

Letters to the Editor

Temple Fortune Hill
NW11

Sir
Living on the Suburb – security or insecurity

I have always loved August on the Suburb. I have lived here all my life and, from my earliest years, have treasured the balmy evenings and slow dreamy walks around the scent laden streets in the summer.

The shared public areas of the Suburb are central to everyday life here. As a child playing hide and seek or tree climbing in our gardens, allotments, woods or on the Heath; as an adolescent

endlessly chatting with friends, and with the opportunity to meet on safe common ground away from home, courting with boyfriends; and as a young parent exploring the woods and other safe natural habitats with our young children. The story goes on for generations with many of the long standing suburb residents.

In the summer many residents are away and the pace of life seems to slow down, becomes unburied and more civilised. There are fewer cars dominating the streets.

However, as I have wandered here and there over the summer, my reverie has been rudely interrupted on a number of occasions by private security patrols.

My view is that they are insecurity vans as they might be promoting insecurity or even fear, especially in the younger and older members of the community.

As a parent and teacher I am concerned with the way young people relate to and take responsibility for their local environment. This includes becoming comfortable and confident in the street. So how do young people perceive the security vans? How does it affect their attitudes to their local streets? How does it affect their growing trust and their ability to take responsibility as a member of society?

Surely we are all committed to creating a safe, secure and non-threatening environment for all our residents, including young people and the elderly. Naturally every homeowner has the right to protect their own home using alarms, lights, etc. What I am concerned with here is the effect on the shared or public domain. I am

concerned that these private patrols might be introducing an atmosphere of living in a compound and therefore represent a threat to the quality of our everyday lives.

I would like to quote from the Chairman of the Residents Association 1963: "There are no Joneses to keep up with on our HGS. This is because the founders planned it as a neighbourhood with a living sense of community. It is a place of beauty and quiet dignity with its gardens, open spaces and its houses and groups of houses of architectural distinction. We want to keep it so."

Yours
Ruth Parish

100 Brim Hill
N2 0EY
Sir

Ms Lorna Loeb refers to the Controlled Parking Zone around East Finchley Station and says that it is 'a set of deterrents to do so motivated by a greedy council and the comfort of so few householders'. I am one of the 'few' and since the Zone was established, I can now get my car out of my drive without being blocked by inconsiderate commuters. We are also now free of the alarms that go off when heavy vehicles pass the parked cars and generally we have regained the right to our part of the road without being beholden to commuters who cannot walk from their homes to the East Finchley Station. More controlled parking zones will give our Garden Suburb a better ambience. One aspect of the Controlled Parking Zone could be improved by making more disabled parking bays available.

Yours
Jack Shapiro

Hertfordshire

Sir,
Could I please use your newspaper to express my thanks to the unknown person who spotted my laptop in Willifield Way and placed it safely in the doorway of a neighbour. This greatly helped to make a holiday in France more enjoyable.

Yours
Mark Kirby

A stylish cut of the 'Barber of Seville'

Nick Chalmers, the new Director of Music at St Jude's is also music director of the acclaimed Hand Made Opera, a touring company that was created to make opera accessible. They made the 'Barber of Seville' very accessible indeed to a delighted Suburb audience in October. Nicola Wenham from Ossulton Way was there for Suburb News:

Hand Made Opera premiered its new production of Rossini's 'The Barber of Seville' at St Jude's on September the 4th. Colin Baldy, the producer, playing the role of Dr Bartolo led the cast of talented, professional singers.

This was a most charming production, sung in Italian with English, updated and very witty dialogue. Baldy set it in the 1920's, which I think worked very well. Playing the part of Dr Bartolo, he was in excellent voice, his bass-baritone easily filling St Jude's. With one of the most rapid and challenging patter songs ever written in the operatic repertoire, 'A un dottor della mia sorte', he handled it with enviable ease, and did so while chasing about the stage. Mark Oldfield, who for me was my favourite, was a charming Figaro, an unapologetic schemer who delights in his role as town fixer. He came on oozing confidence and bristling with energy. His was a resourceful, charming Figaro, self-assured but never arrogant and delightfully sympathetic to Rosina's plight. Jane Streeton, who played the

role of Rosina never, appeared to be in any real doubt that she was in control of each character and situation. Vivacious, playful and wilful, Streeton's Rosina knowingly manipulated the men in her life with seductive charm, rather than resorting to spite or harshness. And her charm and warmth carried through to her singing as well. With a warm full middle voice and an easy, bright top, Streeton did a fine job of bringing Rosina to life in musical as well as theatrical terms.

