

## A link with the past

Having now left our very special house in Meadway Close, The Ship, for the rural retreat of North Devon, I feel that the real link with the past which was conveyed to us in our final days there may be of interest to residents.

The house which we lived in for just under twenty years was built in 1909 by J M Halley for himself and family. He was an accomplished architect and designer who had made a great mark at Glasgow University where he studied with other luminaries of design in the early years of the century. Sadly he was killed in the final weeks of the First World War.

The house which was described as small in the literature of the time has many unusual and indeed unique features. The octagonal dining room, the magnificent pine banister which stretches around both sides of the first floor hall, the sweet little butler table outside the kitchen and the wonderful domed ceiling of the main bedroom are but a few.

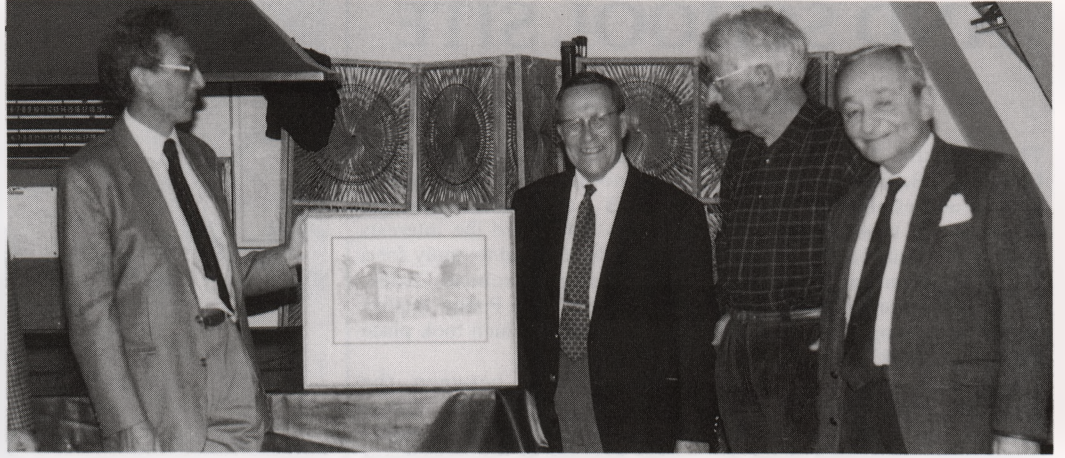
Several weeks before we sold

the house we received a letter from Halley's grand-daughter, Elizabeth Luck, who lives in Gloucestershire. She was hoping to visit London and asked if she might come and see the house. By an odd quirk of fate Mrs Luck and her daughter visited us on the very evening that contracts were exchanged. She brought lots of interesting archive material with her including a photograph of the house in about 1920. It was a delight to find that it had scarcely changed and would be instantly recognisable by anyone. Between us we were able to solve one tiny mystery. The fate of the weather vane which had graced the house originally became instantly clear when we examined at close quarters the brass ship which is on the front door. The telling channel forming the mast of the ship revealed its former life as a weather vane. Mrs Luck was visibly elated when she viewed for the first time the dining room and exclaimed that this was what her aunt had meant when she had referred to the shape of the room. Although we have now moved on, you might imagine this was a

fitting end to our long stay in such a lovely house. It emphasises the importance and great value in keeping the Suburb properties as they were. I know that for Mrs Luck that visit enabled her to appreciate so much of the work her grandfather had done. Her photograph of one of the original wallpapers was not so very different from the one we had now. It occurs to me that many of the houses in the Suburb have now enjoyed a longer life than most of us can expect. Thanks to the loving care and concern shown by their owners and the Trust and Residents' Association these houses have scarcely reached their prime. Even those of us who spend a lifetime in one of these houses are merely temporary custodians of something very special. Happily many of the residents are aware of this and do their best to preserve their little bit of our heritage. This unique house is now in the care of the next sympathetic resident who in turn will cherish and love it.

