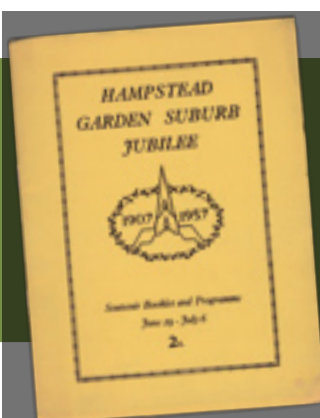




News and pictures of the start of the Centenary celebrations



Celebration programmes marking our coming-of-age in 1928, our Jubilee in 1957 and our Centenary in 2007



SuburbNews

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The Suburb and the sun come out for start of centenary celebrations

One of the largest crowds seen on the Suburb for years thronged Hampstead Way and Asmunds Hill on May 2 for the centenary launch.

Those who were tall enough saw our MP Rudi Vis and the Suburb's favourite knight Sir Donald Sinden help RA chairman David B Lewis at a ceremony presenting Henrietta Barnett rose bushes to David and Naimh White and Bernard and Rosalie Lynch who are the current owners of the first cottages, 140 and 142 Hampstead Way.

It was here on May 2 exactly a hundred years ago, that the Dame had cut the very first sod in the building of the Suburb. The crowd then surged up Asmunds Hill, suitably hung with bunting, to a point where a ribbon was cut by Rudi Vis to show that the centenary celebrations were truly under way.

On Willifield Green it was Marjorie Harris's turn to introduce Jonathan Ross and Jane Goldman, joint presidents of the Horticultural Society, who inaugurated the

centenary flower bed. King Alfred's School pupils provided traditional entertainment with maypole dancing on the green. They were followed by dancing in which everyone one was urged to join in, by Kerem School children.

The Residents Association had laid on a sparkling wine and sandwiches from Waitrose reception in Fellowship House that was enjoyed by hundreds. The sun shone and all agreed the centenary was off to a flying start.

RICHARD WAKEFIELD



Dr Rudi Vis cuts the ribbon, aided by RA chairman David B Lewis and Sir Donald Sinden.



Horticultural Soc presidents Jonathan Ross and his wife Jane Goldman, Marjorie Harris, chairman and David B Lewis. Jonathan Ross said, "Marjorie has thanked everyone but the one who deserves most thanks, is herself."

Chairman thanks volunteers and contributors

Henrietta Barnett School hall was packed as usual for the Residents Association's AGM in March to hear chairman David B Lewis thank all who had been involved as volunteers during the year, and those residents who had given generously towards the funding of an ambitious programme for the Suburb's centenary year.

The business of the meeting passed uneventfully with officers and retiring council members being re-elected along with five new ones: Janet Elliott who is membership secretary; Derek Epstein, chairman of Consam; Dave Brown; Brian Rivett and Will Sowerbutts. In welcoming them David Lewis said he was pleased to see some very much younger faces on council. Douglas Thomas,

retiring from council, was thanked for his long period of service.

Incorporation

There was a discussion of the possible need, due to changes in legislation, to make the association a limited company to avoid the possibility, however remote, of members being personally liable for large claims against them. It was agreed that further investigation should be carried out and the result reported to the next AGM.

Management charge

Maurice Jay asked the question on everyone's mind. What was the RA position on the Trust's management charge? The chairman said that Council had been addressed by Angus Walker, whose application for a varied charge was before the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal,

and subsequently by Trust chairman Mervyn Mandell who was opposed to any change in the way the charge is made. David Lewis read out a resolution passed by the RA Council on 6 February: "The Council of the HGS Residents Association believes that it would be a matter of the greatest regret if there were a dispute about the Trust management charge in the Suburb's Centenary Year. It supports the introduction of a graded management charge based on Council Tax bands, as proposed in the May 2006 Trust Gazette and calls upon the Trust to conduct a postal ballot of householders to ascertain whether the majority of them agree with this view or would prefer the charge to remain at a flat rate."

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Trust member resigns over management charge

In May Richard Wakefield, an elected member of the Trust council, sent in his resignation to Trust chairman Mervyn Mandell. "I had tried and failed to stop my fellow trustees going back on what we had, in my view, given residents to understand, which is that we would be changing the way the management charge is applied so as to make it more equitable. I also felt strongly that the expenditure on legal fees for both applications to the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal is a waste of scarce Trust resources if they are not chargeable to the scheme, or of freeholders' money if they are. This especially as, had we joined with Angus Walker's application which after all was prepared by him on behalf of the Trust, we could have saved the fees and kept our word," he said.

Richard knows the Suburb well, and is also well-known within it, having lived here for most of his life. He was editor of this paper from its first edition in 1983 until his election to the HGS Trust council in September 2005. He is

also a past chairman of the RA and remains its Honorary Secretary. "It's not so much the actual amount," he said, "but the principle. However as the cost of running the scheme of management inevitably increases the charge will become even more of a burden for some people but still hardly noticeable to others. Now is the time to put it on a more equitable basis."

The HGS Trust council has eight trustees of whom four, who must not live on the Suburb, are appointed by professional bodies. There are also four elected resident trustees; Richard's resignation means that there will be an election in September for three Trust council vacancies. Mervyn Mandell completes three years and David Bogush, co-opted following the death of Michael Rowley, has, under the provisions of the Trust's articles, to stand again. Both are eligible to stand. Only Charles Zeloof, re-elected unopposed last year, remains.

All members of the HGS Trust can vote for trustees. Membership of the Trust is open to residents

who have lived here for more than three years. The number of trust members is limited to 1250, but at present there are fewer than 900.

I am sure readers will be surprised that there are so few members and that elected trustees are often co-opted or elected unopposed because of the lack of candidates. Richard says he will stand again and hopes others will join him. "The staff do a terrific job of protecting the Suburb and the enthusiasm with which they all work has improved enormously since Jane Blackburn was appointed. Her idea of persuading volunteers to give time and expertise has transformed the Trust's performance. I have enjoyed working with them and with the Property and Plans committee, which comprises RA and appointed Trust council members, who scrutinise all plans in detail and are very knowledgeable and conscientious in protecting our environment," he said.

TERRY BROOKS