



## What will become of splendid trees?

**W**e owe so much in our streets and parks to the calming companionship of mature trees. Their graceful presence enhances many

a road which might otherwise be plain and stale, they beautify the winding paths of many a common and of course they decorate our hills and the Downs to our gentle delight.

Here in our own town reflect for a moment on the stately Causeway with its small-leaved limes; consider Richmond Road and Parsonage Road both bordered with trees, and all greatly improved by the leafy prospect.

Wander a moment or two down Morth Gardens off the Causeway and you'll see a large beech tree in the back garden of a Causeway house. Its tall spreading crown belies its very recent agricultural background. Look closely and you'll see that the trunk low down supports four major sprouting stems, three of which make up the present crown, and the fourth is just cut off. This tree was last pollarded probably about 120 years ago which tells us that someone thought it worthwhile to keep a tree for crop purposes here right in the centre of town



Horsham's Causeway

only a few generations ago.

Back in the Causeway the columns of splendid green appear under threat. Outside the Manor House one of the fine old beeches has succumbed to some arboreal disease and has been replaced by a sapling. It too has expired, rather ominously, leaving the suspicion that there might be fungal infection underground which is slaughtering our trees.

Even worse, across the road outside number 13 one of the lime trees has been

felled recently and the sawn-off stump reveals the rot within. I tried measuring how deep down inside the hollow stump the rot went and it's more than two metres – at least that's as far as my arm and walking stick went without resistance. How badly are the other trees affected? Are they too under the shadow of the axe? Will the Causeway be denuded of its centuries- old splendour?

The splendour of centuries, indeed of millennia, comes to mind when we glance at the avenue of the old Novartis building.

It is lined with cedars of Lebanon, though sadly at least one has died off. These trees were once the forested pride of the Middle East, valued alike by Egyptians, Greeks, Phoenicians and Hebrews. They were the favoured building timber for many a splendid palace, all long gone, and were famously used in the Temple of Solomon. Over use eliminated these regal giants and at one time Lebanon itself reportedly boasted only forty of these impressive trees.

Will we do better as the Novartis site is redeveloped? Could we prevail upon the planners and developers to build around this magnificent inheritance and construct new dwellings aligned with the flowing glory of these historical trees? Wouldn't it be ironic if Horsham could claim to have saved almost as many cedars as their home country once possessed?

*The Horsham Society is concerned about the past, present and future of the town. It seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces. Membership of the Horsham Society is open to anyone who shares these concerns. For more information, visit the website [www.horshamsociety.org](http://www.horshamsociety.org) or phone 01403 259038.*