

## Tennis courts (cont. from p. 1)

The modesty of the repair budget is plain to see, nets and fencing are missing, in some places the tarmac is hidden under a thick layer of moss. The Trust's assertion that 'The care devoted to creating the Garden Suburb must be continued in order to maintain the buildings, landscape and *shared amenities*' (my italics), does not seem to apply here. Added to that, in 1977, the 'old Suburb', which includes Central Square, was recognised as a 'Conservation Area of Outstanding Architectural or Historic Interest'. The neglect of the tennis courts, for whatever reason, makes a mockery of the guidelines set out by the Trust in their attempt to maintain the Suburb in as much of its original glory as possible.

Local residents must apply to the Trust for permission to make even slight changes to their houses to preserve the area, yet the tennis courts, described by local residents as a 'disgrace' and 'eyesores' are ignored: why? The official answer is that the courts are in a management limbo, between the soon-to-depart Institute and an unknown new owner. Chris Kellerman, Chairman of the Garden Suburb Trust, said that there were 'no plans' as yet for what to do with the courts and that the Trust was 'in discussion' with the Institute as to their future.

If the courts were renovated, permits could be leased out at competitive rates to local residents; it would have to be made clear that the courts were private but they should be left open to prevent damage in attempts to gain access. However, any moderately determined tennis player will probably already be a member of one of the six tennis clubs in and near the Suburb. Taking this into account, keeping the courts as a resident-only facility may well be unfeasible and if so, the obvious answer would be to hand the courts over to Henrietta Barnett. If their proposed new buildings have to be built over their own on-site tennis/hockey courts, the school would be in desperate need of new sports facilities; the Central Square tennis courts would be ideal.

But, as always, any discussion regarding public services returns to the question of money; as repairs to each court could cost up to £13,000, the school may not be able to undertake this



*Neglected tennis courts.*

financial responsibility. As far as future development goes, some residents, particularly those in and around Denman Drive, may be nervous of potential plans by the Trust itself and Freshwater (the property company that owns some Suburb land). A few years ago, the garages behind Denman Drive fell into such disrepair that the Trust and Freshwater proposed that the land could be developed into flats. Residents rejected the proposal, and some suspected that the garages were neglected to manufacture a situation where a profitable sale of land would be accepted by residents. Although it must be emphasised that these suspicions were in no way substantiated, they reflect local unease felt about property development, and it is unlikely that plans to develop Central Square will be accepted. The solution most likely to be consented to would be a plain grassed area covering the existing site of the courts, hopefully getting rid once and for all of both the dilapidated courts and the nettle and flasher infested area between the top and bottom courts.

Whatever happens, action must urgently be taken to solve the problem of these eyesores; general consensus is that the Institute, the Trust and even the council have dithered too long regarding this problem, but unfortunately it seems that there is no satisfactory solution in sight.

ESTHER WALKER

## Neighbourly watching

Recent incidents of muggings and burglaries have prompted some residents in affected areas to employ private security patrols and escorts. Many feel that this sort of security mania is alien to Suburb traditions.

There are other undesirable implications. A tightly guarded part of the Suburb may encourage felons to spread their interests further to other parts of the Suburb. Parts where residents are unable or do not want to pay £1000 a year for doubtful security.

Two weeks ago my next door neighbour, a lady living alone, was mugged at 9.30pm right outside her front door. She was threatened if she dared to make a noise and none of the neighbours in Denman Drive North heard the incident. She was not seriously hurt, but very badly shaken and she lost her handbag and car keys. This is the second time that this exact incident has happened to her in eight years. Her immediate reaction, perhaps understandably, was to demand of anyone who would listen that street lighting in Denman Drive North should be instantly intensified. Most people in Denman Drive North have verbally agreed that we do not want this particular street, or indeed any other street in the Suburb, lit like a London Airport runway!

There must be other ways of making people feel safer apart from private armies and flood lighting. I have discussed a possible alternative with neighbours in Denman Drive North and would like to present the idea for discussion.

A few days after the mugging incident described above, a neighbour's car alarm was screaming at 2.00am. Half a dozen people, including myself, rushed out to investigate. Neighbours, whom we had thought were still on holiday in France, had arrived home late and inadvertently left their car windows open. The slightest movement set off the alarm. They were exhausted and asleep in bed after a long drive. We could not wake them, we did not know their telephone number and we were impotent! Eventually they woke and all was sorted out with no loss or damage.

The reason that I tell this story is to point out our lack of knowledge of our neighbours' movements and the lack of knowledge of their telephone

numbers. Had we known the telephone/mobile numbers/habits of our immediate neighbours (within sight should I think be the criteria for the definition of a group), it would have been easy to have sorted out the car alarm problem described.

