

Jane moves on to pastures new

Before she left us for pastures new, Suburb News spoke to Jane Blackburn about her time with us as Manager of the HGS Trust. Asked about the path that led her to the Suburb she explained that although she originally qualified as an architect it was her work experience which brought her here.

Jane spent ten years working at the Royal Opera House in their housing department where she found herself representing the interests of building users within the organisation and acting as a kind of interpreter of the technical aspects. She said it was a huge organisation (Suburb News checked the website and it is huge) presenting a consequent diversity of experiences and challenges. It was also great fun to work for.

When the time came to move on, it was from one prestigious organisation to another in the form of the Royal Shakespeare Company. Jane was struck by the influence of the company in Stratford and the interrelationship between the company and town.

After working for two large well-known organisations with building programmes and complex relationships with building users and local communities, coming here was quite a change. However the position at the Trust was a wonderful opportunity to work in a special organisation in a special area, the Suburb, and it suited Jane professionally by building on and broadening her previous experience, while also being convenient personally as it was not far from home.

The thing she found the most surprising was that the Trust had seemed unaware of, and had not anticipated, the strength of the legal framework that underpins its ability to resist inappropriate development. Hence in recent years we have seen the testing of the support of the courts for the continued conservation of the Suburb.

More problematic for her was convincing residents that the Trust tries to act in the best interests of the Suburb and those who live in it. She also often found it difficult overcoming the suspicion some have of the Trust and explaining the limits of its powers, particularly in the area of compulsion.

Asked about achievements she mentioned two that she felt had occurred during her time in the job. One was the winning of cases that helped to secure design guidance with legal backing. The other was the reorganisation of the Trust's finances, which resulted in the recovery of financial security and the emergence of financial stability.

The memories Jane will take with her are, almost unbelievably, all positive. She particularly enjoyed the many walks she led over the years, meeting people from all over world, and giving explanations to the participants. The Conservation Area Appraisal was full of discovery and a chance to learn new things. She will remember with fondness the organisation and the staff

with whom she worked. She also said how much she appreciated the opportunity offered to work with builders.

Although she is taking early retirement from the Trust, she is not putting her feet up as she is moving on to a new challenge; becoming the chairman of a new co-housing scheme in Colchester with 23 houses and flats which share one common house. A scheme which allowed Jane to offer us a quote from a foreword written in 1907 by Raymond Unwin for a booklet called Co-partnership in Housing about the Hampstead Tenants' Societies which talks of "those who associate to accept and enjoy the sharing of great things in place of the exclusive possession of small things."

For relaxation and clearing the mind she likes walking. Holidays are often spent in the Lake District or taking on walks such as a recently completed 120 mile excursion on the South West Coastal Path. She told of also recently being press-ganged into cycling, but that is another story.

TERRY BROOKS



LIO – a dedicated performance

True to its title, the London International Orchestra looked towards both the east and the west, in a cleverly-devised programme of Russian and American music. On 25 February, a well-attended audience in the Free Church was treated to some splendid performances, conducted by Paul Wynne Griffiths, a long-standing member of music staff at the Royal Opera House.

The overture to Leonard Bernstein's musical, *Candide*, opened with a tremendous burst of energy and the conductor gave the orchestra its head in a colourful, lively rendering of music that could not have been anything other than American.

Koussevitzky started his career as a double-bass player and was principal in the Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra. He became an international conductor and is remembered for his long tenure as music director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. In 1905 he gave the first performance of his concerto for Double Bass and string orchestra. This single-movement piece of his which is beautifully written for the instrument, is rarely performed, because there are so few players who are capable of doing it justice.

Sixteen-year-old Matthew Paris is a notable exception. He imbued the solo lines with the sonority and tonal beauty of a cello, notably in the yearning middle section. He used his controlled vibrato to make the audience hold their breath and ensured that the romantic flavour never degenerated into oversentimentality. Matthew's mastery of the instrument was underlined by his skill in projecting a testing passage of harmonics with purity and clarity. In him, we were privileged to hear a musician of the first order: I would predict that he has a most distinguished career before him.

Matthew dedicated this performance to his late grand-

father, Nathaniel Paris, who had sadly passed away very recently, aged ninety. He had been a good friend and colleague of John Bakewell, principal double bass of the London International Orchestra, who paid a moving tribute to him and to their long collaboration in the double bass section of the Royal Opera House Orchestra. Nat, as he was generally known, was a popular member of the LIO as well.

In the exciting and lively performance of Borodin's *Polovtsian Dances*, the LIO strings excelled themselves in creating a wild, primeval atmosphere with some deftly bold pizzicati. The bass drum enhanced the thrill of the action. Throughout the work, the conductor kept a tight rein and retained an impeccable ensemble in the rapid urgency at the end of the dances.

Rachmaninov's huge, romantic *Symphony No 2* took up the entire second half. From the sombre and passionate introduction of the first movement to the exultant conclusion, the orchestra displayed

a sense of relish in all departments. In the mocking downward motif in the second movement, we heard some distinguished playing by the horn section. And finally, some expressive poetry from principal clarinettist, Colin Bradbury, in the third movement, will stay long in the memory.

DAVID LITTAUR

You can hear the LIO at the Last Night of the Proms on 28 June at St Jude's Church.



Paul Wynne Griffiths

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Central Square Tennis Courts



The Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust is in the process of refurbishing two tennis courts at Central Square for the use of residents.

One court is ready for use, having been cleaned and re-painted, and we expect the other court to be refurbished in 2015/16.

The courts are for use by Suburb residents and are available for hire free of charge to all residents and their guests.

Please book your time on the courts online via the Trust website:

tinyurl.com/hgstc

Please note that these courts are only to be used by those people who have booked for a specific time period. They are not to be used for tennis coaching, by non-residents, or for any other purpose.

Should you have any queries, please contact the Trust office: mail@hgstrust.org, 020 8455 1066.

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