Rosalyn Kriteaman

## WILFRED COURT RETIRES



Eddie Caplin, Trust Chairman, Wilfred Court and past chairmen Ian Hodgson and Gerry Mansell

It has been a privilege to work with him" was a recurring theme in the speeches made by friends and colleagues on the night of a party thrown by the HGS Trust to mark the retirement of Trust architect for more than 12 years, Wilfred Court.

Mervyn Miller said that there were no chinks in the armour of the man whose name he said would be remembered in Suburb history alongside Unwin, Soutar and Sutcliffe. Nick Brill said that he had enjoyed 12 years of education from Wilfred and praised his dedication.

Gerry Mansell reminded guests that he and Wilfred had joined the Trust at the same time and recalled that Wilfred had had to suffer many meetings at which the Trustees failed to agree and paid tribute to his "celebrated patience with those who were nominally his masters but were actually his pupils".

Eddie Caplin, Trust Chairman said that Wilfred, known to builders as "the man in the mac" had made a major contribution over his 12 years to the maintenance of a Suburb look.

Presentations were made of

flowers to Mrs Court and a watercolour of the Trust offices to Wilfred.

In thanking the Chairman and guests Wilfred said the Trust Council had been marvellous people to work for and that the staff were a lovely team. He was glad to say that, in his experience 90% of Suburb residents are really serious about maintaining standards and conserving the Suburb. He had every confidence in David Pickles who was following him.

Richard Wakefield

## Mum braves the Big Apple

Since our original press release sent in June, Mencap National Council member and volunteer, Pia Duran, has been in serious training to raise cash for Mencap's Blue Sky Appeal. Pia, 51, is taking the brave step of entering her first marathon! The date of the New York Marathon, 3 November 1996, is now fast approaching and to ease her understandable apprehension and give her that extra boost she is looking for local sponsors to support her venture.

Pia joined her local Mencap society in Barnet in 1976 as a Voluntary Welfare Officer, to share with others her own experience of raising a child with a learning disability - her son, Xohan, who is now twenty-eight. Pia was lucky. Thanks to her father, a child psychiatrist, who diagnosed Xohan's problem early, she could get the specialist advice she needed, but many families and parents still fall through the net. Maybe this is not so surprising when you consider that in the time it will take Pia to run the marathon, approximately four babies with a learning disability will have been born. To meet this ever growing demand, Mencap is planning to launch a comprehensive Family Adviser Service, together with an information help line. The Jubilee Appeal has been set up to fund the new service.

Xohan's success story testifies to what can be achieved by people with learning disabilities who are given appropriate advice and support. Mencap's vision is that by the next century everybody with a learning disability will, like Xohan, have access to the right information and services needed to give them the opportunities to make the most of their lives. By sponsoring Pia, you can help make that vision a reality. Phone 0171 696 5583.

## VANDALS HIT STREET TREES

A sad rash of mindless damage is being inflicted on street trees right across the Suburb. It is difficult to understand the motivation. Is it simply drink or drugs or is there some more specific alienation? Clearly in most cases the act has been deliberate, requiring considerable force, and sometimes several adjoining trees have been succes-

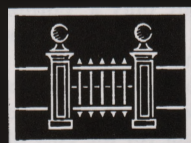
sively attacked. If there is any way you feel we can understand this better and if you have any ideas as to how we can discourage it, please give me a ring (458 1288); at the moment I feel helpless.

However, where it does happen it really is vital that it should be reported as speedily as possible. So immediately you observe

damage please a) ring or fax or e-mail Fintan Bermingham, the tree officer for the Suburb, at Barnet House (359 2000) and/or b) fill in a Barnet Council comments card (available at each library), and/or c) tell Charles Fox, our conscientious Council Ward Officer, when you see him pounding our roads, or d) ring Georgina Malcolm (455 7100), who, as a

Tree Warden and our RA Trees & Open Spaces Committee Secretary, knows the network

very well and energetically follows these occurrences up by fax. Spencer Hudson



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