

Write in to save our trees

Readers may remember the feature on oak trees in the last issue. Barnet Council's refusal to give permission for the felling of these trees was indeed a victory to be celebrated. However, the insurers, Norwich Union, are appealing against the Article 5 Certificates issued by Barnet on both these trees; if the insurers win the appeal, the Council would have to meet the cost of repair to both houses supposedly damaged by subsidence. (Article 5 of a Tree Preservation Order allows the Local Planning Authority to issue a certificate stating that the trees have an outstanding or special amenity value. Where this certificate is issued, compensation for loss or damage is not payable.) If this were the case, it would be extremely difficult for the Council to refuse permission to fell trees in the future, with the potential

loss of many of our well-loved trees. When the appeal date is known the Council will need a huge postbag of letters reaffirming the amenity value of the trees, so all lovers of our green neighbourhood should check the Trust's website for the date of the appeal.

The chainsaw massacre instigated by insurance companies is not confined to the Suburb but is being repeated across London; in the past five years 16,000 street trees have been felled by London councils because of insurance claims even though, according to a report commissioned by the London Assembly, only 1 per cent of tree removals is justified. However, Barnet's own Tree Officer, Andy Tipping, has, with his colleagues in the London Tree Officers' Association, developed a system for street trees that, for the first time, assesses a tree's

worth according to its size, health, historical significance and how many people live near to enjoy it. For example, an oak in Southgate has been valued at £267,000 and a plane in Epping High Street at £200,000. This new system should now help councils fight insurance claims because the high value of trees will demand extra engineering work by insurers to prove a link between a tree and subsidence. According to Andy Tipping, "people still don't understand that subsidence is a problem of buildings, not trees. In many cases trees are not the main culprit. It's other reasons instead, such as Victorian drains, poorly installed double-glazing or climate change. Often an insurer will point the finger at the tree, it is chopped down and then subsidence problems in a house persist."

DEBORAH CALLAND

Enjoy Suburb open gardens and raise money for the NL Hospice

The HGS Horticultural Society will, on Sunday 1 June, be reviving its popular Suburb Gardens Stroll, a leisurely guided walk round the 'old' Suburb, calling in at several open gardens en route. Teas will be available in the last garden and half the profits from the sales of tickets and teas go to the NW Support Group of the North London Hospice (the other half helps to fund society events). Tickets @ £6 (children free) will be on sale outside the former Gallery in Hampstead Way – near Finchley Road, Temple Fortune, NW11 – from 1.45pm and groups will set off from 2pm. Please keep any dogs on leads.

Another Horticultural Society event to look forward to is the

Summer Flower Show at the Free Church Hall on 14 June. When you come in to the hall from outside, it's hard to believe that you are in London – all the sights, scents and peace of the countryside are there to enjoy.

Children from under 5 to 12+ have their own competitions with prizes on the day, so why not encourage yours to paint, bake or make a miniature garden? In addition to all the traditional classes, there will be a photography competition which all ages can enter, with two classes (flowers and/or fruit or a winter scene) and you can sit comfortably with family and friends over home-made tea and cakes in the small hall. For the third year running

there will be a scarecrow competition for all ages, with the theme of your scarecrow to be chosen by you.

We are very grateful that for the past two years, the scarecrows have been judged by our Hon. President Jonathan Ross and his family – we don't know yet whether they will be free this year, but they have certainly been invited! All scarecrows should be delivered to the Free Church Hall at the top of Northway by 2pm on 14 June.

Full details of all the HGS Horticultural Society events each month of the year (except December and January) can be found in Suburb News What's On, or at www.hgs.org.uk/hortsoc.



Awards for restoring the Suburb

During the Residents Association AGM Derek Epstein, who chairs Consam, made two presentations of the Alexander Stuart Gray Architectural Merit Award for works which, in the opinion of the judges, have made a significant contribution to the conservation or enhancement of Suburb buildings.

The first was to Circle 33 Housing Association for its renovation of Queens Court. This is a case of determined residents protecting the Suburb from a large national body which, in the words of one resident, "had no idea what they were dealing with. We saw what they had done to Emmott Close and didn't want the same thing happening here." Mary Mulvey treasurer of the Queens Court RA told Suburb News that she had been instrumental in getting Queens Court listed as soon as Circle 33 made known its plans for refurbishing. "We got it through in record time between November and April," she said.

In the 60s the owners of 117 Hampstead Way were given permission to turn a front room into a garage and to replace all



the front windows of one of a matching pair of houses with plastic windows.

Now the garage is a room again and the windows once

again match those next door. Richard Keppel and Dr Danya Gluschores-Corby, who live there now, collected a Gallery voucher and their certificate.

A Silk Route in London?

One crisp sunny morning recently, Ruth Smith, a qualified City of London guide, my husband and I set off to explore the area where Dame Henrietta Barnett and her husband used to minister to the needs of Londoners less well off than themselves.

Take the bus to Golders Green Tube Station; use the Northern Line (Bank branch) to Moorgate, change and alight at Aldgate or if you prefer at Aldgate East.

Leaving the station, walk towards Whitechapel Art Gallery. I am ashamed to say it was my first visit. A friendly receptionist answered all sorts of questions. She was completely unaware of the existence of the Suburb and its connection with the area. We all thought that this should be rectified somehow. We will be sending some Proms brochures for the attention of Cookie, the friendly receptionist, who said she might come to one of the concerts in June.

In bright sunshine we walked along to Toynbee Hall. Our approach was from the back of

the building – through a maze of East End alley ways where the old brick walls ooze history.

Getting there, a sign 'Arts Bar & Café' and an aroma of fresh coffee led us into an impressively decorated hall flooded with sunlight streaming through tall windows. Our café latte was delicious. With Ruth's guidance we continued our walk through the 'silk' lanes lived in by the Huguenot protestant refugees from 1683, who were renowned for their skills in silk weaving; Fournier Street and Elder Street to Artillery Row now the home of a variety of little restaurants. And of course we visited the renovated Christ Church Spitalfield (1729) with its famous pulpit and reader's desk designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor and the exquisite carving executed by Thomas Darby and Gervase Smith. A fascinating visit and well worth the effort to see where the Suburb's founder worked to help the disadvantaged in the East End. Happy walking!

GERLINDE CROSSLEY

New life for Central Square

One of the longer term projects of the Centenary Committee was the restoration of Central Square. Following a successful bid for Heritage Lottery funds a firm of landscape consultants has been appointed by the Trust to draw up plans.

The square, which is owned by Barnet Council, has long been neglected, the lime trees which once were pleached are overgrown or, in the areas where it is too wet for them, have long since disappeared. "Any plans will have

to tackle the drainage problem," says David Davidson Trust architectural adviser who has been largely responsible, with Eddie Caplin, for the work of making the bid for lottery funds.

Extensive consultation with residents to find out how they would like the square to look and how it should be used will be carried out starting with an exhibition in one of the marquees at the Proms at St Jude's which will be open every evening for comments and suggestions.

Institute

OPEN DAY

June 28

11 High Road, 11am - 4pm

Choose from over 700 courses • Talk to teachers

Enjoy art and sculpture, music and dancing

Find out about our extensive programme of language courses

Refreshments • Family entertainment all day



The Institute

The Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute

11 HIGH ROAD, EAST FINCHLEY N2 8LL • 020 8829 4141 • www.hgsi.ac.uk
COURSES AT: EAST FINCHLEY • HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB • MUSWELL HILL
REG CHARITY NO: 312951