



## A SUBURB GOOD FELLOW

featuring John Hewson

*I have never understood why ascribing the term 'do-gooder' to certain people, carries such negative connotations – implying self-righteousness or piety of an unwarranted nature. Even if the motivation behind such good works maybe called into question, surely the end result can be 'good' even if the person may be seeking some publicity for their actions?*

Well, I can assure you that over many years this quiet, unassuming gentleman has been doing much good voluntary work to help others on the Suburb and is certainly no self-publicist. In fact it has taken me several years to get John to talk 'on the record'. As he puts it, "it's actions that speaks louder than the words. Anyway, who wants to read about me?"

John's grandparents became residents of Oakwood Road in 1917 (some 10 years after the Suburb was founded). They moved to No. 8

Brunner Close in 1928. When John's parents married in 1931 they started life in a newly built house in Brim Hill, where John was born. Then, in 1940 during the 'Battle of Britain', their roof was blown off in an air raid so the family were evacuated to Herefordshire where John spent his formative years.

He was educated at the prestigious Hereford Cathedral School although in his modest way he insists that I make it clear that he "did not have the vocal prowess to be a chorister."

When John married in 1953 he moved back to the Suburb and to the house which had been owned by his grandparents in Brunner Close. He and his wife Wendy downsized and have lived in Homesfield since 1989.

Although John's father, who was in advertising, had encouraged him to have a proper job as an accountant, John had set his sights on something more adventurous. So, after National Service, he took a job in the advertising department of the Sterling Drug Company. However, being young and somewhat impetuous he recalls asking his boss "can you assure me that I will be earning a minimum of £1000 a

year (a high salary in those days) when I am 30?" As the answer was no, John joined the media department of Foote Cone and Belding. After 13 years he was attracted to a trendy, more remunerative and enjoyable life at one of London's most exciting advertising agencies, Collett, Dickenson and Pearce, where he subsequently became Media Director, a very senior role. The agency won numerous awards for memorable campaigns such as those for Hamlet cigars, Silk Cut, Benson & Hedges cigarettes, Heineken and Cinzano. As John jokingly puts it, "we specialised in creating advertising for things that are bad for you!"

On the Suburb John is probably best known for his work with HGS Fellowship. He and his team have been responsible for a major increase in attendance, particularly for the popular Tuesday afternoon talks. He describes the charity as for the over 60s but in practice caters more for the over 70s, of which 90% are women.

Activities include Keep Fit classes, Scrabble Groups, Share a Poem, Croquet, Reading Groups and Music Recitals. "At Fellowship we offer people company and a broad stream of interests. We can provide transport to Fellowship House on Tuesdays for those who need it, home visits and help our members with shopping if they are housebound."

Another leading light at Fellowship, Peter Falk, describes John like this: "An unsung hero who spends so much of his time supporting others in the Community in a wide variety of ways and an excellent Chairman of Fellowship, who leads by example by being involved in so many of its huge range of activities." John and his wife Wendy are also helpers at Abbeyfield, the local residential home for the elderly.

John's other volunteer work is at the opposite end of the age spectrum. He undertakes weekly reading practice at the Garden Suburb School where his son was educated (his daughter went to Brooklands) for youngsters most of whom have English as a second language. As he puts it, "I find this both challenging and rewarding. In my present group I have a mixture of 12 different languages which the children speak at home, including Chinese, Japanese and Polish. Their appetite for learning is just amazing and this oral work could in itself be a full time job."

Although back trouble has forced John to give up golf he is still a keen walker, but he has a laugh about it: "there are just too many hills on the Suburb, Erskine, Hogarth, Temple Fortune, not to mention Brookland – it can be a bit much for someone of my age and condition! Which reminds me the bench on Asmunds Hill needs replacing with another really low one specifically for the likes of John Hewson."

"I have always loved living on the Suburb. It's so pretty (especially late springtime), the air is clean, it's relatively crime-free and despite the massive increase in the number of vehicles it is still possible to enjoy walks on the Heath Extension, Golders Hill Park and Kenwood."

John's favourite walk is as follows: "start at the car park at Kenwood and turn right, off the main path, through the trees 'the plantation' cross the open field and continue through the trees until you can come down to the Vale of Health (if you have a dog this is the place for them to swim). Progress from the Vale, down to Hampstead ponds and then up to the top of the hill, the tumultous, where the views over London are fantastic.

Now walk down to Highgate to ponds, past the ladies swimming pond and back to Kenwood where you enter the restaurant for a well earned tea or coffee and a macaroon. It should take about an hour – and it's so pleasurable." **S**

**Trust (trust) n.** reliance on and confidence in the truth. Custody, charge or care. (Sp in **Hampstead Garden Suburb** – members elect four Trustees to the **Trust Council** in whom is vested legal powers to preserve the character and amenities of the **Suburb**.)

## The Trust requests the pleasure of your company as a member

The Trust Council would like to see more Suburb residents represented as members. The sole requirement for membership is to have lived continuously on the Suburb for three years.

Many residents come to live here because it is a unique environment and support the aims of the Trust in trying to preserve the Suburb's character and amenities.

All residents who believe that the job we are trying to do is worthwhile should be members of the Trust. New residents are now welcome to join as associate members.



**HAMPSTEAD - GARDEN - SUBURB - TRUST**

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