

WOODSIDE PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER, MARCH 1990.

Chairman: Mrs L.Kelly, 46 Lullington Garth.
Vice-Chairman:
Hon Treasurer: Mr K.Buckwell, 151 Chanctonbury Way.
Hon Secretary: Mr W.Hampsher, 25 Cissbury Ring South.

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QUO VADIS?

On Thursday 3rd May next we will be asked to vote in the local elections. It is a strange irony of life that whilst millions are fighting, and dying, on the Continent to establish their claim to vote and nations in the West are encouraging them to do so, in our own country we count it an outstanding event if as many as 30-40% of the electorate exercise their right to elect local councillors when called upon to do so!

Is this because the present state of Barnet, as an example, is so Arcadian; our drainage and highways so admirably maintained and cleaned, public transport so sufficient and punctual, education so adequate and unquestioning and our social and health services answer to our every need and requirement without the hidden fears of what lies ahead in the future?

And what of those who, over the past years, have exercised governance? It is certain nobody undertakes a position in civic affairs these days expecting crowns of laurel to exceed the brick-bats that come their way, however much the latter may, or may not, be deserved.

Time was when the merit of a Council lay in the independence of its members free from the dictates of parties, factions and cabals. Unfortunately they now ape their mentors, as W.S.Gilbert wrote:

"When in that House MPs divide,
If they've a brain and cerebellum too,
They have to leave their brain outside
And vote just as their leaders tell 'em to!"

Local Associations such as our own do their utmost to draw attention to the accruing evils of over-development before making provision for the necessary drainage, roads and utilities to accommodate the development, but to no avail. Small wonder therefore in the recent heavy rains raw sewage flooded Gordon Road and children were paddling in contaminated waters in the Dollis Brook playground. Or that here and now, in 1990! over a hundred houses in the Totteridge and Mill Hill areas are not even connected to main drainage but have to rely on cesspits for their drainage - this within eight miles of Central London!!

What is the purpose of widening existing overcrowded roads to increase or create other bottle-necks a short distance away? Latest proposals to widen the North Circular Road will lead to the destruction of more than two and a half thousand healthy trees, countless hedges and all the consequent annihilation of bird life, foxes, hedgehogs, frogs, squirrels, "protected" owls and bats, numerous species of insects and valuable plants.

Surely there must be a better way than this! Yet if the solution of relieving our congested roads lies in resuscitating public transport, the United Kingdom is at present spending only one-third as much as countries such as Belgium, Italy and Spain to name but three, spend on their rail systems.

The result of water privatisation is now becoming increasingly apparent. The crippling increases in water charges recently announced in certain areas, as much as 62% (Tendring), 56% (Eastbourne) and 50% (West Kent) over a two year period, all foreign owned companies, are but fore-runners of what lies in store elsewhere. Already these companies such as Lyonnaise des Eaux and Generale des Eaux, doubtless have their asset stripping plans to sell their excess lands regardless of future requirements or the present environmental needs. It is anticipated Colne and Lee Valley Water Companies will announce an increase of something like 36% over two years on present reckoning.

Uncertainty in the world of Education has been heightened by a recent legal ruling that residential qualification does not dictate the school to which one's children can be sent. Thus children from Brent or Haringey may well be given preference over Barnet's children within Barnet schools. This has come about mainly due to the winding-up of ILEA as an educational authority. Unless, on appeal, this ruling is reversed this state of affairs may become a fact.

The particular method whereby the community charge/poll tax is operated means that local government is left with little or no option as to how to administer it's affairs. At least under the old system we had the pretence of local autonomy. Now even this is swept away.

We venture to suggest these things take place, to a large extent, because the voice of an independent majority in local affairs has been crushed under the wheels of the party juggernauts, oiled by the indifference of an electorate who cannot be troubled to vote when the time comes to do so.

So once more on the 3rd May we stand at the cross-roads like that apostle of old deciding the way ahead "Quo vadis" - whither?

CAROL SERVICE.

A little over forty residents attended the carol service on the 16th December, in between heavy rains all morning, and high winds and rain well into the night. How lucky we were to squeeze our singing in between the two! Also how fortunate to have such helpful residents as Lucille providing the refreshments, our musicians accompanying the singers and the working party for the erection of the tree and lights which defied the worst the windy weather could offer. We are also indebted to Blake's Valet Services for providing current to light the tree. Imperial Cancer Research have asked us to thank all those who gave so generously at the service raising £14.35d for their funds.

