

The Suburb in World War Two

We at the Hampstead Garden Suburb Archives welcome memories of Suburb events, copies of old letters of local interest and photographs. Anne Lowe recently brought us her collection of family photos, with explanations. Her grandparents were pioneers – they moved from Hampstead to the Suburb in 1908 and were allocated a new house in Willifield Way. Later, Anne lived with her parents close by in Erskine Hill.

The photo shows Anne arranging flowers in the garden. She explained, "On the right hand side of the picture is a gap cut through the privet hedge. There was also a cut the other side so that our neighbours could share the Anderson air-raid shelter further up the garden. This shelter was used by all of us during raids. Eventually we were issued with a Morrison shelter which took up most of the front room of 37 Erskine Hill, but was essential as I suffered from bad asthma attacks and the flooding in the Anderson did not help."

During the 1939-45 War, the Suburb was hit by 57 HE (High Explosive) bombs, five oil bombs, four parachute mines, and two V1 flying bombs. There was a great deal of damage to property as can be seen in the remarkable collection of photos in the Archives. These photos were taken illegally with a box camera and were confiscated by the police. Surprisingly, they were returned to the owner after the War.

A total of 27 civilians died in the raids. The worst raid was on 25 September 1940 when a parachute land mine killed two families in Coleridge Walk and four more people nearby. The Club House, the popular social centre, was also destroyed.

Micky Watkins (Acting Archivist)



Michael Holton researched this and his work is deposited in the Archives. Michael also paid for the Memorial Gate at the Erskine Hill entry to Bigwood.

The Hampstead Garden Suburb Archives Trust
exists to preserve the history and culture of the Suburb

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Henrietta Barnett: A philanthropic hero



This was the title of the talk given by Charlotte Hopkins of the London Metropolitan Archives in the latest of the series of winter events for members organised by the HGS Trust and held in the Henrietta Barnett School Hall in December.

The talk started by looking at how the concepts of heroism and heroes have been very much masculine ideas and explaining how her original discussion paper was one of the few to feature a woman at the Royal Geographical Society's Heroes Conference in October 2015. The documents at the LMA provided the material to show how Henrietta Barnett could be seen as a hero through an investigation of her work.

Examining studies of heroism led her to define a hero as being, 'admired for courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities'. We then heard why Henrietta amply fulfilled the necessary criteria to earn recognition as a philanthropic hero.

She and her husband, Samuel, played an important part in the historic change that was slowly taking place through the movement for social reform in the second half of the 19th century and first half of the 20th. We were told of her being among the first women to be elected as a Poor Law Guardian in the 1880's and helping to provide employment.

They were both also involved in the establishment of Toynbee Hall in 1884 as part of the settlement movement providing education and alleviating poverty. She also played a part in the founding of Whitechapel Art Gallery in 1901, which was one of the first public galleries for exhibitions in London.

Then, of course, there was our Suburb in 1907. A suburb where the classes would live together and put in practice her belief, displayed in 'Practicable Socialism: essays on social reform' in 1888, that social reform needed to touch social relations and bind classes by friendship. A belief that was lifelong as she wrote in The Times in June 1930, "The division of classes is one of the deepest of our social wrongs and one of our gravest dangers..."

It was to be a place where "all classes could live in neighbourliness together with friendships coming about naturally without artificial efforts to build bridges between one class and another." Woods and public gardens would be free to all tenants and divisions would not be walls but hedges. Some might find this a contrast with the new

developments in London today with separate entrances and facilities for rich and poor.

The Barnetts were also aware of the importance of what was known as the Woman Question and Samuel Barnett said, "The state should repeal all laws and abolish all customs which tempt men to lord it over women, or which interfere with the complete development of women's nature... I would abolish all laws which prevent women developing themselves as they choose."

The photo we were shown of Toynbee Hall was composed entirely of men and Henrietta was aware of this, but on Toynbee Hall's website there is now a section dedicated to Henrietta Barnett, which acknowledges that she has often been overlooked.

We were treated to a quote from her book, 'Matters that Matter', from a Mr Sanday, "Well, Mrs Barnett – but you are only a woman – now if you could get a few men behind you, it would be all right."

She has her memorial in Central Square and her obituary in June 1936 remembered that, "For more than 67 years her life was a strenuous and usually successful effort to benefit the community. Endowed with great energy and initiative with strong common sense coupled with irrepressible idealism, she leaves many monuments of her activities. An outstanding and great personality."

Having made the case for Henrietta Barnett's heroic status, Charlotte Hopkins concluded with thanks to Micky Watkins

for her excellent publications and left the audience to reflect on how Dame Henrietta might feel on the progress that has been made in the areas of British life which meant so much to her.

ONLINE ARCHIVE ACCESS
As a postscript to the lecture we were told about accessing the LMA's online archive and how we could go about getting copies of the plans of our own house should we want to. There are charges for the various services available depending upon what is wanted and whether you visit the LMA in person or not.

Eventually we hope to be able to provide more detail on how to go about this and the costs involved on the HGS website, but in the meantime the LMA site can be found at www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/lma.

TERRY BROOKS



The mystery of the missing cock and fish



2015 felt like a windy year and living on an island sitting at the edge of an ocean and a continent is a windy place to be, but the storm in the third week of November gave residents who are members of the RA and subscribers to the HGS List e-mail forum, an unusual subject of discussion and a bit of education.

For readers who are unaware, St Jude's lost its cockerel and its fish! We were alerted to the fact by David White, the Churchwarden, who asked if anyone had seen them because they had disappeared and could not be found.

The pair of them serve as a weather vane on top of the spire, with the fish fixed on the north south axis and the cockerel showing the wind direction.

Micky Watkins told us they were apparently part of a present to Henrietta Barnett on her 60th birthday, and from her bedroom at 1 South Square she would have been able to see which way the wind was blowing every morning.

Alan Walker informed us that the cockerel is associated with St Peter because of his three-

times denial of Christ before the cock crowed. It is also understood as a symbol of the dawn, the new day, and therefore in Christian imagery is a symbol of the Resurrection. Pope Nicholas I ordered every church should prominently display one, and most eventually did so as a weather vane. The fish is a well-known Christian symbol and is also associated with St Peter who was a fisherman.

All sorts of theories – theft, cocknapping and more – were mooted on the List, where the subject generated nearly 100 e-mails, and even a poem. In the end both the cockerel and the fish were found by the

church drone to be lying on different parts of the roof.

They were both subsequently recovered and are to be put back in their rightful place in due course.

As can be imagined, it's not an everyday job. It is hoped Suburb News will be able to report on the successful accomplishment of the task in a future issue.



PHOTOS: HENRY WALKER

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