

LITTER ON THE SUBURB

At this time of year picking up litter can be much more of a chore than in the summer, particularly if the weather is damp and cold.

In spite of the difficulties, the number of people volunteering to be responsible for a Litter Free Zone is increasing. We now have some 160 volunteers covering 40% of the Suburb and this positive action and support by residents is proving of enormous help in the discussions which we have now started with the London Borough of Barnet who are very much aware of and appreciate the extent of what we are doing as citizens, to play our part. These discussions are to determine the provision and siting of new, environmentally acceptable litter bins for the Suburb. It is too early yet to hazard even a guess as to the likely outcome of these talks but, aware of the efforts that we are making to play our part, Barnet appear receptive of our ideas and keen to work out a satisfactory solution with us.

Meanwhile, if you also would like to live in a clean Suburb, why not come off the sidelines and give your active help and support to us by volunteering to be responsible for a Litter Free Zone. For details contact Peter Loyd at 12 Meadway, NW11 Tel: 455 4543.

HBS Old Girls

Last year's HBS Old Girls annual dinner was the best attended yet. The organisers of the next one are hoping for an even better turnout. It is on 5th April at Bigwood Hall. Tickets £8 (£6 for students) from Ruth Green, 36 Southway, NW11. 458 6164.

ANTIQUES BENEFIT FOR HOSPICE

On Saturday evening 18th November, Bigwood Hall was filled to overflowing for an Antiques Roadshow. The event was organised by the North London Hospice's HGS fundraising supreme, former Institute Principal John Enderby. It was conducted at a cracking pace by a team of half a dozen experts from Phillips the West End auctioneers, led by deputy chairman Christopher Hawkins. Residents had brought their treasures, ranging in value from "decorative interest only" to thousands of pounds, which were displayed on tables in front of the team in groups - pictures, silver, jewellery, porcelain and china, timepieces, and miscellaneous items. Each expert selected an object from the table, briefly described it for the benefit of those at the back who could not see the detail, attributed provenance and date, and then gave an insurance value, about double the saleroom hammer price for many artefacts; attention then moved to the next expert. It was all very slickly done, with interest kept going by the variety of objects, their own intrinsic merit and the verbal dexterity of the team. In the course of two hours, about 120 objects were dealt with, average value nearly £850; those whose items were not selected for public description were able afterwards to have a private consultation and valuation. In the interval wine was served and those who fancied their own expertise could try their hand at

identifying the ten mystery objects in the quiz, oddities subsequently revealed as backscratcher, tongue scraper, hem holder and suchlike. Bargain hunters were able to purchase a £30 antiques encyclopaedia with a 60% discount. Altogether a most enjoyable and interesting evening. The Hospice gained £1,200 directly from the event, with the addition of two generous donations totalling £2,800, i.e. £4,000 in all.

PRGT

HGSDS AT WAR

"Oh, What a Lovely War" This musical entertainment was created in 1963 by Joan Littlewood and her fellow artists at the Theatre Workshop and it is said that it was the music which originally inspired the show. Gerry Raffles who with Charles Chilton, researched all the material, got the idea after hearing a Black and White Minstrel programme devoted to the songs of the First World War.

It is from the songs that one gets the full picture of our overcivilised society forced to cope with instincts of brutality it had almost rationalised out of existence. The songs have a drama and unity all of their own - they still have a shattering impact and tell a terrible story. The material for this music-hall style view of the Kaiser's War was culled from authentic sources. The most preposterous dialogue is provided by Haig's speeches or extracts from pulpit oratory of the period. Stylistically the piece is very complex moving from naturalistic scenes between foot soldiers sharing Christmas rations with the enemy to pure vaudeville as in the scene of the new recruits brandishing cane weapons.

The Hampstead Garden Suburb Dramatic Society under the direction of Richard Kinder made a lively attempt. One could have wished for a little more bite but it may be that what shocked one in 1963 no longer has the same impact. Out of the cast of eighteen Diana Bromley, Bill Musker and Terry Rogers stood out. It was the men on the whole who were in better voice. The band consisting of Dominic Rogers, Robin Healey, Nick Watson and Jamie Stoneman were excellent and tried their best, in this hall with its horrible acoustics, not to drown the inexperienced singers.

LS



The Church Mice is the name for St. Jude's mother and toddler's group seen here at a recent get together.

POTTER SCARES THEM OFF

Perhaps it was all the fuss and publicity about "Blackeyes" which frightened away the audiences at the beginning of December from the HGSDS's production of Potter's first stage play, "Sufficient Carbohydrate", seen originally at the Hampstead Theatre Club in 1983. Alas, the audiences were very thin which was a pity since the Society gave a pretty good rendering of a complex and often very funny play.

