

PROTECTING TRANQUIL SOUTHWOLD

I spoke my first words on Southwold Common in 1929 and my 5-year-old sister rushed the news to my parents. Undeterred, they took us to Southwold again in 1930, when the lighthouse in Stradbroke Road, seen from my cot through the window in the evening light, became fixed in my mind's eye for ever as my very first visual memory.

Regrettably, I never saw in action the narrow-gauge railway which once connected Southwold with Walberswick, Blythburgh and Halesworth, but had to be content years later with walking its mysterious overgrown tracks and with operating the derelict station's now forlorn and unregarded signal. It was August 1939. One evening we went to the cinema and there was a very noisy thunderstorm; several people in the audience thought the war had started,

fled for the exit and hurt themselves all trying to get out at the same time.

Now Southwold has another war on its hands — against developers. The harbour, it has to be admitted, is in need of repair, but when the news broke that plans had been submitted for a marina with 300 houses there was an outcry; virtually the entire population — from the oldest retired general to the youngest fisherman — rose as one and it was impossible to

walk down the High Street without acquiring a sheaf of protest leaflets. My sister wrote letters from her Essex village and received encouraging reports. Eventually, I telephoned an official of the Waveney District Council, who confirmed that this monstrous scheme had, for the time being at least, been quashed. He added with dispassionate wonder, "These Southwold people do seem to have a lot of friends in high places."

But this was only the first battle. The war still has to be fought and won. Waveney Council has appointed Lewis and Duvivier (Engineers), who have previous experience of Southwold and its difficulties,

to re-examine the problem. Southwold Harbour and River Protection Group (SHARP) has no objection to this choice but has appointed Ove Arup to act as its own technical advisers.

There is broad agreement between SHARP and Waveney Council that what is needed is a programme of minimum repair works for coast protection, land drainage, and provision of a navigable harbour. SHARP had collected some £6,000 by September (this sum will have increased by now) towards the cost of its campaign; every penny of this, and more, will be needed to sustain it during the months of vigilance and struggle which lie ahead if the harbour is to be repaired in a way which

leaves undamaged the unique character of Southwold and its marshes.

What has all this to do with people living in a north-west London Suburb 100 miles away? For many of you perhaps nothing at all. But I suspect that there are a number of people in the Suburb who have been bitten in much the same way as I evidently was at the age of six months, who thrill to the harsh light and the determined non-pretentiousness of the East Anglian coast, and who heave a sigh of relief every time they come to this fishing village with its magnificent wool church and its seamen's reading-room and find its few concessions to being a seaside resort are still tucked

away as discreetly as ever; for them the preservation of Southwold must be a cause for concern.

But if you are one of those who share this concern I've probably told you nothing you don't know already. You probably also know as well as I do that SHARP's public relations officer is Mike Hyslop, 10 Market Place, Southwold, Suffolk (0502-723915) and that the Chairman, Brian Morton, can be contacted here in London (359-0202/3) and that your help will be very welcome. **MP**

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CANDLELIT CAROLS



Stille Nacht, heilige nacht.

Every year Jean Barraclough organises a Students Carol Service for EFL students from the Institute.

The service takes place in the Free Church led by the minister Peter Barraclough.

It is a joyous international

occasion as choirs and individuals of the many nationalities represented sing their carols.

The highlight was this year as always the candlebearing Scandinavians in white processing down the aisle in the darkened church singing Santa Lucia.

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Care of trees and light pruning

At this time of the year many people, are contemplating tree pruning prior to buds forming with the advent of spring. Apart from extremely frosty conditions now is a good time to tackle light pruning of trees, mainly because one is able to see exactly where to prune without the presence of leaves.

It should be mentioned at this stage that permission is required from the New Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust for tree pruning, unless it is very light with a total thinning of less than 10%. The London Borough of Barnet must also be notified of the intention to prune because the suburb is protected as a conservation area.

If you do not intend to do the work yourself it is advisable to contact the Trust Office for a list of approved tree surgeons. Unfortunately it goes without saying that there are many unprofessional 'Cowboy type' tree surgeons acting within the area who will very easily ruin, possibly for all time, the correct shape and form of a tree — so please be warned and seek qualified assistance.

Many trees within the suburb are in close proximity to roads and footpaths and it is therefore important to maintain a certain clearance for pedestrians and vehicles from overhanging branches. It should be remem-

bered that when a tree grows it does not grow from the bottom upwards taking its branches higher as it develops. A tree grows only at the top whilst increasing its girth to support its development, therefore branches will stay at the same level and not gain height as the tree grows, it is therefore recommended that branches growing from the lower portion of the tree which might in time become a nuisance are cut back to the trunk.

The question of which branches to prune is always the most difficult but in general terms the following criteria apply.

First of all any broken or diseased branches should be removed when first noticed irrespective of the time of year, this helps prevent the spread of disease or decay as well as maintaining its visual attraction.

Any suckers or shoots from around the base of the tree should be removed, lime trees are particularly noticeable for this type of growth. Also sucker growth or water shoots

from within the tree should be removed, thorn trees are good examples where this sort of growth is prevalent.

Low branches which could interfere with passage should be removed as mentioned before together with downward pointing, inward growing, or crossing branches. Obviously any weak limbs or dead or dying branches should also be removed.

A tree which develops a main lead shoot or upper stem as part of its natural form should be pruned accordingly and any competitive shoots should be removed. Tips of branches which protrude from the basic outline or form of the tree can be cut back in order to preserve and maintain the correct overall shape.

The most important factor which applies to all of the various branches recommended for removal is the need to prune the branch flush against the trunk or main limb of the tree. This allows the tree to heal the wound by means of the 'Cambium layer' under the bark gradually spreading over the cut surface.

If a small piece of branch or 'snag' is left growing from the trunk it is impossible for the 'Cambium layer' to spread over it; this will eventually lead to decay which could in turn spread within the heart of the tree.

As a conclusion we would strongly urge you to seek professional help from the Trust unless the pruning you have in mind is of a minimal nature.



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