

Sir
The headline for Richard Wakefield's article 'Henrietta Barnett School Comprehensive Threat' (Winter 99 - Issue 62) will have angered more than one Suburb resident. The dictionary definition of the word 'threat' is 'a sign, warning or possibility of coming danger'.

The 'threat' he writes about is the possible abolition of the rigid academic entry requirements set by Henrietta Barnett school that prevent many local girls from attending this school. Using this premise both the Garden Suburb and Brookland Schools might also be considered a 'threat' since their intake is truly comprehensive, comprising entirely children admitted under the criterion of proximity of their homes to the schools.

Henrietta Barnett school has long enjoyed the benefits provided by superb location in the heart of the Suburb. In return, it has repeatedly rejected the majority of local applicants, most of whom have no alternative secondary school place automatically available to them. The statement from the school that "they do favour local girls but that successful Suburb entrants are more likely to turn down the offer and go elsewhere" uses anecdotal information to justify their desire to remain academically exclusive. The insinuation that Suburb residents would prefer to send their daughters elsewhere (to fee paying schools presumably) is an assumption.

52 The Orchard, NW11
Sir
It is obvious that your correspondent, Siddiek Meer, is either a recent newcomer to the Suburb or one who knows little or nothing about its history or trees. Years ago it was admitted that mistakes had been made in the choice of street trees and many unsuitable trees had been planted, particularly the hybrid 'Plane X hispanica' known as the 'London Plane', in Hampstead Way and the American Oaks in Erskine Hill.

Some years ago it was decided the Oaks should be gradually felled and replaced with small flowering trees. One or two have been cut down where the roots had lifted the pavement and damaged the foundations of houses.

In Hampstead Way the Plane trees should have been planted on the opposite side as that area, now covered by

Should the school lose its criterion for admission by selection, and discover that some places offered to local girls are discarded in favour of private school places, this would only provide an additional useful outcome. The offer of places at this school could then be extended to the wider local population who are in desperate need of more secondary school places for girls living in this general area.

I would also vehemently disagree with Councillor Jasmine Naghar's view that "if it [Henrietta Barnett school] became comprehensive it would quickly lose its academic status and as a result fewer Garden Suburb girls might attend. In the long term it would not be beneficial for the Suburb." For a number of reasons the change would be very beneficial indeed. If Henrietta Barnett were attended by those girls living closest to the school, many would walk to school, thus alleviating the congestion of cars in the Suburb and in the wider community, therefore reducing pollution. At the moment, pupils currently attending Henrietta Barnett may be from further afield and many are driven to and from school whilst local girls are travelling by car from the Suburb to attend schools elsewhere.

Directly as a result of the academically exclusive status of Henrietta Barnett, parents with children attending our two local junior schools feel bound to prepare their daughters for the

Queens Court, was originally planned as a recreation ground and tennis courts.
The trees have been pollarded to keep them at a reasonable height as they shade the houses, and raise the pavement, making walking difficult and dangerous for the elderly.

Mr Meer writes, about Mrs Berger "showing her ignorance" when he parades his own in every statement he makes.

I am surprised that the editor of the 'News' did not make some comment about the abuse of one of the regular and well read contributors who knows what she is writing about.

Yours
L Potipbar

entrance examination privately, since state junior schools are nor obliged to prepare children for entrance examinations of this kind. Private tuition takes place after school for many junior school children and the pressure upon the girls is compounded by the likelihood of a rejection from Henrietta Barnett, coupled with a rejection from Barnet's education department for applications made to other state schools. The Suburb's geographical location places its residents outside the admission criteria for many of the other schools in Barnet.

I would urge those parents who are eligible to vote for or against the abolition of selection as the criterion for admission to Henrietta Barnett, to think carefully about the local consequences if the school were to remain academically exclusive. Henrietta Barnett school is named in celebration of a dynamic woman whose ideology created Hampstead Garden Suburb as 'a garden suburb for the working classes'. The intention was surely that the benefits and facilities available in the Suburb would be accessible to all its residents. To exclude the majority of local girls from the school that bears her name is a travesty which has continued for too long.

