

FAMOUS TREES AT CHRISTCHURCH

Not to be Destroyed.

A REASSURING STATEMENT.

APPROACH TO ANCIENT DRUIDS' SHRINE. 13-11-1926

Considerable concern has been expressed by different Christchurch people of late as to what it is likely to be the fate of the beautiful avenue of oaks near the north-western extremity of the borough. Rumours appear to have got about that these favourite trees were in imminent danger of being destroyed.

With a view to getting first-hand information regarding the matter, an "Echo" representative called on Alderman Frank A. Lane, secretary to the South Coast Land Society, Ltd., and that gentleman had reassuring things to say. His society, he said, had disposed of the whole of the plots of land bordering either side of the avenue in question ("The Grove"), and on which houses were now rapidly springing up; but the oaks all remained in the roadway, and were therefore regarded as public property. So far as the society were concerned, he said, they would do all they could towards preserving the avenue intact. As evidence of the interest taken by individual members, Mr. Lane recalled the generous and practical act performed by the chairman, Mr. Alexr. J. Abbott, J.P., of Boscombe, some time ago, in securing the continued well-being of the wonderful old fir at the corner of the Grove and Fairmile, and presenting it to the town. This tree, by the way, claims to be the biggest and finest fir in the country.

Tradition has it that the avenue of oaks was planted by the Ancient Druids, as an approach to the shrine they had erected on the hill (now known as St. Catherine's) close by.

20-11-1926

A Giant Fir-

THOUGH a city of pines Bournemouth has few notable trees. The one that has just been figuring in the news columns is the most notable in the locality, and it is outside the borough. Few picnic parties on their way to St Catherine's Hill or the Rhododendron Forest have failed to stop near the giant fir tree that throws its shade over the road junction where Oak-avenue meets the

highway from Christchurch. Its girth has been the subject of many an arm-span, and its claims to have the biggest trunk of any pine tree in the country have often been debated.

What is certain is that it held a proud place in the landscape before ever Bournemouth was made conspicuous by its planted rows of pines, and it is fitting that this veteran should now be exempted from the fate of its younger rivals.

—and Its Reprieve.

RUMOUR has condemned this great tree to fall a victim to the rapacious axe of the builder seeking sites for houses. Its remoteness from urban sites and sounds, a lone sentinel of the retreating forest, might at one time have seemed to have secured for ever its protection, but the town has stretched tentacles over the intervening miles; bungalows and even shops sprang up within the shadow of its branches, and the tree was in danger of finding itself part of an "eligible corner site ripe for development".

Luckily it has been reprieved. Together with the space claimed by its gaunt projecting roots, it has been presented to the Borough of Christchurch for preservation. As a trysting place it may have lost fascination, for instead of lovers the seat that surrounds it now shelters waiting bus passengers, and the tree may yet support a sign "all cars stop here."