

'HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB: Dreams and Realities', by C.W. IKIN

This is an interesting and important book, but its aim is never entirely clear. Its framework is chronological, but it lacks the impulse of narrative history. It contains illuminating comments on the inner tensions of the Suburb society and organisations, but it is not sociology. It makes accessible a great deal of previously obscure and fascinating information (particularly legal documents) and a number of haunting photographs of the Suburb between the wars, but it is clearly more than a source-book.

The most important and valuable part of the book is the account of what happened in the Suburb in the years 1961-71, and, at the same time, this account is the book's deepest failure.

There was a story to be told of those years: of the Old Trust, lacking in vision and will, being prepared to sell the Suburb freeholds to commercial interests; of the Residents Association of that time too supine and unaware to be able to react; of the heroic struggle of the Protection Society, led by Jean Henderson and George Bower – and, though he modestly refers to himself as 'a solicitor' or 'the negotiator', by Kit Ikin himself – as a result of which the Suburb

was saved from degenerating into another commercial estate; of the work to obviate the threat to Leasehold estates such as the Suburb, whose amenities were protected by covenants in their lease, posed by the Leasehold Reform Act; of the detailed negotiations which led to the setting up of the New Trust. All of that is there in the book, but it is hard to delve that story out of the mass of unsystematically stated facts and details with which the reader has to struggle. Perhaps the author is too close to those events to be able to stand back and select which facts are more important. It is a pity that the publishers, whose enterprise in bringing out this book is to be praised, did not

provide him with the help of an editor to assist him in making that selection – and to ensure that the appendices were cross-referenced to the correct pages in the text. Not all the appendices are of equal value, and it is unfortunate that there is not one containing a 'who was who' of the period 1961-71, because it is frankly difficult to sort out which name in the text plays which part.

What does come clearly from the book, however, is that, although the society and institutions of the Suburb today are very different from those envisaged by Henrietta Barnett when she founded it, there has been a genuine effort to preserve her vision. At the head of that effort, Kit Ikin gave himself unstintingly to the services of the Suburb for ten years, and the debt the Suburb community owes to him and his colleagues of the Protection Society is incalculable. This book is not an easy or light 'read', but if it teaches us the lesson of the dangers of the 1960s and how they were averted by a few devoted individuals, then, with all its faults, this is a book of great value. **DDS**

A DOUBLE UNIQUE

Wentworth Pritchard, Parliamentary Agent to the Suburb 24 years ago, has written to Kit Ikin about **Hampstead Garden Suburb: Dreams and Realities**:

'... I shall enjoy reading the whole book, because I am most interested in the Hampstead Garden Suburb. But I must admit that when I opened the book yesterday, I did not resist the temptation to read the passages about the matters in which I took part. I was interested because this case was unique in the whole of my experience. I have never had a case of clients who wanted to promote a private Bill when the chances of success were nil, but who achieved their object by getting all amendments to a government Bill. It is very difficult to secure an amendment to a government Bill. We were fortunate in having one outstanding and one useful member of the opposition

to look after us and several important members of the Government who were sympathetic. The Government would probably never accept an amendment to their Bill, but we got what we hoped for, a statement by the Minister that if the amendment were withdrawn he would consider the matter sympathetically and see if he could introduce a suitable amendment at the next stage. After further negotiations the Government submitted their amendment to me and asked whether it was acceptable to my clients. That, I think, was also unique. The net result was that we got what we wanted and instead of scrimping and scrounging to get enough money to pay for the private Bill, we had the problem of what to do with the surplus money... If I may say so, I consider that what you have written about the matters in which I was concerned is quite excellent, accurate and fair.

