

## Ruth Gumb 1913-2003

It is with great sorrow that we report the death of Ruth Gumb on February 14 2003, the long-standing Membership Secretary of the HGS Theatre Club, who would have celebrated her 90th Birthday this August.

Her father, Leopold Kessler was a member of the Independent Zionist Consortium which bought the Jewish Chronicle in 1907.

She was born on 21 August 1913 and grew up in the large family house in Bexley with her two older brothers David and Jack. She eventually became her father's secretary and then a reporter, sub-editor and film critic on the paper.

She met her future husband, Alex Gumb, at the firm's dinner and dance and were married in 1938. They settled in Hurst Close in 1943 and were only the second owners of the lovely house.

During the Second World War, Ruth worked at the Ministry of Information. She later became a volunteer for the Jewish Blind

Society, driving members twice a week to the West London Synagogue's Waley Club for over 40 years. For ten years she participated in a scheme to help children with reading difficulties.

She was an active member of the RA, under the chairmanship of Tony Mandelson. One of her passions was her garden and she exhibited many years at the Suburb Horticultural Shows. She also attended classes at the Institute for Art and London Lectures.

She was particularly fond of animals, having had several dogs and latterly a much-favoured, rescued cat. She had been active in the Society for Animal Welfare in Israel. Her garden had an abundance of bird feeders, which were always well stocked and the variety of birds she attracted brought her enormous joy.

Her husband Alex died in 1996. She is survived by her two daughters, Jo and Sally, son



Jonathan, two sons-in-law, a daughter-in-law, six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Ruth served our Committee for over ten years, during which time she worked diligently and

tirelessly for the success of the Theatre Club.

We all loved and admired her and will miss her enormously.

THE COMMITTEE OF THE HGS THEATRE CLUB

## News from Fellowship

Apologies that Fellowship's most recent Annual Report is only now being sent to you with this edition of *Suburb News*.

For many years it formed part of the special circulation of documents for the Residents Association AGM – but this year they forgot to tell us they had changed the system!

An appeal to those who use Fellowship House: please, please do as instructed and write to the Lettings Officer at Fellowship House. Some organisations and individuals have been phoning on the 'old pals act', which really isn't fair if they, thereby, jump the queue for bookings.

EILEEN WHELAN

## Free church organ revitalised

It was good to hear the organ playing on 16th February for the first time since it was dismantled in August last year. The speed with which we were able to refurbish it has been remarkable, and due to the generosity of the many people and organisations that responded to our appeal. The target which we set ourselves at Christmas 2001 was reached by Christmas day 2002. On behalf of the Free Church I would like to thank all of you who have made contributions or assisted us in other ways towards this remarkable achievement. The Norman and Beard organ,

which was installed in 1912, has been restored as nearly as possible to its original condition. In the process of the work its 1,450 pipes were removed, cleaned and replaced!

The retuning of the organ will be completed by the autumn and in celebration there will be an *Organ Recital* on Saturday, 4 October at 7.30pm – programme to be announced. We hope that as many residents as possible will join us on this occasion: in appreciation of the support we have received we are making no charge for admission.

TONY SPRING



## Anna Fuchs-Marx 1901-2003

The Suburb has lost a well loved and very senior resident with the death at almost 102 of Mrs Fuchs. Her daughter said of her very full life:

"Anna Fuchs-Marx was born on 9 March 1901 in Bruchsal, Germany. WW1 came during her early teens. She attended the famous Bauhaus art school in Weimar and was commissioned to design packaging and adverts for her brother-in-law's cigar manufacturing company.

Soon after her stay in Weimar, she met and married my father,

Walter Fuchs. He entered her father's business in Bruchsal, curing tobacco, and together with a partner, took over the business. Our family lived well and the business thrived.

When Hitler rose to power many people left Germany. However, my father's partner did not want money withdrawn from the company and refused to leave.

Our escape from Germany is a long story. Due to my mother's astuteness, unflinching will-power and persistence, she managed to find a way to get my father out

of prison where the Gestapo had put him when he tried to flee across the border on Kristallnacht and to send my brother Frank and I to England in a 'Children's Transport'. As late as May 1939, she also managed to buy tickets on the ill-fated ship, the St Louis, for herself and Walter to emigrate to Cuba. All of their possessions were lost on this trip except for a couple of books of wedding telegrams.

Thanks to the generosity of the British government, they arrived in England only three weeks before the war started. They had no money, spoke no English and there was no opportunity for my father to work. He was almost immediately interned again, this time as 'an enemy alien' on the Isle of Man.

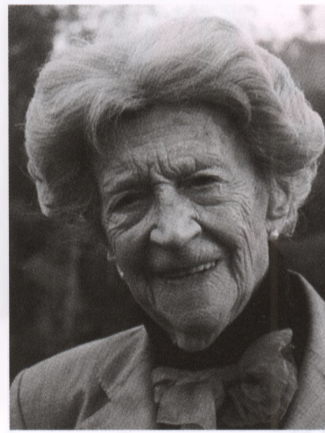
In the meantime, the blitz had begun. We lived at my uncle Michael Foulkes' house, 84 Hampstead Way.

My mother had learned how to make hats before leaving Germany and found a job in Bond Street and became a head milliner. Unfortunately, this firm went bankrupt, forcing her to find other ways of bringing in money. She created a new job for herself by pressing flowers and making lampshades and trays, which she successfully sold to exclusive clubs, restaurants and stores, including Kettner and Liberty.

In the last few years she had physical set-backs with arthritis and suffered loss of hearing and eyesight but this did not dampen her indomitable spirit. She loved her garden and made gardening both hobby and outlet for her creativity. She transformed the house at 2 Asmunds Hill into a very special home. Many pieces of furniture are made from orange boxes disguised by brocade and interesting marble tops gleaned from second-hand stores. Her discerning eye discovered real treasures in some of these sorties and everything in the house 'has a story'.

She was playful, had a great sense of humour and loved to have fun. She was a role model to us all in the art of growing old with dignity.

We owe her much for setting such a wonderful example."



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## HGS Theatre Club

You may not have seen news from the most popular of the RA's social groups for some time but this glorious spring has sprung and inspired us all.

Since last summer, we have enjoyed a monthly outing to a variety of excellent and stimulating shows which have included Michael Frayn's 'Benefactors', 'Vincent in Brixton' by Nicholas Wright (best new play award), 'Role Play' (Ayckbourn), 'Contact', a splendid American song and dance in January and, most recently, 'Arsenic and Old Lace'.

The most memorable was 'Mrs Warren's Profession' with an award winning performance by Brenda Blethyn. This was the first and only occasion in our long history when we arrived two minutes late due to a tortoise crawl traffic jam from Hampstead to the

West End. However, we missed less than ten minutes of the play, preceded by a tour of the theatre, as we had to go up aloft for the first act. It was a dark, wet night, too.

Our next bookings are for 'Bad Blood', which is a thrilling psychological drama, at Richmond in May and Tom Stoppard's 'Jumpers' in June.

Usually, our 53 seat coach is filled quickly and there is a waiting list, but just once in a while we have a few unsold tickets for no obvious reason – one of life's smaller mysteries.

We have had a happy and successful year but are saddened by the recent death of Ruth Gumb, our long serving, hard working Membership Secretary and a dear friend.

RUTH CASS

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