



Henrietta Barnett School pupils celebrate their GCSE results

Glenn Capus

The Henrietta Barnett School

The school is now receiving applications for entry into Year 7 in September 1995. Full details of the school's Open Days and the entry procedures are available from the school office in person or by post on receipt of a large - A4 size - stamped addressed envelope with 47p stamps. As a Voluntary Aided School there is no catchment area and the Governors determine the criteria for admission. Entry is by examination and about 250 candidates are

then interviewed. These are selected according to their marks in the examination and include those who have displayed exceptional talent in one area, and sisters of present pupils whose marks are on the borderline. In reaching a final decision amongst girls of equal academic standard and potential, favourable consideration will be given to sisters and local residents.

About 30% of the pupils live on or near the Suburb and the

majority come from Barnet primary schools.

The entrance examination will be held on Thursday 5 January 1995 and there will probably be two sessions. The school wishes to apologise to local residents for the inconvenience of the additional traffic.

All residents will be most welcome at the Carol Service on Tuesday 13 December. Time and place will be notified.

Jane de Swiet

Neighbourhood Watch

Once again Neighbourhood Watch is national news.

In August all seemed to be quiet and peaceful until *The Times* reported that the Home Secretary was again resurrecting his proposals that Neighbourhood Watch should provide street patrols.

Perhaps the idea can be made to work in little village communities where crime is minimal, where everybody knows everyone else.

But, for a whole raft of reasons, it is not a feasible proposition for us on the Suburb. We are NOT a small rural community.

However, the media thrive on bad news and so any highlighting of Neighbourhood Watch nationally immediately triggers headlines such as those which appeared in *The Times* the day after - "Neighbourhood Watch, a scheme that promises much but has clearly failed", and "A local army puffing after the criminals".

The purpose of Neighbourhood Watch.

On the Suburb, Neighbourhood Watch clearly has NOT failed. But if we are to understand why it has not failed - in fact, why it is a success - we need to be quite clear as to the purpose of Neighbourhood Watch, and what it can, and cannot, do.

Contrary to popular belief, the primary purpose of Neighbourhood Watch is NOT to be the "eyes and ears of the police". We are all perfectly ordinary citizens like anyone else and we are not trained to be able to act as look-outs for the police. Of course all of us should be alert and aware; of course we should dial 999 immediately whenever we see or hear what we suspect may be criminal behaviour. Neighbourhood Watch can certainly help us to understand how criminals operate and what should make us suspicious. But, unless confronted by obvious criminality, most of us would have the greatest difficulty in fulfilling such a role and we are certainly not trained or qualified to do so. But the press don't seem to realise this, and constantly ask for examples of action by Neighbourhood Watch members which have resulted in the apprehension of criminals. In the absence of such examples, Neighbourhood Watch is written off as a failure.

Quite simply, the main purpose of Neighbourhood Watch is, in partnership with the police, to prevent the criminal from

achieving his objectives. And the main way in which this is done is communicating effectively all the vital information that each of us needs to know in order to be able to protect our property and ourselves.

However, if that is the main means of achieving that purpose, by implication a further means must be by encouraging and engendering a climate of confidence, mutual responsibility and neighbourliness so that we all take heed of the advice which we have been given and respond to it effectively.

A middle-class organisation.

One way in which the media has attempted to denigrate Neighbourhood Watch has been classifying it as a typical middle-class phenomenon. And, to some extent, this may well be true inasmuch as Neighbourhood Watch cannot work unless everybody acts responsibly on the advice they are given.

Our Suburb record.

But this not to suggest that we, on the Suburb, are perfect. Regretably, there are still residents who fail to heed the information and advice which has been made available to them - at least until after they have, themselves, become the victims of crime. They still leave their houses and cars unsecured; they still fail to display Marked Property stickers which show that they have engraved their personal possessions with their postcode and house number; they still carry handbags and wear jewellery in public places in such a way as to invite robbery. The result is that we still have just over one thousand crimes a year, at least half of which are avoidable.

But this annual figure is now lower than it has been for the last ten years, and a significant part of this success is because a large number of residents have heeded and acted upon the advice they have received thereby preventing a vast number of Suburb crimes from taking place.

Our local police.

We work in close partnership with our local police, to whom we owe

a considerable debt of gratitude. Much of the success of Neighbourhood Watch is due to the support which we receive from them to an extent often unknown in other areas, and it is largely because of their efficiency that Suburb crime is now down to its present low level.

We certainly cannot rest on our laurels, especially with so many new residents coming to the Suburb whose security education now has to be brought up to the level of the remainder of us. But, with your continuing help and co-operation, we have no reason to believe we cannot reduce Suburb crime much further yet.

Meeting with Home Office Minister

At the end of August, five of us from different parts of the country were invited to meet David MacLean, the Minister of State at the Home Office, with his officials to give him our views on the draft of the new Home Office publication *Partners against Crime*, which was launched in late September. This booklet, which is now available to the public, concentrates on three separate partnerships against crime: Neighbourhood Watch, Street Watch and Neighbourhood Constables.