R E M I N D E R

It is hoped to hold the annual CHEESE and WINE
evening this year on Thursday 24th May
7.30pm at Frith Manor School.

Tickets £2. will be obtainable at the door
to include refreshments and a glass of wine.

WOODSIDE PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER, JUNE 1990.

Chairman: Mrs L.Kelly, 46 Lullington Garth

Vice-Chairman:

Hon Treasurer: Mr K.Buckwell, 151 Chanctonbury Way.

Hon Secretary: Mr W.Hampsher, 25 Cissbury Ring South.

WHO'S DRIVING THE 'BUS?

From the time when Edward III took the government of London away from the oligarchy of the rich City Merchants and made it the centre of future national administration, the Capital has always been held to give rise to special problems of government in itself, eventually necessitating the creation of the London County Council in 1889 and latterly the Greater London Council in 1965.

Over the years London has of course expanded in area and increased in population. In 1800 it was just over a million, in 1900 it had grown to six and a half millions and just prior to the outbreak of the last war was, in 1939, at it's peak of about eight and three-quarter millions. Nevertheless, since that date the population has decreased to six and three-quarters as at 1980. However, the number of motor vehicles has, and is, increasing by leaps and bounds. It is estimated the present number of motor cars will have doubled by the years 2000 to 2005! Thus this problem alone i.e. the relationship of population to vehicular transport, the difficulties arising therefrom, are fluid and not all in one direction. Add to this the complexities arising within the whole of the S.E. area from the Cross Channel Tunnel alone can only serve to multiply existing or give rise to fresh problems within the London area and environs.

Then again, the concentration of population, industry and commerce bring with them a mass of complex ecological matters that must arise when large populations and pursuits are thrown together.

The point being made is that all the arguments would appear to be for the establishment of a strong local authority (some argue the appointment of a Minister) to control such matters as road plans, railways and public transport, the area economy, housing and public services, education, use density and height zoning and architectural control in planning matters, open spaces, the green belt and recreation etc., etc., in and about the Capital. In spite of such arguments, from the 1st April 1986 the Greater London Council was abolished and approximately seventy-five per cent of the duties formerly undertaken and controlled from County Hall were given to the City of London and the London Boroughs and representatives from the latter were appointed to serve on Committees formed to perform other duties not undertaken by the Boroughs themselves. The political differences, antagonism and rivalry existing between and among such bodies were either overlooked or ignored in such arrangements.

Now, four years later, questions are being asked, as past control drifts gradually into chaos, by persons not always in antipathy to the government the C.B.I., the City Corporation, the London Chamber of Commerce and the London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC) to name but a few, as to whether it was such a good idea to let yet another baby (GLC) go out with the bath water?

Already the danger signals are flying and are apparent to such government champions as Lady Porter (leader of Westminster City Council) and Sir Alan Greengross (former opposition leader on the GLC) who have both and independently, instigated reports to advise on ways out of the growing crisis with the hint that some method of co-ordination and central guidance within the Capital is sadly lacking.

We in Barnet are concerned because we are part and parcel of this great City and must be greatly concerned with any vehicle of government, or lack of it, that affects our own and our childrens daily lives.

How has it come about that a matter of waste disposal, for instance, surely a matter for central control is now "scattered" amongst seven different bodies? London Transport whose big red buses and staff were once the pride and joy of the Capital and envy of the world, is now decimated into eleven sub-divisions and others, awaiting their auction to the highest bidders? Why is the LPAC alarmed that, at a time when London is attempting to reaffirm itself as the financial centre of Europe, in opposition to Paris, Berlin and Frankfurt, she suffers from such limited resources, lack of co-ordination and lessening environmental qualities?

Unless some lead is given to provide a guiding force within the Capital, and soon, either by way of a governing authority or Minister we will continue with this aimless drift at our cost and peril.

Just now we are entitled to ask "Who's driving the 'bus?'".

LOCAL ELECTIONS.

We congratulate our three Councillors Mrs Joan Levinson, Victor Lyon and Victor Usher, O.B.E., on their re-election to the Council. In all three instances their share of the poll was more than double that of their nearest rivals.

