

Suburb Bloggers



After a single issue hiatus our Blog News returns with details of a couple more bloggers who responded to the call. I hope after reading this more of you will be in touch to let us know of your participation in the blogosphere.

Carla Zazueta originally comes from Mexico but is now married to an Englishman, has two

small children and has lived in East Finchley and the Suburb for almost 14 years. If you like Mexican food or like the idea of cooking it, and she even gives lessons, her blog is for you. She's present on a range of social media like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. You can find out more about Carla and Mexican cooking at www.mexicanfoodmemories.co.uk.

Naava Carman's blog could not be more different and will probably appeal to a more limited audience, but could be of great interest to both pregnant women and those wishing to have children, as well as their partners. She is a birth doula – one who provides companionship and support around childbirth – as well as an acupuncturist and herbalist. She practices from her

home in the Suburb and there is a lot of information on fertility, pregnancy, childbirth and other subjects such as Finnish quilts on her blog at www.naavacarman.com.

Are there a couple more of you reading this who would like to share your blog with us? If so, get in touch.



A calm mind, good balance and a flexible body – through Tai Chi



“Oh that's the thing where you flap your arms about isn't it?” “Do you make up the movements as you go along?” “Is that really any kind of work out for the body?” The list of questions and misunderstandings about Tai Chi is endless. In fact Tai Chi Chuan (meaning ‘supreme ultimate force’) is an ancient Chinese exercise form suitable for all ages and fitness levels.

As practised now in the West it can be thought of as a moving form of yoga and meditation combined. It helps you improve your physical flexibility, balance and coordination. At the same time it brings calmness to your mind and body. It involves learning a sequence of whole-

body movements and practising them with as much grace as you can, whilst also coordinating your breathing with the movements. Remembering the names of the movements encourages elegance and concentration – wild crane flies; golden needle; bow and arrow; heaven's reach; strum the lute, stroke the tree are just a few of the evocative terms.

For the last six years I have been part of the Jade Circle Tai Chi Club, which meets on Tuesday mornings in the Free Church Hall. It is a club, rather than a ‘class’ because it is run by volunteers who work simply for the benefit of each other. Last July our beloved teacher – long-term Suburb resident Wendy

Brennan – decided it was time to retire. She will be much missed, not only for her teaching skills but also for her kindness and care for all club members. But the good news is that Jon Attrill, who studied with Wendy, has now taken over as our teacher. He has recently qualified as an intermediate level instructor with the Tai Chi Union of Great Britain. Watching his beautiful movements as he demonstrates is, itself, a highlight each meeting.

The even better news for the Suburb is that Jon has now started a class for beginners – at 12 noon on Tuesdays. It is not too late to start at this stage in the year. Jon will help you catch up if necessary. Come along and try it. You will find a friendly group of local people and an inspiring teacher. And you will leave each session feeling refreshed in body and mind. For further information call Jon on 07932 439498 or Margaret on 07860 907779.

MARGARET HARRIS

HGS Golf Society

The first Golf Society match took place at Hampstead Golf Club in glorious sunshine. Everyone was surprised to find such an excellent golf course right on our doorstep. A small group enjoyed a golf clinic, which will be run again for anyone wishing to take up the game.

If you wish to learn more please contact Paul Wenham at paulwenham@hotmail.co.uk.



SUBURB ARCHIVES FROM THE ARCHIVES



Wellgarth Road Nursery School

Great War stunts Suburb growth

The expansion of the Hampstead Garden Suburb ground to a halt during the First World War, as growing shortages of labour and materials hit the housebuilding sector. ‘Our beautiful Suburb is hindered in its development,’ was the mournful observation made by one contemporary.

In the seven years leading up to the outbreak of the War, over 1,000 dwellings had been built on the 242 acres of the ‘Old’ Suburb, and ambitious plans were afoot for a major expansion into new lands that had been obtained in 1911-12. The Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust had acquired 112 acres, and Co-partnership Tenants Ltd - a federal body overseeing the various co-partnership companies that were engaged in building houses in the Suburb and elsewhere - had acquired 300 acres, each being obtained from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Taken together, these holdings covered most of the area known today as the ‘New’ Suburb.

Some building had been started on the ‘New’ Suburb before the conflict, but wartime shortages forced the bulk of its development to be put on ice until well after the Armistice. These new acres, however, did not lie entirely unnoticed. In 1915, the Trust's land was ‘visited’ by men of the 183rd Royal Field Artillery, otherwise known as the Hampstead Howitzers. They had strayed across from the Heath Extension while exercising their horses - a misdemeanour that resulted in their commanding officer receiving a ticking off from Henrietta Barnett.

The next encroachment on the 112 acres occurred in 1917, when the Trust received a Cultivation of Lands Order from Hendon Urban District Council requiring it to set aside 34 acres for allotments. Land near the lower end of what is now Northway was selected for this purpose. It was sown with oats, but sadly this enterprise did little to aid the war effort because the birds from Big Wood helped themselves to the best of the crop.

A small amount of building work continued in the ‘Old’ Suburb, at least during the early stages of the War. Two noteworthy new structures were erected – the Nursery Training School (1915) in Wellgarth Road, and the Barnett Homestead (1916) in Erskine Hill (both of these buildings nowadays contain private residences). The establishment of the Barnett Homestead, which provided accommodation for war widows with babies or toddlers, was widely applauded in the Suburb; but the same was not true, at least at the outset, of the plans to establish the Nursery Training School. This was to be built in one of the ‘better’ roads of the Suburb, and local residents were not best pleased at the thought of working-class girls (with attendant ‘followers’) coming into their neighbourhood to be trained. The Trust turned a deaf ear to these objections.

Significant building work did not resume until the 1920s, with most of it taking place in the ‘New’ Suburb. The rapid pace of inter-war development meant that, by 1939, Hampstead Garden Suburb (which nowadays boasts almost 5,000 individual dwellings) had acquired much the same look as it possesses today.

The Hampstead Garden Suburb Archives Trust

exists to preserve the history and culture of the Suburb

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