Yours
Loren Loeb

110 Erskine Hill
Sir
How comforting to learn that our beautiful oaks are being so passionately defended. No doubt the glorious bowers of gold and russet that crown Erskine Hill during the autumnal months would be reduced to the sad spectacle of the dismembered bodies in Mrs Berger's 'assault course' - if it were not for the fact that they are so jealously guarded by Mr Meer. The former contributor to your paper is not beyond using a little exaggeration, and the latter uses this technique to great effect. This brings me to my next point.

Both Mrs Berger and Mr Meer hold strong convictions. The fact that they happen to express their opposing views so ardently, in my opinion, adds zest to the quality of the discursive issues in 'The Suburb News'.

Yours
Caroline Buys

112 Erskine Hill
Sir
How can any gardener call a tree a 'monster'? (D. Berger / Autumn issue).

The magnificent Turkey Oaks at the bottom of Erskine Hill are a sight to be seen from bare branch to full leaf. So far, the case for trees causing subsidence is still unproven - we have lived very close to those same-said trees for 30 years with no sign of any disturbance. I have also seen many houses on the Suburb with subsidence and not a tree in sight.

I agree with Siddiek Meer (Winter issue) that trees, properly pruned and looked after, are beneficial to mankind and one of life's chief joys.

Yours
M H Pyne (Mrs)

LETTERS

862 Finchley Road NW11 6AB
Sir

We, the members of the Trust Council, thought this was an appropriate opportunity for us to say how much we welcome the settlement of the dispute that has been running for several years over the future of the Central Square site used by the Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute and Henrietta Barnett School. Reaching this settlement has involved a great deal of constructive effort on the part of those involved: the Institute, the School, the London Borough of Barnet and the Department of Education and Employment. We, too would have been subjected to the Compulsory Purchase Order in respect of the Trust's freehold, although we had made arrangements to retain our rights over development were this to have happened.

The Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust exists to protect the character and amenities of

144 Hampstead Way, NW11 7XH
Sir

As an avid reader of the gardening articles in the Suburb News, I was delighted when Diane Berger wrote castigating the plane trees in Hampstead Way. It is reassuring to know that others can empathise with the problems they create. Imagine my consternation when I read the angry and rather aggressively toned letter from Mr Meer, in the last issue of the News (Winter No.62).

I am an ardent tree lover, but, as with most things in life, only in the appropriate place. As a resident of Hampstead Way for over 25 years, with two large plane trees outside, I am only too aware of the problems they create.

To quibble and gripe over the use of the word 'monster' seems peevish, petty and pedantic. I can well understand why Diane used such a term. [NB my Oxford Dictionary gives 'huge' as a possible meaning. It also gives the meaning of monstrous

Willifield Way

Sir
I am replying to Siddiek Meer's letter in the winter issue of the Suburb News. I am astonished at the rudeness and vitriolic nature of his attack directed at Diane Berger's comments about trees in the Suburb. Mr Meer has really missed her point that the large plane trees lining Erskine Hill and Hampstead Way are out of place: she does not say they should be removed; her point, Mr Meer, is that, when planting a tree in a narrow road, a more appropriate tree would have been more suitable.

I live in a house which has a very mature oak tree, which has cost me hundreds of pounds in maintenance over the past ten years. I strongly feel that this tree would be better in a Gainsborough painting with a flock of sheep grazing under it, than at the end of a small suburban garden.

Just spare a thought for the residents in Hampstead Way who have to keep their front room lights on in the summer months because of the dense canopy of leaves from these plane trees. Finally, Mr Meer, love thy neighbour - that includes Diane Berger!

Yours
Karen Grant

the Suburb. The Trust's policy throughout has been that a settlement could and should be reached on a basis that gave both the Institute and School a continued presence and viable future on the site. We believe that the major concessions made by all parties have achieved a positive, workable long-term solution under which both bodies can continue to work side by side on Central Square.

As you may know, the terms of the settlement give the Institute a rent free period of five years during which it can negotiate terms on which it can stay thereafter. The Trust Council is keen that the Institute should remain permanently on the Suburb, and we will do what we can to facilitate its long-term presence here. We are confident that this is what Dame Henrietta Barnett would have wished.

It is likely that proposals will come forward for new buildings on the site, including removal of the unsightly bus. The Trust's powers of control over building development are unaffected by the settlement and we will

as 'outrageously wrong or absurd'!. And I live with these monsters outside my house, with their roots invading the foundations. It may be a fact that the houses were, in those days, built with inadequate foundations but why exacerbate the problem with outsize and monstrous trees?

