



Synagogue News

For many of the Suburb's Jewish residents, the focal point of their communal life is found at the Hampstead Garden Suburb Synagogue, Norrice Lea. The Synagogue which has almost 1700 members and a regular Sabbath morning attendance of around half that number, offers a wide choice of educational, religious, cultural and social activities for all ages.

The spiritual leader of the congregation is Rabbi Edward Jackson BA who has always made a priority of education and certainly both the Kerem school and the Hebrew classes at the Synagogue complex are flourishing as never before.

Religious activities are based on the Jewish calendar and a tradition of different culinary delights at each festival. March saw the celebration of Purim, the story of Queen Esther, which is traditionally celebrated by children in fancy dress based on characters in the story. The eating of a triangular biscuit covered in poppy seed representing the ears of Haman, the villain of the story, was a central item on the menu of the children's party in the Synagogue hall.

One month later the hall was also the venue for one of the most moving events in the Synagogue year, the communal 'Sader' meal on Passover. The tradition of a meal on the night of Passover has lasted over 3000 years and its mixture of story, prayer and song celebrating the exodus from Egypt never fails to arouse great emotion. The eating of unleavened bread is a direct link back across the centuries, to the time of Moses.

May sees the newest addition to the festive calendar, the marking of the birth of the modern State of Israel in 1948. The 44th Independence Day celebrations attracted another 'full house' including many from beyond the local community who came to enjoy Israeli folk music and dancing and to sample modern Israeli food with its Oriental and North African flavours.

The Synagogue will be at its prettiest on June 7th and 8th for the festival of Pentecost. The beautiful floral displays which will adorn the Synagogue as part of the celebrations of the festival of first fruits will be on sale on the 9th to raise money for charity.

Norrice Lea Synagogue has also a richly deserved reputation for its cultural contribution to the community. On June 23rd the Synagogue will be presenting a performance of 'La Traviata' in aid of the local Combined Charities Fund and it is certain that this annual operatic entertainment will be enjoyed by all as well as providing funds for community projects.

The Synagogue's reputation for celebrity lectures has been enhanced recently with Esther Rantzen, whose talk on child abuse was especially thought-provoking and moving.

Norrice Lea Synagogue caters for the social needs of its members of all ages. Regular clubs range from a thriving Mothers and toddlers group to an over 50's club and those members interested in Israeli dancing and music are well catered for. The Synagogue magazine published bi-annually is always well received and enjoyed for its rich mixture of news, interviews and interesting articles.

Special events held recently range from a 'Swim and Gym' day to a Casino evening (all profits to charity!) and which all go to ensure that the Synagogue's place as a vital and vibrant part of Suburb life is not only maintained but enhanced. **RG**



TONY HANCOCK LIVED HERE

Patricia Hayes and Ernie Wise were among a good crowd of celebrities and local residents in Grey Close on April 26 to see the unveiling of a plaque on number 10 where Tony Hancock had lived in the late forties.

The Dead Comics Society had organised the Commemoration for Tony Hancock as part of its campaign to place blue plaques in memory of comedians.

The unveiling was followed by lunch in the house now the home of Larry and June Lewis.



Ernie Wise pulls the unveiling chord assisted by June Lewis.

RA Traffic Report

The Roads and Traffic Committee is having a hectic time these days. The argument about Henlys Corner and the procedures used by the Department of Transport in its public inquiries continues. This, in essence, is that the British Government having accepted in 1985 the European definitions and procedures for environmental impact assessments when dealing with roads and similar public works, the Department of Transport has continued to use its own 1983 procedures. Many people, including us, believe these do not meet the European requirements.

Several organisations, notably the Council for the Protection of Rural England, have reported this to the European Environmental Commissioner and we joined in, a little belatedly, with a similar report in December 1991. This was followed up with an approach to a body called the Environmental Law Foundation, which advises on environmental legal issues. The initial advice is free, and thereafter one has to decide what can be done.

We have also taken up the question of Red Routes, because with Falldon Way and the North

Circular Road both designated as Red Routes the northern part of the Suburb will be more isolated than ever, alas. Our submission to the Department of Transport is unlikely to have much effect, but we shall keep at it.

Three-cornered talks on traffic calming - the Residents Association, the 'Trust, and the Borough Council - are continuing, concentrating on specific improvements which can be implemented one by one to achieve a long-term integrated scheme. In the nature of things however we cannot expect very quick results.

The basic problem in all these issues is that Department of Transport road programmes tend to be environmentally damaging because they do not consider the efficient use of energy overall, and because they do not consider adequately the needs of people who, whether car owners or not, live in communities where much activity by preference takes place on foot - eg shopping, visiting, taking or sending children to school, etc.

Well, we shall to on nagging away, and if we have any successes you will be (I hope) the first to hear about them. **SFB**

Suburb's Subtle Colour Use

Among the many factors that distinguish Garden Suburb architecture is a keen and harmonising sense of colour. Those who advocate the maxim that red and green should not be seen are studiously ignored: light red as a colour for brick and roof tiles is the dominant background for lush planting. Like the vernacular influence on scale and details of construction, these building materials are imported from the rural south east. The indigenous yellow-grey London stock is confined to garden walls, and the sombre blue-grey slates which roof much of Georgian and Victorian London are not to be found.

John Ruskin, who must have remained an influence on many of the architects who designed Suburb houses, advocated the study of nature for developing a sense of colour. He observed that in nature colour is always graded as a result of the direction of sunlight and the contours and texture of the subject. Painters could best imitate the effect of nature by superimposing washes of pure colour to create variety of tone and colour, or by applying paint in dots and dashes of pure colour to build up this variety. The pointillist Seurat takes the idea to the extreme.

Look carefully at the multi-stock bricks from which Garden Suburb houses are built, and the first impression of colour can be found to break down into purple, scarlet, orange, blue, yellow and grey: each brick with dashes of three or four colours. The handmade texture of the brick blends the colours with subtle

highlights and shadow on the face of the wall. The light brown-grey mortar softens and subdues the colours. The matrix of colours on the surface of a pebble dash wall mix together to form honey brown. The surface colour of clay roof tiles is more consistent. The orange-red handmade tiles acquire a two-way curve during firing that results in an intricate pattern of highlight and shadow over the roof surface. The colours and infinite variety of the sky is of course an essential component in the composition.

The building materials do not only look good when new; their appearance improves as they weather and mature. Because they are traditional materials, constructed using traditional methods, this process of ageing was understood as a vintner understands that fine wines must mature.

The care and understanding that went into the design and construction of the buildings must be employed in their maintenance. Great harm can be done by owners and builders who do not understand the tradition, or are motivated by fashion, impatience and short-term economics. The subtle appearance of a wall can be butchered by inappropriate pointing. New bricks and tiles must exactly match the originals - and they are available. Never never paint bricks, tiles or unpainted pebble dash; to do so is to lose the subtlety of the original design and to create an unnecessary problem of future maintenance. **JS**

ST JUDES SUPPER CONCERT

Rosie and Peter Loyd and their social committee organised an event that packed the Church Rooms for a seven course supper and nine separate musical or entertainment concert items. Compered by Jim Ambrose.

Food was donated by members of the congregation and

entertainment by Elinor Edwards, Lucy Handley, Hugh Cox, Polly Edwards, Jessica and Miriam Honeyball, Grace Davidson and Barbara Honeyball, Peter Kingsley, Louise Edwards, Anne Bromilow, Polly Edwards and Hannah Davidson and Dafydd Edwards. An evening to remember. **RJW**

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