

HGS Archive Trust 'Handlist' Launch Party

The woman outside the Institute on 25 April was disgruntled. "I need to park here, close," she said, "I've got this chair to carry to the Furniture Restoration class. Doesn't the mayor of Barnet have legs?"

But it was the mayor's long-suffering chauffeur who needed the parking space, to get hold of the Mayor and tell her that she would be late for her next appointment if she stayed any longer. The Hampstead Garden Suburb Archive Trust's 'Handlist' launch party was in full swing inside, and the Mayor, together with a range of the great and the good, had been there for quite a while. Dr Bridget Cherry (the new Pevsner) had made a speech. The Bishop of Edmonton had come. So had Deputy Ann Pembroke of the Corporation of London, Professor C. Elrington, former Director of Victoria County History, Dr Deborah Jenkins, Director of the London Metropolitan Archives and lots of other people from the world of museums, archives and architecture, and from the academic world. Close to home, besides Her Worship the Mayor, were Lord and Lady Howie, who live on the Suburb and Councillor John Marshall. (Our MP, Rudi Vis, who had been intending to come, at the last minute unfortunately had to be abroad and sent apologies.) Our sister suburb at Brentham was represented by Heather Moore and Mr and Mrs Alan Henderson and from the Suburb itself came a galaxy of notables, including Richard Wakefield, Chairman of the Residents Association with his new Deputy Georgina Malcolm, Chris Kellerman of the HGS Trust, John Enderby, former Institute Principal and his successor Fay Naylor, the indefatigable Colin

Gregory with too many hats to name, Suburb architect Ros Archer and innumerable others. Rev. Alan Walker, who is one of HGSAT's Trustees, had arranged for St Jude's to be open for a ceremony of welcome, to give the visitors a chance to see its Lutyens glories. And of course the other Trustees – Dr Ann Saunders, Chairman Harry Cobb, Archivist Jeremy Clynes, Treasurer Richard Bradbury, Gill Healey, Alfred Lester, Raymond Lowe and Micky Watkins – were all there to welcome guests.

The Ham & High homed in on the event – did you see the full page article that followed?

So, what was it all about? Well, the 150th anniversary of Dame Henrietta's birth was about to come round and the Hampstead Garden Suburb Archive Trust (HGSAT) was in the process of telling a wider world about the historic papers in its possession. The papers in the Archive contain a good part of the bones behind the story of HGS – of Henrietta Barnett's fight to get her revolutionary ideas into bricks and mortar against the prejudices of her time. "We cannot do business with a WOMAN, Mrs Barnett!" was the lofty gist of the reply from the Trustees of the Eton Estate when she tried to get them to sell her the land she needed. It's the story of how she mobilised the foremost architects of the day, threw herself into fundraising, and won through; and it deserves to be much better known.

It's also a story of first importance in the history of British Architecture in the first half of the twentieth century, and of the Garden Suburb Movement. This is just the Suburb's good luck, though – Henrietta wanted



(Above) **Camilla Raab**, Joan Holton, Simon Abbott, Michael Holton, Georgina Malcolm and Fay Naylor.

(Right) **John de F Enderby** and Richard Bradbury, past and present Archive Trust members.

(Below) **Lady Howie** and Dorothea Brandes.

(Bottom) **Rev Alan Walker**, Cllr Gill Sargeant, the Bishop of Edmonton and Free Church Minister Tony Spring.

the top architects quite as much for their publicity value as for their architecture. Primarily she was galvanised by the conditions suffered by poor people in her husband's parish of Whitechapel. She was after a design for living that would foster social cohesion and the Archive is prime material for anyone wanting to make a study of pioneering attempts to tackle poverty, disadvantage and inequality and of the emancipation of women.

The particular occasion for the party was to launch HGSAT's new publication and to thank the people who had helped. It had been more than time that the huge mass of material in the Archive was fully catalogued, but the resources available to the Archive Trust had not stretched to that. In Millennium Year, with a noble amount of help from the London Metropolitan Archive (LMA) (who are storing free of charge the more than 200-feet-of-shelf's-worth of documents), and with two generous grants from the Borough of Barnet (who are very keen that the HGS Archive should be known to the Borough's schools), a complete catalogue of the collection was achieved. This finished catalogue, though, turned out over 1500 pages long – not quite what the well-furnished Suburb Resident looks for on her coffee table.

So, with more help – yet another grant from Barnet, plus very welcome donations from the Residents Association, the HGS Trust, the Hendon and District Archaeological Society, The Fellowship, and with the financial and professional generosity of Mrs Camilla Raab, who gave invaluable time proofreading – a condensed version was produced. No it's not 'yet another history of the Suburb'. In fact, it's not a narrative at all (apart from the introduction, of which more in a minute). But – do you want to find out who was the architect for your house? see if there's a plan? find out why your road was built the way it is? more seriously, what the area was like before (and while) the Suburb was built, and what alternative schemes were considered? more excitingly, what Henerietta Barnett said to the Eton Estate

trustees? and why....? but you get the idea. The 'Handlist' ('archive index', in archives-speak) is just a list, not of course of every document that exists on Suburb matters, but of what is in the HGSAT archive; and you can see (and, for a small charge, get a copy) of any of the archive documents just by going to the LMA at 40 Northampton Road, Islington (tel. 0207 332 3820) and asking. The Handlist is the key - it will tell you what's there. (Though if you get hooked, LMA also have, outside the HHSAT Archive, a lot of other interesting documents on the Barnetts.)

You can have your own copy of the Handlist, either direct from the HGSAT (tel. 8455 3115 or 8458 3688), or from the Suburb Gallery in Hampstead Way or the LMA in Islington. The price is £10, and the book contains, besides the lists, an illuminating selection of photos from the Archive – and of course this introduction that I mentioned. That is a history of the Suburb, and some of you may have seen it before. It was written by Brigid Grafton Green (1916-1991) who lived in the Suburb for many years, and who is probably the only reason many of the documents in the Archive even exist today. (HGSAT were delighted that her son Paddy was able to come to the Handlist Launch.) Thirty years ago, there was no space for official storage of the documents, and there was a risk that they might be destroyed. She took them into her own house, mended them, organised them, and in 1973, with the help of a few like-minded friends, set up the Archive Trust on the proverbial shoe-string. The handlist is also intended as a tangible memory to her, and to the farsightedness and sheer hard work that she put into the job of saving this bit of our heritage. Buy a copy, in memory of her, and help the job along.

And if you want to help more directly, if you have something in your possession that you'd like to show, give, or leave to the Archive, if you have information that conflicts with a particular document, or if you simply want to be involved, let one of the Trustees know. They'd be very glad to hear from you.

GILL HEALEY



Dr Ann Saunders in equally distinguished company, Barbara Anderson, left, past chair of both the Trust and the RA and Jean Dyson past chair of Henrietta Barnett School Governors.

berriys

garden company



landscaping
design
patios
planting
drives

020 8209 0194

maintenance
turfing
watering systems
fencing
lighting

Caring for the Suburb for 20 years

P R HARTLEY

CHARTERED
ACCOUNTANT
& LICENSED AUDITOR

Accounting and Taxation Services

Call 020 8731 9745 or 07850 634395

Email HartleyP@aol.co.uk

www.prhartley.co.uk