

Suburb loses old friends

Recent weeks have seen the loss to the Suburb of Dorothy White and Lord Soper. Both have been the subject of long obituaries in the national press for their enormous contributions to a much wider world than that of the Suburb. Suffice it to say that they will be much missed nearer home. Our condolences to their families.

Lord (Donald) Soper had lived on the Suburb since before



the last war, first in Wildwood Road, where their house was bombed, later with his wife and four daughters in Willifield Way and latterly in Bigwood Road.

He said recently that having spent all his working life, which always included weekends, outside the Suburb he had really only appreciated it in the last few years when he and his housekeeper have been a familiar sight as Lord Soper was wheeled around our streets.

Dorothy White OBE and her husband John moved to Corringham Road in 1956 and for the past 25 years the family, they have three sons, have lived in Hampstead Way.

She enjoyed a distinguished civil service career and was later awarded her OBE for voluntary services to Barnet. Like Lord Soper she was a life long Labour supporter.

RICHARD WAKEFIELD

Service to the Suburb

Residents are asked for nominations for Honorary Life Members. The criteria are, not strictly but usually, that nominees should have given their services on a voluntary basis, they should have to some extent retired from whatever they were

doing, that the service is for the benefit of the Suburb generally, not necessarily via the Residents Association.

Please send your nominations in confidence to the Hon. Sec. Graham Cunnold, 55 Middleway NW11 6SH by February 27.

Adopt a Tree

Thanks to the Residents Association, the Trust and L B Barnet there are now over 70 young trees on Suburb streets that have been planted this Autumn and Winter.

It may be hard to imagine now after so many soggy months but these young trees,

as well as any planted the year before, will certainly need watering through any dry periods if they are to flourish.

If there is a young street tree outside your house please make sure it doesn't die of thirst. All it needs is a bucket of water every two or three days. Thank you.

TREES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

RA raises £10,000 for Fellowship

A big "Thank You" to all Suburb residents who supported our Bring and Buy Sale on 1st December in aid of the Central America Fund. In a little over an hour we raised around £430. Wonderful! On 8th December

we had a poignant ceremony at the south end of the croquet lawn when we planted a new bed of roses to commemorate Elsie Densham, Ken Reaks, Daisy Stonhold, Jean Henderson and Muriel Grainger.

Chaim Bermant

The Max Weinbaum Hall was packed to capacity and beyond for the memorial service in October for the late Chaim Bermant who had lived in Hill Rise with his wife Judy and their family since 1966. Best known for his often controversial columns in the Jewish Chronicle, his dry wit and superb writing won him a wider audience in the national press; he wrote regularly for the Independent, Guardian, Observer, Telegraph and Times as well as a novelist and biographer.

Tributes were paid to him by, among others, Lord Jakobovitz, whose biography was written by Chaim Bermant, who recalled their affectionate relationship and described him as "dividing the community into those that swore by him and those who swore at him".

Jewish Book Week during March 7 - 14, at the Royal National Hotel, will devote its first evening to a Celebration of Chaim Bermant. Entitled LChaim!, the evening will link the

memories of Geoffrey Paul, Lynne Reid Banks, Jeremy Isaacs, Ned Temko, Geoffrey Wheatcroft and Chaim's daughters.

He was working on an autobiography and had finished the first part 'Genesis - a Latvian Childhood' which was published recently and a book of his Jewish Chronicle columns is in preparation.

On the Suburb he must have been known by sight to many he didn't know as he delighted in walking everywhere and was a striking figure, tall and with flowing beard. Born in Latvia, his upbringing in Scotland left him with a strong Glaswegian accent, much enjoyed by his audience at an RA International Club lecture some time ago.

He spent some Sunday mornings as a volunteer in the Garden Suburb Gallery during his wife Judy's exhibition there. I will always remember him sitting reading in exactly the pose of his portrait framed in the window.

RICHARD WAKEFIELD

Muriel Grainger 1905-1998

Muriel lived on the suburb for the greater part of her life and the Free Church, and latterly also Fellowship House, was central to her life. She had devoted much of her time and energy to the Free Church, having been both deacon and elder, choir member and junior church leader. She seldom missed a service and was a source of spiritual inspiration to us all. For the young she wrote plays and pageants, for older members she gave readings to Thursday Fellowship and visited lovingly in the Orchard.