I have proposed that, over the next couple of weeks, I will collect information from all the 'in sight' neighbours in Denman Drive North with a view to distributing names/phone numbers/any unusual habits to everyone who lives in Denman Drive North. In extremis, anyone knowing that they are likely to be coming home late at night alone, could phone a neighbour and ask them to keep an eye out until they are safely inside their front door.

This system could be piloted in Denman Drive at first. It would be a very useful complement to the Wardens of Neighbourhood Watch, who in many Watches each keep contact with about ten residents.

Neighbourhood Watch has, as a basic aim, the improvement of neighbourliness and any activity which has this result is to be welcomed. Neighbourliness is a tradition of the Suburb that has been neglected of late and its revival will be helpful in combating crime and maintaining the features of the Suburb that bring us to live here.

MICHAEL ROWLEY

## Hampstead Rugby Club

Hampstead Rugby Club has been using the Heath Extension to train and play for over 15 years. We now see ourselves, and are seen, as part of the local 'set up', accordingly, Suburb readers may like to know more about the Club.

For a relatively recently formed rugby club, Hampstead RFC has a noteworthy past. The Times recently published a response by Jed Smith of the Twickenham Museum of Rugby to a question over how Wasps got their name. He notes:

"Dissatisfied members of Hampstead Rugby Club attended a meeting to form a new club in 1867 wearing their club colours - black and gold hoped jerseys - and the club was named Wasps in tribute. Three years later, the original Hampstead club had to move from the area and needed a new name. Wanting to keep the embroidered 'HFC' letters on their jerseys, the name was changed to Harlequins."

Re-formed in our current state in 1956, Hampstead is one of the few remaining clubs which plays out of a pub and plays on Local Authority owned pitches. This has not been a deterrent to the development of the Club or the style of running rugby we traditionally play. Over the last five years we have been promoted twice and run five teams - a rarity for a club based in central London. This

number of teams means we can offer games ranging from seriously competitive and of a high standard to a more social level, for those who want a run out and a beer afterwards.

When using any public facility there are always minor hassles and irritations. The only real problems we have in playing on the Heath are:

- the lack of a clubhouse - we cannot offer pre-match hospitality to officials of visiting clubs.
- inconsiderate dog owners! The main problem is dog poo on the pitch - not a pleasant prospect when playing rugby! Despite all the signs about the need to clear up after their dogs and the provision of the necessary bins, some anti-social owners allow their dogs to foul the pitch.

A relatively minor problem was a lady who used to insist on walking her dog across the pitch whilst the game was going on - when challenged she would respond with a shrill "But I live here."

It is things like this which make the Heath a unique place to play rugby. It is more than just a place to play and has helped to form our character - the way we play and the way we enjoy ourselves afterwards.

Anyone interested in playing or watching Hampstead can contact Mark Spilsbury, the Club Secretary, on 020 8347 7178.

## PART TIME SECRETARIAL ASSISTANT REQUIRED

We are looking for a part-time secretarial assistant to work at the Trust office. Good administrative and computer skills required and interpersonal skills in answering questions raised by residents on planning and other issues.

You will be working with the assistant to the Trust Manager and the assistant to the Trust's Architectural Adviser.

The hours are flexible. Please write to Christopher Kellerman with your CV.

**HAMPSTEAD - GARDEN - SUBURB - TRUST**

862 Finchley Road, Hampstead Garden Suburb, London NW11 6AB.

## HARMONY CONSULTANCY SERVICES

Are you confused by the etiquette of natural and step parent joint events?

Do you puzzle over invitations and seating arrangements?

Are you mystified by the complexity of creating a harmonious environment when new and old families get together?

Do you worry about how extended families will relate at significant functions?

If your answer is yes to any of these we are here to support, guide and help you.

Judi Keshet-Orr (Consultant Relationship Therapist), together with experienced colleagues, has many years experience in working with families who have gone through marriages and re-marriages and who have been troubled by the etiquette of group and celebratory situations. We offer a comprehensive and confidential service aimed at resolving the complications associated with these events.

If you would like more information or to make a booking for a consultation please call 020 8455 4511  
E-mail: judiko@ulfie.demon.co.uk



The gallery, which is run by Residents Association volunteers and supported by the HGS Trust, sells Suburb books, maps, cards and the work of more than thirty local artists. Browsers are welcome.

**The Garden Suburb Gallery**  
at the Temple Fortune end of Hampstead Way, tel 8455 7410