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NEWS

AND

VIEWS OF

WOODSIDE

PARK

**Woodside Park
Ratepayers' and Residents' Association**

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News and Views

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE
WOODSIDE PARK RATEPAYERS' AND RESIDENTS'
ASSOCIATION

Volume XIII

No. 3

January-February 1968

EDITORIAL

AT this time of year the Borough seems full of incident, particularly Woodside Park. A really heavy fall of snow, lorries, buses and cars floundering about, Northern Line delays, dogs, Rating of Empty Properties, horse riding and other attendant hazards.

The snow lasted some ten days or so, and such a rapid thaw followed that some lorries filled with snow cleared from roads could have arrived back empty.

The Northern Line delays, however, seem to have been a thorn in the side of Woodside Park for a very long time. A letter of apology from London Transport is printed in this issue and this contains a gleam of hope in its last paragraph. It says:

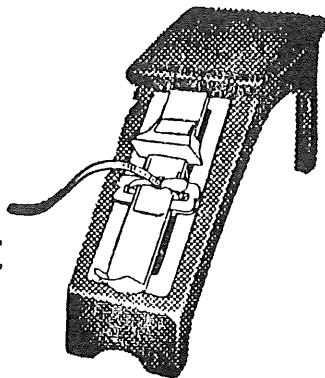
"The better weather will undoubtedly bring with it a reduction of staff absences through illness and this will ensure that trains do not have to be cancelled at short notice when a driver or guard does not report for work."

We are asking London Transport, through the Federation of Ratepayers' Associations of Barnet, whether anyone telephones on behalf of a sick man to give adequate notice that he will be unable to report for duty, because the last few lines of the letter seem to indicate that this does not happen.

We regret this issue is a little later than usual due to circumstances beyond our control.

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Local Notes

Hendon Aerodrome Housing Site

The Hendon Aerodrome Committee of the London Borough of Barnet recommended to the Council that they should approve the use of a rationalised traditional form of construction for the 1,807 local authority dwellings and that competitive tenders should be invited on full bills of quantities to include roads and sewer construction (except main spine sewer) and landscaping.

Comment.—This is something for which F.O.R.A.B. has been campaigning for the past year or more, starting with the Dollis Valley Estate, then West Hendon Development, and finally Hendon Aerodrome. This outcome is satisfactory.

North Finchley Public Library, Ravensdale Avenue

The workroom, recently completed, is, we understand, for the use of the Library Staff and not for public study.

Burning Leaves

Whenever there is a sunny day in late Autumn at week-ends, there is usually a spate of leaf burning with attendant clouds of smoke. Difficult to avoid, no doubt, but some residents wish their neighbours would realise which way the wind is blowing.

Map of the Area

Your Secretary wrote to the Barnet Council on 11th November asking if a map of the area could be placed in a suitable case at Sussex Ring, but the Town Clerk replied, saying that this was not thought to be really necessary, as most people living on the estate knew the locality anyway. Our point was that strangers might find difficulty. We are considering adding a map on the cover of the magazine, which will include not only our own roads but those in a wider area, such as Chiddingfold.

Horse Riding

The overlapping barrier to prevent horses riding along the back of Chanctonbury Way is useful. We have been concerned to see 20 riders galloping horses on the tarmac in Chanctonbury Way. They do not appear to realise the danger of horses taking fright at passing traffic. We are sure they do not come from Frith Manor Riding Stables.

Northern Line Delays

Your Chairman referred this matter (November/December issue page 5) to London Transport through the Federation of Ratepayers' Associations of Barnet (F.O.R.A.B.). The following reply has been received:

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London Transport

Dear Mrs. Cairns,

6th February, 1968.

Thank you for your letter of 14th January.

I am sorry that the Barnet Ratepayers' Association should have had cause for complaint about the service on the Northern Line this winter, particularly during the morning peak period. We have to admit that since October the service in both peak periods has been below standard on a number of occasions and the reasons for this have been either staff shortages or rolling stock defects. Inevitably when a train is cancelled because there is no crew available to man it, or because of a defect, a gap in the service is created and trains tend to run progressively later because of the additional passengers they are called upon to carry at a time when they are normally already crowded. It is in such circumstances that a single incident in the course of a peak period can slow down the service as a whole and cause passengers to arrive late at their destinations.

