

Scarecrows and seeds

HGS Horticultural Society joint presidents Johnathan Ross and Jane Goldman again judged the scarecrow competition at the Summer flower show.

Since all the scarecrows were so good, Jonathan gave prizes to all the children; for the 'most original' Soraya Hussein and George and Yolanda Taylor; 'best dressed' Lucia Campbell; 'prettiest' Olivia and Melissa

Redman; 'cutest' Joe Coury-Reid and 'scariest' Aarian Shoraka and Sophie Lewis.

SEED SWAP

The Horticultural Society will be holding a seed swap event on 10 February next year (full details of time and venue nearer the time). If you have spare flower and vegetable seeds in your garden now, why not harvest the seeds while they are

dry and ready, clean them up by getting rid of bits of chaff and leaves, and store them to swap for something else, free. Seed envelopes with labels are available from Lizzie Sturm (8455 4897) or email her at hgs@hortsoc.co.uk. Lizzie will also be glad to give helpful advice on seed collecting, if you need it.

MARJORIE HARRIS



LETTERS

The Institute, 11 High Road, N2

Brunner Close, NW11

Sir,
We were somewhat puzzled to read the account of our AGM in the Spring issue of Suburb News and would like to respond as follows:

Firstly, you query why a page in the annual report under the heading 'The Institute in its Local Context' is devoted largely to the London borough of Barnet with no individual mention of the Suburb. While the Suburb cherishes its independent spirit, it remains within the borough of Barnet. No other neighbourhood is singled out for mention either, so to construe the omission of the Suburb by name as an indication of The Institute's neglect does seem rather a rush to take offence (We are now based in East Finchley yet no mention is made of East Finchley in the annual report either).

Based on our latest (2009) student statistics, 21% of Institute students reside in the N2 postcode and 12.4% in NW11, showing that Suburb residents continue to make up a significant proportion of Institute students. As editor of Suburb News you could encourage your readers to join The Institute Society and therefore be entitled to attend the AGM and provide us with comment and feedback.

The Institute maintains cordial and close relations with the Suburb on a number of levels: our events are always listed in Suburb News as well as on the HGS website. Our newsletter, *Insight* is read – and enjoyed – all over the Suburb and beyond. Our links with the Suburb – as neighbours and friends – are too numerous to be listed.

For The Institute's finances to be restored to good health, it obviously needs to reach out to a wider area of North London to attract new students. Despite the dismal account of our finances given in Suburb News, we are in fact steadily reducing our losses at an impressive rate. We are quite confident that the vast majority of residents of the Suburb understand this and wish us well.

Yours
Joy Solomon, Principal

Sir,
We were notified by both the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust and the London Borough of Barnet that the new owners of 14 Brunner Close have submitted applications for significant alterations.

This includes, amongst other things, plans to rebuild the existing garage and convert to living accommodation, and most importantly to create a basement with rear lightwells.

Residents of Brunner Close acknowledge that the new owners will want to extend the property consistent with the sorts of development that have already been undertaken in the Close and this part of the Suburb, such as loft conversions and small scale rear extensions.

However, we are deeply concerned at the potential precedent created by the proposal to develop a basement in a semi-detached property in an area where other houses have already experienced subsidence and which is totally out of keeping with the style and architecture of the houses in Brunner Close and the surrounding areas.

In particular, we are concerned at the potential impact on the structural integrity of surrounding properties, not least the adjoining semi. In addition, we question the practical viability of creating the basement (the necessary excavation equipment, the associated traffic to remove excavated earth and the lorries to pour concrete) in the restricted area of the Close without it severely restricting the access to adjoining properties at the top of the Close.

The latest copy of Suburb News has a very graphic picture of the level of traffic that might be associated with the excavation and creation of a basement as seen on Hampstead Way.

Furthermore, we are concerned at the potential loss of a garage that can accommodate a large modern car (and has done so until recently) with the knock-on effect on parking in the Close, which is frequently already difficult.

Despite significant objections from residents of Brunner Close, LB Barnet has now granted planning permission for the full extent of the proposed development. These proposals, if allowed in their entirety, would create a dangerous precedent with significant implications for the entire Suburb, particularly those living in terraced and semi-detached properties.

Yours
Frances Blunden

NW11

Sir,
We would like to bring you up to date with our project at Impalila Island School and progress with fundraising and other issues.

The Trustees Annual Report and Accounts for the period 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2009 were presented to our Second Annual General Meeting held at 28 Coleridge Walk on Sunday 11 July.