THE BROOK

Have you looked in the Brook lately? There are fish actually swimming in it once more. We do not know whom to thank most for this. However we did hear a cleaning party from the Woodside Park Club had been working on a stretch of it. It may be due to some action of the Council. Might be due to some effort ourselves. Over the past year some eight letters have been written to various authorities on the vexed matter of pollution. Whoever is responsible for the improvement a big "Thank You!"

HELP! HELP!!

Assistance is required at "Meadowside" Holden Road, the residential home for the elderly for women to act as "Trolley Dollys" (selling comfort to the residents). Approximately one and a half hours of duty is usually given once a month and without which the residents suffer in some degree. Would volunteers please get into touch with the Secretary (445 - 4278).

R E M I N D E R

Our annual SOCIAL GATHERING will be held on Thursday the 24th May next, 7.30pm at Frith Manor School. Invitations have been issued to our local Councillors, the Crime Prevention Officers of Neighbourhood Watch it is hoped will also be able to attend. Tickets £2. obtainable at the door, to include refreshments and a glass of wine.

WOODSIDE PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 1990.

Chairman: Mrs L.Kelly, 46 Lullington Garth.
Vice-Chairman:
Hon. Treasurer: Mr K.Buckwell, 151 Chanctonbury Way.
Hon. Secretary: Mr W.Hampsher, 25 Cissbury Ring South.

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INTRODUCING "YOUR" RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

We have been taken to task recently, maybe rightly so, in not explaining who we are and the purpose of our existence. Especially when new residents are confronted at their door with someone seeking their subscription to an Association whose existence they were unaware of let alone the purpose of it's being.

Let us begin by saying our Association is one of the oldest Residents' Associations in Barnet and that we have existed over the past fifty years or so to (a) safeguard and extend such amenities as are enjoyed by the residents, and (b) to act as a medium of communication on all matters of interest and complaint between residents and the various authorities and undertakers both statutory and private. We have an elected committee, meeting regularly, and who publish an information newsletter quarterly. Through the Federation of Barnet Residents (FORAB), of which one of our committee members is chairman, we are represented nationally on the National Union of Ratepayers' Associations (NURA).

To this extent therefore, not only locally but nationally we, as a non-political organisation, are representative of local residents. Indeed only recently through these bodies, the Secretary of State for the Environment had under consideration proposals to overcome the scandal of numerous irresponsible and repetitive planning applications made by developers on a single site or property, and made or intended to defeat normal planning procedures. These proposals originated from your own Woodside Park Committee.

We all owe a great debt to those who, in the past, have served our community and helped to preserve, to whatever degree, the pleasant area in which we live. Thanks to their early efforts within five years of the estate being developed the local school was opened on 23rd January 1939. In the sixties they fought long and hard, and successfully, to prevent the CEGB erecting pylons accross Lullington Garth and along the Totteridge Valley. Later when Frith Manor House was gutted by fire the Committee fought against the development of this site for the erection of flats - it now forms part of the Green Belt. More recently your Committee has presented to the Council comments on the Unitary Development Plan and the planning brief for the future development of Inglis Barracks.

Over the past year we have held ten committee meetings discussing such matters as pollution of the Brook, highways, transport, rights of way, land encroachment, Neighbourhood Watch, bus routes, planning applications and objections &c., &c., published the Newsletter each quarter, held a social evening and carol service.

All this work takes place on a voluntary basis and, we would suggest is worthy of your interest and support, especially in the uncertain years that lie immediately ahead in the development of this area.

PROPOSED NEW 326 BUS ROUTE

In June this year London Transport's proposals for consultation with the Local Authorities, in regard to the revision of a number of bus services in the Barnet, Finchley and Wood Green areas early next year were announced. As far as we in the Woodside Park area are concerned, the proposals to replace the existing 26 bus route by a new midi-bus service (No 326) passing through the estate from Totteridge via Chanctonbury Way, Walmington Fold, Fursby Avenue on to Finchley Central will affect us intimately.

From correspondence and 'phone calls made to your Committee there would appear to be division as to the merits and demerits in these proposals. We have accordingly written London Transport inviting their representatives to a public meeting in order to receive the views of our residents and for a general discussion. We have received the following reply:

".....As we will be formally consulting with the local authorities next month (September), we feel it would be too early at this stage to hold meetings to discuss proposals which are only our initial thoughts....."

