

THE SHAPE OF OUR TREES

A Sad Tale

In the 1960's Bristol City Council was singularly fortunate to have a Mr Wilkes training their arboricultural department (before the times of 'contracting out'). He used to give practical public lectures, demonstrating his theories on a tree as he spoke! The resultant 'cut' often lightened the weight supported by the tree by up to a third, but importantly maintained its basic habit of growth and shape.

However Mr Wilkes has been dead for 25 years, and it seems all his good educational work and advice is forgotten. The firms now employed by the City Council, when asked to lighten the weight by 30% (which is the most considered suitable for any tree), just lower the height in the fashion of a 'lollipop cut' virtually destroying its characteristic shape.

In summer the cut tree can look like little more than 'a bush on a stalk' and the following year will need much additional pruning (which it is unlikely to receive) to control the burst of growth from the ends of the severed limbs! Winter presents us with another visual loss. For 5 months the tree has no leaf, and its entire fine winter tracery has also been destroyed.

You see in the picture the sort of cut inflicted yearly on our city trees, and you may ask whether there is anywhere that now trains our tree surgeons to understand the individual growth form of trees, and who do not just regard them as a potential danger. We badly need the leaves to deal with the carbon monoxide emissions from cars, and the trees themselves enhance our surroundings.

The very simple 'rule of thumb' expressed by Mr Wilkes was that no selected branch should be cut across, but always either cut back to source, or, to where it divides into two (or more) branches.

This method required considered, selective thought, but then, as we have all learnt in our particular fields of endeavour, anything worthwhile does!



Anne Hicks

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OBITUARIES

EVELYN BROMHEAD

Members will be sorry to learn of the death, on 12 November, of Evelyn, a stalwart of the Civic Society for more than 25 years. For most of that time she served on its Committee, only retiring in 1999 owing to illness. She played an active part in the work of several of the working groups, and was successfully involved in contesting some quite inappropriate changes proposed for Ashton Park, and was involved in the early stages of proposals for the Avon Walkway.

Evelyn gave generously of her time and energies. She was a Magistrate, on a board of the Health Authority and on the Parole Board at Shepton Mallet Prison. She also stood as liberal candidate on the Parish Council. Few people knew of her keen interest in art history: she made a particular study of paintings of the Annunciation.

Evelyn was happily married to Peter, who sadly predeceased her by a few days. They had two daughters and four grandsons. Their home was always a warm and welcoming one, not least to newcomers to the University and to the area.



Pam Bird

ST. JOHN HARTNELL

St. John Hartnell died five days before Christmas and Bristol lost a very distinguished son. In 1996 Bristol Civic Society invited all party support for a Festival of the Sea to celebrate Cabot's historic voyage and there was unanimous commitment. However, it took St. John's imaginative leadership to ensure that it was such a spectacular success. He initiated the construction of the Matthew (a replica of the original), a dinner dance in Queens Square (entirely tented over!) to celebrate the launch, the return voyage to America, a festival of all manner of ships in Bristol Harbour and sustained national recognition.

Together with his wife Sarah they brought enthusiasm and distinction to Bristol's unique culture. They raised funds for the Royal West of England Academy's Millennium Appeal and he was a member of Bristol Civic Society. He even considered the possibility of constructing a replica of the Dutch House! We offer our profound sympathy to Mrs. Hartnell on the loss of such an exhilarating partner and hope his imaginative enterprise will be a lasting inspiration to Bristolians.



Jerry Hicks