We are very pleased to inform you that over £25,000 has been raised mostly from generous donations but also by three fundraising activities as follows:

• Spitalfields Walk, September 2009

Ruth Smith introduced a group of about twenty of us to Spitalfields which is famous for its Victorian market and elegant Georgian streets. We discovered Spitalfields' Huguenot past and its connection with Tracey Emin and Britart. We were fortunate in April to have a warm day, Ruth entertained us all the way with anecdotes and we ended with a pub lunch.

• Charity Concert at the Free Church, December 2009

The London International Orchestra, leader Prudence Sedgwick and Conducted by Toby Purser treated us to concert of favourite orchestral works and tenor arias by Verdi, Donizetti, Mendelssohn and Grieg. The guest singer was Mexican tenor Jesus Leon who appeared by kind permission of Glyndebourne Opera. After the interval the orchestra played Symphony No 6 (Pathétique)

During my time as a war correspondent I've reported from massacres and atrocities, bombed-out hospitals and harrowing refugee convoys. But I've had no reader response to any story to match the good wishes that flowed from my report in the last Suburb News, on my legal battle to win back my dog Shadow in the New York courts. My thanks to all who sent their good wishes. If good wishes were what counted, I would have won. But they weren't, and I lost.

Shadow is the world's liveliest border collie, originally from Transylvania, Romania. I lived with him and my girlfriend in New York. When the relationship imploded, I got Shadow. A year later I left him with her to travel to London. When I got back, she told me she was keeping him, or rather, she had dumped him on her elderly parents. No reasons were given, but I could guess at a few.

And so I went to court. Things got off to a bad start when the judge leaned down from his bench and told me that under the law, he could not order return of Shadow, who was classed as 'chattel', only cash compensation.

Shadow Dog

Facing down a New York judge, and a supervising judge at that, was not what I had in mind. What I wanted was getting back my dog. I could not afford a lawyer, but I had free legal advice from two lawyer friends. So I told him, in the meekest possible tone, that he was wrong.

He glared at me. Then he consulted his law book. And then he mumbled that, yes, indeed, it seemed after all that he was wrong. Welcome to the New York court system.

It proved a pyrrhic victory. I had all kinds of arguments, starting with her verbal assurance that Shadow was my dog to my custody of him for a year. She had the dog license. A document that cost 11 dollars. A document I could have obtained, if I had ever thought.

I gave it my all. I won a series of minor precedents, including the right to 'inspect the chattel'. It was the only light moment in a long process, when the judge at a previous hearing could find no protocol for inspection of living chattel.

That half hour I spent with Shadow, in the office of my former girlfriend's lawyer, was the most precious of my life. What can you do with half an hour? I stroked him, played with him and brushed his hair. I kept the hair, it is in a see-through box, kept along with a red ball a friend had bought to give to him.

Going to court is hell. But not going is worse. I regret not getting that license. More, I regret the acrimony of the breakup. A little more humility, and things might have been different. My advice for younger readers – you reap what you sow.

CHRIS STEPHEN



Suburb News needs you!

We ran an article in the last issue of Suburb News seeking assistance with the future production of the paper.

Earlier this year Richard Wakefield, who has been responsible for the production of this paper since 1983, informed the publications committee of his intention to stand down from his role at Suburb News. Richard has been doing the bulk of the work involved, bringing his publishing skills to the paper along with his intimate knowledge of Suburb life going back a considerable time. We feel it is not realistic to attempt to find someone to fill his shoes and do all the things he does.

We believe that we need to find a small team of people to do some of the work and support a new publisher. Apart from any reporting of events, writing or

sub editing copy there is the collation, laying out and taking or finding of photos to do and then the editing as well. In addition there is the job of finding and retaining advertisers. Fortunately Richard is not leaving in a precipitate manner so there is a short period in which we need to manage the change.

Anyone, professional or amateur and from student to pensioner, who wants to be a part of the production team is welcome to volunteer. We already have some people and are particularly keen to find someone who can take over the advertising work.

If there is anything you would like to contribute, please email rapublications@hgs.org.uk or write to me at 11 Brim Hill, London N2 0HD.

TERRY BROOKS,
RA PUBLICATIONS

London International
Orchestra

25th
Anniversary
Celebration
Concert

7pm Sunday 5th December 2010

in the presence of
The Rt Hon Baroness Boothroyd OM, PC

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