

Letters to the editor

90 Falloeden Way
NW11 6JD

Sir

It seems a pity that Mr Ditchfield of Hogarth Hill, after taking some nine months to frame a response to my article about the de-trunking of Falloeden Way, should have got so many of his facts wrong. On the basis of these he advocates closing the junction of Falloeden Way with Addison Way, thus effectively severing much of the north side of the Suburb from its facilities on the south.

He claims that the responsible national and local authorities are not opposed to his suggestion. Wrong.

Both the Traffic Director for London, the Highways Agency and the London Borough of Barnet are against its closure.

He suggests 'arranging the junction' to give only north/south movements. Unless Mr Ditchfield has more faith than most in frustrated motorists' willingness to observe 'No Right/Left Turn' notices, his proposals would require a flyover or underpass. Hardly realistic.

He asserts that through traffic will always prefer to use Falloeden Way to another north/south alternative. Wrong again. Drivers prefer the easiest and quickest routed and if Falloeden Way is less desirable, they will forsake it for another. Steps have already been taken to achieve this by having the northwest bound traffic restricted to a single lane and this reduction in capacity will cut the numbers of vehicles seeking to rat-run via Addison Way.

Mr Ditchfield is not alone in deploring the effects of traffic on residential streets. I must remind him that Falloeden Way - by far the worst affected street in the Suburb - was

originally Addison Way too, and that its residents also have a right to the peace and quiet he seeks for Addison Way. Something he seems prepared to ignore.

But the most disturbing aspect of Mr Ditchfield's attitude is his advocacy of accepting faits accomplis.

If the Lorry Route Joint Action Committee had followed his advice in 1967, we would now have a six lane motorway through the Suburb. If we had not kept up the fight for the past 33 years we would not have succeeded in containing the Transport Ministry's ruthless appetite for roadbuilding here and be looking forward instead to a reduction in traffic on Falloeden Way and the surrounding streets. That, I believe, is the way forward, and I hope Mr Ditchfield agrees that remedies have to start at the source of the problem. But, to paraphrase his final sentence - being only Falloeden Way, does he care?

Yours
Terry Rand

12 Meadoway
NW11 7JS

Sir

Hurray for Henrietta Barnett! In September I picked a total of 701 apples from the Bramley apple tree in my garden which she imaginatively arranged to have planted for me shortly after my house was built in 1912. In the 38 years I have lived here, I have never harvested so many apples before. Is this a record?

Yours
Peter Loyd

Death and the Maiden

From time to time the Garden Suburb Theatre attempts something really adventurous and gets away with it. Having in the past made a success of Berkoff and Fao, they have turned their sights on Ariel Dorfman's gripping 'Death and the Maiden'.

The plot is seemingly simple. Paulina Salas, who was tortured some years ago, recognises the stranger her husband has invited to their home as the man who raped and tortured her. She ties him up and threatens to kill him unless he confesses and asks her forgiveness. The stranger, Dr Roberto Miranda, swears his innocence but eventually confesses to save his life. Paulina's husband Gerardo, about to sit on Chile's Truth Committee, helps Roberto write the confession.

Mandy Ribekow-Evans in her admirable production leaves

the question of innocence or guilt wide open. Liz Amiel portrays Paulina as a woman still suffering from her ordeal and not quite sane. Is she mistaken as she can only recognise him by voice? It is a very subtle performance full of strange little looks, rage and nervous laughter.

Richard Kinder as Gerardo, conveys the husband's shock, love and incomprehension as he struggles to come to terms with the situation. Andy Wilson's performance ensures that one is never sure about Dr Miranda's guilt. Appearing first as a hearty fellow he disintegrates into whining fear. However, his defiance is in the end ambiguous. Whatever your own conclusions, this is a moving and powerful study of suffering and coming to terms with the past.

LEONIE STEPHEN

Much ado about nothing

The fact that the director was Mark Overall and his assistant was Val Gregory indicated that this would be a thoughtful and well spoken production. And so it was. (The world around Little Wood gets noisier every year but most of the actors overcame this obstacle.) 'Much Ado About Nothing' was very enjoyable, even the often unfunny scenes between Dogberry and Verges were amusing due to Colin Gregory and Toby Moore. Colin Gregory conveyed a lovely pompous, puffed-up quality as he strutted about indignantly at being called "an ass".

