

STREET PIGEON

Many years ago I found a tiny dove in my garden. It was smaller than a sparrow, pink, grey and blue with overall diamonds of white. She turned out to be an escaped aviary bird and would have had no chance in the real world. We took her to the Waterlow Park Zoo, and still visit her when passing by.

Of the three types of dove, or pigeon, you are more likely to see in the Suburb, the Street Pigeon is the most familiar, being a major pest in the world's great cities. As a race it is descended from captured and domesticated doves perhaps dating back to the Bronze Age, the wild stock was originally the species known as the Rock Dove, which is still to be found flying freely and spectacularly on the cliffs and headlands of Britain, and of a band of the Old World from the Faeroes to Sri Lanka.

The captured doves adapted easily to life with mankind if their offspring are anything to go by. They readily accepted shelter and man made nesting boxes as 'home' and faithfully returned to them from great distances. They must have provided a welcome source of fresh

meat and eggs during the hard medieval winter.

As with other farmyard animals the pigeon proved capable of improvement by selective breeding, and was adapted for many other purposes than food including racing speed, homing instinct, acrobatics and beautiful or curious plumage. Through the centuries many of these tame birds escaped, or just wandered off, forming loose flocks of generally blue-grey pigeons, but mixed in were odd birds of other colours. Nowadays it is virtually impossible to pick out a pigeon in the street with exactly the colour and markings of its wild Rock Dove ancestor.

'Success' in a species seems to follow from effective adaptation to changes in environment and thence to vast increases in numbers. Gulls, starlings and pigeons show this principle at work: each takes advantage of human activity and adjusts his own economy to profit from it. The Street Pigeon will eat almost any form of rubbish, and will nest in almost any gutter or drainpipe. Only one or two eggs are laid in a clutch, but the pigeons breed continuously except, while moulting in autumn,



Too many — too long.

TOO MANY AGENTS' BOARDS

at such a rate that the parents must drive away the adolescent birds to make way for the new chicks. Naturally an expanding population results.

The worldwide symbol for the Spirit of Peace is a dove. A very apt choice, a creature almost lacking in aggression, which probably imagines itself at peace with mankind, cooing soothingly through the lazy summer days, while anything with teeth, claws or gums prepares to tear it limb from limb. It must have been an ancestor of the American Mourning Dove who brought back the sprig of laurel to the Ark. They say her song is 'Noah, pay me, pay me'. CG

Under the Town and Country Planning Regulations of 1984 'For Sale' signs are limited to one board per property and boards saying 'Sold' should be removed after two weeks. Unfortunately these two simple regulations are still being ignored by Suburb agents and since the beginning of the year the Trust has removed over 70 illegal boards. According to the Trust Manager, Chris Kellerman, the problem of unsightly boards will only be solved if residents selling properties on the Suburb insist that agents acting for them comply with the law. From the owner's point of view it is also sensible to have only one board, since multiple boards indicate that the property is difficult to sell.

OPEN COLLEGE

The Institute, along with Barnet and Hendon Colleges, has become a local link in the latest national initiative for adults seeking further education and training. Called 'Open College', the new venture is aimed at both unemployed people who wish to increase their knowledge and practical skills, probably with a view to obtaining helpful qualifications, and at employed people who want to become more effective in their work, or perhaps to alter the direction of their career. Equally, 'Open College' courses can be taken out of pure interest. The programme includes a wide range of subjects, from basic communication techniques to management skills, and there is a comprehensive prospectus giving details of them all.

Like the 'Open University', it relies mainly on private study, using a variety of learning aids, such as cassettes, video tapes and workbooks, as well as regular television programmes on Channel 4. Some of the courses make provision for face-to-face tutorials and workshop sessions. Flexibility is the keynote, the objective being to allow students to start the courses when they want, and to study at their own pace and at times of the day which suit them. The 'Open College' does not award qualifications itself, but some of its courses will count towards qualifications awarded by other bodies, such as City and Guilds.

'Open College' is very much at the experimental stage at present, and because of the speed with which it was set up, the local arrangements for administering it may be somewhat ad hoc at the outset. It seems likely, however, that the Institute, like its fellow colleges in the borough, will be involved in counselling prospective students, enrolment, and the organisation of tutorials and workshop sessions, some of which will probably take place in the Institute building.

