

750 walk for the Hospice

Organised by the North West Support Group based on the Suburb, this year's walk to Westminster is expected to raise more than £50,000.

On Sunday, 19 March 800 Hospice supporters from children in pushchairs to octogenarians walked from East Finchley to Storey's Gate, Westminster, to raise money for the North London Hospice.

The sun shone on the sponsored group as they ran, jogged, walked briskly, strolled or ambled through Cherry Tree Wood, Highgate Woods, Hampstead Heath, Primrose Hill, Regent's Park, (where they enjoyed a sandwich lunch), Hyde Park, Green Park and St James's Park to be met at Westminster by Martyn Lewis (news reader) and the Ebony Steel Band. Coffee and

doughnuts were served and very welcome they were too after 7½ miles. Two people turned round and walked straight back - why? They had been offered double sponsorship if they walked both ways.

It was the fifth Big Fun Walk to be organised by the North West Support Group of the North London Hospice. The amount raised goes up every year by leaps and bounds. The first walk raised £13,000, the next £24,000, then £36,000, next £44,000 and finally £48,000 last year when 400 people walked. So we hesitate to guess what it will be this year 2000 with 750 walkers. It is going to be a bumper year that's for sure, but how much? We won't know until all the sponsorship is in and that could take some time.

PAULINE TREEN



Some of the 800 walkers including Dr Rudi Vis MP, Dr Chris Donovan, Mayor of Barnet Cllr Jack Coben and Cllr John Marshall and his dog



Anne Samworth, Susie Gregson and Vivienne Bentley

Most days I open my eyes, look out of the windows trying not to notice how dirty the panes are and thank my lucky stars (and my late husband) that I live on the Suburb.

Thanks to another mild winter we had a glorious spring. With very little frost, the magnolias and camellias remained undamaged and everything looks so beautiful.

The beginning of March was really very kind to us and gave the garden a great kick start. So much blossom, bulbs bursting everywhere and good old forsythia flowering its socks off.

Did anyone notice the clump of violets on the lawn whilst passing through the Orchard? Every year the patch gets larger and larger and the gardener very carefully avoids them when

trimming the lawn. The same can be said for my crocus lawn which is expanding and developing beautifully, a wonderful splash of purple and white, maybe I could add some violets in this area. Clematis amandii was in abundance everywhere and a house in Erskine Hill was literally dripping with blossom from this plant.

I hope you have fed everything, not just the family but the roses, flowerbeds and maybe even the poor old hedges. Make a note to spray roses on a regular basis to keep the black spot at bay and water with Murphy's Sluggit (not Murphy's stout) around certain plants which are more susceptible to being eaten.

Try to keep an eye on climbing plants and tie them in when they are young, so much easier than scooping them up when large and desperately trying to make them appear natural.

Start placing Y stakes or link stakes now before the herbaceous plants get too large.



Driving around the Suburb I have noticed a growing cult of topiary. There are some very good examples, a fat chicken and egg at the top of Erskine Hill, a proud peacock in Hampstead Way and more fowl in Bigwood Road. They really bring a smile, especially on a dreary day.

Have you started thinking about summer containers? Well, I have. This year I'm going to be big, bold and very bright, so I am going to stuff every container with Canna, the variety is Black Knight, red with

magnificent red foliage, exotica in NW11.

I am also going to try Phygellus, the Cape fuchsia, and the variety is Sensation, quite stunning with deep rose pink flowers.

I saw these advertised in Gardeners World and was tempted. I don't normally order plants through the mail, only bulbs, but I really did want this particular plant so I shall give it a go.

Not least is my last choice for this summer, and I know I have mentioned it before, the pelargonium 'Lord Bute' a very sturdy plant in a colour of the blackest purple which will take pride of place in my front porch.

If anyone is interested in very large plants I have discovered a specialist plant nursery at Crews Hill called Paramount Plants (telephone 8367 8809).

I have never seen so many huge specimens in one place before. Tree ferns, cordylines, bamboos, magnolia, grandiflora and many others.

Obviously the prices were high but if you want big plants you have to pay big bucks. I am off to Chelsea again, so watch this space and don't forget to enjoy your garden.

Good gardening.

DIANE BERGER



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Suburb rainfall

The first three months of the new century have continued the pattern set at the end of the last. Alternating months of well above average rainfall and well below average meant January with just over an inch was unusually dry. February, with over three inches, was well above the average established in North London but did mean the traditional "February filldyke" label was more appropriate than it has been in many Februaries for the last twenty years. March saw well under an inch of rain,

but any possibility of gardens drying out has, of course, been negated by the (rather prolonged) April showers of the beginning of the month.

The total of the six winter months from October to March was just over 12 inches compared with an average of just over 15 inches. This is not really a significant shortfall, especially as August and September of last year were sufficiently wet to start replacing summer deficits in the soil moisture. However, should there be even a fairly dry

summer, the cynic might look for the water company's excuse of a dry winter for hosepipe bans later on in the year.

Initial research into unexpected rainfall measurements does indeed show that there can be considerable variation between places as near as Hampstead Observatory and the Suburb. However, much more investigation is needed before a realistic theory can be advanced that our gardens are indeed blessed (or cursed) with more water than elsewhere in London.

DIANA IWI

News, pictures, articles and letters are welcomed by the Editor, 26 Hampstead Way, NW11 7JL. Deadline for the Summer issue is June 16 for publication July 29. Views expressed in Suburb News are those of the authors and not necessarily of the publishers, the Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association.

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