CONGRATULATIONS

There were numerous and comprehensive displays at the Finchley Horticultural Society's 50th Autumn Show held at Christ Church School on Saturday 8th September. Woodside Park residents were well represented amongst the prize winners Mrs Stenham, Mrs Kerr, Mrs Hampsher and Mr Harrow all gaining firsts in the various classes on exhibit. Councillor Mrs Joan Levinson attended to present the prizes.

DOLLIS BROOK - POLLUTION

To all those who have approached us in regard to this matter, extensive correspondence is at present taking place with the National Rivers Authority, Thames Water, L.B.Barnet, Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher M.P. and Sydney Chapman, M.P., the local Members of Parliament in regard to pollution of the stream. Doubtless this matter will be raised at our Annual General Meeting where fuller details will be given and discussed as to our future action in this matter.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

will be held in the Library at

FRITH MANOR SCHOOL

on Tuesday 2nd October next at 7.30pm.

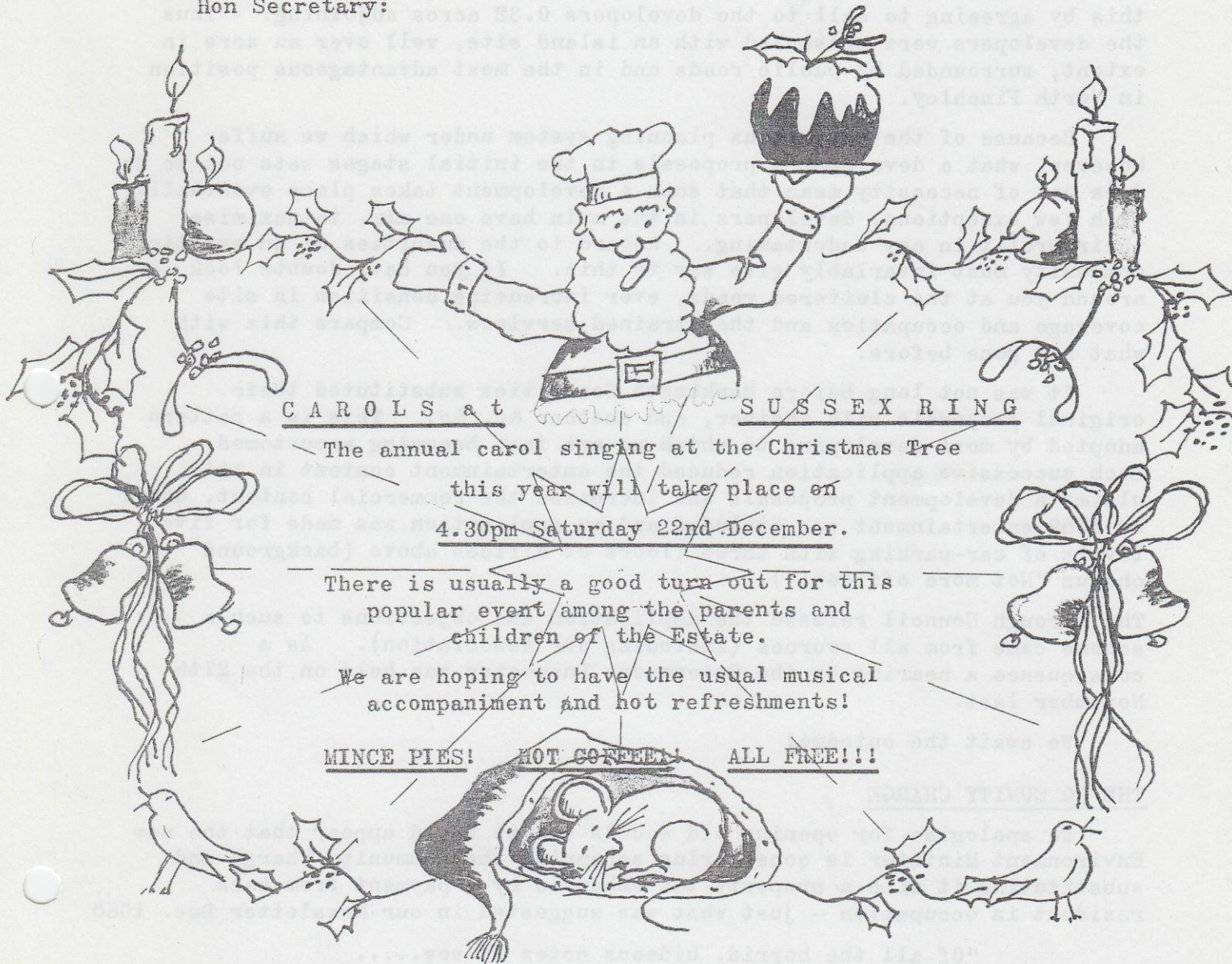
The resignations of your Chairman Mrs Lucille Kelly and Secretary Mr Bill Hampsher, have been received with regret, and nominations to fill these offices, should be forwarded to the Secretary prior to the meeting.

