

# Suburb News



**Her twentieth Proms and still going strong, page 4**



**Suburb celebrates the Jubilee, back page** **HBS girls swing back to the 20s to celebrate centenary, page 3**

## Jonathan Ross opens saved Suburb Library

Jonathan Ross told a delighted crowd in Hill Rise on June 28 that he was "thrilled to be able to be here to officially open the Garden Suburb Community Library." It was only two months after the library had been closed by Barnet, since when some 70 volunteers had been trained and the library was welcoming customers old and new. Barnet Council announced in June 2011 that it would close two libraries due to funding cuts, but a petition attracting 2,500 signatures organised by Debbie Warland (our Style pages editor) and Neville Silver, followed up by the backing of the Residents Association, had saved it for the Suburb. Introducing Jonathan

Ross, Jeremy Clynes, RA Treasurer, said that "I and my co-director, Jonathan Seres, RA vice chairman, thank Councillor Rams, and our three local councillors, but especially John Marshall who has given us great support over the past few months as have the Barnet library team headed up by Mike Fahey. Jonathan Ross told the crowd "It's such a beautiful little building and it's so heartening to see everyone gathered today to celebrate it. Libraries are about so much more than just books. They're much more important – they provide a place for the community to gather. It's vital that we support them. This is a lovely place to live and we're

really lucky to have such a sense of community. This is proof that people power can work." One volunteer, Ruth Beedle, said: "It's so important to support local libraries like this. What's been so lovely is that everyone, young or old, has come together for the sake of the community." She added that attendance at the toddlers singing group has doubled and a story time for children has been introduced. There are now also plans for an adult book club. Garden Suburb Councillor John Marshall said, "I'm delighted that the council listened to the community. I look forward to many more years of it serving the local people."



Jonathan Ross cuts the ribbon at the opening ceremony of The Suburb Community Library helped by Jana Teteris, Jeremy Clynes and Hetty Colchester



Rev Alan Walker and Rabbi Dov Kaplan



A hug for Debbie Warland



Cllr Rams, Cllr Marshall and Janet Elliott

## A plea to put the Suburb first

Before our next edition is out, we will have had this year's Annual General Meeting of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust and also an election for a new trustee to replace Judith Chaney who retires by rotation. I wrote last year urging you to become members of the Trust and to use your votes to ensure the election of a candidate who would protect our Suburb from inappropriate development and not work to deny the Trust the resources necessary to do so. I am worried about the possibility of a representative of the Concerned Residents winning again this year. This is principally because of what has been, to date, their major policy. They wish a reduction in the level of the management charge and use 2004/5, when the Trust was on

the brink of bankruptcy, as their base for comparison. The Trust has said it expects the charge now to vary within a range of £100 to £140 with adjustments for inflation. This has been so for the last six years. Perversely the Concerned Residents have in fact increased the cost of the charge in recent years by their actions in challenging it (see SN110, page 9, letters) and by doing so added considerably to the staff workload as well. The result of the present Trust administration's policies have turned it into a much more professional body which is now financially secure and able to do its job better. It has responded to the criticism voiced at the last AGM with new proposals for the conduct of consultations. The Trust has to be able to take

legal action where it feels it is necessary and after having taken advice. I do not think anyone can predict what the effects of the present revolution in planning law will be, nor how Barnet's new proposed privatised planners will behave. To my mind the Trust needs our support now, not a kind of fifth column within its own membership. If the Concerned Residents principal interest is in minimising the management charge by cutting staff and avoiding legal action in planning disputes, the consequences for the proper functioning of the Trust could be damaging. Their complaint is about an annual charge that helps protect and maintain the Suburb, but which costs less than a TV licence. It also has arrangements for helping those

## Institute chairman goes but says "we're safer now"

who have real problems paying. Finally it is very important to say that the above represents my personal views and not those of anyone else or of any group. I would now urge you to vote for Claire Calman, an independent candidate who puts, by supporting the objectives of the Trust, her responsibilities to the Suburb first, and is not 'concerned' with other things. TERRY BROOKS, EDITOR

Stephen Brain, chairman of the HGS Institute since 2010 resigned his position in June. His decision is believed to be the result of a difference of opinion about the conduct and timing of staff changes. However he told Suburb News, "I never considered it a permanent role; more an emergency one for a relatively short time." He had been surprised when he took over by salary levels, "high for the education sector," and the cost of the East Finchley building "£220,000 a year rent – sheer vanity," he said. "In March 2011 we were very close to winding up." They were helped by the kindness of McDonalds, a very good landlord willing to accept a lower rent and taking what Mr Brain called an American line that something was better than nothing. An attempt to move from the Allied Irish Bank had been helped by Mike Freer MP but had not succeeded. "I now feel that the Institute is in a much safer position." He paid tribute to the trustees, in particular to their finance skills and to RA representative Janet Elliott. Trustee Greville Waterman is now acting chairman and is very positive that there is a future for the Institute. "We are the guardians of a great tradition of offering adult education for everyone based largely on the arts but we have to restructure to make us fit for purpose" he said "I hope for a change of approach from the Council where added expertise is needed. Approaches from potential trustees from the Suburb are welcome." The future is dependent on the sale of the new Arts Centre, off Bishops Avenue, which is being forced on the Institute by the need to repay a £3.7million bank loan. The building is on (continued on page 2)

## RIBA Awards for School

Architects of the new Henrietta Barnett School buildings in Central Square have won the RIBA Award 2012 London and two British Council for School Environments Awards. The first is an award for Excellence in Design for Teaching and Learning and the second is for Excellence in Design for Heritage.

## Passionate Suburbites

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A break in the weather let hundreds enjoy the Residents Association picnic on the Square on July 15

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