Nicholas Chalmers did an excellent job conducting the young and talented orchestra of Hand Made Opera, with good tempi, precise articulation, well-calculated accent and musical energy throughout. The direction was superb, considering it was only done in one week (they didn't happen to mention that one in the programme), with some charming choreography including a dance with umbrellas, and special lighting effects such as strobe lights to create the effect of an old silent film, which I thought was very amusing and perhaps deserved more laughs from the audience. The result was a show with as much delight for the ear as for the eye. For every level of opera fan, 'The Barber of Seville', was a cut above the rest.

(For those of you who missed this production and would like find out more about the company, you can visit their website at: <http://omtf.org.uk/handmade>)

NICOLA WENHAM

Hampstead Rugby Football Club

Hampstead were promoted at the end of the last season and have had a marvellous start in the London NW League Division 3 by beating Imperial Medicals away 28-39.

The club fields five XV's. Matches are played on the Heath Extension near the Great Wall on Saturday afternoons. Kick off times vary with the seasons.

Match reports and other details are often shown in the sports section of the Ham & High and information is available from the club secretary, Mark Spilsbury on 8347 7178.

TOM SALES

Minister visits Henrietta Barnett school

Stephen Twigg MP made a private visit to HBS last week. He is the MP for Enfield Southgate, but has a particular interest in education, which he says is "a passion" of his.

He is a Junior Minister at the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and is on the Governing Body of two schools in his own constituency.

Mr Twigg met with staff, pupils and members of the Governing Body and looked in on some lessons.

He met with some of the pupils for a question and answer sessions and said he was extremely impressed with the girls, their questioning and their attentiveness.

Proms at St Jude's 12 to 20 June 2004

The Committee for Proms at St Jude's seeks a music student to assist the concerts manager in all duties connected with the running of a busy London music festival. Duties will include preparation of the auditorium and stage areas for orchestral and chamber concerts, helping with the practicalities of lunch-time and

evening catering arrangements, looking after professional performers, audience management and helping with last-minute problems as they arise.

The Proms at St Jude's is a charitable fund-raising event and, whilst no remuneration is offered, out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed. 8731 6755.

The Roaring Girl

Again it is pleasing to see the Garden Suburb Theatre expanding its repertoire but, personally, I do not think that this comedy by the Jacobean playwrights, Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, was suitable for the open air theatre in Little Wood. It has a very complicated plot with numerous characters, some of whom appear only once which made it rather hard work. The excellent programme gave a most welcome summary of the plot.

The production was very slow mostly due to unanticipated entrances (it is such a long walk from the bushes to the front of the stage) which left players standing silent. The ingenious set, designed by Jon Musker, worked well in the shopkeepers scene but the endless carrying on and off of these screens by the actors delayed the action even more.

The play is a vigorous picture of low life and contains the vivid figure of Moll, an expert highwayman and cutpurse, who

even in rehabilitation loses none of her robustness. Elizabeth Travis gave Moll lots of panache and her presence enlivened every scene. She was well matched by the excellent Tim Solomons as Trapdoor, a rogue hired to murder her by Sir Alex, the father of the hero, Sebastian, whose choice of Mary for wife does not please. To fool him, Sebastian says he wants to marry Moll. Sir Alex was vigorously played by Tim Messon. Camilla Collins and Christian Radnedge were rather wan and unromantic lovers. Much livelier were the three gallants excellently brought to life by Andrew Farrer (Goshawk), Andrew Craze (Laxton) and Noel Radnedge (Greenwit). The shopkeeper scene had a nice liveliness with Debbie Lane, Sarah Overall and Harriet Cox as an amusing gossiping trio. The play was directed by Mary Musker with a good eye for detail but the music was a mistake as this, combined with other noises in Little Wood, tended to drown the actors.

LEONIE STEPHEN

Litter on the Suburb

Because of the 125 'Litter Pickers Up', there is hardly any. Most of us move around the Suburb with a sense of pride – we also pick up the odd piece of litter when we have to.

Because we do so well, Barnet Council is most co-operative and, whenever there is a problem, they help us solve it.

We do, however, need a few more 'Litter Pickers Up'. It is not a well paid job, but it does not take much time. It will give you a great sense of satisfaction and

pride. Some of our team are really wonderful.

Give me a ring on 8458 2277, or drop me a line at 3 Ruskin Close NW11 7AU.

Since I have reached the age (18?) when I should really be thinking of handing over my job, I am sure one of you will volunteer. It takes so little time – the occasional telephone call and keeping my list of the team up to date.

JOHN M DAVIS
(Chief Litter Picker Up)

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