

Woodland Management in Bigwood 1995 -6



Hampstead Garden Suburb may be seen as one of the greenest areas in Barnet, with its focal point of two churches standing in the central square, St Jude's and the Free Church, surrounded by green lanes of snickets and the small woodland areas with Bigwood and Littlewood.

Like other woodland areas, Bigwood and Littlewood require a certain amount of attention, to ensure their longevity and preserve their character. Bigwood itself has been in decline over the last few years.

Barnet has been working with the arboriculture and countryside management departments of Capel Manor College, to plan and carry out the first stage of a woodland regeneration programme. Over the next few months coppicing will be carried out in two areas of the wood.

Bigwood is a typical traditional oak and hazel woodland area, benefiting from its small population of wild service trees. Proposed management of the wood may include a regular cycle of 'beating-up' or replanting of the correct species.

Planned felling of dangerous, dead or dying trees will help keep the wood healthy. Certain dead trees can be retained at a safe height to allow for nesting sites for the small population of nuthatch and woodpecker.

Research into the woods' habitat has led to a number of management recommendations being made. The London Ecology Unit recently undertook a survey and produced management guidelines which Barnet will recognise in its woodland regeneration programme. Students from Capel Manor College are helping Barnet with this regeneration programme.

Coppicing

Coppicing is a traditional method for producing a 'crop' of useable wooden poles of a specific size, depending on the species of tree coppiced and the length of time between each cutting cycle. Coppicing can be carried out with traditional hand tools, billhooks, handsaws or with more modern tools such as chainsaws. At each cutting the poles are removed leaving a 'stool' from which the next crop of poles will grow. Between each

cutting the woodland floor is exposed to sunlight, stimulating the growth of native flowers such as bluebells, wood anemones and many others. Coppice timber provides a renewable source of timber. Prolonging the life of the woodland through proper management can only improve the habitat for numerous insects, reptiles, birds and small mammals as well as combat air pollution.

Bigwood has a number of wild service trees and the work in the wood is geared to helping their growth and maintaining the current numbers. A recent survey put the population at 110 of various ages and conditions. At the moment Bigwood would be considered to be in a state of degeneration. Over the last 15 years competition for light and overpopulation of grey squirrels has destroyed young seedlings and restricted new growth.

Although coppicing in 1985/86 helped to improve the population of wild service trees, removal of competitive bramble, rhododendron, sycamore and snowberry, will allow the native oak and hazel, field maple and crab apple as well as wild service trees to come through.

The response for tree wardens has been high and I would like to thank everyone for their support. I will come back with training dates as soon as possible.

These woodland areas are wonderful for relaxing in, but residents or visitors must take home or put in bins any litter. Domestic and garden waste can be taken to the Civic Amenity Site off Tilling Road, Cricklewood.

If anyone would like to help in the regeneration of the woodlands they may contact Rhodri Jones, Barnet's Arboricultural Officer in the Environmental Services Department at 1255 High Road, N20 0EJ.

Murder in the Cathedral

The Garden Suburb Theatre certainly likes to live dangerously. Who would have thought that T.S. Eliot's great verse play "Murder in the Cathedral" would prove so rewarding in the leafy confines of the Little Wood theatre. Earlier in the week the play had one performance in St Jude's Church, as part of the 'Prom', and though the setting added visual dramatic effect, in many ways it worked against the actors.

Because they played so far forward from the altar the players were not visible except to the few front rows and the acoustics, which are so kind to music, are not helpful to the human voice. Shout and your words are lost. Many words were lost. However, the entry of the four knights, intent on murder, and Becket's Christmas Day sermon were certainly enhanced by being performed in St Jude's.

Set against Colin Gregory's blood red set in Little Wood, the play gained in so far that everyone could see the players and hear them. The excellent chorus also seemed freer in their movements. The Women of Canterbury have some of the most marvellous poetry to say and ably lead by Paula Morris, they brought out all the fearful foreboding and faith. Michael Sabine-Bacon made a rather austere Beckett; it was not easy to imagine this man defying the king or having led a former dissolute life. Chris Gregory really stood out as 2nd Priest, he was so beautifully cast in the part.

The four Tempters and Knights have some very good lines and how relevant they still are today. Just as you think the play is over Eliot brings the knights back to justify themselves to us not in verse but in prose. The excuses ring familiarly in our ears. Taylor Lilley, Jav Punwar, Derek Smith and Bernard Thomas were both persuasive and menacing.