In midsummer, I am forced to put on the lights in the middle of the day when I want to work in the front. The leaves keep out all the sun and light. The only solution is to pollard the trees. London planes were not supposed to be grown quite so near buildings.

There are perennial problems over pruning and pollarding. Walking to the shops on a windy day, last Autumn, became rather hazardous. The lower branches threatened the eyes of all tall passers-by and parked cars. Having phoned Barnet Council twice, they eventually

119 Erskine Hill

Sir
I refer to Mr Siddiek Meer's article in your Issue 62. I am in full agreement with what he says and can only wish that there were more people willing to stick their necks out in order to save our trees!

Yours
E. M. Sorge

Cherry Childe A.R.A.D. A.M.S.T.D.
school of dancing
Ballet R.A.D. Tap & Modern I.S.T.D.
London NW11
0181 458 6962

PIANO LESSONS FOR BEGINNERS
Piano lessons for beginners of any age given in the Suburb by local professional musician and educator. Fees very reasonable.
Tel & fax: 0181-458 5621

CREATIVE WRITING FOR WOMEN
New ten week course, taught by experienced novelist and teacher, starts in Hampstead Garden Suburb on May 10.
For details phone Helen Harris, 458 8823

PICTURE FRAMING
HGS Resident: evenings, weekends, daytime
458 2894

continue to exercise them consistently with our duty to conserve the character of this focal area of the Suburb when considering any proposals.

We are sorry that the Institute's Chairman has continued to criticise the Trust's stance in this matter. We have always sought to act in the interests of the Suburb as a whole; never at any stage with the intention of being "anti-Institute" - rather being both "pro-Institute" and "pro-School". Both bodies are important to the Suburb and both can and, we hope, will stay. This is the unanimous view of the present Trust Council and that of our predecessors.

We see this as the start of a new chapter in the history of the Suburb. We look forward to old contentions now being set aside and to all parties working positively and constructively in tandem to build on their academic achievements for the future.

Yours
Edward Caplin

removed the hazardous lower branches of these 'monsters'.

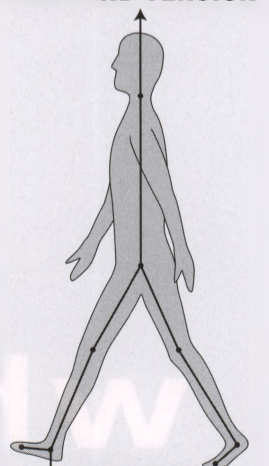
Autumn - well yes - leaves! Not the sort that are easily composted. These leaves form a thick carpet over everything so that little water can percolate. It encourages slugs and disease. If not removed from paths and pavements they can be dangerously slippery for the less-than-sure-footed, particularly when wet and frosty.

Having spent more than a quarter of a century with these trees in Hampstead Way, I know that I am not alone in my feelings that these trees are unsuitable monsters for the area. I would welcome their demise if I were not then threatened with beaver!

The world is full of the most wonderful trees. Let's try and keep things in perspective and choose suitable ones.

Yours
Jane Epstein

FREE YOURSELF FROM PAIN AND TENSION



WITH THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE
Alex Maunder BSc, MSTAT
79 Brookland Rise,
Hampstead Garden Suburb
Tel: (0181) 455 1878

HOMOEOPATHIC CLINIC WHY HOMOEOPATHY?
• It is free from side effects •
• It treats both cause and symptoms •
• It is safe •

All medicines are made from natural substances free from artificial colours and flavours and can be given to the smallest infant.
Children's Appointments cost just £20 (Adult appointments and low cost children's clinic - please ask for details)

Cathy Brooks LCH
34 Chiselhurst Avenue, London N12 0HU
0181 349 2582

ENGLISH

Why settle for less?

TOP GRADE EXPERIENCED TEACHERS,
FRIENDLY, SMALL CLASSES

APPROVED TEACHER TRAINING CENTRE

TRINITY COLLEGE CERT

FREE CLASSES 1-3!!!

FOR OUR REGISTERED STUDENTS!!

WP AND COMPUTER TRAINING!

Golders Green College

and School of English

11 Golders Green Road,
London NW11 8DE

Tel: 0181 905 5467

Fax: 0181 455 6528

e mail: GGCOL@easynet.co.uk

