



Sheila Abbott and her school at the millennium celebration.

Popular head retires

Children, staff and parents said a fond farewell to Mrs Sheila Abbott this summer when she retired as head teacher of Brookland Infant and Nursery school after more than a quarter of a century at the helm. She had delayed her departure several times, staying on at the governors' request. But in July, once a successor had been selected and appointed, Sheila bowed out after 26 years, confident that she leaves the school with which she has been associated for so long in the safest of hands.

Always over-subscribed, under Sheila's leadership, Brookland Infant School developed in 1990 from a two form entry to three

form entry school. It had long been her dream to add in a nursery, which by dint of hard work, persuasion and fund-raising, just a few years before her retirement, she was finally able to achieve.

A special 'Goodbye to Sheila' evening was held with many education colleagues from Barnet and further afield paying their tributes to her leadership and teaching skills, the high educational standards her school achieved, and her energy, dynamism and resilience – qualities which have enriched the lives of thousands of local children starting school for the first time. The caring ethos which Sheila fostered was mentioned

time and again. For her, the children in her care came first and last and always.

The new head teacher, Shirley Dickinson, was previously Sheila's deputy, and has worked with her closely over the years. "Sheila will be sadly missed by all at Brookland," she said. "We have lost a colleague but not a friend."

Amongst the many gifts showered on Sheila and husband David were some yellow rose bushes called 'Sheila's Perfume' and membership of the Royal Horticultural Society from the Governing Body.

Her time to enjoy them will be richly deserved.

LINDA LEWIS, SCHOOL GOVERNOR

A very interesting Tempest

Mary Musker and Mark Overall's production of Shakespeare's 'The Tempest' proved to be very interesting. Intelligent and well-spoken but odd in the fact that Prospero was almost a minor character. The players who remain in the memory were the astonishing Ariel and Caliban. Alon Witzum is a large man but his fine voice and delicate movements had an ethereal quality which made his Ariel memorable. Richard Kinders'

Caliban was also outstanding and his scenes with Trinculo and Stephano were hilarious. Amos Witzum as the Cook and Toby Moore as the Butler were very funny but their humour also had a dark edge. The king, Alonso and his court were strongly played and retained interest. Tony Newton was an impressive Gonzalo and the scheming Sebastian and Antonio were for once not boring being characterised by John Colemans

and Christopher Poke. Jemima Lane as Miranda and Matt Alias Ferdiand made great lovers. Andy Farrer's Prospero was well-spoken and looked grand but strangely low-key.

The sloping acting area was designed by Andy Farrer and Jill Penwarden and Frances Musker, in charge of costumes, saw that all looked fine. One quibble – the interval music was awful. Whoever thought of 'The Isle of Capri'!

LÉONIE STEPHEN

Letters to the Editor

654 Finchley Road, NW11 7NT

Sir,
I would be most grateful for the opportunity to respond to the letter from the Chairman of the HGS Trust which has been sent to all householders.

As he says, although the hearings at the IVT have not yet been concluded, the cost to the residents has been £5 per property. Without wishing to raise the question of why the Trust had to spend £17,500 on legal fees, when we already pay their staff £204,000 a year to represent us, may I be allowed to say that, since the 250 freeholders registered their objection to the increases, the precept has been reduced from £110 to £77.

An amazing coincidence or a good return for our £5?

Yours,
H Freeman

862 Finchley Road, NW11 6AB

Sir
I am sorry to see from Mr Freeman's letter that he still apparently misunderstands the nature of the Management Charge and the way in which it is calculated.

I offered, both before and after the hearings at the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal, to meet Mr Freeman at any time to go through the Trust's accounts with him. Other residents, including an eminent Queen's Counsel and an accountant, have taken the time to do this and have afterwards professed themselves satisfied.

The Leasehold Valuation Tribunal heard Mr Freeman's case at length and rejected it

completely. The Tribunal was sufficiently clear in its decision to refuse Mr Freeman leave to appeal to the Lands Tribunal. When the application to appeal was none the less made, the Lands Tribunal refused it outright.

Since 2005 the Trust charges freeholders exactly what it costs to operate the Scheme and has ceased to provide a subsidy. Consequently the charge will vary from year to year. Last year (2006-2007) the actual cost was less than the estimate and freeholders have received a rebate towards the estimated charge for 2007-2008.

Such variations are based not on pressure from Mr Freeman but on a carefully considered assessment of what, in the actual circumstances of any year, is necessary to protect the character and amenity of the Suburb.

I remain, as ever, ready to go over this with Mr Freeman.

Yours
Jane Blackburn, Trust Manager

21 Middleway NW11 6SN

Sir
This August saw the closure of the Temple Fortune Greengrocer S. Blyth & Sons after more than thirty years in business

Purchasing top quality hand selected fruit and veg at this wonderful shop has, for me, been one of the great pleasures gained from shopping in our area. Suburb residents together with all those living nearby will now notice that their choice of local providers of fruit and vegetables is restricted to convenience stores and supermarkets, both of which in my opinion generally offer a lower quality of produce than

that which was available at Blyth's.

The message to Suburb residents is clear: if we continue to favour the convenience of supermarket shopping over the possibility of purchasing from the various specialist stores that make Temple Fortune one of the great shopping streets in London, we will soon end up having no choice. Use it or lose it.

Yours
Robert Max

47 Oakwood Road, NW11 6RJ

To RA Chairmen
As I was sending you my cheque for the renewal of my subscription to the Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association, I wanted to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to you for the arrangements for the Centenary celebrations this year.

I think that you, your committee members and the numerous voluntary helpers have done a wonderful job in organising all the publications and events for the Centenary celebrations. The souvenier programme was particularly attractive and well-produced. I have enjoyed so many of the events during the year right from the opening of the celebrations on 2 May, through the commemorative pageant in June, to the concerts in the St Jude's Proms. It has made for a memorable year, and not over yet. It has certainly reinforced the feeling for us residents that we live in a very special place. Thank you.

Yours,
Barrie MacDonald

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