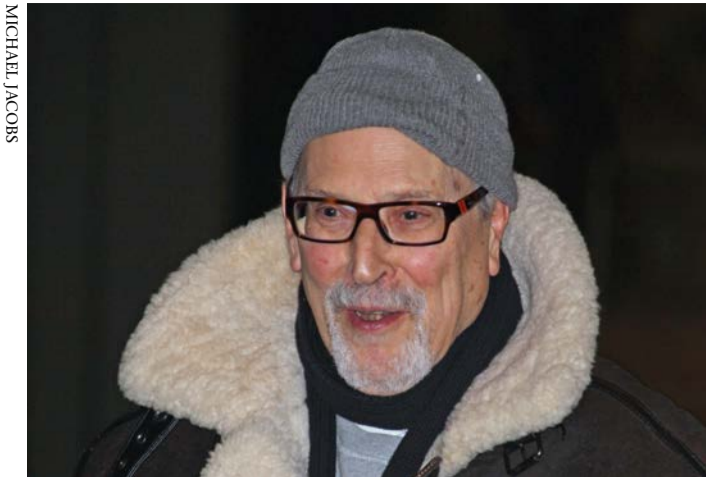


# Charles Gale 1935-2017



MICHAEL JACOBS

## A TRIBUTE

I have known Charles for about six years, when he re-joined the RA Council, which he had left several years earlier. Immediately, I became aware that there was a character so individual that he was impossible to ignore.

This rather quirky gentleman with the distinctively resonant voice asked me whether he could join the Events Committee and I accepted his offer with alacrity. His presence livened up our somewhat earnest committee meetings with amusing and witty remarks. He never failed to see the funny side of things and expressed himself cogently in his matchless, stentorian voice. He brought humour as well as humanity to the committee table, plus a great deal of wisdom. When he sent apologies for absence, the meetings felt dull by comparison.

He spoke in sentences and was the essence of clarity. Knowing my difficulties with deafness, he would preface his remarks by asking whether I could hear him. Of course, I could hardly fail to discern his crisp and crystalline tones, since his diction was peerless.

Charles was just a tower of strength on the RA Events Committee, having worked hard and successfully to obtain sponsorship over the years. He managed to raise large sums of money to underwrite events like the Summer Picnic and Fireworks, and the RA owes him a big debt of gratitude.

There was far, far more to Charles than his light-hearted facetiousness. He was the epitome of kindness and he always had concerns for the welfare of his fellows. Altruism was his chief attribute: for example, since I myself stopped driving, Charles regularly gave me a lift to meetings in his car. Even when he was not attending the function himself, he would offer to leave his warm home on a dark evening just to drop me at my destination. Not many people would do that, such was the utter selflessness and kind-heartedness of the man.

Charles's car reminds me of one of the eccentricities contributing to his endearing personality. He had a complete lack of a sense of direction. Yes, he could keep to well-worn routes and find his way to Waitrose or Fellowship House. But away from landmarks familiar to him, he was quite lost and at the mercy of his passengers. Maps to Charles were pieces of paper containing indecipherable hieroglyphics: they were irrelevancies to him and had no place in his daily life. As for SatNavs...!

Similarly, he had no understanding of the world of computers and his feeble attempts to relate to them were abysmal. He did receive emails on his almost unemployed computer, but he never looked at them. However, he managed to get by splendidly without referring to them.

Because his powers of expression were so good, he was a superb salesman; he would visit every single shop in the Market Place and Temple Fortune and talk to the owners about the benefits of the RA's Discount Scheme. Shopkeepers could not resist his charm and powers of persuasion and they would agree to participate in the programme, in numbers unheard of before Charles led his campaign. His persuasive skills also encouraged them to display RA publicity in their shop windows and, due to the excellent relations he had with Waitrose and others, they went out of their way to supply the Events Committee with provisions at advantageous rates.

Charles's last months of illness were distressing for him and all his family and friends who saw him. He continued to look forward in a positive manner and never once did I hear a word of complaint. He even hosted an Events Committee meeting in his home, during which he added his own recommendations to the debate. May I pay an especial tribute to his beloved sister Angela and

his devoted carer Blessing, who gave him such wonderful care and support.

