

Suburb
Style editor
Deborah
Warland,
talks to
residents
about some
of their
favourite
things



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Warland

SUBURB

Fitness Guru

featuring Jeanne Solomons

Jeanne Solomons and her husband, Kenneth have lived on the Suburb since 1962. They have four children, Jeremy, Richard, Tim and Emma.

Jeanne's active interest in Keep Fit began in 1964 when she was taken by a friend to a class in St Mary's Church Hall in Hendon Lane. She says, "I had always liked to dance and in the 1950s I was involved with the Hornsey Operatic Society as a dancer. However it was not until the 80s that I was persuaded to take a Keep Fit Association Teacher Training Course. I then began taking classes in a Camden Day Centre and several retirement homes on behalf of Barnet College.

Although the concept of Keep Fit had, to some extent, been identified at the time with younger women wishing to maintain a good figure, I became increasingly aware of the recreational need for the more mature generation to undertake moderate regular exercise. Doctors were becoming more vocal in recommending low-fat diets and some form of 'work out' to reduce the growing risk of strokes and heart attacks, particularly among the over 60s. I was personally convinced that Keep Fit classes should provide a friendly environment where like-minded people can also socialise and have fun. Indeed, when I took over the classes at St Mary's in 1988 they were two hours long with a break in between for coffee and a chat."

After 21 years Jeanne still teaches at St Mary's and 10 years ago took over from Ann Cohen at the very popular Institute classes at the Free Church Hall. She does have some concerns that the Institute classes will remain on the Suburb as many of those



Jeanne and Kenneth Solomons

still attending were in the original class over 40 years ago! Some are now in their 80s and, undoubtedly, the classes keep them active, healthy and benefit all ages. Many have become close friends over the years, but there are many younger participants as well and, as Jeanne says, "I love the fact that I can assist in keeping others happy while making sure that I am still active and mobile." She also takes a fortnightly class for the over 60s at Fellowship House.

Over the years I have been aware of Jeanne's involvement with the Garden Suburb Theatre Group. She said, "This started when Tim, my son was 11 and was in 'The Prince and the Pauper'. As a parent with a child performing I was obliged to become a member of the Society. I began by helping with the making of costumes and have continued ever since. You might say that this involvement is very much a

family affair as Tim and Emma are active as choreographers, stage managers, lighting experts, directors and, of course, actors. From time to time I also involve Kenneth as a model whenever I need to judge the size and suitability of a particular garment!"

I also learned that since Kenneth's retirement he is very busy with charity work. He is an escort taking elderly people on a minibus to the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in St John's Wood for social events. He helps the less able with computer knowledge at Ivy House and in addition helps with PHAB in Barnet which is a charity helping physically handicapped men and women to mix with able bodied adults.

All in all Jeanne and Kenneth obviously lead a full and active life and, as with other long term Suburb residents they enjoy 'giving something back' in return for the pleasure and privilege of living here.

SUBURB

Proms

featuring Danny Kessler

Danny Kessler went to Haberdashers Aske's and will attend Balliol College, Oxford to study Physics and Philosophy this October. He spent his gap year travelling, only popping home for important occasions like the Suburb Proms.



A MEMORABLE PROMS AT ST JUDE'S

When an evening begins with Morris Dancing, it always has potential. A friend and I arrived to find a small, happy contingent of Morris Dancers outside St Jude's surrounded by 60somethings. The night was young, the crowd wasn't, and smiling to all the people we recognised – and many whom we didn't – we filed in and took our seats.

The Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain were playing. 'I'm just a teenage dirtbag

baby/listen to Iron Maiden, baby...' sang the band, brilliantly misunderstanding the mindset of the average Suburb listener. Indeed, the lady in front of me watched the first half with a look of disgust as if the Queen had just voted Lib Dem. The church, normally so quiet and dignified, had been kitted out with strobe lights, and the band, and a few more adventurous members of the audience had started shaking their heads extremely vigorously in time with the heavy metal rock, so I could quite understand her disgust, even if I feel the Ukulele Orchestra are the greatest English musicians since Vaughan Williams.

The Proms at St Jude's are one of the finest aspects of the Suburb life. My parents think so too, so they invested in Silver Membership which I believe entitles them to hang around the Member's Tent and drink as much wine as they can. Since I was the only one in the family going that particular evening, I borrowed their card and turned up requesting my parents' free drinks. My first obstacle to the canapés and Chardonnay was the young volunteer at the door. "Hello, my name's Dave. You may know me – I'm on the RA," he declared. I presented my parents' card and tried to look as much like my father as possible. Fortunately Dave was too busy daydreaming to notice that the names on the cards. James and Jane Kessler, couldn't possibly correspond to the two 18-year-old male teenagers standing before him.

We snuck in and admired the Member's Tent. The canapés looked delicious and the wine was flowing like water fountains. The room was full of middle-aged patrons of the Proms and young volunteers serving drinks. A pretty girl called Ellen was among them so I struck up a conversation. "Do you volunteer here often?" I asked, hoping it would be the case. "Most years – I only do it for the food," she said, and to prove it she stuffed half a tray of nibbles into her mouth, filling her cheeks and making her look like a rather sexy hamster. "By the way," she mumbled, "are you actually allowed to be here?" I was about to explain that I wasn't, and would she like to accompany me outside, when her superior, none other than Proms Organiser Susie Gregson noticed me, and thought the same thing. "May I see your ▶▶

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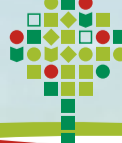
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