

The Tea House

MARJORIE HARRIS

If you have been walking around Central Square in recent weeks, you will have noticed some evidence of work being carried out on the building at the top of Northway; the one which boasts an old red telephone kiosk in its front garden. This is the 'Tea House' but, surprisingly, little of its history has been recorded.

The HGS Virtual Museum records that the building was designed by architect John Soutar 'in a modified version of the Parker and Unwin (or rather, Charles Wade) style with clipped

brick gables'. Soutar's drawings, which are in the possession of the HGS Trust, are dated November 1923 and it was in existence by 1928 when it was mentioned in Henrietta Barnett's account of 'The Story and Growth of the Hampstead Garden Suburb'.

According to David Davidson, the current Architectural Adviser to the Trust, The Tea House was built by the Trust itself and sited so as to be close to the tennis courts on and around Central Square. The original building had 'home' and 'away' changing rooms, toilets and a small kitchen. Two flats were incorporated into the first floor wings. There were refreshment facilities which were used by the tennis players and visitors who came to view the Garden Suburb. The internal 'tea house' space was originally double-height and open to the

roof beams, although a modern lowered ceiling was later installed.

For some time the building was managed by the Trust but in 1952, the Trust granted a lease to the Institute which used it for teaching and office purposes and also provided a canteen used by Institute students and Henrietta Barnett School Pupils. The building was Grade II listed in 1965. Marilyn Greene recalls: "My mother worked at the Institute in the 1980s and there were classes held in the Tea House. There was an Institute office, book room and of course the students could get refreshments. The building was hired out to different groups and Garden Suburb Theatre had rehearsed play-readings there."

In 2009, the Institute, suffering financial difficulties, sold the Tea House to a private developer who planned to convert it into a four-



Tea House
(© Jim Osley and licensed for reuse under Creative Commons Licence)

bedroomed dwelling. Design and structural repair proposals were put on public display in 2013, much to the consternation of many local people who, as reported in Suburb News at the time, had long hoped that the building could revert to communal use for the benefit of Suburb residents.

Although the Trust eventually approved the conversion and repair proposals in 2018, it seems that

nothing has happened on the site since then. Maybe the current activity is a sign that the building might soon be refurbished and brought into use again?

If you have any further information about the Tea House, now or in the past, please get in touch with Suburb News so that we can update the records in the Virtual Museum and our Suburb News readers.

Farm Walk and Suzanne's new clothes

SARAH CITRON

Farm Walk Tennis Club is a peaceful oasis in Temple Fortune set between Hampstead Way and Temple Fortune Lane. As you enter, you are immediately welcomed by our most elegant and well-dressed member, Suzanne. There in all weathers, she keeps a watchful eye on us all. Crafted by one of our members, Michael Berg, she has been with us for a number of years.

After the long Winter, Suzanne was feeling rather dishevelled as, like the rest of us, she had no real reason to dress up. However, we opened again on 29 March, a glorious Spring day, and to our surprise noticed that she had smartened up and is now resplendent in a new tennis dress, green sash and matching head band ready for the new season.

Our Tennis Club caters for all standards from Rusty Rackets to Team Players, singles and doubles. Our members range in age from 4 to 80 plus. We have two coaches, Theo Hyman and Greg Nadsady. They can be contacted via our email: farmwalktennis@gmail.com. New members are always welcome. Visit www.farmwalktennis.net.



Photo: Sarah Citron

The Secret Suburb what's in a name?

GEORGINA MALCOLM

Do you know that little triangular garden at the junction of Hampstead Way and Willifield Way? Barnet calls it Willifield Way Open Space, as does Open Street Maps. In 1910 Raymond Unwin labelled a photograph of the very new looking garden 'Hampstead Way junction with Willifield Way'. I think that's a bit dull.

Especially as the previous Trust Manager but two, Chris Kellerman, told me this little garden was called the Youatt Garden. Apparently named after an early gardener at the Crematorium. I have no idea if that's true: Wikipedia tells me that the visionary gardener William Robinson laid out the Crematorium grounds but, perhaps not very surprisingly, there's no mention of anyone who did the weeding or pruning.

I can tell you that two families called Youatt lived in Hampstead Way, at 69 and 70 (the road has since been renumbered) at least between 1911 and 1920. In 1911 one Youatt was a 58 year old librarian and the other Youatt was 32: possibly he was a son of the librarian, and he would likely have been in the army for much of this period.

But if Kellerman's story is true, the younger Youatt might well have been a gardener. So it's possible that the garden could have been named for this local family. On the other hand, an early hand-drawn postcard, obviously of the same garden, is labelled Crossway Garden. Where did this discrepancy creep in? And how is it that nobody seems to remember these two quite different names from only a century ago?

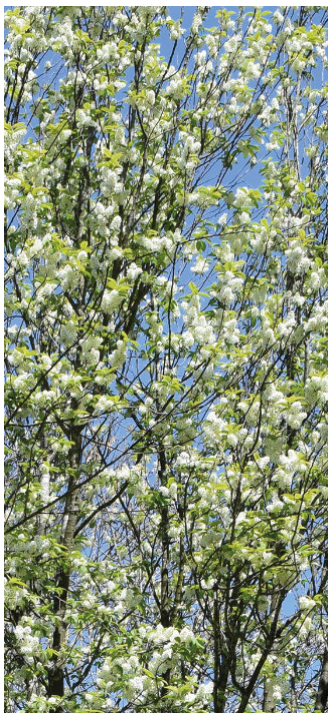
If truth be told, the Youatt/Crossway Garden isn't all that interesting for most of the year these days. It has been owned by Barnet since 1933, and they don't have much money to spare for maintenance. In recent years the grass has often been left to grow too long, and when it is cut, the clippings are left to lie which makes it hard to wade across to the memorial benches. Originally there was what looks like a handsome herbaceous border, but today it's mostly shrubs and grass.

However, there are two flowering Cherries and a really beautiful Bird Cherry in the garden, which all produce pretty white flowers in late April, and at the South East end (the pointy end) some thoughtful person planted several Tulip Trees which have flourished and grown very tall. Tulip Trees have very attractive flowers which unfortunately they seem to produce right up at the top, so come armed with binoculars, or a good camera, but later in the year they have fascinating brown papery fruits which you can find under the trees if you look.

The three benches in the garden are in memory of Mary Dalton Jones, Eric Alexander Hill Goodwin, and Adrian Shindel. Sadly the Shindel bench is missing two plaques. I imagine they were for other members of the same family.

Should we perhaps try to revert to a more interesting name for this little garden?

Thanks very much to HGS Archives for helpful background information.



Photos: Georgina Malcolm



BRILL OWEN

CHARTERED ARCHITECTS
We are able to offer a complete service from conception to completion helping you to create a unique home that fulfils your needs

Contact us for a free no obligation consultation on
0208 349 0037

Or email at
architects@brillowen.co.uk

View our recent work at
www.brillowen.co.uk

We are Chartered Architects based in North London specialising in refurbishments, extensions and new build houses and flats within conservation areas and to listed buildings.