I need hardly say that we are not satisfied with the recent running of this line, and we are doing all we can to improve matters. The better weather will undoubtedly bring with it a reduction in staff absences through illness and this will help ensure that trains do not have to be cancelled at short notice when a driver or guard does not report for work.

Yours sincerely,

F. Baker,

Public Relations Officer.

Mrs. J. Cairns, Hon. Secretary,
The Federation of Ratepayers' and Residents'
Associations of the London Borough of Barnet,
133, Longlands Drive, Totteridge, N.20.

Christmas Tree at Sussex Ring

We are going into the question of having a suitable tree planted where one is usually erected. This would save this Association money each year. Our thanks are once again due not only to Mr. Corbett for organising the tree and its erection and later removal, but also to the willing help given by members of your Committee and to Mr. Bathe of the Woodside Stores for so generously allowing the lights to be lighted from his own electricity supply.

The Snow

There has been criticism that preparation for snow this year was not really adequate. We heard that the bin at Lullington Garth contained no grit, or salt. This matter was raised by your Chairman with the Borough Engineer at the Friern Barnet Ratepayers' Annual General Meeting. He apologised and said he would look into it. There is a shortage of staff and their rate of pay, he said, was low.

Mrs. Rosenthal thought that a sand bin was vital at the junction of Southover with Chanctonbury Way. Cars just could not climb up that short but steep hill.

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Snow Clearance

At a meeting of your Committee on 29th January Mr. Cohn and Mr. Hare referred to a simple snow plough attachment which can be bolted on to a lorry or other vehicles. The plough would be angled to sweep the snow to one side. Apparently the Post Office use such attachments and clear whole areas of ground in a few minutes. This might help to solve the problem of hiring bulldozers (as in 1963) because a number of the 350 vehicles owned by the Borough, such as refuse collection vehicles, could have these bolted on in an emergency and start straight from the depot. We mention refuse collection vehicles because after a heavy snowfall main roads get priority from gritters and salt, and the refuse collection in side roads may get delayed in consequence.

Woodside Park Dogs

The following is from a **resident** with whom we sympathise.

"Many people must be grateful to the resident who wrote about those little dogs again in our "News".

May I pass on three recent complaints?

1. From a man: "My poor wife has an awful time with the three children bringing the dirt in on their shoes. She doesn't always discover it immediately, so you can imagine the rest."
2. An elderly woman: "It's awful when I come home at night in the car, tired, and soon find I've stepped into the stuff."
3. A man: "Seen the bit in 'Woodside News' about the dogs? I don't agree about getting the dog to the park—that's supposed to be a place where children can play, but it's not hygienic. I'd like to write and say so, but I wouldn't like the publicity."

So it's a case of "anything for peace" when there is no peace. And how strange that such very nice people can be so thoughtless!

Fido's only legitimate loo is in his owner's garden, all at hand, so it seems rather cruel to make him strain at the leash with a pitiful little face saying: "Get me to the park on time."

Another resident."

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Walmington Fold

A resident has said that yellow water now forms at the bottom of his garden after heavy rain and thinks this may be consequent on the removal of the air raid shelter. If part of the shelter were, say, below ground, it would, before being filled in, form a catchpit for water running off higher ground. Filling it in could raise the water level temporarily in the surrounding ground after heavy rain.

Rating of Empty Properties

Extract from the Report of the Finance Committee of the London Borough of Barnet Council dated 8th January, 1968.

Liability for the payment of rates on empty properties would fall on the "owner" of the premises and the extent of the liability would be for one-half of the full rate (i.e., not the lower domestic rate) after following initial empty period:

- (a) 6 months in the case of newly erected dwelling houses or flats.
- (b) 3 months in the case of all other dwelling houses and flats and other types of property.

It was pointed out that the rating authority had no power to remit or reduce the charge other than for the reasons normally applying to any rate liability (e.g., on grounds of poverty), although the Act provided for exemption in a number of special circumstances (e.g., if occupation was prohibited by law or by the action of a public authority).

