

# SUBURB NEWS

Issue 33 THE NEWSPAPER OF THE HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION Summer '91

## GAS MAIN CONCERNS

Early in the progress of British Gas' massive works to lay a 30" main through the Suburb it seemed that all was going to go quite smoothly. Everyone was impressed with the apparent efficiency of the operation, the way the contractors tidied up and put all their outsized toys away on the Heath Extension at night.

However problems have arisen concerning which the Residents Association is endeavouring to obtain answers from British Gas.

Willifield Way residents have been without water, on at least nine occasions, not, says British Gas, because they have ruptured mains but because the water mains are so old that vibration has caused ruptures in areas which have not actually been disturbed by the gas pipe laying.

A potentially much more serious problem has been highlighted by Penry Cooper who lives in Hampstead Way. His concern is that British Gas is removing tons of wet clay and refilling the trench with porous infill. Potentially creating, he maintains, a massive land drain a mile long through the Suburb. Added to this are the "sumps" 13' x 13' x 18' deep either side of

Finchley Road and Meadway also to be refilled with aggregate.

A telephone conversation with Barnet elicited the information that they had not considered the possibility of causing drainage of water from the neighbouring clay. Neither apparently had British Gas. Barnet have said that British Gas will "look into the matter and if found necessary, arrange for tests to ensure compliance with specifications".

Mr Cooper says that his complaint is not whether the work is up to specification but whether the specification itself is sound.

Suburb householders have enough problems with subsidence caused by drying out and swelling of the clay on which our houses are built it would be nice to know exactly what if any will be the effect of the gas drain.

RJW

## Success in the Suburb

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Environment week saw a range of RA activities including much appreciated teas in the Tea House on Northway.

## Cable for Suburb

In August contractors working for Videotron UK will start laying cableways in the Suburb. Videotron is a large Canadian company, which has been granted a franchise by the Government to operate in London, from Greenwich in the south east clockwise round to Barnet in the north, covering some 980,000 homes. The first Suburb area to be cabled will be the area of the Old Suburb enclosed by Heathgate, Meadway, Temple Fortune Lane, Hampstead Way, Asmunds Hill, Erskine Hill and Addison Way. The first 1700 to 2000 homes will be able to be connected soon after the cableways are laid, within two months of the start of work; it is intended that the whole suburb, including North Side, will be able to receive cable TV by May 1992.

A representative of Videotron explained the sequence to the RA Council at its meeting in June. Four to six weeks before work starts in a street, residents will be informed by letter, and then a couple of days before the dig a card will be dropped through the door. The cables will be laid about 45 centimetres deep in the pavements, at the rate of about 50 metres a day; the intention is that a day's worth will be opened by hand digging, the cable laid and the trench closed again within the day; access will be maintained to houses throughout. At intervals, mainly at street corners, boxes, probably dark green, each with a pitched roof, 1.2 m high by 1 m wide by 0.5 m deep from back to front, will be installed at the back of the pavement. Each will contain the

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## FALLODEN WAY FORGOTTEN?

In the Spring issue of Suburb News, two long articles detailed the Suburb's traffic problems and the possibility of mitigating some of them by "traffic calming" measures. While interesting many residents, I suspect that these articles will have confused and misled many more.

For in all the lists of roads so sorely afflicted by through traffic there is not a single mention of Falloden Way. Not a single suggestion for relieving the danger and disruption endured daily by these Suburb residents. Not even an acknowledgement that a problem exists for these residents.

The "traffic calming" exercise which was trailed so comprehensively in the Spring issue was clearly not some spontaneous inspiration launched in complete on an unsuspecting Suburb. So how could the eyes of the visionaires have been so resolutely averted from Falloden Way? And what does this blinkered approach betoken for the future of their proposals?

Two possible answers suggest themselves to the first of these questions. One is weakness, masquerading as "realism". The argument - that you can never win against the Department of Transport, so why waste time

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## GOURMET CLUB

Forthcoming events: We are hoping to have

- \* an International Evening
- \* a wine-and-beer-making competition
- \* a wholefood cookery competition for children (under 15) and/or adults.

Food will be available for purchase at the end of the events.

Can you help to organise any of these?

Please contact:

The Secretary, HGS Gourmet Society, 12 Hutchings Walk, London NW11 6LT

## RA REPORT

The Residents Association never has a dull routine! New problems and challenges are always arising. Apart from continuing as a pressure group on behalf of residents regarding traffic, wheeled bins, refuse, Nautilus, etc., we have been closely monitoring the work being carried out by British Gas. Our Chairman, Eileen Whelan and S.F. Bailey have been continually in contact with British Gas, dealing with the problems and inconveniences that have arisen.

Next month it is probable that TV Cable will start to be laid on the Suburb. Karen Marsden from Videotron, the cable company, outlined their plans and answered questions at the RA Council Meeting in June and David Rapson and S.F. Bailey were taken to see areas where TV cable has already been laid. As it is laid under pavements only, we hope for very little inconvenience to residents. Later the Suburb will have the opportunity to lose satellite dishes and aerials.

At this time of the year Membership Representatives are collecting residents' contributions to the RA. - Have you remembered your subscription? One of the most useful and informative books you can have on the Suburb is the Yellow Directory. This is brought up to date every year, and a lot of care and detail goes into this. The late

Dr. Hoblyn's invaluable work has been taken on by Patrick Gaskell-Taylor and Neville Silver, with the Publications Committee.

The Traffic Committee is constantly monitoring all events that can affect traffic on the Suburb, now and in the future, so David Rapson represented us at a meeting on 4th June with the Chairman of the London Borough of Barnet, the Finchley Society and the North Circular Road Action Group, to discuss our objections to the Department of Transport plan to close access to the North Circular Road from the Brent Street crossing. This will inevitably bring more traffic to Henlys Corner and Hampstead Garden Suburb.

The RA Council was happy to mark the occasion of the Golden Wedding Anniversary of two of the most active, helpful and knowledgeable residents over the years - Anne and Alan Lawson.

During Environment Week, the inauguration of the Tony Mandelson Memorial took place on Willifield Green, followed by a party at Fellowship House. A presentation of a book was made to Councillor Shutz to mark the end of his term of office as Mayor of Barnet.

Representatives from the RA continue to meet the Hampstead Garden Trust twice a year, and all the Standing Committees keep busy on your behalf.

SdeP

Cllr Schutz accepts a token at the end of his term as Mayor of Barnet from Eileen Whelan and Sylvia de Peyer.

