

FEAR NOT TO SOW BECAUSE OF THE BIRDS SECURITY FAIR

On the evening of 24th May Mr Gerald Isaaman, Editor of the "Ham & High" delivered the 20th Dame Henrietta Barnett Memorial Lecture in the Institute Hall. Mr Gerard Mansell, CBE Chairman of the New Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust, presided. It is regretted that space does not allow justice to be done to the lecturer's masterly exposition of the problems facing "our fragile environment".

Mr Isaaman stated that he was led to accept the invitation to lecture when he saw in Westminster Abbey the memorial to Canon and Dame Henrietta Barnett bearing the inscription "Fear not to sow because of the birds". He concluded his lecture with the words "Do not fear to sow because of the birds. Fear not nature. Fear the awful hand of man".

Dealing first with Hampstead Garden Suburb, Mr Isaaman made these telling comments "The houses destined for the working classes now cost astronomical sums, the skyscape is reddled with aerials and dishes, the roads so considerably planned clogged with cars, the magnificent churches Dame Henrietta built hardly ever full, this seat of learning (The Institute) however and on-going success".

"But though it failed in its remarkable social aspirations the Suburb remains an alive model of urban town planning and indigenous domestic architecture that is celebrated internationally. Half a dream had to be better than none. Dame Henrietta was undoubtedly right not to fear the birds. But what of the Suburb today? Can it continue to provide delightful refuge in a society based on have and grab, where expectations of material riches is the over-riding force? Have we not here, as much as anywhere in the Western world, reached a gigantic crossroads?"

Turning now to the environment in general, the lecturer said "Let us look a little at today's situation as it affects air, water and the land that supports us in different ways, and the

scorched earth policy we seem to be relentlessly and blindly following despite all the dire warnings".

"Man has polluted the AIR since the discovery of fire, great forests have disappeared in smoke. But that was nothing to what happened as a result of the industrial revolution. In the 1880s, a century ago, the Swedish scientist Svante Arrhenius calculated that the increasing production of carbon dioxide would raise the planet's temperature by as much as five degrees centigrade".

"We have been warned of the dangers of global warming yet we do nothing except perhaps talk about it. The amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has increased by around 25 per cent this century and the burning of vast rainforests is adding 2.5 billion tons of carbon to the atmosphere annually". Mr Isaaman also stressed the growing effect of the motor car adding that we shall have doubled the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere by 2035.

The lecturer then moved to WATER, stressing that "it makes our planet unique in the solar system - yet we abuse it in

industry, in farming, in our domestic needs".

"Pollution is all around us. The North Sea is a disgusting cesspit, though we still eat the fish it manages to produce; huge lakes and countless rivers are now devoid of natural life, just flowing effluents of chemicals, their surfaces covered with spreading toxic algae, the water table ruined by leeching pesticides, the water we actually drink recycled up to 10 times but still sometimes containing harmful substances. We know we are poisoning ourselves and, irrationally, take little action except to buy water in bottles from the supermarket".

Mr Issaman asked if we could afford such water consumption as, for example, the American cottage cheese industry producing as much waste daily as six million people while the conversion of a ton of raw potatoes into potato crisps uses more than 4,000 gallons of water. He further explained that legislation covering the control of hazardous waste is not strong enough especially when applied to producers of such waste.

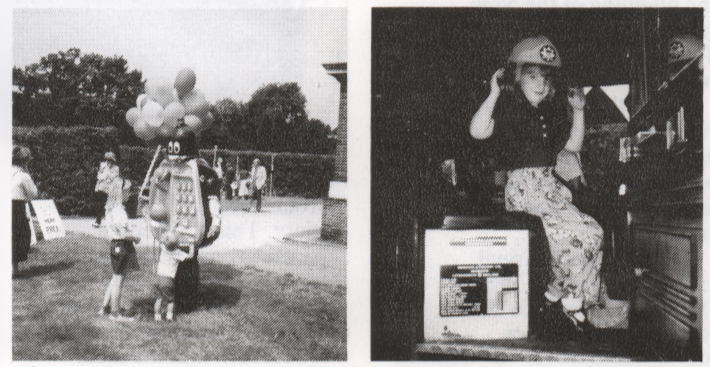
Finally, the lecturer turned to LAND and demonstrated the situation we face dealing at some length with the nuclear disasters of Chernobyl and Sellafield. "It has taken four years for the secrets of Chernobyl to be exposed and more than 30 years for those of Sellafield, alias Windscale, to come to light. And that is only soem of the secrets. The Russians have revealed that some four million people are likely to have been affected and that thousands will ultimately die as a direct consequences. Yet, we still believe that nuclear energy is safe, the

fact that the French have no fewer than 16 nuclear power stations on their channel coast-line facing us being something largely ignored. No known contingency plans exist should one of them explode".

Referring to the number of sheep farms put under quarantine in Cumbria, ostensibly as a result of the Chernobyl disaster, Mr Isaaman went on to say "My belief is that the problem is not Chernobyl but Sellafield, which is destroying not only the livelihoods of sheep farmers but the actual lives of children born with leukemia despite all the assurances given in the past and destroying the lives of workers at the Sellafield nuclear plant who have been exposed to doses of radiation way above the accepted safety limits".

The lecturer went on to give a number of facts about how the dangers of Sellafield/Windscale problems have been understated. "Yet, as is widely known, children and parents, Sellafield workers, suffer from leukemia and cancer". He went on to castigate the authorities for constantly understating the dangers giving a number of startling examples and stressing that they were not those of a sensational journalist.

Mr Isaaman concluded that we accept only part of reality and ignore the rest. "But whether or not there is a mismatch between our evolution and the world we have created, we face the most frightening challenge ever".



The June Security Fair organised by Neighbourhood Watch under Peter Loyd saw an impressive array of stands from security firms and the police.

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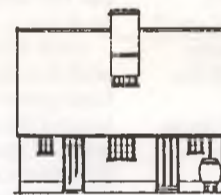
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CABLE TV PLANS FOR THE SUBURB

Residents will recall that a year or so ago a questionnaire was circulated by a cable TV firm that was assessing the market with a view to cabling the Suburb in the reasonably near future. That fairly small firm has now been taken over by a larger company, but the plan to cable this area still exists; although the programme has been put back a few months as a result of the changes, it should not be too far off, so it is not necessary for people to rush out and buy satellite dishes. Suburb News is in touch with professionals in cable TV circles and will keep residents informed of developments as the plans mature. Cable TV will of course enable people to receive the existing programmes as well as the pay channels, and this will give a marked improvement on the somewhat mediocre reception at present in some parts of the Suburb, especially in summer when the trees are in full leaf. PRGT

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