Invitations have been sent to the Borough Councillors and the Crime Prevention Officer to attend.

WOODSIDE PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER, DECEMBER 1990.

Chairman: Mrs J.Weiner, 102 Walmington Fold.
Vice-Chairman: Mr A.Pilcher, 97 Cissbury Ring South.
Hon Treasurer: Mr K.Buckwell, 151 Chanctonbury Way.
Hon Secretary:



THE GAUMONT CINEMA SITE (A Modern Fairy Story).

To a greater or less degree the attractiveness, pleasantness, richness of an area in which to live, can be measured by the provision of entertainment and recreational facilities within that area. Not the least as regards entertainment, whether live in the theatre or screened in a cinema, these may be considered essential for the well-being of a community.

Most of us can recall the time when North Finchley had a cinema "The Gaumont". Built in 1937 by the Ostrer Brothers (Gaumont-British Picture Corp'n. Ltd.) it was one of the largest and most modern of any of the suburban cinemas seating 2,500 persons, a large cafe open from 10.30am until 10.30pm, large stage ninety feet in width with dressing rooms, huge "Compton" organ, car park &c. &c. It had everything!

Nevertheless as with most such gargantuans, changing customs and a variety of ill-judged policies caused their demise including our own "Finchley Gaumont". In 1980 it closed its doors as a cinema for the last time, was ultimately purchased by Markheath Securities for development and was subsequently demolished in 1986. The same developers had in mind to replace the former cinema with two smaller cinemas, a live theatre and offices in their original scheme. The Council gave their blessing to this by agreeing to sell to the developers 0.32 acres adjoining. Thus the developers were presented with an island site, well over an acre in extent, surrounded by public roads and in the most advantageous position in North Finchley.

Because of the iniquitous planning system under which we suffer however, what a developer's proposals in the initial stages sets out to do does not of necessity mean that such a development takes place eventually. With few exceptions, developers in the main have one aim, to maximise their profit in any undertaking. Regard to the amenities of an existing community must invariably give way to this. If you have doubts look around you at the cluttered roads, ever increasing densities in site coverage and occupation and the strained services. Compare this with what had gone before.

It was not long before Markheath Securities substituted their original proposals with another, and another &c. &c. This is a pattern adopted by most developers to which we are fast becoming accustomed. Each successive application reduced the entertainment content in its ultimate development proposals and increased the commercial content, until by 1989 entertainment was excluded and an application was made for five levels of car-parking with three floors of offices above (background chorus "Not more offices!").

The Borough Council refused the application and objections to such a scheme came from all sources (including our Association). As a consequence a hearing by the Government Inspector was held on the 27th November last.

We await the outcome!

THE COMMUNITY CHARGE

We apologise for opening old wounds but it would appear that the new Environment Minister is considering scrapping the Community Charge and substituting it with a property tax enhanced by a payment from each resident in occupation - just what was suggested in our Newsletter Dec. 1986

"Of all the horrid, hideous notes of woe.....
Is that portentous phrase "I told you so" ".

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This was held on the 2nd October last about fifty residents attended. As a result of the elections Mrs J.Weiner was elected as Chairman, Mr A.Pilcher Vice-Chairman. Mr K.Buckwell agreed to continue as Treasurer. Nobody is prepared to take on the duties of Secretary whose duties are now spread among the members of the Committee until a new appointment is made to fill this post. Members of the Committee are themselves undertaking to collect subscriptions which have been held to £1 per household. In regard to the proposed No 326 bus we understand details of the final route and frequencies are being released by London Transport early in December.