

Suburb Watches

Two more Suburb Neighbourhood Watches have now been formed bringing the total to the 25 Watches listed below together with details of their Co-ordinators.

Watch	Co-Ordinator	Address	Tel No.
Brookland	Mr John Angus	48 Brookland Rise	455 4315
Brim Hill	Lady Atkinson	39 Brim Hill	455 8522
Chalton Drive	(does not want name and address to be divulged)		
Corringham	Mrs Hagaig	17 Corringham Road	455 5341
Denham Drive	Mr Eric Townley	53 Denman Drive	458 1911
Erskine Hill	Mr F. W H Pine	112 Erskine Hill	455 3671
Grey Close	Mrs Judy Charlton	2 Grey Close	458 2721
Gurney	Mrs Sonya Zuckerman	6 Gurney Drive	455 4413
Heath and Hampstead Way	Mr Peter Loyd	12 Meadway	455 4543
H.O.L.	Mrs Valerie Herman	4 Holyoake Walk	883 0839
Holm	Mrs Marks	28 Midholm	455 9052
Kingsley Way	Mrs Larsen	34 Kingsley Way	455 7619
Litchfield Way	Mrs J. Goodman	14 Litchfield Way	455 6378
Meadway and Turner	Mrs Janet Parker	1 Turner Drive	458 2646
Neville Drive	Mr David Goodenday	Bunkers Dip, Neville Drive	458 2814
Norrice Lea	Mrs Rosemary Goldstein	1A Church Mount	458 1123
North Square	Mr Richard Townley	3 North Square	455 8934
Northway	Mr Evelyn Down	79 Northway	455 6110
Oakwood Road	Mr Ivan May	29 Oakwood Road	458 1301
Reynolds Close	Mr Schwob	19 Reynolds Close	458 1543
Southway	Mr Xavier Pullen	65 Southway	458 1470
Southwood Court	Mrs Joyce Pullen	18 Southwood Court, Bigwood Road	458 1288
Sutcliffe Close	Mr P D Goldsmith	13 Sutcliffe Close	455 5398
Wildwood Road	Mrs R H Ellert	9 Wildwood Road	455 7777
Willifield Way	Mrs Dina Shapiro	92 Willifield Way	455 9597

Most of the Suburb now has Neighbourhood Watch, but there are still some pockets without coverage, notably:

- the Hogarth Hill and part Addison Way area;
- the Temple Fortune Lane area;
- the lower Hampstead Way, Wellgarth Road area;
- the Bigwood Road, Thornton Way, Middleway area;
- the Market Place and roads immediately North of it;
- the Vivian Way, Deansway area; and
- Ingram Avenue./Winnington Road

If anyone was prepared to take a lead and act either as the Co-

ordinator or as a Warden in any of these areas, they are invited to contact Peter Loyd (455 4543) who will be delighted to advise on how to get a Watch organised.

Burglaries in the Golders Green area as a whole are down by some 25% this year which the Police attribute almost entirely to the growth and effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch. But the task now on the Suburb, especially in areas covered by Neighbourhood Watch, is to increase this success rate and, to all intents and purposes, to make the Suburb a 'no-go' area for villains. One important aspect of this is knowing how to deal with strangers who call at the door.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH



Strangers at the door

A startling statistic is the fact that 27% of the strangers who call at your door are up to no good. These are the people who offer to unblock your drains, repair your roof, install double glazing, clean your curtains and carpets, put manure on your garden or sweep the snow from your door. But they are also young men purporting to be out of work offering to sell you yellow dusters, innumerable people collecting for charities, as well as people who allege they are from the Water Board, the Gas Board or the Council.

Not all of these people are villains. To be precise, 7 out of 10 of them are genuine. But the other 3 out of 10 are only ringing your front door bell either to see whether you are out — in which case they will ease round to the back of your house to see whether they can jimmy open a window or even find a window or back door open — or to persuade you to let them into your house when you will be seriously at risk. So, how do you deal with ALL strangers at the door?

