

WHAT NO MOLES

On a Sunday morning, rain or shine, a dozen or two people gather for coffee in the middle of the Heath Extension and then walk off in small groups - map and notebook in hand, sandwiches in pocket. (Their starting-point is a little brick building easily spotted from Hampstead Way if you park near Reynolds Close.)

Some may make for the Seven Sisters (that chain of small ponds alongside Wildwood Road) to record the many species of dragonfly to be found there; or scores of different water-snails. Others will go with a botanist to map the whereabouts of wildflowers or gorse. Particularly in the breeding season, bird-spotting is a popular option.

No moles here

And everyone keeps an eye open for molehills nearby: in vain, because (for some mysterious reason) the moles favour the Heath only south of Spaniards Road and shun our northern Extension. Never mind: what we have got are a number of Wild Service Trees, those most ancient of witnesses to the antiquity of the Heath Extension.

Who are these enthusiasts, regularly going out - for the sheer enjoyment of it - at 11a.m. on the last Sunday of every month, to monitor and record the wildlife of our Heath? Many are highly professional, but others (old or young, local or from other parts of London) have had little or no previous experience of telling one moth from another, or naming any of (yes!) seventy kinds of fungi that flourish on the Heath. They soon learn..

Anyone can join

Anyone can join them, by becoming a member of the London Natural History Society, founded 140 years ago. A £10 subscription (concessions to students etc.; sent to the Society at 9 Pinewood Court, 23 Clarence Avenue, SW4 8LB) brings a handsomely produced *London Bird Report* and a learned journal, the *London Naturalist*, as well as newsletters and a programme of London-wide walks, talks, slide-shows etc. (in places as varied as cemeteries or reservoirs, the prestigious Linnean Society in Piccadilly or the Tradescant Museum of Garden History). There's a library, and a

periodical-sharing scheme.

The survey of Hampstead Heath is a new development, not yet a year old. As the decades pass, it will provide an invaluable record of flora and fauna and how these change with time. The Heath has always attracted interest of this sort (the first attempt at systematic recording is dated 1629) but the many individuals and organisations pursuing various aspects on their own have previously had no central depository for it. Now the London Natural History Society is providing this, and all manner of interesting information - from scholarly reports to back-of-an-envelope notes - is being fed into a computer, or recorded on maps lining the walls of the little brick house on the Heath. Passers-by can learn of the Society's latest finds from a bulletin-board on the outside, while organised groups are sometimes given talks (and coffee) inside information, 0171 485 7903..

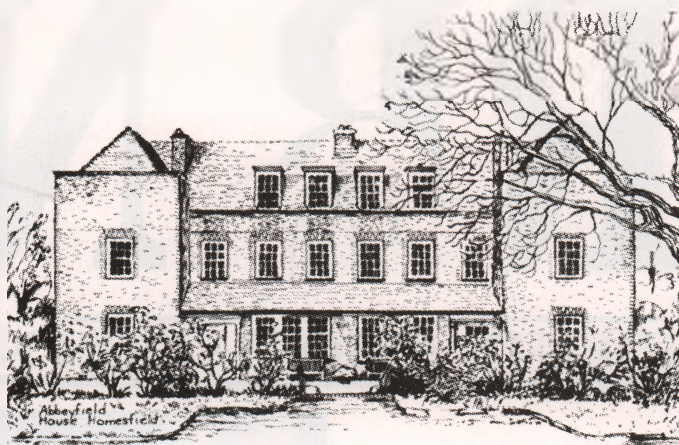
Dogs wreak havoc

Although the Society is a recording rather than a conservation or pressure group (the Wildlife Trusts of London and other areas, as well as the Heath and Old Hampstead Society, take on that role), they do have an influence. Locally, they would like dog-owners to discourage their dogs from plunging into the Seven Sisters ponds, wreaking havoc among the wildlife there.

