

AS LIFE MEMBERS

Running trade associations for chemical plant and food machinery manufactures, is a far cry from fighting to protect a local Conservation Area.

But for chemical engineer Dr Ted Hoblyn, quiet, humorous and now 80-years-old, both could be described as his life's work.

For 25 years Dr Hoblyn worked as Secretary, then as Director of two trade associations. He later became Advisory Director to what is now the Process Plant Association.

He joined the Executive Committee of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association in 1958. Then much to his surprise he was "dumped in the then vacant chair," in 1963.

At that time, it could be said, was in a crisis state. It had just been sold to property developers. The local Protection Society, suddenly formed in 1962 to stop a potentially dangerous management scheme, had won its case in the High Court. And the planning of the New Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust was rapidly getting under way.

But in those days, says Dr Hoblyn, "The RA was nothing like the influential watchdog organisation it is today. The time had come for it to make its voice heard".

With his professional experience making him "thoroughly familiar with committee and other organisation work," he realised that the RA's Constitution must speedily be changed.

A new Council was set up, supported by an Executive Committee and a series of small Sub-Committees. They were the modest forerunners of the efficient RA Standing Committee system which today cares for all aspects of the Suburb's welfare.

"The RA quickly got off the ground and in the following 25 years or so it developed splendidly," says Dr Hoblyn. But ask him what he regards as its most important work while he was in its Chair and he replies: "Our work on the 1963 Leasehold Reform Bill".

The Bill - now an Act of Parliament - opened the way for the first time, for people to buy the freeholds of the property in which they lived.

"Had residents been allowed to do so on the Suburb without any controls, he explains, "some terrible things could have been done architecturally".

By this time the RA Council included in its ranks some



members of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Protection Society. This allowed the two separate groups with common interests to work closely together without forming an official organisational link.

Dr Hoblyn met the local Members of Parliament, Sir Hugh Lucas Tooth and Mrs Margaret Thatcher and pointed out the danger. They quickly took the point.

Soon some clauses were added to the Bill. They highlighted the fact that the United Kingdom had some areas of special historical and architectural interest... for example Hampstead Garden Suburb... such areas should have individual management schemes aided by special planning controls the Bill, in effect, now said.

The passing of the Act implemented today's Conservation Area system, now heavily under fire from an exploding volume of ill-considered redevelopment schemes and planning applications.

In 1963, Suburb Leaseholds wanted to take charge of the local scheme. The New Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust, then being set up, wanted to run it, too.

"There was a public inquiry.

The Inspector recommended it should be the responsibility of the Trust. And that was the time when the RA started getting to grips with things," Dr Hoblyn says.

The widespread and now generally regarded as disastrous city and suburban redevelopment which marks the 60s as this country's post-war architectural dark age, despite the new Statutory protection, still threatened the Hampstead Garden Suburb Conservation Area.

The RA, it could be said, took on an even more important role than it had originally planned. Though with no actual control over the management scheme - this was in the hands of the Trust - the RA now spoke for the local public "proving itself a more vital and influential organisation than we at first dreamed it could be".

And recognising the importance of communications throughout the area "we started a directory and a yearbook, in addition to continuing to publish an annual report".

Dr Hoblyn continues: "The yearbook, since it was inevitably always slightly out of date, led to the introduction of our quarterly Suburb News.

Though Dr Hoblyn's term as RA Council Chairman expired in 1968, he continued to and still does take an interest in its affairs.

He remained a Council member until the onset of slight deafness made him decide to resign. His outstanding contributions to the Council in the last 17 years was the production of the annual Directory.

Like Miss Henderson, Dr Hoblyn, too, is deeply concerned at the barrage of planning applications which could bring in their wake ugliness and over-development, threatening the Suburb as much as did the proposed new management scheme of 1961/62.

"The Suburb has always had a changing population. But it also always had a number of long established residents who care deeply for the area's interests and do what they can to help keep it the wonderful place it is.