Basic Precautions — Many callers make their appearance during the day when those most likely to have to deal with them will be housewives, 'au pairs' or elderly people. The housewife may be in a hurry to stop a pan boiling over, or there may be children who need her attention, the 'au pair' may have had little experience in dealing with a well dressed, fast speaking salesman and the elderly may feel threatened by the mere presence of an unexpected caller. However, there are some basic precautions which you can take and ways to check whether the caller is genuine.

The first thing to do is to fix a chain or limiter to the door. This does two very important things — it prevents you from opening the door wide enough to allow the caller entry, and it buys time for you to think. Keep the chain on while talking to the caller. Alternatively, try to look out of a window first to see if you recognise the caller: if not, then speak to the caller through the window or even the door, if possible. He, or she, will be likely to fit into one of three categories — salesman, charity collector or official (probably bogus).

Salesmen include anyone offering to sell you goods or a service, and they will do everything in their power to encourage you to buy. Recently we have had instances of young people using the 'line' that a purchase will help the unemployed because they are from a Youth Co-operative, or claiming to be art students working their way through college, or selling on behalf of the disabled. If you really need the product, then the choice of whether to buy or not is yours. But if you purchase at the front door, without proper documentation from a company, you have no real redress should the goods prove unsatisfactory. Many people purchase goods, particularly if they are not expensive items, just to be rid of the caller, but this only encourages a salesman to call again. A simple 'no thank you' should be sufficient if the salesman is genuine.

It is always advisable to obtain other quotations for any sort of building service, and so you can ask for the name and address of the firm and say you will get in touch if you are interested. Don't let the caller in to the house to view the premises — if you really feel he can be of help with a service, make an appointment for him to return later when you are not alone and after you have had a chance to check on his credentials.

Bogus Officials. If you are offered an identity card, do not place too much reliance on it — or, to put it another way, an identity card is NOT proof of identity! It can be useful for company personnel or for dealing with people outside the home environment, but the safest method of checking identity is by dialing the caller's listed telephone number. The householder should ask the caller for details of his company or organisation and then ask him to wait, close the front door, look up the telephone number in the telephone directory and ring to check his credentials. Never accept a telephone number from the caller — it may be that he has an accomplice waiting to answer it, sometimes even in the call box down the road! If the caller leaves when challenged, dial 999 immediately with a description, car number and any other relevant details. If you don't have a phone, you can still ask for the information and suggest that the caller returns in a couple of days, to give you time to verify it.

In the case of calls from people claiming to be gas or electricity meter readers, you should ask them to quote your account number, reference number or, better still, your meter number which is shorter. It is worthwhile making a note of this and have it somewhere easily accessible for reference.

Two of the most common ruses used by bogus officials to gain entry to premises are to claim to be from the Water Authority or the Gas Board.

There may even be a Water Authority van in the road but this does not necessarily mean that it belongs to the caller; or two men may claim to be from the Gas Board checking appliances for leaks, and you must not be panicked by this tale. If there was a serious risk from a major gas leak, the Police would be in evidence, probably cordoning off the road and preventing people from smoking.

These are just some of the typical ways that villains operate and, if you think that you are alert and aware already of these dangers, just ask yourself whether your children and your 'au pair' and others in your house are equally aware!

- The rules should be:
- always keep the chain on the door when dealing with a stranger;
 - never allow a stranger to enter your house until you have first thoroughly checked his (or her) bona fides;
 - always be suspicious of all strangers, however plausible. IF IN ANY DOUBT AT ALL DIAL 999.

Tail piece — The Golders Green Police were recently approached by a deputation of local salesmen who said they were no longer able to visit houses in one particular area of Finchley because, every time they did so, the householders all dialled 999 and the Police arrived to check them out. The Police were delighted at this example of a Neighbourhood Watch working correctly and effectively, especially as they were able to demonstrate that these actions by members of the Watch had resulted in a 72% reduction in burglaries in that area.

