



ANDREW BOTTERILL

End of an era

Leaking gutters, missing tiles and cracked downpipes have led many Suburb residents into the comforting arms of F & R Roofing aka Fred and Ron. At the end of January we were lucky to be squeezed into the last couple of days of their farewell tour before retirement – the timing of which was due as much to Fred’s tired legs as to the hopeless prospect of the MOT test for their wheezing van.

For over 47 years they have been the go-to roofers for our area – 80% of their business has been here. On the RA ‘Master Tradesman List’ there is a record number of 31 recommendations. Judging from these comments, people seem to have been taken as much by their humour and honesty as by their workmanship. I asked Fred how would we all manage without them? “You’ll all have to move” he said. If we don’t, he is officially handing over the roofing baton to Mark Stevens, 07836717931 – also on the List.

Fred French, born during the war in Bethnal Green met Ron Day from Kentish Town 10 years his junior whilst working in a London building firm. In 1973 they decided to go it alone. Like Fred, Ron had worked before in plumbing.

How had 47 years together worked out? Better than most marriages, it seems. Of course there are differences of opinion. “Ron likes him but I think Trump is an idiot.”

What beckons in retirement? Fred’s wife will keep him busy decorating their house in Barnet, trips to Tenerife no longer holding much appeal. Ron, a keen ‘twitcher’, will spend more time on the Norfolk Broads.

Will they miss being up on the roof? The answer is unsurprisingly ‘no’. It’s either wet, windy and cold, or too hot in summer. But they will miss chatting to Suburb people. We shall miss them too. Great characters.

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Hampstead Dental Studio

Dr Khilan Shah opened Hampstead Dental Studio in September 2020 just after the first Lockdown. Terrible timing one might think? Actually, besides the initial panic of a new business owner, this worked out pretty well for him. On a personal level he was able to spend three months at home with his newborn son – something he would never have had the chance to do otherwise.

Born in Edgware, educated at QE Boys, Barnet later studying dentistry at Kings College London and Valencia, Khilan completed his training at a dental practice in Cambridge and has since been working in London for the past five years. However, he always wanted to own his own practice so when the opportunity came up to buy an existing practice in Hampstead Garden Suburb, he grabbed it with both hands. What he wants to offer is, in his own words, “top quality dental services, easily accessible to all.” Khilan offers a one stop shop dental treatment practice covering general dentistry to more advanced dentistry, such as implants, orthodontic work and facial aesthetics (botox fillers etc) all carried out by highly qualified specialist dental professionals. Khilan, was recently presented with a special award for his expertise in using the Invisalign system, to create beautiful smiles for his patients.

Whilst interviewing Khilan, I noticed a snazzy machine to his right. “Ah, this is a 3D scanner,” he said with real pride. Clearly a lover of all things high-tech, he went on to explain how this machine is deployed to fully check patients’ dental health giving him a good understanding before even looks in a patient’s mouth.

He describes his approach to dentistry as “minimally invasive” which basically means he wants to limit the use of the dreaded

drill where possible. His focus is on prevention rather than cure. He urges clients to come in for regular check-ups and not to wait for pain or problems because, by that stage, things are more difficult to manage and the treatment is likely to be more invasive. He allows one hour for all of his consultations and part of that is an initial chat with patients away from the dental chair. Khilan feels it is important to put patients at ease from the very start. He is also going to offer a playlist so patients can listen to music they enjoy whilst undergoing treatment.

Khilan offers home video consultations (used mostly for orthodontic advice but helpful to diagnose the start of general dental issues) which can be booked by phone or using the WhatsApp button on the website. He also offers membership plans making treatment more affordable and gives an extra discount to HGS residents. He is intending to open on Saturday mornings.

Besides his love of dentistry, Khilan enjoys the actual running of a business, putting his own stamp on the practice. From the website design to social media content to interior design, Khilan is all hands on deck. When I asked him to use some adjectives to describe his practice he came up with: “friendly”, “comfortable”, “specialist” and “accessible”. Tick, tick, tick and tick!

SHELLEY-ANNE SALISBURY



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Suburb street trees

In 2017 the London Borough of Barnet published an ambitious street tree policy highlighting the significant benefits they bring to the environment. Trees are one of the few assets that appreciate in value – they act as carbon sinks and, as street trees, they capture the extra heat absorbed by road surfaces and buildings.

There should be about 2,500 street trees in the Suburb but at the moment there are over 370 vacant tree pits. In their 2018 three-year survey Barnet felled 131 street trees which they agreed to replace. However, they actually felled more trees over that period for a variety of other reasons (subsidence claims, poor health, etc) and these were not replaced.

Barnet has calculated the cost of a new street tree is £400. This includes regular watering during the summer months for the first two years. British summers have become much drier and the Barnet watering programme is not frequent enough – they acknowledge up to 10% of new saplings are likely to die. The RA works with Barnet on the supply and choice of street trees and uses membership funds to buy extra trees. But we need to work together with the Council to ensure more street trees are planted and that fewer new saplings die.

The RA would like to enlist volunteers to occasionally water the new trees in their road to supplement Barnet’s watering during the first two years and then to continue watering in the third year when Barnet stops. Anyone who is interested should contact trees@hgsra.uk.

This winter the RA has pledged £6,000 to plant an extra 15 street trees. We would like to increase that number for winter 2021 by setting up an ‘Adopt a Street Tree’ Scheme whereby an individual or group contribute £250 towards a new street tree in their road and be prepared to look after it until it is established.



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The RA would make up the difference of £150. Anyone who would like to do this should contact trees@hgsra.uk.

Finally, we also need to look at the species of tree in the Suburb as some are no longer suitable due to climate change. For example, the Rowan no longer flourishes as a street tree. We have agreed to replace these with another species which establishes itself easily – the Robin Hill. We have also worked with Barnet in Northway where the Red Horse Chestnut trees all showed signs of deteriorating crown dieback. All 15 trees were felled and replaced with the Indian Horse Chestnut, a sub species which is resistant to the causes of crown diebacks. Barnet agreed to plant a further six Indian Horse Chestnut trees in Northway taking the number of new saplings to 21.

Hopefully the newly-planted trees will eventually restore the street scene in the Suburb to its former glory.

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