Like many women, born in the early part of the century, she was well-educated and widely-read but regretted not having been able to go to University to read English Literature as she had so fervently desired. Instead, on leaving South Hampstead School she had to go to work, joining Fleetway Publications in 1925 at a salary of £2 a week, working on the magazines for women that sold a 2 pennies a copy. Her writing talents were soon recognised and she became editor of Women's World. Later she became Managing Editor of the group of Women's publications for the company which was now part of I.P.C. This group included Women's World, Wife and Home and Women's Companion among others. Muriel seems to have written many different parts of the magazines at different times, short stories, answers to letters, an agony aunt column even occasionally the horoscopes when the usual contributor was ill. It used to amuse her that she, who had never married was dispensing advice on bringing up children, 'keeping your husband happy', and planning the week's meals. In Wife and Home she wrote a weekly story about a family where the husband was blind and the daughter crippled, which went on for many years. These were the soaps of the war years, and the

readers took them very seriously, even sending in presents for the 'poor crippled girl'.

Muriel's gifts as a writer are well known, she will always be remembered for her children's book of 365 Bible stories and the book with Elizabeth Goudge-Pattern of People as well as her many articles and essays. But it is as a poet that she will be best remembered. She began to write as a child of eleven and she never stopped. Many of her poems first appeared in magazines of poetry but were later reprinted and added to. Several slim volumes of verse appeared between 1959 and 1995. Among these were Walled Garden, Stranded Shell, One-Room Flat and Climbing Stairs. Through her verse she made many friends, including the actress Anna Massey who became an ardent fan and wrote a foreword to One-Room Flat. Muriel's poetry was expressive of her character, sensitive, profoundly spiritual, filled with her love for people, literature and art and with a delight in words and images that transforms her lines into something magical.

Can I leave you with 'The Ghost' in which we seem to hear Muriel speaking to us...

JEAN BARRACLOUGH

THE GHOST

Who will adopt my house when I am gone-

*Look through the leaded windows' bottle panes,
And watch my apple tree
through every change-
Blossom and fruit and fallen
curling leaves,
Taking a chair into the inviting sun*

*As I do now, to sit there with a book,
Absorbing healing silence and deep peace?*

*And will they sense the ghost that once was I,
And look up with a smile as I pass by?*

MURIEL GRAINGER

At Fellowship's Annual Meeting in November Jean Dyson resigned as Vice-Chairman and Dorothy Unwin agreed to succeed her. We learned from our Treasurer that, for the first time ever, contributions to our work by residents of the Suburb had topped £10,000. Added to the fact that in 1998 we received several substantial bequests, our accounts are looking very healthy.

But *please don't stop giving to us so very generously* - the next appeal will be coming out with the RA 'envelopes' very

shortly and I know you will all contribute to our work. Necessarily, so much of what we do is confidential that I can only assure you that any money, whatever its source, will be put to very good use.

My appeal, in an earlier issue of SUBURB NEWS, for more volunteer helpers yielded a few more drivers and 'tea-ladies'. If anyone 'out there' has a few hours to spare each month, please contact either Florence Chamberlain (455 1491) or me (458 2889).

EILEEN WHELAN

Institute confident

The few members who turned up for the Institute Society's AGM heard the chairman Malcolm Davis outline the current situation and say that contracts were almost ready to be exchanged. (The Institute is selling the site for £9m and staying on for five years rent free) He said "We are now able to go forward with confidence".

Members asked questions mostly about what happens after five years and where else the Institute might buy another building. Eileen Whelan asked about use of Manor House Hospital which would be a lot nearer than the Muswell Hill option. Malcolm Davis said that they had been exploring the possibility of the Muswell Hill building but that the council was keeping alert for any possibilities, including Manor House, that might be nearer the the Suburb. Susie Gregson felt that the

money raised by the sale, "Henrietta Barnett's legacy", should remain on the Suburb and was told by the chairman that it had always made clear that the Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute would remain on the Suburb.

Mary Ambrose asked about being "kicked out" after five years but Malcolm Davis thought it unlikely "Relations with the school are very good. The school uses the buildings only during the day and it makes commercial sense to continue with the Institute" he said. Jane de Swiet, Head of Henrietta Barnett, said she wished to confirm that "relations have remained harmonious and constructive. It is in the best interest of all parties. None of us can foresee the future but we very much hope we will continue to work together as we always have done".

RICHARD WAKEFIELD

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