

## Eruvs (cont. from p.1)

solution for social deprivation. Without an eruv, say supporters, a community that adheres to the Sabbath's restrictions finds itself constrained. Conversely, it is argued that the very social deprivation is in itself created by its own strict religious rules.

Opponent's arguments have ranged from worries about social consequences – the area becoming a ghetto and a focus of racial vandalism and anti-Semitic attacks – to birds being decapitated on wires, and aesthetic impacts. The eruv, which some have described as obtrusive and provocative, the late Lord Soper called it "an impertinence", creates segregation, not integration, they argue, and alienates others. Ironically, many of the most passionate objectors are Jews, some disagreeing with what they call ancient outdated practices.

Hendon Rabbi Alan Kimche, told *Suburb News*: "It's going to be a useful facility, especially for the elderly, disabled and mothers of small children. Thousands of Orthodox Jews in the area will benefit." About suggestions concerning the creation of an unbalance in a multi-cultural community, he said: "I don't quite understand that. Barnet has no quota system. You could say a mosque or a particular new school could unbalance the area. To my knowledge the people in Barnet, of all backgrounds and cultures, live in peace with each other. I don't believe the eruv will change that.

"It won't adversely effect the environment more than any other project. Anyway, it is highly unlikely that many Jews will move to the area because of



Eruv pole at Golders Hill park.

an eruv, it would only be a small percentage.

"The remarks about possible racial hatred as an affect I also find very strange. Unless people have such feelings inside anyway, a project like this by itself can't create it. It's not high profile, just another part of the many

forms of street furniture there already are. Many objectors will realise that once it's up, it will be less obtrusive and visible than they thought. You won't even know where it is."

In 1995, after more than a decade of struggle on both sides and intense consultations with the public and various community groups, the then Secretary of State for the Environment, John Gummer granted approval for Britain's first full-scale eruv. After further delays concerning issues such as colours and style of the posts, Tuesday 20 August 2002 saw the eruv's first two poles, approximately three metres high, erected at Prospect Place, East Finchley, attended by a few rabbis, some residents and a media-mob. Reaching national news, at six in the evening we watched a some-what puzzled reporter standing in a quiet suburban street.

But the anger has not left. English Jewish Michael Max, an NW11 resident since 1938 and former Conservative Councillor and Institute Council Chairman, has left the United Synagogue because of the eruv, which has upset him considerably.

He said: "The issue is a very complicated matter. It's not a question of noticing the poles, but boundaries like this one are exclusive and affect our demography. My main objection is that attracting a disproportionate number of Jews into a multi-cultural area can cause problems, and children really must grow up with other races and religions. A person who relies on the eruv may do so even if it is broken, his mental state justifies his taking advantage of it. On the other hand, I have been told that I shall have no regard to the eruv because the posts are not obtrusive, in other words what goes on in my mind is rejected as an objection."

However, since the first two poles' installation, Sabbath-

adhering Jews are still waiting for continuation. And perhaps not surprisingly, one of the main hold-ups stems from the change of the Wildwood Road poles at RA Consam instigation from metal to wood. 13 new poles scheduled for the last weekend of September on the North Circular, the Great North Way and A41, have also been postponed due to traffic problems.

FEMKE VAN IPEREN

### FACTS AND FIGURES:

- The poles will vary between 3.5m (pictured) and 6.5m in height, depending on their location. The majority will stand at 5.5m.

- The Southern boundary of the eruv will run along the top end of Wildwood Road and the location of its six poles has been marked by yellow circles on the pavement.

- Five other poles of about 30 feet have been erected on the boundaries of the Suburb.

- Poles 32 and 34 are on either side of Aylmer Road at the junction with the Bishops Avenue, which allows a wire across the A1. Pole 33 will be on the central reservation. Poles 43 and 44 will support a wire across North End Road at the entrance to Golders Hill Park and next to new flats at Manor Heights. Between poles the eruv will be marked by houses, the Mill Hill East branch of the Northern Line and trunk roads such as the M1 and Hendon Way.

- Unlike the remaining 78 poles, the six in Wildwood Road will be made of wood. Construction of these should commence before Christmas 2002 supervised by arboriculturists from the Corporation of London ensuring the safety of tree roots.