Set in a holiday villa on a Greek Island (nicely suggested by a good set designed by Jo Eggleton and Jane Rogers) the play tells of Eddie and Lucy, who have invited Jack and Elizabeth for a weeks holiday. It soon transpires that all is not as it should be. Elizabeth is having an affair with Eddie; Lucy is Eddie's second wife and not much older than her stepson. Clayton, who mopes moodily about the place and Jack, has had to sell his business to Eddie's firm Green Ace and is appalled at the American company's junk food market. He has been proving a difficult colleague and Eddie is using the holiday to get Jack either to conform or to resign.

The character of Jack contains many of Potter's favourite themes - the fear of age, waning sexual powers, self disgust and nostalgia for the innocence of childhood. It is a very long part ranging from sardonic humour to rage and physical assault and the only fault with Simon Ramsey's portrayal is that he started the play too angry and had nothing to build up to, so that the assault on Lucy (which has always seemed contrived and out of character) did not arise out of the pent up emotions over Elizabeth's infidelities. He also lacked charm and made one wonder why Elizabeth stayed with him. Caroline

Wright was excellent as his long-suffering wife and Roger Rose looked and sounded like an American business man, seemingly friendly and easy going. Simon Prendergast gave a very thoughtful performance as Clayton, the son no one wants to bother about. Denis Potter's female characters are often not well defined and one cannot blame Debbie Lane for failing to find the key to Lucy - her bedding of Clayton seems as contrived as the assault on her by Jack.

The production by Bill Critchley did not help at these moments and lacked lightness.

POSTSCRIPT So Barnet sees itself as a patron of the Arts, but only if they make money! Six local groups have had their grant applications rejected, among them the HGSDS, which requested £1,385 for a hut, electricity supply and lighting for the Little Oakwood theatre. Just why £21,400 of a £28,500 package should go to the Songmakers Almanac defeats me. A Community Theatre project in the Edgware-Grahame Park area gets a mere £7,000.

As for Little Oakwood and its one-time charming little theatre, it has been neglected by Barnet Council for many years - it's high time they put up a little money to revive it.

LS

GARDENING IN JANUARY

Probably the most important January work is concerned with fruit trees, bushes and canes. Now, while plants are dormant, is the time to spray them with a tar-oil winter wash, followed by good pruning. This will greatly improve the quality of fruit next summer. Check stakes and ties, and renew framework supports where necessary. Those trees and bushes growing in grass should, as soon as possible, have a good feed of nitrogen. Rhubarb crowns, although out of sight at present, will benefit enormously from a top covering of straw manure. Plant new-crowns with a very generous helping of well rotted manure, and avoid pulling stems until the second year.

Clear all dead tops of non-shrubby plants from borders. Fork over the soil surface between plants and bury weeds. Continue digging heavy soil to enable the frosts to improve the soil texture. It is the right time to test soil for lime content. If the reading is below pH 6.5 add a top dressing of lime. (Protect lime hating plants).

Drain water-logged stools of outdoor chrysanthemums by piercing soil deeply with a garden fork. Similarly aerate lawns if not too wet. Apply coarse sand to wet muddy areas then hand-fork to allow water to drain away. If your garden is now devoid of interesting colours, why not do something about it to make next winter more colourful? Plant some winter flowering heathers, preferably where you can enjoy them from indoors. Early crocus, Eranthus, Galanthus (Snowdrop) and Helleborus niger (Christmas rose) will all help to provide January colour. Shrubs and trees with brightly coloured fruits or beautiful flowers will enliven the duller days. Have a look at Pyracantha, Skimmia Japonica, Daphne mezereum, Mahonia and Jasminum nudiflorum (winter jasmine).

Finally, don't forget to have the lawnmower serviced and the shears, secateurs and hedge-trimmers sharpened before the spring rush.

CLAYFINGERS

ACCIDENT

Traffic speeding carelessly through the Suburb, a constant RA concern, was highlighted earlier this month when, on crossing Willifield Way from Fellowship House, Harry Whitehead was knocked down by a black BMW. He sustained a broken arm, the driver did not stop!

Howard Barnett

is delighted to announce the opening of

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Apropos our lead article last issue on Nautilus, Mrs Weiss sends her adaptation of Edvard Munch's famous "Scream", with apologies to the artist.

TRAVEL CENTRE HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB

Our experienced staff will help with all travel arrangements.

8 MARKET PLACE,
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