



New grass verges 'green' Addison Way

The Greening starts

Most residents have probably seen that the grass verges in Addison Way and Hogarth Hill have been reinstated. The work was undertaken by Barnet and financed by the Trust in consultation with the Residents Association. Grass verges were widespread throughout the Suburb but over the years they have been asphalted over in many roads. The grass verges in Addison Way and Hogarth Hill have transformed both visually and aesthetically the street scene of these roads.

Last year English Heritage prepared a report entitled "Greening the Garden Suburb" in which they suggested a number

of environmental improvements. Besides the reinstatement of grass verges, other projects include the removal of unnecessary street furniture and improvements to Suburb street signs.

Until now the main concern of the Trust has been controlling alterations to individual Suburb properties and this is the first time it has been involved in improving the wider Suburb environment. The work also illustrates effective cooperation between a private estate management company (Trust), local authority (Barnet), English Heritage and residents.

C M Kellerman

Make a New Year resolution

Come and join the HGS Theatre Club! We are a thriving group who go to the theatre once a month. We book the best stalls seats (at a discount), transport you to and from the theatre by coach from Temple Fortune and choose a very good mix of plays throughout the year.

We started the year off on 9 January when we went to see *Old Wicked Songs*, a new play by

John Morans, starring Bob Hoskins and James Callis. On Tuesday 11 February we shall see *Art*, a new play by Yasmina Reza with Albert Finney, Tom Courtenay and Ken Stott.

Our membership is only £6 per annum and our secretaries await your call: Ruth Gumb on 455 6490 or Charlotte Mohn on 458 2584.

HBS Association supper

The Henrietta Barnett School Association (formerly the Old Girls' Association) is holding a supper party on

Monday 17th March 1997

in the main school hall. This event is held annually for

anyone who attended the school.

In particular it is a special reunion for all those who left the school 10 and 20 years ago.

If you are interested, please telephone **0171 915 9292**.



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LETTERS

123 Erskine Hill
NW11 6HU

6 November 1996

Sir,

Oak Trees in Erskine Hill

Spencer Hudson's article in *Suburb News* is manifestly complacent and runs counter to all the efforts made by local residents to preserve these unique oaks in Erskine Hill. It is precisely this complacency which obliged the residents of Erskine Hill to fight for the preservation of these trees because they realised that they could not rely solely on the official organs to protect and preserve this unique environment.

Under his inaccurate and misleading headline, 'oaks to go eventually', he denigrates these wonderful oaks by stating that the trees give Erskine Hill a 'narrow, enclosed and spooky feeling' and goes on to say, wholly incorrectly, that 'the oak trees should never have been planted' on the spurious ground that 'these trees cause subsidence, cause branches to fall on motor cars as well as push up paving stones'. In this he is merely echoing the outdated views of Council officers which we have had to resist over the years. Fortunately, as was confirmed at the Public Works Committee meeting on 18 June, neither the officers nor members subscribe to these views any more. The officers have had to accept that past pruning and reduction works were unnecessary and harmful to the trees and the environment. As a consequence the residents succeeded in getting the Public Works Committee to agree on 18 June to review the Council's policy on trees, in particular in the Hampstead Garden Suburb, having regard to its unique character and 'to strike a proper balance between the Council's legal responsibilities and the need to preserve and enhance the environment.'

He further asserts that Barnet are obliged to maintain the trees in

a safe condition, and it is pointless to complain that in the past their methods may have been brutal or unnecessary. That was in the past. 'The current tree officers had nothing to do with what has been done...The gang responsible for the recent butchering of a 200-year-old oak in Temple Fortune Lane will not be used again by the London Borough of Barnet.' In fact I can tell him that the Council still uses this contractor. Mr Hudson fails to realise that it is not mistakes of the past but continuing mistakes which the residents have had to put up with and challenge. The decision of the Public Works Committee meeting on 18 June to set up effective mechanisms for ensuring proper consultation with residents was as a result of the Council wanting to pollard these trees and which gave rise to our petition to the Council. In fact the 200-year-old oak in Temple Fortune Lane was butchered on the very day that Council officers met with residents to assure them that this sort of eventuality was a thing of the past. What is worse is that this assurance was given by the very Officer who instructed the butchering of the oak tree in Temple Fortune Lane.

With regard to reports from independent arboriculturalists, Mr Hudson seems to forget that they were commissioned only as a result of residents' concerns and not initiated by Council officers, as he seems to imply.

Finally he asserts, incorrectly, that the oaks have become structurally unsound so that they will have to be removed. There is no evidence that they are unsound and this is confirmed by the independent reports. The residents fortunately have got the Public Works Committee to agree that no tree surgery works are to be carried out in future until a long-term strategy is agreed by the Council. To date, the officers of the Council have not produced a report on future strategy so that it is

incorrect for Mr Hudson to say that the trees will have to go.

With regard to the planting of limes, this was in the context of the residents' criticisms that the Council had over the years planted ornamental trees like cherry blossoms in Erskine Hill which was not in keeping with the character of the street. The officers agreed with this. The residents felt that limes which grow to the same height as the oaks should replace these inappropriate trees so as to preserve the present character of this unique street.

Yours,

Siddiek Meer

Georgina Malcolm, who wrote the original article about the Erskine Hill trees which was wrongly attributed to Spencer Hudson, writes

Since writing his letter Mr Meer will have received a copy of LB Barnet's management proposal for the oaks in Erskine Hill. Mr Meer was present at the site meeting when the proposed pruning was discussed, as were other residents of Erskine Hill, and I trust he will agree that all his opinions were carefully noted by Barnet's Arboricultural Officer who has dealt with this matter conscientiously throughout.