The piece was directed by Fred Griessen and he is to be congratulated in bringing such a difficult play to life. Léonie Stephen



Left to right Elizabeth Boyle, harpsichord; Rebecca Austen-Brown, recorders, baroque violin, medieval fiddle

SUBURB MUSICIANS

Rebecca Austen-Browne and Elizabeth Boyle have recently moved to Erskine Hill after completing postgraduate music courses in London. They met while studying at the Royal Academy of Music and, as well as teaching recorder and piano locally, have since formed a chamber group, "Mousikos", specialising in Baroque trio sonatas.

Rebecca, having gone on to a postgraduate year at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, plays recorders, baroque violin and medieval fiddle in several established ensembles. She has played as far afield as France and Italy, and, after taking part in the finals of the Moek International Solo Recorder Competition in

October, will return to France for some concerts planned for February.

Elizabeth, a harpsichordist, has just completed a two-year post-graduate course at the Royal Academy of Music. She regularly performs in London and throughout the country with "The Song Players" as well as with other ensembles formed while at the Academy. Elizabeth is the continuo player in several tours this year with L'Académie Baroque Européenne - a baroque orchestra based in France.

Elizabeth and Rebecca plan to pursue both their performing and teaching careers in London, and hope to build their contacts within the Suburb. For more information please ring 905 5425.

Gaming Arcade battle won

Thanks to the concerted opposition from residents in Golders Green and throughout the area orchestrated by the pressure group 'Residents Against Gaming in Golders Green' (RAGG), the planning application to Barnet for a permit to site a gaming arcade in Golders Green Road has been dropped.

Apart from the war, there has probably been no single issue which has so united everyone as the opposition to this proposal. It ranged from the collective congregations of the churches and synagogues to councillors, politicians, the schools, shopkeepers and other groups representing different sections of our diverse community. The HGS Residents Association opposed it on behalf of Suburb

residents and, because this type of activity can be addictive as well as tending to attract drug peddlers and other undesirable criminals, Neighbourhood Watch made representation opposing it on behalf of its 4,985 homes covered within the Suburb area.

As our MP, John Marshall, said, 'I am delighted that this thoroughly unwelcome application has been withdrawn. It is a victory for people power.'

RAGG, which drew support from across the community, will not disband. The money raised during the campaign will be invested and the pressure group will remain in readiness to fight any other similar threat to the community which may come along. Peter Loyd

PICTURE FRAMING
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New Suburb Book

For almost 90 years, local photographers have recorded the evolution of Hampstead Garden Suburb and its social life. The Hampstead Garden Suburb Archives, and several private collections have yielded a rich crop of photographs illustrating the development from its beginnings to the present. It is the first archive photography book about the Suburb. The author, Mervyn Miller, is a specialist on Garden City History, and gained his PhD for a study of Raymond Unwin, planner of Hampstead Garden Suburb. Dr Miller has been a Director of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust since 1979, appointed by the Royal Town Planning Institute. He was made an honorary life member of the HGS Residents Association in 1993.

The Chalford Publishing Company are specialists in Archives Photographs books, and their recent output has ranged around many of the London Boroughs, as well as traditional historic towns. One of the most recent titles is *Welwyn Garden City*, by the Librarian, Angela Eserin, and this will be joined by Mervyn Miller's *Letchworth Garden City*, to be published before the end of 1995 with *Hampstead Garden Suburb* to make a trilogy on landmarks of the Garden City Movement.

Hampstead Garden Suburb will be available from the Garden Suburb Gallery.

Sad Sonnet from the Suburb's edge

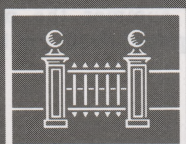
*I pray you listen to this tragic rhyme -
The tale of one who calls the Suburb home.
I must clear rubbish from my hedge each time
I to the shops, or back again, do roam.*

*Trip-chains do fence me in, and with the morn
Pneumatic drills oft shrill the start of day,
Cars triple-parked do challenge with loud horn,
Their drivers swearing in unseemly way.*

*The tattered banners of a careless horde,
Pieces of plastic hang among the trees.
No Sabbath calm brings sweetness for the Lord -
Carbon monoxide lingers on the breeze.*

*Abandoned trollies, uncollected, wait,
Oh Henrietta!, near my garden gate.*

A. Corden



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