We all wholeheartedly supported the Home Secretary's desire to involve all sections of the community in the fight against crime. But we were unanimous in our opposition to Neighbourhood Watch having anything to do with patrolling the streets, and we said that "Street Watch" - which the Home Secretary's ideas seem to have developed into - should not be linked in any way with the Neighbourhood Watch movement.

Neighbourhood Constables are similar to Special Constables and are those who particularly ask to be deployed in a given area or neighbourhood. In rural areas they may be known as Parish Constables. They will work with, and be trained by, the regular police.

Peter Loyd

Arguably the most important feature throughout the Garden Suburb is the presence of hedges. Apart from defining boundaries and affording privacy to residents, the hedges provide a homogeneous element which links the whole area. The lack of aesthetically hard features, such as walls and fences and their associated varieties of colour, is often not consciously appreciated until one travel through other areas of London.



Privet in Bigwood Road

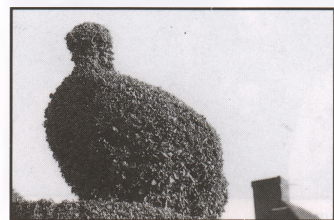
It is therefore most important to care for the hedges and preserve this important feature. Generally the standard of clipping is excellent, but it should be realised that clipping or pruning also encourages root growth, and because of the close proximity of individual hedges plants the room for root growth is often restricted; sometimes it is further exacerbated by the presence of hard surfaces such as pavements. It is therefore necessary to feed the hedge periodically, otherwise it becomes a little lacklustre with possibly some dieback occurring. This is more likely in mature hedges and in particular coniferous species. General fertilisers, whether in the form of slow-release tablets placed in the soil or solutions applied with a watering can, are available from most Garden Centres.

This leads to another point, and that is the capability of the plant to absorb the feed, or indeed surface water run-off from the surrounding area. Within the base of mature hedges, and accumulated over a number of years, is a mass of twigs, dead leaves and general rubbish which creates a very dry and dense area with little room for air movement or water absorption. As a general maintenance operation it is necessary to clean out the base of the hedge annually to prevent this occurring.

The majority of the hedges throughout the Suburb were

HEDGES

planted at the time the houses were built and are therefore in the region of 70 to 80 years old. Some species are short lived and are now reaching the end of their natural life, others are mature specimens where the rate of growth has slowed and, with age they have become more susceptible to diseases such as 'honey fungus'. The Trust will be pleased to offer advice when the replacement of a hedge is thought to be necessary, although in general new hedging should be the same as previously existed, particularly where adjacent hedges are the same species. If the reason for replanting was caused through disease, it may be advisable to plant a more disease resistant species.



The choice of a hedge is usually dependent on being evergreen, for obvious reasons, and fast growing to avoid a long wait for the hedge to reach maturity and provide cover. Species vary throughout the Suburb, although Privet is the most common and is generally the most suitable and acceptable plant; other common species are Beech, Hornbeam, Yew and Holly. Although Beech and Hornbeam are deciduous, they both retain their leaves through the winter and shed them just prior to the new leaves emerging in the spring, thus providing suitable cover throughout the year.

In general, small-leaved species are easier to trim into a formal hedge which rules out large-leaved species such as Laurel, Aucuba and Rhododendron which, in other circumstances, all make fine informal hedges. Other species which make good hedges are Euonymus japonica, Choisya, Box, Griselinia and Escallonia and even the Evergreen or Holm Oak, all of

which are evergreen and resistant to honey fungus.



Yew in Erskine Hill

The other hedging species that should be mentioned is the ubiquitous Leyland Cypress (*Chamaecyparis leylandii*) which is invariably planted due to its fast growth. Unfortunately, the plant does not magically stop growing at around 6 feet, and will continue if unchecked, often reaching heights in excess of 100 feet. Even if checked through constant clipping, the stems mature into trunks and the result often appears to be a row of pollarded trees rather than a hedge. The Trust do not advocate the use of this species for these reasons; also it is not indigenous and should therefore be discouraged. The attribute of fast growth is also not a necessary requirement because all of the hedging species mentioned are available up to and often in excess of 6 feet, which is normally all that is required. It is therefore possible to plant a mature and instant hedge.

Temporary fences are sometimes erected during the establishment of a new hedge to afford security and privacy. However, this is counter-productive when using a timber fence as the loss of light and air movement restricts the growth of the new hedge and, when the fence is taken down, the resultant hedge is not dense and well established. To provide some security it is better to erect a chain link (tennis court) fence up to say 4 feet and stagger the new hedge plants either side. This will allow the hedge to mature properly and in time totally envelop the fence.

Hedges are acknowledged as one of the most important features of the Suburb, and if you are concerned about the health of a hedge, or even its replacement, we would urge you to contact the Trust for advice.

Tony George

LOW RISK HOUSEHOLDS SHOULD NOT PAY HIGH RISK PREMIUMS

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Do you belong to
Neighbourhood Watch?
Have you adequate security?

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Building and Contents Insurance and also enjoy
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