1 Grey Close

NW11 6QG 18 December 1996

Sir,

Why do people on the Suburb feel it necessary to drive over or park on our once beautiful grass verges? Should we not be proud of this amenity? This has been most noticeable in Kingsley Way where these have been re-laid and are now covered in tyre-marks.

If it is not the residents, should we not keep our eyes open for visitors who abuse our conservation area?

Yours,

Rosalind Josephs

Cast of 40 for Alice

It is almost a cliché of theatrical exaggeration to say that something or someone needs no introduction, but this would surely be true of Lewis Carroll's Alice stories. In February the Garden Suburb Theatre is bringing them both to the stage of the Institute with *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and through the Looking Glass* (to give the play its full title).

This production remains refreshingly close to the original but with the addition of music and dance. All the well loved characters are there, represented by a cast numbering over 40 with ages ranging from eight to 70! Alice is played by Debbie Day, whom loyal supporters may remember from previous February shows, especially as the monkey in *Aladdin* in 1995.

Whether you're introducing a child to Alice for the first time or want to relive the experience yourself then this is the ideal show.

Billy Liar is a classic of the 60s which now appears as an A Level set text. Its inspired humour and inventiveness have not been marred by the passing of time. To those unfamiliar with the play or with the film, which starred Tom Courtenay and Julie Christie, Billy Fisher is a young undertaker's assistant whose dreams of escaping his humdrum life in a dull northern town lead him into a world of fantasies and lies which threaten to engulf him. Having two fiancées and only one ring is certainly a problem, especially when the girl you really love reappears, and what did happen to all those company calendars Billy was supposed to have posted last Christmas?

Although described as a comedy by its authors, Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall, *Billy Liar* is more. The Fisher family and Billy's friends with their own feelings and aspirations are as cleverly drawn as Billy himself.

New York Marathon

I write to thank all my friends and corporate sponsors for the financial support and encouragement you gave me prior to going to New York to run on Sunday 3rd November.

I DID IT!

It was freezing cold and I wore for the entire 26 miles four layers, two pairs of trousers, a bobble hat and gloves. Even under those conditions I finished, but I am refusing to divulge my time on the grounds that you may think it extraordinarily slow but...I finished!

Although I was terrified before the race started, it was an extremely interesting experience and I felt a great sense of elation when I crossed the finishing line.

The good news is that with all your sponsorship £4,500 was raised for the Mencap Blue Sky Appeal.

Sincere thanks and appreciation to each and every one of you.

Pia Duran

Mencap National Councillor

29 Maurice Walk

NW11 6JX 13 November 1996

Sir,

The Solution to Graffiti

Readers may be interested to know of a possible answer to the problem of graffiti which is currently blighting the Suburb. This ink used by these young vandals on street lights and other street furniture can be removed fairly easily with the aid of a Brillo pad and warm water. So if a dustbin, lamppost or telephone box near you has attracted the attention of these children, do not wait for the Council to clear it up: you can go out and do it yourself! I take my young children and we all rather enjoy the work, which does not take long. It may also help control the scourge of graffiti generally. Once erased, it is not so quickly replaced as the vandals are easily discouraged; but graffiti attract graffiti.

Yours,

James Kessler

Golders Green Crematorium

The autumn edition of *Suburb News* stated that the management of the crematorium had confirmed the timetable for the installation of the new equipment in compliance with the provisions of the Environmental Health Act 1990.

This provoked a very angry response from the general manager and registrar, Mr K G Zawisza, who had taken up his appointment in August 1996. At first he claimed that no timetable had ever been mentioned; fortunately, notes had been made at the time of statements by his predecessor, Mr Phillip Reeves, to the effect that the new equipment would be installed and working during January 1997. Mr Reeves has now left.

In order to be certain about the position, meetings at the crematorium have been held and Mr G H Schofield, the general manager of the London Cremation Company PLC (the owners of the Golders Green crematorium), attended and has since confirmed his statements in writing. Extracts from his letters are: 'I am sorry that our predecessors gave you some information which has turned out to be erroneous, but I am sure that at the time they gave you this information they did so in good faith.' 'I refer to our recent meeting in my office and confirm that the new cremation equipment for Golders Green crematorium will be installed by April 1998.' 'The equipment will meet all the requirements of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, and will be provided by an established company with a proven track record in this field. The installation will be supervised by NIFES Environmental Services, who are a firm of independent engineering consultants, and market leaders in this type of project.

The local environmental health officer is being kept fully apprised of our plan.' This information will come as a great disappointment to those residents who are affected by the smell and smoke (and sometimes soot) from the crematorium's chimneys.

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 called for new equipment to be installed and working by April 1996. But, because of the manufacturers' inability to meet the demand, the deadline was extended to April 1998. It would now appear that, instead of aiming to comply with the provisions of the 1990 Act as quickly as possible, the management of the crematorium have worked back from April 1998, the last permitted date for installation, and have left it as late as possible before taking any steps to buy, or even order, the new equipment.

One of the reasons given by Mr Schofield for the delay was the earlier unavailability of funds. This claim does not match up with the chairman's statement with the accounts for the year ended 31 March 1996: 'We have submitted a planning application to the East Hampshire District Council to build a crematorium at West Liss, near Petersfield. This application is still under review... If this project goes ahead, I anticipate a capital expenditure in the region of one million pounds over the next two years. The company has a sound financial base and the ability to respond to opportunities that, in the medium term, will prove beneficial.'

An inspection of the company's balance sheet and accounts discloses a very strong financial position indeed with increasing profitability.

Tom Sales

And when he does get the chance, will Billy have the strength to live up to his own dreams?

Billy Liar will be presented in the Institute at the end of April.

For full details of both productions please see *What's On*.

Debbie Lane

Jane Collins

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