I know that all of us will mourn the loss of this dear, eccentric, kindly, humorous and much-loved personality. Through his ever-cheerful demeanour and selfless example, he succeeded brilliantly in illuminating our

*Reading David's tribute to Charles led me to remember one occasion when Charles arrived late for a meeting of the Publications Committee and demonstrated what David called his 'lack of sense of direction'.*

## A EULOGY

Uncle Charlie had no children (that I know of!), but did have lots of pets. Spaniels, cats and, more recently, miniature Schnauzers. He leaves behind Noodles, who always doted on Charles and never left his side.

Things were not always straightforward where Charles was concerned: he was drafted into National Service, but it didn't last long: he complained so much about the scratchy clothes he had to wear, they let him out early.

In his 20's he had a sports car, which he would drive to the only real job he ever had, which was teaching English to foreign students. As he was always late for work, he would drive down Southway from the top to the bottom with his hand on the horn, to warn people that he was coming, speeding past several Give Way junctions on the way. One day a police car was waiting for him. He was arrested and banned from driving for 2 years, which he was not pleased about, but also made the front page of the local paper, which he was pleased about.

Charlie helped my brother with his English Literature O-Level, tutoring him in *The Merchant of Venice*. He also played Scrabble very strictly, memorising all the unusual words that he was allowed to use.

He was somewhat eccentric: whenever my brother and I visited as children, Charles would be wearing his dressing gown all day, often playing Scrabble with his mother, Carmel, who he called 'Bunky'. He would then leave the house late at night to play cards or chess, which sounded exciting. When my son was little, my mother would tell him 'naughty uncle Charlie' stories. My favourite story was when he got bored with his violin lessons he sawed the violin open to see what it was inside that made the noise.

As a family we would go on holiday together. Charles would usually have to change rooms a few times before he could settle down and enjoy himself. But he was extremely charming, and

lives. Although we will miss him very much indeed, Charles would not want us to be sad. There are other ways of showing how much he meant to us: as he spread so much happiness, what could be more fitting than remembering his inspiring life with a grateful smile!

DAVID LITTAUR

*He apologised profusely for being late and added, with a wonderful insouciance, that he had got lost on the way to my house in Brim Hill from his in Southway. A lovely memory of a lovely man.*

Editor

would make friends with all the hotel staff so that he would be the centre of attention and would get special treatment.

Even in his 70's he still had a sense of adventure, using a motor scooter to ride around everywhere, and falling off at one point and breaking his ankle. His sense of adventure continued even after he got ill: he tried out a few mobility scooters, but never actually found one that he liked. There is a great photograph of him test-driving one in the street still wearing his dressing gown.

His home was always lively. Rather than live on his own, Charles had a series of lodgers, and more recently some of them were housekeepers, and all of them were young, attractive and female. He looked after his lodgers and housekeepers as if they were his children, providing advice and guidance, and was always there should they need a shoulder to cry on.

One of his pastimes was chess, which he played even better than Scrabble, and he would often challenge me to a game. To make it fair for me, he would start with no queen, and a few other pieces missing. I think I only beat him once, when he started the game with hardly any pieces! His favourite chess venue was a café called *The Prompt Corner*. Parking was difficult in the area, but that didn't stop him from parking nearby. I remember once my grandfather, Reuben, showing me a drawer of what looked like hundreds of letters relating to unpaid parking tickets, each one of which he had contested on Charlie's behalf.

Most of all, Charles was a paternal figure for me, having lost my own father at a young age. He wasn't intrusive into my life, but would gently steer me in the right direction when he felt it necessary.

Charles died on 10 March, after a long illness, which he refused to let affect him, staying in control of all his affairs until the end, and doing the Guardian cryptic crossword every week with his sister, Angela.

TOM GREENFIELD

# Bute Mews planning

The Residents Association hosted a public meeting at the HGS Synagogue's Landy Gallery for residents and business owners to obtain information and express views about the recent planning application for the private road in the Suburb called Bute Mews. This road, currently used as a service road, runs between Kingsley Way and Northway behind shops and flats in the Market Place.

The planning application is for six 3-bedroom houses to be built in place of blocks of garages, which are to be demolished. Links to the planning documents are given at the end of this article.