CONGRATULATIONS

Mr Ikin is to be congratulated on his scholarly job of pulling together 'the realities' (the 'ins and outs') of the founding, running and subsequent management of the Suburb. However there are two important omissions. The first concerns the Odeon meeting of the Trust on 24th June 1971, and the furore caused by the Trust (as then constituted), who were proposing to set up a company independent of the Trust to run the proposed Scheme of Management; this was rejected by the Trust members. The second omission concerns the background to the setting up of the RA/Trust Joint Working Party. I was Chairman of the RA at the time, and can vouch that the Trust wanted the RA's support for their application to the High Court to vary the Scheme of Management Charge so that it was related to the actual cost of running the Scheme (up to this time the annual charge was fixed at £2 per annum). The RA agreed to give their support, conditional upon the setting up of the Joint Working Party to review the workings of the Trust, and the Trust's agreement to implement the findings of the Report which followed. I then submitted an affidavit to the High Court, giving the RA's backing to the new proposals for fixing the annual charge. A search through the RA files will reveal the correspondence between the RA and the Trust on this matter.

Unfortunately there is something else missing which would make the book a much more valuable document: a 'dramatis personae'. So many names appear that there are times when it is difficult to know 'who is who'. Let us hope that someone will provide those few missing pages. It is a book well worth having. **AL**

WEA Classes

Why not make a New Year Resolution to try something new?

The WEA Golders Green Branch offers some interesting and stimulating classes, starting in January:

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For details, phone 452 8850 or pick up a leaflet from Golders Green library.

CRAFT FAIR



Tessa Hauxwell upholsters



Peter Oliver with David and Jane Rapson



Mollie Cattle raised £197.50

The 1990 Suburb Craft Fair held on November 10th in the Free Church Hall was a tremendous success – as always it was a very social occasion as well as a good opportunity for some seasonal shopping. We had around 1,000 visitors this year and raised a grand total of £2,233.41 for charity (over £400 more than last year): UK Rett Syndrome Association £963.58; NL Hospice Group £1,044.83; and Save the Children Fund £225.00. Among contributions from stallholders were two particularly generous ones: Hilary Donaldson and Tessa Hauxwell raised £150 for the UK Rett Syndrome Association by raffling two recently upholstered pieces of furniture (won by Mrs Perrin of Northway and Mrs Robinson of Willifield

Way) and Mollie Cattle donated £197.50 to the North London Hospice Group from the sale of some of her beautiful needlework.

A display by members of the Middlesex Beekeepers' Association attracted much attention – and there was delicious honey to taste and buy! There were over thirty stalls offering a wide variety of high quality handmade crafts including: soft toys (Margaret Smith & Kay Saint); silverwork (Veronica Shaw); children's knitwear (Beryl Moulden); pottery (Jan Lilley); beeswax candles and ethnic jewellery (Nik Wolf); Liberty children's wear, cushions (Lizzie Houghton); upholstery and caning (Hilary Donaldson & Tessa Hauxwell); preserves and cakes (Yvonne Oliver); pottery (Helen Cohen); dried flower decorations (Mari Aldred); wooden toys and games (Dave Beetlestone); enamels and jewellery (Diana Redhouse); watercolours (Peter Sutton); peg dolls (Diane Darrer); handweaving (Hilary Shrimpton); quilting (Angela Thonger); Liberty print gifts and cards (Mary Avery). Lesley Michaelides and her helpers from the NL Hospice Group worked tirelessly once again to provide delicious refreshments.

The UK Rett Syndrome Association stand, on which Lorna Jaffa presented some excellent photographic and written material about Rett Syndrome, was manned in the morning by Ronnie and Lorna (who had Jessica with them) and in the afternoon by David and Jane Rapson. **YO**



Jessica Jaffa and friend

VALENTINE'S NIGHT

Wine and dine your loved one at A Valentine's Dinner and Ball on February 14th.

Friends of the North London Hospice Group will be hosting the event at the Swiss Cottage Holiday Inn in King Henry's Road, at 7.30pm. Tickets are £40.

For tickets or donations for the tombola, ring Vivienne Bentley on 081-203 5131.

HOSPICE HELP

We need people to help in the Day Centre and on the wards at the Edenhall Marie Curie Hospice, Lyndhurst Gardens, NW3.

Lively people and quiet people form our team of volunteers – would you like to join us?

We need all sorts of people for all sorts of things:

Listening to someone's life story
Doing a manicure...
Making a drink...
Taking round the shop trolley
Demonstrating flower arranging...
Making friends...

Sitting peacefully with someone who is dying...
Driving a day-patient home... etc.

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