Apologies and Corrections

In our November-December issue we said: "We believe there may be some delay in the Council drawing up leases for land which they are letting," and mention of the Darlands Estate at Totteridge bought by the Council for £50,000, but," we said, "the legal documents for a lease of 3½ acres are still not in a state for final completion."

The Town Clerk wrote on 9th February, having checked the details, to say that if the 2½ acres of land to which we made reference relates to land proposed to be leased to the Arkley Golf Club (we had no knowledge of this at the time) then the correct area is 9 acres, and it is not part of the Darlands Estate. The sole reason that the lease has not been completed is that the club has decided that it would be wise to await the outcome of certain proposals of the Electricity Generating Board on part of the land proposed to be leased to the club.

We are grateful to the Town Clerk for pointing this out and since we asked: "Surely this (delay) must show a loss of revenue?" we are sorry that the facts were not checked before publication and apologise to the Town Clerk and his department for making an inference which was not correct.

Collection of Subscriptions

We apologise to Mrs. D. Fletcher for having said in our last issue that she would be collecting your subscriptions. This was due to a misunderstanding because prior arrangements had been made with Miss Lesley Hampsher, of 25, Cissbury Ring South, who must also have been caused no small embarrassment, and to whom we have also apologised.

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Work of The Borough Engineer's Department

The Borough Engineer, Mr. G. A. Pentecost, C.Eng., A.M.I.C.E., M.I.Mun.E., A.M.T.P.I., gave a very interesting talk on his work within the London Borough of Barnet at the Annual General Meeting of Friern Barnet Ratepayers' Association (Chairman, Mr. L. V. Adamson).

The essence of the address was as follows:—

There are 21,000 street lamps in the Borough and, although electricity charges have increased 7%, the maintenance charges have decreased due mainly to the increased life expectancy of sodium vapour lamps, which used to last 3,000 hours, but now last for 6,000 hours and so at 4,000 hours per year require changing only every 1½ years. Prices have also gone down because the larger amalgamated Borough obtains larger discounts resulting in a saving of £6,000-£7,000. Barnet carries only a small maintenance staff and the Electricity Board carries out some of the work.

Mr. Pentecost said that sometimes a road is resurfaced and then statutory undertakers, the Water Board, Electricity or Gas come and dig trenches. He does try his utmost to keep this to the minimum. He mentioned also that some people, when applying for a new cross-over from their garage to the road, express concern over a month's "delay", but, said Mr. Pentecost, his department checks with the Water Board, the Gas and Electricity suppliers whether they also want to do any work here and these enquiries and replies usually take a month.

On **Public Open Spaces**, there are 1,900 acres (which is greater than Friern Barnet) and 400 men are employed. Dog patrols are being introduced to guard against vandalism and other nuisances.

Four golf clubs are on land owned by the Council and several football clubs also.

Regarding **swimming pools**, although there is only one indoor swimming pool at Squires Lane, there are a lot of indoor pools in schools. One pool at Edgware was built by the parents, who had spent about £4,000 in 2 or 3 years. Mr. Pentecost visited it one week-end to give any advice he could and thought they had done a magnificent job.

Slipper baths, he said, are a diminishing asset and one at West Hendon has been demolished.



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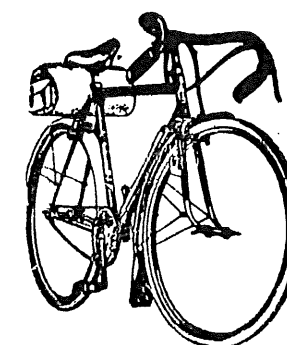
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On the question of **Council Depots**, they had lost out on two, which was inconvenient. One at Cromwell Road, Friern Barnet, will be cut off when a dual carriageway is formed, Mays Lane Depot has been lost, of course, due to the Dollis Valley Housing Scheme, and Bunns Lane Depot also has been given up.

Refuse Collection

There has been a lot of changes. A very large refuse destructor is being built at Edmonton costing £11,000,000 and, although that is longer travelling to Edmonton than to transfer stations at Finchley and Hendon, larger lorries carrying 8 tons will be used instead of 2½ tons. The wages bill for refuse collection is about £200,000, involving the collection of 80,000 tons per year from 100,000 premises at a total cost of £400,000. This, he said, works out at 1/6d. per house per annum.