Elsewhere in this issue you will see details of the major Presentation which the Golders Green Police are giving to Residents on the evening of Monday 25th April in The Institute Hall, Central Square. It should be a most interesting evening and of considerable benefit to everyone who lives on the Suburb. Do come along and be with us on this occasion.

IT'S AN ILL WIND

The 16 October will be remembered for a long time as the night the hurricane hit the British Isles with particular impact in London and the South East which of course included the Hampstead Garden Suburb. But if you will forgive the pun 'It's an ill wind that blows no-one any good', and whereas I would never belittle the horrendous effects of the storm it does open up some new opportunities.

Gardens, Streets, Woodlands and even Parks were often enthusiastically overplanted years ago and a much needed thinning exercise became increasingly more difficult and expensive as time lapsed, neglect became the order of the day. Now the thinning has been done for us by courtesy of the hurricane (we did not even name it unlike the Americans) and we must now grasp the opportunity to replant and landscape the Urban and Rural areas in a sensible and unselfish way. Similar to that carried out generations ago for which we now reap the benefit with large mature trees which grace the London Squares and Parks as well as the Countryside.

Types of species will be covered later but first I would ask what makes the Hampstead Garden Suburb so different from the rest of London's Suburbia, after all both areas possess many trees.

Firstly there is an absence of 'hard' enclosure, which means very few brick or block walls and the usual array of different types and heights of timber fence panels. The suburb possesses a unique landscape of 'soft' enclosure, in the form of hedges encompassing a variety of species. The second is the type of tree specie and the sheer numbers of them which transforms the Suburb to a Garden Suburb.

The second difference with the rest of London's Suburbia is the abundance of tree species of the correct type in landscape terms rather than the more usual 'hotchpotch' of small ornamental garden trees. Plane trees in Falldon Way and Hampstead Way, Birch trees in Constable Close and Blandford Close, and the Turkey Oaks in Erskine Hill all contribute to a landscape with scale, rather than the small insignificant trees totally out of scale with surrounding buildings.

It cannot be emphasised enough that native trees with a scale and presence should be planted where possible to compliment the variety of buildings throughout the

Suburb. The types of trees which should be replanted where feasible are Limes and Planes, both of these species will take considerable pruning and still maintain a look of some stature. Oaks, Ash, Poplars and Willows are all native species that warrant inclusion into the Suburb scene, and although they may take years to mature one must think of future generations as our forefathers did and not adopt a selfish approach with fast growing ornamental trees where their life span is often less than 100 years.

The London Borough of Barnet insist on street tree planting using small types of ornamental trees totally out of scale in the neighbourhood, and which incidentally is the same policy adopted for the remainder of the Borough. This will eventually reduce the streets of the garden Suburb to the same meaningless sprawl of bizarre varieties of little known trees which help to create 'Suburbia'.

The aftermath of the hurricane left a number of problems other than straight replacements, for instance should a tree badly damaged within the crown be totally removed, or pruned to the best shape possible in the hopes of some acceptable shape in the future. One example is an old oak tree in Ruskin Close where it



required drastic pruning in order to make the tree safe resulting in a 'Totem Pole' effect which has been the subject of some debate. However, the large trunk is irreplaceable for another 200 years or so, and it was therefore decided to try and salvage the tree in the hopes that it makes some growth in the crown and therefore becomes more acceptable. If this does not materialise then the tree will be removed and another replanted.

It is of utmost importance to contact the Suburb Office when considering tree work of any kind irrespective of the recent storm damage. So often one sees legacies of the tree butcher rather than the tree surgeon and recent



examples are a young oak tree in Hampstead Way and the lopping of a birch tree in Hilltop. But once the damage is done it cannot be rectified so please contact the Office if in any doubt.

As a conclusion I would again reiterate the fact that trees we now accept as part of our heritage were planted several generation ago and it is equally important that we also accept some responsibility and also plant trees for future generations.



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