

Jan White 1937 - 2019

Jan White who died on 29 November 2019 had lived in the Suburb for 57 years.

Jan was born in 1937 in Tottenham where her father was a GP and her mother was the manager of the local labour exchange. The events of 1939, when Jan was just two years old, necessitated a move out of North London to avoid the bombing and the family moved to Letchworth for the duration of the war. On their return, Jan became a pupil at City of London School where she was made head girl and gained a place to read English at St Hilda's College, Oxford in 1956.

After university, Jan started work at Hutchinson's, the publishers in Great Portland Street, mainly editing technical books. Pete, her future husband, worked at an IT company in what were the early days of computing. On a training course near Maidenhead, Pete met Jan's brother Andrew who introduced Pete to Jan at Queens' Ice-skating Rink in Bayswater. As it turned out, Pete had been at Oxford at the exact same time as Jan, but, in the three years their paths never crossed.

Pete and Jan went all over London looking to buy a house for some time without success, including one in a Camden Town mews which they were keen on until Jan's mother pointed out that there was a bullet-hole in one of the windows! Eventually, on the way back from a party late one night, they got totally lost and ended up in the Suburb which



THE REVEREND ALAN WALKER

appeared to be worth a second look in daylight. They duly returned and were very impressed. By the time they were married in 1962, Jan and Pete had committed to buying a house in Asmun's Hill and would have moved in straight away if not for the leaks caused by the snow and ice of the infamous winter of 1962. They finally moved into Asmun's Hill in the Spring of 1963.

Over the next few years, Jan and Pete became parents to Richard (who sadly died shortly after his birth), Roz, Ziz and Patrick. The family, including dogs and cats, was now expanding and the house in Asmun's Hill was proving too small. Jan and Pete moved their family to Hampstead Way, their base ever since.

Jan was very involved in helping others. Early commitments included being secretary of the Barnet MS Society and serving on the committee of Wellgarth Nursery here in the

Suburb. In between this, she was a freelance editor and worked for a while at the Polytechnic of Central London. Jan also worked on the Priority Estates Project, which was concerned with the betterment and support of run-down estates in the capital.

On the local front, she became very involved with Garden Suburb School PTA and, with friends, set up a local youth club based in St Jude's Church Rooms that ran for many years. She also set up a regular clothes swap for children's clothing. Jan was also one of many local friends and neighbours who became involved in the annual Proms at St Jude's, more or less from the start. Her particular role was helping to organise the refreshments. She also organised the flower rota at the church for many years and belonged to the Wives Fellowship.

Two of Jan's ongoing passions were the Liberal Democrats and pottery, which continued right throughout her life. She was also a governor at Whitefield School for a number of years and served for a long time on the local North London Hospice support group, among other things, organising annual book swaps and helping with running charity walks. To quote a member of the brilliant North London Hospice team, where she spent her last few days "Jan was a very special person, always managing a smile in whatever circumstances."

Her funeral took place at St Jude's on Friday 20 December.

THE REVEREND ALAN WALKER

Ten years at the Trust

Nick Packard joined the Trust as estate manager in 2009. He had previously worked as an estate agent in residential property. In so doing he realised when you are dealing with people's homes, the owners can be very emotional and proprietorial. Moving home is, in fact, recognised as one of the most stressful things that people go through (after death and divorce). Nick understood his job meant providing solutions and that sympathy and kindness went a long way.

As the estate manager, Nick's job was to look after the 27 private roads, 50 communal gardens and 11 allotments, all owned by the Suburb Trust. He spent five years managing and maintaining these sites and found himself learning a lot about road construction. The roads on the Suburb were originally built for horse and cart; the cars and lorries that use them now cause a lot of damage. Nick's first road reconstruction project was in Reynolds Close where everything that could go wrong did and, as he visited the site every day, he was there to witness it all. This experience taught him how to manage a site: what works are needed, what the risks are and the difference between a 'repair' and an 'improvement'. These projects brought him in close contact with the residents and he spent a lot of time explaining what was going on to a well-educated and informed audience.

After five years he took over as Manager from Jane Blackburn who, in this role, had put the Trust onto a professional and commercially viable basis. Nick was the 'continuity'. He says "I inherited a well-run organisation" and he acknowledges the help he received from Richard Wakefield who had recently been appointed as Chairman: "I was very lucky to have him, he was a superb manager and, as a resident himself, understood what the problems were."