"Today's younger newcomers come here for the quality of life the area provides. But sadly with prices being what they are, they buy houses which are too small for their needs.

So they start seeking permission to build extensions or maybe put hard standings and garages where there are now lovely gardens. "Even worse, they want to turn the few garages we have into extra rooms and to park their cars instead on our already over-parked streets".

But running alongside their accidental ignorance which results in the newcomers helping to destroy the area they so admire, Dr Hoblyn fears their apathy which, he maintains, "could undermine all that the Trust and the RA do to conserve the very quality of life the new residents seek".

He concludes: "We do not want the Suburb to become a museum. We recognise that carefully it must change with the times.

"But it is sad that people now coming to live here treat the Suburb as a delightful dormitory, rather than the community it has been for so long.

"The Residents Association Council should continue to maintain - to build even more substantial funds so that it may be ready to fight any issue as and when it may arise." VH

SOS

Wood Engraver Needed

The Henrietta Barnett School Old Girls Association is searching for a wood engraver to update the Head Girls Honours Board at the School.

Any offers or suggestions gratefully received by The Secretary 081-455 3851.

A SUNDIAL FOR CYRIL LUCKHAM

At first it seemed as though the essential ingredient for a working sundial would be missing but just at the moment of its dedication to the memory of Cyril Luckham the sun shone brilliantly for a few minutes on a large gathering in Lucas Square.

We had come on 1st July to see Rev Ralph Baldry dedicate The Sundial, organised by Cyril's family, neighbours and friends, which stands in the place of the original, lost years ago.

Harry James spoke for all in remembering Cyril's life on the Suburb; Anne Harvey read a moving poem by Eleanor Far-

jeon and a young neighbour, Kate McCarthy, told us how she had grown up fondly regarding Mr Luckham as another grandfather.

Twin Luckham said how pleased she was to see so many friends and neighbours before inviting all present, well over 100! to a magnificent tea in the McCarthy's house. RW



HANDICRAFTS EXHIBITION

This really was a splendid occasion. There were 91 entries covering an amazingly wide range of hobbies and handicrafts. We had paintings and pottery, cooking and crochet, beautiful embroidery and delightful soft toys. The largest single group was of knitted garments; perhaps those knitted from unpicked jumpers and oddments of wool deserved special mention in this age of re-cycling materials. The miscellaneous section included such beautiful items - a velvet bowl for necklaces, a quilted skirt, tapestry, bobbin lace, calligraphy and poetry. What a wealth of skills our members share.

The exhibition was well

supported by members and friends who together made it a really happy, social occasion. Tea was served and taken out into the sunshine where the excellence of the work was talked over and praised. Few went away without feeling that perhaps they too could try something they had found particularly appealing.

And of course we must marvel again at the team work of those members who just came together to mount the display, label the entries, make & serve tea & biscuits and after working hard from 11am, staying behind and helping to clear everything away. What a great spirit there is at Fellowship House. FC

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THE BRIM HILL OPINION POLL

During April, residents in Brim Hill and the surrounding area participated in a traffic opinion poll conducted by several families living in Brim Hill.

The objective of the poll was to determine the strength of the local residents' feeling towards traffic calming proposals for Brim Hill and to gauge some idea of traffic related problems in the Brim Hill area.

The results clearly indicated: * 97% of residents were in favour of some sort of traffic calming proposals in Brim Hill; * 26% had witnessed a car crash in Brim Hill in the past year; * 62% had witnessed a near miss;

* 86% had witnessed excessive speeding (in their opinion); * 11% had witnessed a motor incident involving a pedestrian.

The results of this survey will be used as a contribution towards the Residents Association and New Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust traffic study which is being carried out on the Suburb this year. A letter has also been sent with a petition to the London Borough of Barnet requesting urgent consideration for traffic calming throughout Brim Hill and some form of weekday parking restrictions for non-resident parking at the junction of Brim Hill and Deansway. LJ

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