Welsh Harp

This was not intended as a boating marina, but is a balancing task for the Grand Union Canal. The water level may have to be lowered to cater for the run-off of surface water when the Hendon Aerodrome site is finished.

Vehicles and Plant

There are about 350 vehicles of different types; vans, gully emptiers, street sweepers, ambulances, coaches, lorries, etc., which are all maintained by the Borough. Hiring is uneconomical, but they do hire tar-spraying vehicles only in the summer.

The Squires Lane Depot is to be redesigned to provide workshops.

On the question of **sewage**, the cost of yearly maintenance of the 800 miles of sewers was £80,000, costing only 16/- per house per annum. Eleven men deal with the work.

The great majority of **buildings** in the Borough are maintained by his department, including schools. Two or three painters can pressure paint spray a room the size of the Friern Barnet Town Hall Council Chamber in one day. A classroom a day is commonplace and this technique does away with painting only during the summer holidays.

His department designs heating installations, but does not undertake structural design owing to a shortage of qualified structural engineers. On the basis that, if you can cope comfortably with 100% of the work that comes in you are overstaffed, his department does carry out 75-80% of the work necessary.

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END, FINCHLEY, N.3
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Old Sewage Works at Friern Barnet

The ultimate use, perhaps for open spaces, has not been decided. Some of the land cannot be used, anyway, as it was for many years a refuse tip and by law a number of years must elapse before any building or habitation can take place on it.

Staff

The outside staff numbers about 1,500 and, inside, 300 carry out clerical duties. Which, considering the size of the Borough (7 miles North to South and 5 miles East to West), is an achievement. Mr. Pentecost paid tribute to the quality and loyalty of the men and women in his department. He himself spends an average of 3 nights every week at committees.

Questions were put by a number of people present in the audience, dealing with the possibility of having traffic lights at **Middleton Park/Oakleigh Road North**, where, it was stated, traffic has increased enormously during the last 6 months. Two schools are nearby (and a third school soon) and this junction is very dangerous.

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Mud on the road and footways caused by building operations, such as at **Friern Barnet Lane, Ridgeway**, was discussed and one speaker drew attention to surface water producing mud in **Friary Park**, suggesting that some additional drainage might be necessary.

Another questioner asked what the interval was between **relaying paving stones**, some of which are displaced by frost heave and others by tree roots. The answer to this was that usually his department deals with all the worst cases quickly and welcomes telephone reports by residents. There will be a 15% cut in highway estimates, which could result in a 20-30% cut in work, and so his department can deal with only the worst cases as they arise.

Mr. Pentecost referred to **traffic improvements**, such as that involved in the **New Southgate Development Scheme**, where it was possible that the railway bridge by the Standard Telephones and Cables premises at Station Road would be altered. Heights of bridges are under discussion at present in view of the railway electrification scheme.

Reference was made to **street sweeping** and the great difficulty of using mechanical sweepers along, say, High Road, North Finchley, where cars are parked both sides of the road all day. Mechanical sweepers are useless here to clear the rubbish, silt, etc., which accumulates in the gutters under the cars. They have to start sweeping at 5.30 a.m. They have about 100 street sweepers and the early risers are all volunteers.

One answer that Mr. Pentecost gave concerned **salt** for use by residents after falls of snow. Large bags were difficult for the average person to carry without a car and he himself has ordered from one supplier, The Direct Salt Supplies at Isleworth, who deliver salt in plastic bags which can be kept for two years or more at upwards of 14/- per cwt., delivered.

To another question why it seemed that road **tar-spraying and resurfacing** with chippings always took place in the summer months, he replied that the existing surface was warmer during this time and received the chippings better. He appreciated that in the past on occasion some chippings did become scattered over the pavement, became stuck to pedestrians' shoes and were trodden in houses over carpets, but that now there was a type of precoated chipping being used which adhered better to the road surface, and he thought that, in the future, pavements would be more free of scatter.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Pentecost not only for his interesting talk, but also for spending so much of his spare time in coming to the meeting.