Any Suburb resident with even a little bit of information to contribute to the common pot of knowledge will be warmly welcomed. A recent offering was a major piece of research into the old field-names of the Extension - 'Shirk Mead', 'Bean Field', 'Upper Weild Pightle' and so on (*pightle* is an ancient word for a little enclosure). But a chance spotting of two kinds of Jewel Beetle was received with equal enthusiasm. Geology and even archaeology have a place too.

Incidentally, although children are welcome on the Sunday recording forays, if accompanied, the younger ones might find the new 'Wildlife Watch' activities in the adventure playground at Parliament Hill more absorbing - run by the Heath authorities (for details, telephone 0171 482 7073).

Elizabeth Gundry



Abbeyfield open house

May 31st was a glorious morning for Abbeyfield's latest open house which resulted in a record number of friends and visitors coming to see the house, sit in the garden and enjoy coffee and home-made cakes. These twice-yearly coffee mornings are held to say thank you to our many friends for their support and encouragement and to welcome those people who haven't been to Abbeyfield in the past. The residents, staff and committee members welcome the opportunity to show the house (many residents open their rooms) and confirm that it is a warm, friendly and happy home for 12 active, though elderly, members of the community. It is indeed a fact that over the years a number of visitors to these coffee mornings have decided that they would like to join the Abbeyfield family and have in due course become residents themselves.

Fund-raising is not the intention of these gatherings but this year we have produced a pack of notelets featuring a delightful pen and ink sketch of the house by local artist Annie Walker and these were offered for sale and proved to be very popular.

Over the years the late Margaret Glaser spent many hours tending our garden in addition to all her other activities described in a recent Suburb News and twelve "Abbeyfield" roses (half of which were donated by the Trust) have been planted in the front garden in her memory. The coffee morning provided an ideal opportunity to invite Margaret's family to see the roses and to put up a commemorative plaque. It was a truly happy occasion and one which we think Margaret herself would have enjoyed.

Abbeyfield notelets, £2 for ten, are at the Garden Suburb Gallery.

Edith Lillian Brown

On April 5th one of the Suburb's original residents passed away in the North London Hospice. Edith Brown (née Faulkner) was born in Hampstead on May 12th 1907. Two years later her parents moved into a newly built house in Willifield Way where her brother Francis was born.

She attended school in a hall at the Institute until Garden Suburb School was built and from there she went to Hendon County School. The walk to school and back was very rural along Bridge Lane and up Bell Lane through fields before the building of the North Circular Road. Her memories included the fellowship at the old Club House; of seeing Dame Henrietta around her suburb; the terrible land mine that landed on Willifield Green, and the King and Queen visiting the destruction. Times were much harder, but the spirit of the community was strong and happy.

From an early age she loved gardening. Both her parents, William and Annie Faulkner, were keen and successful members of the newly formed Horticultural Society. During her long life she exhibited and won many prizes in



flower, produce and home economy classes of which she was a formidable entrant. Preserves and marmalade were her forte. In January this year in spite of her failing health she still made her pan of marmalade for this June's show. At her death she was still a Vice President of the society.

In 1931 Edith married Ernest Brown at St Jude's and soon after moved into Erskine Hill, which was their home until her death. Last December they celebrated their 65th year of happy, devoted marriage. She is greatly missed by her husband, family and friends.

John MacDonald Ross C.B.E.

John Ross, who died in March shortly before his eighty-ninth birthday, combined a distinguished career in the Home Office with a devotion to theology, classical studies and classical music.

Born in 1908 in Bothwell, Lanarkshire, the elder son of Sir James Stirling Ross and his wife Christina, he was educated at Highgate School and Wadham College, Oxford, where he studied Greats. While at school he developed an interest in bird-watching and learnt the intricacies of bird-song in Highgate Woods. At Oxford he combined his classical studies with an active interest in choral music.

At Finchley Presbyterian Church he met Nella in 1913 and they were married on October 8th 1932. They enjoyed 64 years of happy marriage, and are survived by four of their six children and three grandchildren. In 1937 they moved to Hampstead

Garden Suburb.

