The other Mary – doyenne of baking

HGS Heritage virtual museum

A few years ago our Suburb celebrated its centenary having been noted as an important worldwide leader of ‘Garden Suburbs’, with its great housing, gardens, open spaces and amenities – but what of the future? To what extent is our history relevant to our way forward? How can we safeguard our Heritage for citizens in the years to come?

To respond to this question the leading organisations on the Suburb, including the Archives Trust, got together to answer this by setting up a welcome and information centre for enquirers, including students, residents and outside visitors. Also a museum for the display of artefacts and memorabilia – paintings and posters, photographs and letters. Having surveyed all possible sites that we could find on and near the Suburb with scant reward, it has been decided as the first step to set up a ‘virtual museum’ on the web. This will display items and can be used extensively by those with access to the internet. In some cases, this is an advantage as some items such as some water-colours, because of their fragility, cannot otherwise be be shown. A pilot is already nearly complete and we hope by the end of the year that the Virtual Museum will go live. We intend also to work jointly with the Archives Trust, to set up an ongoing campaign to collect Suburb artefacts and memorabilia in private sources. All this will become a permanent and growing repository of the Suburb’s Heritage. We hope in due course to find the space for a real museum and not have to rely solely on what a virtual one can offer.

The work so far is funded through the generosity of the HGS Residents Association and a charitable trust. But we need more person support to help us preserve the best of the past for the benefit of future generations. We lack an Hon. Secretary and we need additional committee members who can take on an overseeing role for some (not too onerous) areas of our activity. For example perhaps a specialist role such as publicity. Through an alliance with the Henrietta Barnett School we are gaining volunteers who can assess, organise and input details for the virtual museum, and hopefully in the future for the collection of heritage items. Expenses are paid.

We have the benefit of our distinguished Patrons, Martin Bell, Sir Roderic Brathwaite, Jane Goodman and Lord Winston who all live on the Suburb. Our present HGS Heritage committee also comprises an impressive list of Suburb dignitaries.

Maybe you, or someone you know, could add some further skill or expertise to this working committee. Contact abbott.simon@virgin.net.

From the Other Side

Hennetta and Samuel, founders of our Suburb – ‘Hetty’ and ‘Sam’ – are somewhere out there (in case you need an eye on the Suburb and, in particular, the HGS Chatline (Samuel is looking at the Chatline on his laptop and Hennetta is reading a book. She puts down her book).

Hetty: Is there anything on the Chatline Samuel?
Sam: (Pears at screen) Not a lot Het. Useful stuff: Servant problems – ‘au pairs’ they call them now – things that to do with people on holiday, theatre recommendations – the usual middle class problems.
Hetty: No sarcasm if you please Samuel – it’s a sign of weakness and unbecoming in a man of the cloth.
Sam: Sorry Het! Oh this will interest you – there’s been a bit of a complaint about hedges.
Hetty: (Suddenly interested and standing up) Hedges? Quite right! There should be a law. I was always having to look out doors and doors people keep their hedges in order. They simply wouldn’t keep them under control at all. Over the place, blocking the paths, cluttering the gardens, creating problems everywhere. I could understand the artisans not knowing about hedges but even the Central Square lot seemed clueless.
Sam: I can’t follow all of it but there seems to be a lot of criticism about the height hedges are supposed to be.
Hetty: (Indignantly, pacing up and down) Goodness me! What on earth is the problem? They’ve got rules haven’t they? If I could go round with a tape measure and tell people off, what’s to stop them? Or do I have to show them how to use those as well? (Pause) Oh, of course I can’t anymore. I’m up here now.
Sam: It’s not so much the measuring but the rules that seem to annoy them – the regulations. In fact, having regulations at all. (Looks at laptop) According to this Chap it’s something do with a ‘nanny state’.
Hetty: Yes, that was awful. I thought it would never stop. More humans to worry about now. I don’t like the thought of people coming up here and all they want are dustbins! Why did I bother?
Sam: It does seem a pity. But we have to change with the times, Het. ‘O tempora, O mores’, that sort of thing.
Hetty: ‘Out lagging lagging more’, – I can do the Latin as well Samuel! Well at least it might provide material for one of your sermons. God knows they need living up to a bit.
Sam: Rather like the Chatline – eh Hetty?
Hetty: I’ll do the jokes Samuel.
Sam: (Angrily) Green bins! What’s the problem now? Don’t they like green bins either? What colour would they like them to be? Pink, red, multi-coloured? Or do they just want to come and empty them for you?
Hetty: (Disagreeing) Green bins. What is the problem now? Don’t they like green bins either? What colour would they like them to be? Pink, red, multi-coloured? Or do they just want to come and empty them for you?
Sam: (Being placatory) Steady on Het – Hetty – you’re not really supposed to lose your temper up here.

Garden Suburb Design Guidance

A fully illustrated Design Guidance for the Suburb has been produced by the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust and Barnet Council. The full colour publication is about to be printed and distributed to new residents, owners, agents and others with an interest in the Suburb. It includes advice on repairs, alterations and extensions to properties and on works to trees and gardens.

Copies are available to collect from the Trust Office and Garden Suburb Library, or by sending a self-addressed A4 envelope stamped with £1.33 to:

Trust Education & Publications Assistant, 862 Finchley Road, London NW11 6AB
A digital copy is available on the Trust’s website www.hgstrust.org

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