

Suburb News *in conversation with...*

...Professor Margaret Harris

Daphne Berkovi chats to Margaret about her life, academia and nostalgia for a Temple Fortune childhood

Margaret and her husband Paul moved to the Suburb in 2008 after their retirement. However, this move, returned Margaret to her childhood roots as we discover in conversation.

Margaret's family moved to Monkville Avenue in Temple Fortune when she was aged just 4. Margaret explained to me that she was a lonely only child until aged 6 when her brother was born but once the family moved, Margaret encountered lots of children to play with in their cul-de-sac. These were halcyon days when Margaret walked on her own to and from the Garden Suburb primary school. There was always the obligatory policeman on duty at the bottom of Childs Way to manage the children crossing the Finchley Road (no lollipop lady or pedestrian crossing was in existence then). Margaret told me that if the policeman was not present, then she was under strict instructions from her mother to ask Mr Corney (the founder of Corney's fishmongers) to accompany her across the Finchley Road.

Childhood memories abound as Margaret conveyed to me that she distinctly remembers being walked to the Odeon in Temple Fortune to view films of the Queen's coronation and about the Conquest of Everest the same year. So, after passing the 11 plus and leaving her primary

school in the Suburb, Margaret then attended Cophall, a local girl's grammar school. Thereafter she went to Birmingham University to study Sociology and Politics where she met her husband Paul who was studying law. She related that her academic studies have allowed her to pursue a pathway that has proved interesting and worthwhile throughout her life. A year after graduation Paul and Margaret married in 1967.

A return then to London and initially to live in Earls Court; Margaret's first job was working for the former Greater London Council at County Hall, Westminster. It was here that Margaret felt she honed her organisational skills as she serviced several council committees, including the one supervising the building of the National Theatre on the South Bank, and the one which provided liaison between the GLC and the Heathrow Airport Authority. Thereafter Margaret moved to the GLC Research Unit, conducting social research projects, which fed into the council's planning and policy.

Once Margaret and Paul started their family (a son and daughter) they settled in Elstree. It was then that Margaret decided to stop the commute to London and pursue college teaching alongside voluntary work as an adviser and trainer for the Citizens Advice Bureau. It was at this juncture of her life

that Margaret was introduced to the world of charities and the voluntary sector. Thus, in 1979 Margaret went to Brunel University to complete a Master's in Public Administration. Whilst there she was invited to develop teaching and research on the management of charities and other voluntary organisations. This was at a time when there was practically no research about the 'third sector'.

This then marked a new chapter in Margaret's life as she recounted that this was the moment that her career and research on voluntary organisations took off; resulting in pioneering a new academic field including postgraduate teaching and research projects at Brunel. With this experience, Margaret told me she then moved to the LSE, where she helped form a new academic centre within the Department of Social Policy. In parallel Margaret pursued her Ph.D. on research into the organisation of churches and synagogues, and in 1999 she accepted the post of Professor at the Business School at Aston University.

So, why the move to the Suburb in 2008? Margaret explained that once she retired, she and Paul wanted to change their lifestyle. They also wanted to live close to their two children and their grandchildren in North London. It was only after buying their house that they were delighted to discover that

it had been designed by the eccentric architect Matthew Dawson, who designed several houses in the Suburb. Another reason was the easy access to transport and shops. Margaret expressed how much she really appreciated the H2 bus service that exists in the Suburb. She also values the online Master Tradespeople List that can be consulted by members of the

Residents Association. Margaret also spoke about the good interfaith work that exists, encouraged by the local churches and synagogues.

Finally, Margaret spoke of the opportunity for new learning now that the new U3A has been established in the Suburb; where she has joined a class, 'Blank Page', and is writing up memories of her

Temple Fortune childhood. This is an important part of social history and Suburb history too; for living here, Margaret explains, is helping her to recall the shops and personalities of her local childhood; recounting and documenting what has changed and what has remained the same. I am sure this will make interesting reading for us all **S**



CENTRAL SQUARE & SUNSHINE CORNER

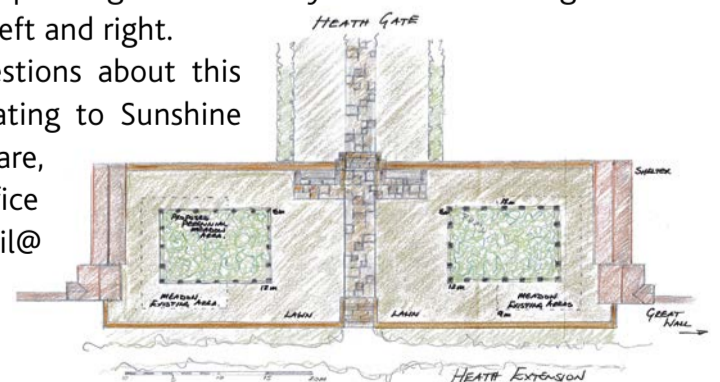
Works at Sunshine Corner, Winter 2017/18



Following a successful transformation of the beds at Central Square (above), the Trust is currently making some changes to the planting at Sunshine Corner.

This includes changing the orientation of the beds, and establishing a new perennial meadow planting scheme. Early sketches showing the plans can be seen below, left and right.

If you have any questions about this or any other queries relating to Sunshine Corner or Central Square, please call the Trust office on 020 8455 1066 or mail@hgstrust.org.



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