

An interview with The Orchard

PHOTOS: DAVID JOHNSON



Situated in the heart of the early Suburb, in a secluded close off Hampstead Way, is the Orchard Housing Society, known near and far just as The Orchard. It is a special place that has its history steeped in the ethos of Dame Henrietta Barnett, the founder of Hampstead Garden Suburb.

The Orchard exists to provide sheltered accommodation for the older (aged 60 and over) members of the Suburb population (or the parents of Suburb residents or those with strong Suburb connections) who are in housing need. The provision of flats for residents to rent when they became elderly was part of Henrietta Barnett's vision as this would enable them to continue to live independently on the Suburb throughout their later years.

The original building opened in 1909, but by the 1960s it was in a poor condition and no longer met the requirements for this type of housing. A group of local residents led by Edward Parry formed the Orchard Housing Society to replace the original building with a more modern provision and the new buildings were opened in 1972. It has accommodation for 48 single people and 13 couples, with approximately 70 tenants on site.

The Orchard Housing Society is a registered, not-for-profit provider of social housing. The

affairs of the Society are conducted by a group of local volunteers who form the Management Committee together with up to three current tenants.

It was on a sunny afternoon in September, I was sitting and talking to Beatrice Boussard, the new Tenant Support Manager of The Orchard in their newly refurbished communal lounge. Beatrice explained to me that she feels with two new managers on site who have previously worked with bigger housing organisations, they will have a fresh look, and aim to share their enthusiasm for bringing the tenants together by organising activities in the new communal room. She believes that having activities on site can be very beneficial to health and wellbeing, giving tenants the opportunity to meet and socialise.

Beatrice explained that she feels the key to tenant satisfaction is achieved by inviting each tenant to complete a support plan. This highlights any areas in their life that could be improved or supported by external agencies. Her plan is to try to make sure the tenants are involved in some activities especially in the winter months when it is harder to go out. She anticipates that this will reduce isolation and loneliness and promote tenant engagement.

Although tenants have some activities to engage with, including

a decoupage class, which is organised by one of The Orchard's tenants, producing beautiful boxes, there are also tenants who have musical skills and can play the saxophone, piano or sitar, and then there are those that attend talks, music programmes and a poetry class at Fellowship House.

So, what has transpired during this summer is a new collaboration between The Orchard and the new HGS U3A. Tenants were invited to attend 'taster' classes for one week led by different HGS U3A group leaders. This has led to several tenants joining the new U3A and starting classes in Yoga and Gentle Exercise and Dance; classes which they really enjoyed and found beneficial.

The Orchard is a fine example of how well sheltered housing can succeed; with good management, purpose-built accommodation in an attractive tranquil setting; and connections with other groups within the local vicinity, thus continuing the spirit of community from its original founder Dame Henrietta Barnett.

The Orchard are pleased to be able to take on new applications from prospective tenants who would like to move to The Orchard in the near future.

DAPHNE BERKOVI



Fireworks over Central Square

December 31 saw the annual HGS party held in St Jude's church, which this year attracted the largest ever crowd of local residents with their families and children. Organised by the RA and their Events team, all present enjoyed wine and soft drinks with homemade snacks provided, while catching up with friends and their Christmas news and activities.

At midnight, the church bell rang, announcing the start of 2018, followed by a brilliant firework display over Central Square, created by Alchemy. Then sadly, it was all over and time to go home and continue partying.

In the unlikely event that anyone missed it, a clip can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=fsxhfSHHpjQ.



Tony Brand & Hella Schrader of RA Events

Or you can see photos at www.stjudeonthehill.org/?m=1 and www.stjudeonthehill.org/2018/01/new-years-eve-20172018.html.

Once again, many thanks go to the Reverend Alan Walker for the use of St Jude's, the Suburb Trust and the Borough of Barnet for use of the tennis court and Central Square, all volunteers young and old, and finally to both our sponsors Hausman & Holmes, and Estate Wealth of Golders Green.

TONY BRAND



PHOTOS: CESAR RODRIGUEZ-DURAN

Suburb kids (of all sizes) enjoy the snow



PHOTOS: JULIAN GIBBINS

April HGS Art Fair

HGS Art is a young organisation though some of its members are quite mature. They are skilful local artists, sculptors, photographers, film makers, potters, glass makers, workers in fabrics and indeed all manner of craft. HGS Art brings them together to enjoy interesting lectures, outings, wine tasting and social events, and also to display their work at its annual Art Fair which will be held at Fellowship House on April 14-15, where it will run a Children's Art Workshop. A date for your diary and do keep a look out for HGS posters which will give more details.

Meantime, we are looking forward to Pat Hedger's lecture on the Dutch Golden Age on February 22.

To join HGS Art, visit us at www.hgsart.co.uk or contact Mary Davis, membership secretary at maryd5@hotmail.com.



A wonderful example of HGS Art member Vera Moore's work



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The RA website is www.hgs.org.uk