Nobody can be certain what public response to the 'Open College' will be, and there have already been expressions of concern about the fee levels, which have to be sufficient to cover both learning materials and, where appropriate, teaching time and use of specialist equipment; but, if the teething troubles can be surmounted, this new initiative could become an important addition to the education and training of adults in Britain. The Institute will certainly be doing its best to contribute to the achievement of that end. It is due to begin its full participation in the 'Open College' next term, but in the meantime will be happy to advise enquirers about what is on offer. The regular programme of Institute classes is already under way, of course, and there are still vacancies in some subjects — please ring 455 9951 for details. RB

SUPPER QUIZ

On Saturday September 26 Brooklands Junior School PA held its first supper quiz for parents.

The whole evening was organised splendidly by Mr & Mrs Vardy who set the questions and acted as question masters with some of their friends helping as adjudicators and servers. The evening began with a fish supper and then the quiz began. It was a lively affair with much heckling and bantering between tables and greatly enjoyed by all. The evening, although not intended as a fund raising event made about £200 for school funds. PE

HARVEST FESTIVAL

Brooklands Junior School held its annual harvest festival on October 6. The theme this year being the harvest of the sea. After the service the fourth year children distributed the harvest gifts to local old peoples homes and visited the residents. PE

SPANIARDS FIELD HOUSE

In January Barnet turned down an application from Mr Bradman of Rosehaugh Properties to build a new house at Spaniards Field in Wildwood Rise.

Although the existing house is derelict and has no architectural merits, the proposed new house was opposed by many residents in adjoining properties. The planning officers at Barnet recommended approving the scheme but it was turned down by the Central Division Planning Committee. Mr Bradman has decided to appeal against this decision and the DOE will be holding a Local Inquiry at the Hendon Town Hall on 17-18 May next year. It is expected that both the applicant and the objectors to the Scheme will be represented by Counsel and both sides will be using expert witnesses to support their arguments.

GROWING HERBS FOR ENJOYMENT

Herbs are mainly grown for their culinary uses, but, coming as they do as annuals, perennials, and shrubby plants, they can be used as attractive specimen plants in mixed borders.

Ideally, the herb garden should be south facing, in full sun, with well drained light soil, near the kitchen, the bed being surrounded with paving stones so that the herbs are easily accessible without getting muddy feet.

More realistically, herbs can be grown successfully in odd corners of the garden. Some — chervil, chives, mint, parsley and sorrel — can be cultivated in partial shade. Many can be grown in window boxes or in pots on the kitchen window-ledge (preferably south or west facing for maximum sun). Small bay leaf trees, grown in pots, can make an ugly space or empty patio look elegantly beautiful. Lemon verbena, melisse (lemon balsam) interspersed with mints planted near a garden seat will greatly enhance the fragrant enjoyment of leisure time in the garden. (Do remember to grow mint with its roots restricted in an old bucket or flower pot to prevent the suckers taking over the whole bed.)



Harvest firm flower heads in full bloom and seeds when the pods ripen and begin to turn yellow or brown. Herbs can be dried on a tray in the airing cupboard, or tied together in sprigs and hung upside down in a warm room. Freezing is an excellent method of preserving herbs such as parsley or chervil where the leaves are unsuitable for drying — blanch in boiling water for one minute, plunge into cold water and leave until cold, drain well and freeze immediately. Frozen herbs need not be thawed for use in soups and stews, but once thawed they are suitable for flavouring but not for garnishing.

For those of you considering making a herb garden start now. Find out which plants can be grown from seed, which can be "acquired" from friends' cuttings, and which herbs can be bought in small pots, and then get down to planning the planting spots. Where necessary turn the soil over, incorporating some compost and leave for the winter.

Spend some of those long winter evenings reading about the fantastic recipes you are going to make, seasoned with delicious herbs.

CLAYFINGERS



For winter use, herbs should be dried and stored in airtight containers, or frozen and packed away in easily usable amounts. Harvest time depends upon whether stems, leaves, flowers or seeds are being used. Plants grown for leaves or stems should be gathered in the young leafy stage before flowering.

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