Leonato, Governor or Messina, and his brother, Antonio, were given gravitas by Roger Rose and Andrew Graze. Emma Paterson made a sweet and gentle Hero. Lyndon Radnedge's Claudio was a bit of a cad from

the start. Was it love or money he was after? One did wonder what Hero saw in him.

Beatrice, one of Shakespeare's deliciously witty women, was played by Mary Musker with lots of charm and spirit. One would have wished her "Kill Claudio" to have been stronger since it is the moment when the play's lighter and darker sides come to together.

Jon Musker's style is not suited to the role of Benedick. He has not the lightness of touch needed for the banter between himself and Beatrice. Nor did he show a soldierly and proper deference to Don Pedro (Andy Farrer), who was after all Prince of Arragon and his mentor. The good and serviceable set was designed by David Lane and Andy Farrer

LEONIE STEPHEN

Defending the Barnet grammar schools

It seems to be the fate of The Henrietta Barnett School to go from one challenge to another - and yet to rise above it each time with flying colours.

Just as the school ends a long period of uncertainty over its shared premises with the Institute, it is now faced with a Barnet-based anti-grammar school campaign. If this succeeds, it could undermine the original aims on which the school was founded and 90 years of endeavour and extraordinary success could be eroded.

At the centre of the campaign is Jenny Brown - a Barnet parent

and member of the Campaign for State Education (CASE). She is visiting primary school playgrounds to urge eligible parents to sign her petition. Her aim is to gather 6,000 signatures so she can force a ballot, in the hope that parents will vote to change the status of Barnet's three grammar schools - Queen Elizabeth's School for boys, Henrietta Barnett and St Michael's Catholic Grammar.

Whereas the heads of the three schools are not allowed to campaign in favour of academic selection, the parents are. They have already distributed several thousand leaflets to parents at

'feeder schools' (primary schools that have sent at least five children to these secondary schools over the last three years) explaining the dangers involved if they sign the petition.

Andrea Sarchet, a spokeswoman for the Henrietta Barnett parents campaign explains that if the schools were forced to become comprehensive it would be potentially disruptive for all schools in the area and the choice for many parents would be even more limited. In the case of Henrietta Barnett, which can only take in 93 girls each year, the catchment area would be very small.

Dame Henrietta, who founded The Henrietta Barnett School in 1911, was committed to providing the highest level of achievement for women, regardless of social economic, cultural or ethnic background. The school has been true to her ideals. Thirty per cent of pupils come from ethnic minorities and the pass

rate at GCSE and 'A' level is one of the highest in the country. "In March this year David Blunkett presented the school with the London School Award for academic excellence," says Andrea Sarchet. "Parents feel a sense of injustice that it has taken 90 years to get the school to this point and there are people out to destroy it."

Andrea's daughter is one of many fast-working, academically able children who are able to benefit from grammar schools. "My daughter loves being among other children who are also keen to learn," she says. Whereas these pupils could be labelled as 'swots' in mixed ability schools, grammars allow them to flourish in an environment that suits them best. Andrea, like many parents, believes that it would be a travesty if bright children no longer had the opportunity to attend academically selective schools.

CHARLOTTE WOLFF

Institute gains 'Gold Standard'

The Institute was awarded the *Investors in People* standard in July after a rigorous assessment by an external expert and scrutiny by the Assessment Panel. *Investors in People* is a process which promotes the need for continuous improvement of individuals, teams and organisations. Eagerly sought by the best companies in the UK, successful schools and colleges are now being urged by David Blunkett to undergo the process to encourage high performance.

The Institute strengths as outlined in the report included:

- The fact that staff at all levels understand the objectives of the organisation and are included in the planning process
- Good communications which keep staff well informed

- The way in which management encourage a learning culture to exist and flourish
- Constant evaluation of the quality of the courses and procedures
- Investment in the training and support of all employees

The award will be presented at a ceremony organised by the Training and Enterprise Council later this autumn, Institute Principal Fay Naylor commented.

"We have found this an excellent way to keep staff motivation high and enable individuals to build on their strengths thereby improving the success of the whole organisation.

We now need to ensure that we keep up the standard and achieve even greater success in the next century."

FAY NAYLOR

Architectural Award

Have you enhanced the Suburb with works at your house during the year?

If so do enter for the Residents Association's Alexander Stuart Gray Architectural Merit Award. Household or their architects or designers are asked to enter a description, plan and the address for major works or minor alterations that have been completed during 1999.

They will, by appointment, be visited by the judges in February and awards will be presented at the RA AGM in March.

Entries to the Gallery please or phone 455 9132.

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