Nick enjoyed the history and architecture of the Suburb



and its emphasis on heritage. The Trust has a long term horizon, and he saw his role as "improving the financial performance, keeping good systems in place, and having good people on the staff."

Like all organisations, the Trust needs a steady income. Nick decided to buy Suburb flats that were for sale either because of a short lease or through probate. He chose that particular investment because Trust staff have the expertise to manage property. It allowed them to refurbish the flats, extend the leases and rent them out. These investments now provide a steady long term income.

Nick saw the Trust as a well-structured organisation. It does what it needs to do to protect the character of a special area which is of interest not only to the residents, but to a much wider audience. He has endeavoured to give more resources to exhibitions and talks, because as a charity, the Trust has a public benefit requirement. A number of visitors such as students and architects from all over the world come to

see the Suburb so the Trust organises talks and tours for them "to gently spread the message of what an interesting concept it is and how well preserved it still is; after all, Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, did describe it as 'the most nearly perfect example of that English invention and specialty, the garden suburb'."

After 10 years with the Trust, Nick is moving to the Crown Estate Paving Commission in Regent's Park. He accepted the job, because it has a number of similarities to the Trust, not least its heritage aspects, and, also because he wants to test himself out in a new environment.

When asked about his best memory of the Trust, he decided it was Sunshine Corner at the end of Heathgate. "This area means a lot to me. I worked over three years on this project with my colleagues, particularly Michael Tutton, consultant engineer Stuart Tappin and an excellent craftsman builder, Martin Goodchild, to appropriately restore the hard landscaping of this important part of the Suburb marking the change from the rural Heath Extension to the urban townscape. Unfortunately, as soon as we finished, a car crashed through part of the wall (luckily the driver survived and no-one else was injured) which again had to re-built."

Nick concluded he "learnt so much with very supportive trustees and a happy and hard-working office and that has been great." It was, he says, "A most fantastic time!"



Sunshine Corner

Combat Stress



DAVID CROSSLEY

As its many Suburb supporters already know, a small Suburb committee has raised well over £40,000 over the past few years to support outreach services provided by Armed Services' mental health charity Combat Stress. The charity was founded in 1919 and on Saturday 5 October the HGS Combat Stress Committee put on a special centenary fundraising concert

at the Free Church, North Square. A packed and very appreciative audience enjoyed an evening of music and song featuring The North London Military Wives Choir and The Royal Naval Volunteer Band - Northwest Headquarters. Long-time supporter and HGS resident Martin Bell OBE introduced the proceedings and there was a moving account by a former PTSD sufferer telling

how Combat Stress had helped him and his family back to a normal life after years of suppressed mental ill-health.

Ticket, programme, Christmas card and refreshment sales, donations and voluntary assistance from Merchants Taylors School Combined Cadet Force and many others raised an amazing amount of money. The committee would like to thank all the unsung heroes and heroines who helped to organise the concert, made cakes to feed the audience in the interval and waived or reduced fees for various services. A few weeks after the concert, the CCF held a Christmas charity event and bake sale and asked that their proceeds be added to the concert total. When a £525 donation from Waitrose Temple Fortune's Green token scheme was also added in, the concert total yielded a magnificent £4,460.48 for Combat Stress.

As the icing on the cake, just before the concert, Combat Stress HQ gave its inaugural Community Group of the Year Award to the HGS committee, and in December Ruth Smith and Yvonne Oliver appeared on Radio London's Robert Elms show to tell Londoners about fundraising for Combat Stress.

MARJORIE HARRIS

Mitzvah Day litter pick



NAOMI COLMAN

On 15 November, as part of Mitzvah Day 2019, a group of Henrietta Barnett School students from Years 11 and 12 took to the streets surrounding the school in order to pick up rubbish littering the streets, bushes and hedges. This fitted Mitzvah Day's 'Going Greener' theme.

We joined forces with local volunteers from the HGS Residents Association Litter Picking Team to tackle the job. Despite the wind and rain, we all felt it was really enjoyable getting to clean up the local area as well getting to know the people who live locally to the school.

We had a great time taking part in the Litter Pick and can't wait to see what opportunities there will be next year as well!

We hope this will be the start of a joint initiative between our school community and the local residents.

Mitzvah Day is a charity whose aim is to make a difference to

the community around us by bringing together volunteers from all backgrounds and faiths to address real needs through social action.

ARIA PARDIWALA & DAHYUN HAM, 12F

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