree Wardens

Membership is open to anyone with an interest in trees. We do not currently charge a membership fee and, although we need members who want to be involved in practical tasks or the running of the network, we also welcome supporters. If you would like to become a member, please request a membership application form by e-mail to hbctreewardens@gmail.com