John Ross was much appreciated for his organising skills, his intellectual rigour, but also for his wit and warmth. His hobbies included bookbinding, sketching, light verse, humorous songs, playing his clavichord and his fortepiano, listening to classical music from Bach to Schubert, brewing home-made wines, and travel. He wrote detailed diaries of all his travels, preferring to illustrate them with his own sketches rather than by photographs. He and Nella both researched their ancestry and genealogy. He did not drive, but rode a bicycle until his loss of hearing made it unsafe to do so.

In old age his loss of hearing led to a gradual withdrawal from active participation in many of his interests, but his mind remained active to the end. He will be long remembered and sadly missed.

Gavin Ross

NEWS FROM FELLOWSHIP

Is there anyone out there who would like to do a "once a year" job for Fellowship?

For many years now Jean Dyson has organised the purchase, wrapping and distribution of bowls of bulbs to the elderly and housebound just before Christmas - a scheme initiated by her husband, Jimmy.

Jean now feels she would like to give this up; if anyone would like to find out more, before volunteering, give Jean a ring on 455-8193.

Fellowship was "on parade" on the afternoon of Sunday 22 June, as part of the Suburb's 90th birthday celebrations. A large number of people came to look at the exhibition of work by Fellowship members, have tea, and look at the Suburb mural which-earlier in the year-the

Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust donated to Fellowship House.

People may remember that for many years the mural was on the back wall of Barclays Bank, Temple Fortune. When the bank was redeveloped in 1995 the mural was stripped from the wall and stowed away. The Trust rescued it, paid for it to be restored and mounted by the Arcade Gallery, and then offered it to Fellowship. Our Committee were delighted to accept; initially it was thought it should go in the entrance hall, but that wall proved not to be big enough, so it has been put into the small Committee Room. If anyone knows anything of the history of the mural, or who the artist was, please get in touch with meon 458 2889.

Eileen Whelan

THE CHOICE IS YOURS

There is a common view that retirement is the great escape from the disciplines of work and the worries that usually go with it.

This may be true in many cases, but retirement actually brings a much more important benefit to most people. Suddenly, and probably for the first time in their lives, they have the freedom to choose what they want to do and when they want to do it.

Most business and professional people living in the Hampstead Garden Suburb have spent their careers concentrating their minds on the needs of their job, and have relaxed only at weekends and during annual holidays, when "just mucking about" seemed the perfect pastime. But when that occasional leisure-time becomes a way-of-life, it is necessary to do more than just "muck about" to enjoy a happy and fulfilled retirement.

So what are some of the choices that will keep an active brain occupied in retirement? The first choices on the list usually centre on the interests which were only hobbies while work got in the way. Golf, gardening, DIY, walking the dog, completing the crossword, are all pleasures in themselves, but not for too long at a stretch. When a one-time tycoon finds that the major decision of the day is what to have for tea, the rot is beginning to set in.

The better option is to put some of that underused intellectual energy and experience to good use by making it available to charities which desperately need that sort of help. There is no money in it, but there is a great deal of satisfaction and self-respect to be gained, which is a proven "rot-stopper". And when

it comes to choice, there are no problems at all.

There are over a half a million voluntary organisations in the UK, covering every conceivable cause. But they all have one thing in common-they all need help of one kind or another.

Choose the amount of time that you are prepared to give (your out-of-pocket expenses will be paid). Choose which day/s of the week you want to involve. Choose the location. Choose what you want to do (you need not stay with your original business discipline, it's your general experience that is valued). Then ask REACH to send you details of suitable charities for you to choose from. They have over 1,000 vacancies on their books right now.

REACH is itself a charity that finds voluntary work for retired business and professional men and women with other charities throughout the UK. The service that REACH provides is free to all parties concerned. A number of HGS residents have become successful REACH volunteers, but more, many more volunteers are needed.

A letter or a phone call to REACH at Bear Wharf, 27 Bankside, London SE1 9ET (0171 928 0452) could be a very good choice for you.

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