

Triumph for the Archer Academy

Every year Welwyn Garden City holds a Youth Drama Festival featuring groups from Hertfordshire and its adjoining counties. This year, their 75th anniversary, it took place from March 4 to 9 at the Barn Theatre. Eighteen

different drama groups entered with three short one-act plays performed each night before a panel of expert judges.

The Archer Players featured 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' by William Shakespeare. They ended

up winning first place and an additional technical award for all aspects of their performance.

Congratulations to the whole cast for their hard work and to their drama director, Anja Rodford.

TONY BRAND



Brookland School at Fellowship



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On April 4, Hampstead Garden Suburb seniors were entertained at Fellowship House by Year 2 pupils from Brookland School performing a selection of dances and songs with members of the audience sometimes joining in.

It was a delightful afternoon with a group of dedicated six and seven year old boys and girls making a big effort for the local community.

Congratulations and thanks to all of them and their teacher.

TONY BRAND

Mental Health, Gardening... and a Seed Swap



Fellowship House was packed on the evening of March 7 for a joint initiative of the HGS Horticultural Society and the Allotments Committee. It started with a very interesting and informative conversation between Jenifer Wakelyn and Chris Page, both doctors who are gardeners living in the Suburb, on The roots to mental health, why gardening is good for you.

Jenifer started by talking about her work with children in care and the importance of play. She described how gardening has a long history of helping with depression, anxiety and other mental illnesses. Chris added that recent studies show that physical, mental and social health improve with being

outside and close to nature, and how allotments help with loneliness. Gardeners are more aware of weather and seasons, such as noticing the first butterflies or cuckoo, or identifying the many different birdsongs.

They both made interesting connections between gardening and mental health, drawing from a range of different theoretical perspectives, history, nature, medicine, psychology and encouraged us to think privately about our love of gardening and how it helps us in our everyday lives.

Jenifer explained how 'playing' in the garden is inherently creative and expressive. It helps us in life through the constructive dialogue between

our intensely private and sometimes difficult to access internal world, as well as controlling and understanding our external worlds.

An interesting Q and A session followed with several members of the audience talking movingly about the importance of playing outside when they were young; how children are fascinated by nature and enjoy gardens, but sometimes appear disinterested during adolescent years; how the original love of nature can reappear later in life.

The Seed Swap itself was a terrific success with four long tables heaving with an enormous selection of vegetable seeds, perennials, annuals and some seedlings. Everyone behaved themselves, with no sharp elbows!

Many allotmenters were delighted that Terry Rand had brought along a supply of his St George and Cobra runner bean seeds, and Caroline Broome had dozens of Thompson and Morgan vegetable and flowers seeds.

Diane Berger and her team looked after us with refreshments, and it was heartening to see such a large turn out of both Horticultural Society and Allotment Committee members and residents. It was a wonderful evening, with pockets full of seeds to sow, and no money was exchanged at any stage!

Many thanks to all involved, especially Jenifer and Chris.

Annemount Head celebrates 25th year

Annemount School has only ever had two heads. The first, Miss Jamaiker, was there from 1936 to 1993, when Geraldine Maidment (right) took over after Miss Jamaiker's death.

Geraldine is celebrating 25 years at the school and has asked Suburb News to make it known that the school is inviting families with links to it to share their memories by e-mailing the school at headteacher@annemount.co.uk.

TERRY BROOKS



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10 Waterlow Court
Monday, February 4

Dear Sir

I cannot begin to describe the waste of time and effort, and sheer frustration over at least five long weeks in trying to get the Council to respond to their failure to collect the four large paladins and ten recycling bins from Waterlow Court.

Firstly, the new crew had no idea we existed and had not been briefed at all on how to access Waterlow Court from the rear. Then, a missed bin collection cannot be logged on the website for blocks with more than 10 flats; a telephone call has to be made to a number on which no message can be left & no-one answers, as it has a pre-recorded message. So how would they ever know about a problem? Clearly they prefer not to know. A Kafkaesque situation.

Secondly, while willing to report a complaint on our behalf, our ward councillors appeared impotent to actually make anything happen, or hold their officers to account. Our excellent constituency MP also tried and was fobbed off with a misleading e-mail that failed to remedy matters.

Letters to the Editor

Finally, after 26 years of collecting our bins from the rear of our site along a back alley, which entails a slope and right angle bend, to pick up in the car park of the adjacent block of flats in Corringway, the Council's Assistant Director decreed that this constituted a Health & Safety concern and could no longer be countenanced: we would have to bring the bins down ourselves (we have no porter) or pay for a special collection: the additional cost – over and above our 54 individual council tax contributions – an insupportable five figure sum!

While I appreciate councils have been severely constrained financially by this government, we are all being made to pay for the lack of what should be a cost-effective and efficient public service.

Yours
Alexandra Rook

Suburb News decided to look further into the circumstances and forwarded this letter to the three HGS ward councillors and our MP for comment.

It's interesting to note that the Health and Safety concerns

which don't allow for the bins to be moved can be magically overcome by the application of money.

Councillor Rohit Grover sent the following statement to Suburb News:

"We acknowledge the difficulties residents of Waterlow Court face as a result of this re-organisation and will work with them in order to find a satisfactory resolution. We are meeting with the Chairman of the Environment Committee and the Assistant Director of Street Scene at the site next week in order to examine options."

Dear Sir

As I mentioned in a question at the RA Council meeting on Tuesday evening, April 2, it is an offence in law to blow garden waste from your private property onto public property. Private contractors should be informed by the owners of the property they must dispose of any garden waste by collecting the garden waste material and taking it to the nearest public dump. If the owners of the property allow their contractors to blow waste into the road, or onto the pavement, they are then breaking the law.

Yours

Mr T F Youlden

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