The meeting was chaired by Peter McCluskie, Chairman of the RA's Conservation & Amenities Committee, and was attended by about 45 people. The main speaker was Graham Robinson, Planning Manager, Barnet Council. Councillors John Marshall and Rohit Grover also attended as did Richard Wiseman, Chairman of the HGS Trust. The developers, Tenorpace Properties Ltd were invited but did not attend and were not represented.

There was a lively question and answer session with Mr Robinson, who was well briefed, dealing with a large number of diverse issues including:

- the density of the development
- the appearance of the proposed terrace of houses

- larger dormer windows overlooking the park (Northway Gardens East)
- garden gates leading directly into the park
- loss of trees and other vegetation
- unrealistic landscape proposals
- possible narrowing of the service road
- parking for businesses and their customers
- future maintenance issues
- disruption during building work, including to traffic in the already congested roads abutting Bute Mews

It was not all negative, however, and some attendees welcomed the potential improvement of an area which had become notorious for fly-tipping, rodent-infestation and crime.

Mr Wiseman confirmed that the Trust's consultation ended on March 8. Mr Robinson said that Barnet Council's consultation would continue until the planning meeting in May. Mr McCluskie encouraged residents to send in their comments to the Trust and Barnet Council.

The meeting concluded with a spontaneous round of applause for Mr Robinson. Mr McCluskie thanked the synagogue and its staff for use of the Landy Gallery.

The Bute Mews planning documents can be viewed at [www.hgstrust.org/butemews.shtml](http://www.hgstrust.org/butemews.shtml) and [www.tinyurl.com/j2mp8xb](http://www.tinyurl.com/j2mp8xb).



## Letter to the editor

*Gary Shaw of the RA's Noise Abatement Working Group passed on this letter to Suburb News for publication:*

NW11

Dear Mr Shaw,

**Re: Barnet, Gardeners and Noise**  
The other day one of the Barnet tree men rang on my door to tell me that they would be doing some tree shredding. Apparently they are required to inform neighbours by law because of the noise.

I am afraid that I did not think to pursue this. But I pass on the information in case the same law can be used against noisy gardeners.

*With regard to the red card scheme, it certainly seems to be having an effect. As I think I have already told you, gardeners seem much more wary of having several machines going at the same time and I have also started to see many more gardeners with brooms. Perhaps one could congratulate these gardeners in the Suburb News so that they get a little free advertising. It might also give gardeners who say it takes much longer to sweep (I am yet to be convinced) something to think about.*

Yours,  
Isabelle Ficker

## Welcome to St Jude's

Sundays:

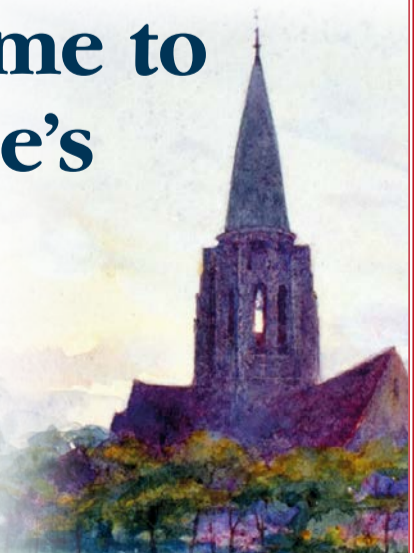
8am

Said Eucharist

10.30am

Sung Eucharist

All Welcome



SAINT JUDE-ON-THE-HILL • THE PARISH CHURCH OF HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB

[www.stjudeonthehill.com](http://www.stjudeonthehill.com)



*Many of you will be sad to hear that long-time Suburb resident Leonie Stephen died at home in Willifield Way a couple of weeks ago after a long illness. Suburb News will carry a full appreciation of her life in our next issue, but readers in the meantime might like to refresh their memories of Leonie by reading our conversation with her on page 6 of Issue 124 in Autumn 2015.*

## G Cohen ANTIQUÉ SILVER

We wish to purchase items of silver in any condition. As a long standing resident of the Suburb, Gideon Cohen is happy to view your silverware at home and will make an offer to purchase, free of any obligation.

17 The London Silver Vaults  
53-64 Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1QT  
020 7404 1425  
[enquiries@gcohen.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@gcohen.co.uk)

[www.gcohen.co.uk](http://www.gcohen.co.uk)