- The Eruv will allow house keys to be carried but not car keys. Wheelchairs and prams can be pushed, but umbrellas, pens and

### Trust AGM (cont. from p.1)

as deputy director of the Design Council would be invaluable.

#### No result yet on Trust Procedure review.

At the last AGM a review of Trust Procedures and Communications had been announced, residents had been asked for their ideas and the RA invited to join a working party. Steven Licht said that, "many helpful comments have been received, and we have had a number of meetings during the year but some matters have not been finalised. We would rather continue our joint efforts," he said, "than rush into print too soon. In answer to Prof. Eilon's question when would the review be completed and published the chairman said, "we don't want to rush the job." Michael Rowley, Residents Association, said that there had been invaluable discussions and asked for members to be patient for six months. David Iwi, Trust Council, read from the initial letter from the RA and from the Trust's advertisement requesting comments and said although residents had responded there had been "very little response on planning policies. I urge everyone to make their views known particularly on such things as satellite dishes, gates and hard standings." Carol Boulter, RA, suggested that an opinion survey might produce more response. Prof. Eilon supported this and said "specific answers to specific questions would be more effective."

### School plans

Moving on the chairman said that since the exhibition of the Henrietta Barnett School's plans the Trust, as freeholder, had met regularly with the school governors. The likely outcome, he thought, would be a single new building behind Bigwood House and the removal of the huts in a single stage building programme. Eva Jacob, RA, expressed surprise that there had been no announcement until now since the exhibition. David Lewis, RA, welcomed the one phase plan which included the removal of the temporary huts. Ivor Hall asked how the school could finalise plans without a decision from the Institute on its own plans. Jean Barraclough, RA and Institute, said they were in discussion with the school over continuing use of part of the school buildings. Diana Woodfield hoped plans would "not be finalised and then discussed! Will the plans incorporate community facilities and will the Trust put forward the idea of a swimming pool?" she asked. Chris Kellerman, Trust manager, said the building should be used by the community outside school hours and the school may be including a gym and pool. Cllr John Marshall said Barnet's planning committee would bear in mind the needs of the community.

Steven Licht said the Trust Council hoped sincerely that the Octagon plan for a new Institute building would provide them with a permanent home.

RICHARD WAKEFIELD

mobile phones must be left at home. Bike riding and football are still forbidden.

- Every Friday the whole eruv has to be inspected to make sure it is complete. Like an electrical circuit it can only operate if all the poles and wires are intact.

- Some Orthodox Jews will not use the eruv for fear of being stranded on breakage of the borders.

- There are approximately 300,000 Jews in Britain. Less

than half are members of Synagogues affiliated to the United Synagogue. In the Suburb, many attend the Reform Synagogue in Alyth Gardens and the Masorti Synagogue in East End Road.

- Maintenance funding will be from corporate sponsorship and private subscriptions.

- Users can ring a helpline to check that the eruv is intact before the Sabbath: the number is 020 8202 3788.

## FHA Fête success

Patrick and Joan Laurance, the Suburb's resident fête organisers, raised an outstanding £3,600 for the Family Holiday Association from one of their well-attended events at the beginning of September. Patrick and Joan have been running fêtes and fairs in the Suburb for the FHA for the last fifteen years, but think that this may be the last one. "I think when you reach 82, it is time to call it a day!" said Patrick, although he hinted that they may be running another type of event next year. It would

seem that there is now room for another brave soul to take on the organising, but handing over the mantle is not easy, as Patrick explains: "If you have run it for fifteen years, you just know everything and everyone, plus we've got a garage that has never seen our car; it is always full of things for the fairs!" Hopefully someone will step up to take charge as it would be a shame if these popular community events disappeared from Suburb life.

ESTHER WALKER

## New Music Director

St Jude's new director of music William Carslake comes to the Suburb from Paisley Abbey where he was assistant director. He says, "What an inspiring building! And what an acoustic! The choir have been very supportive. They are a dedicated group with an exciting sound and I particularly look forward to singing and conducting the St Jude's Proms in the summer.

William is keen that St Jude's provides training for young musicians and invites anyone



interested to contact him. williamcarslake@hotmail.com or via the church.

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