

An architect of the early Suburb

100 years ago last month, George Lister Sutcliffe, an architect of the early Suburb, died aged just 51.

As Co-partnership Tenants' chief architect, Sutcliffe designed housing not only for Hampstead Garden Suburb (Creswick Walk was his first group, designed in late 1910) but also in Brentham (Ealing) from early 1910, Penkhull (Stoke-on-Trent), Wavertree (Liverpool) and Wrexham as well as in other Coparts estates all over England.

The following article was published to mark the centenary of his death in the newsletter of the Wavertree Society; Hampstead Garden Suburb Archives Trust thanks Mike Chitty, local historian of the Wavertree Society, Liverpool, for his kind permission to re-publish his article here. Hampstead Garden Suburb Archives Trust plans to explore Sutcliffe's contribution to Hampstead Garden Suburb in future editions of Suburb News.

The architect George L Sutcliffe died one hundred years ago on September 12, 1915. He was employed by Co-partnership Tenants Ltd of London. On the 1911 Census form he described his occupation as 'Architect - design and construction of garden suburbs'. Among his works were sections of Brentham and Hampstead Garden Suburbs in London, Wrexham Garden Village in Wales and Wavertree Garden Suburb in Liverpool.

In Wavertree we know that he was responsible for Fieldway Green (1913) - and indeed all of

the other housing east of Wavertree Nook Road - and that he had assisted Raymond Unwin in the design of the earlier section west of Wavertree Nook Road. He had also, in 1912, drawn up plans for expanding the garden suburb towards Childwall Road. His cottage-style house designs were of the highest quality, and his premature death is probably the main reason why his name is not better known today.

George Lister Sutcliffe was born in Heptonstall, Yorkshire, in 1864. His parents, William and Rachel Sutcliffe, ran a grocers' and drapers' shop at No.1 Main Street, Heptonstall - nowadays numbered 66 Towngate - or 'Top of Town' on the early Census records. Lister was his mother's maiden name, her father George Lister being a Hebden Bridge timber merchant. The 1881 Census lists young George (aged 16) as an 'Architect (Apprentice)'. He worked for Sutcliffe & Sutcliffe of Todmorden and Hebden Bridge - not relatives of his, apparently - and after qualifying as ARIBA he became a partner in the firm. He was responsible for designing a number of nonconformist chapels in the surrounding area (he himself being a Baptist). He also wrote or edited books on house design, construction and 'sanitary' matters, including The Principles and Practice of Modern House Construction (1898) and The Modern Carpenter, Joiner, and



Cabinet-maker: a Complete Guide to Current Practice (1902).

In 1897 G L Sutcliffe married Alice Johnson of London and the couple moved to a house called Stone Slack just west of Heptonstall. At some point he got to know the architect/planner Raymond Unwin who was responsible for the layout of Letchworth Garden City in 1904 and the carpenter/trade unionist Henry Vivian, who was an advocate of the co-partnership system of housing

development. Both of these men were keen to improve the living conditions of ordinary working people and saw garden suburbs on the edge of existing cities as a more practical solution than free-standing Garden Cities on the Letchworth model.

Although Sutcliffe had grown up in the Pennines, where millstone grit was the traditional building material, he quickly adapted his style to suit the south of England. Before taking up the post as Chief Architect of

Co-partnership Tenants Ltd, he designed several large houses in the Surrey and Buckinghamshire commuter belt, in an attractive 'arts and crafts' style with gables and steeply-pitched clay-tiled roofs. These features also characterised the cottages he designed within the various garden suburbs. Even when commissioned to plan a garden suburb for a northern city like Liverpool, he kept to the same style and the same building materials - rather than, for example, using slate for the roofs which was the norm in Liverpool at that time.

Sadly, Sutcliffe did not live to see the implementation of all of his plans. In Wavertree, he had designed a purpose built Garden Suburb Institute on Queens Drive, the foundation stone of which was laid on July 4, 1914. One month later, the First World War broke out, and

before long all civilian building work was brought to a halt. In any case the introduction of rent controls and the inflation of building costs after the war was to make the co-partnership system uneconomic.

Sutcliffe - who had moved to London, and lived at 25 Cannon Place, Hampstead - died in 1915 of heart disease. He was buried in the Baptist Cemetery at Slack, just outside Heptonstall. The centenary of his death gives us an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of a man who, like the garden suburb movement as a whole, was 'years ahead of his time' in recognising the importance of house design as a way of improving the health of the nation, and whose aim was to create new communities rather than just 'places to live'.



MEMBERSHIP FORM

one subscription covers everyone at the address

I would like to join the HGS Residents Association.

PLEASE USE CAPITALS THROUGHOUT

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Email _____

(Giving your Email address helps us keep in touch and reduce costs)

Phone _____

Subscription amount: £ _____ (Suggested minimum payment £15)

Fellowship donation: £ _____ (To support Fellowship, a Suburb charity, in its work for Suburb senior citizens)

Total: £ _____ (Total amount for cheque, standing order, PayPal or credit card via www.hgs.org.uk)

Standing order is best - stays unchanged unless you alter/cancel it!

BANK STANDING ORDER FORM To the Manager:

Bank Name _____

Bank Address _____

Post Code _____

Sort Code _____ Account No _____

Account Name _____

(If different to name above)

Please pay the 'Total' amount entered above now and then annually on 1st February until further notice to:

The Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association.

Account number: 91605747, Sort Code: 40-03-11

at HSBC, 40 Temple Fortune Parade, London NW11 0QU

Quoting Reference (leave blank, RA to complete) _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Please return this form with the bank standing order section completed or your cheque made payable to HGS Residents Association to: **HGS RA, 40 TEMPLE FORTUNE LANE, NW11 7UE**

Minyan renews church rooms for all



May election hustings

Central Square Minyan (CSM) is a growing independent orthodox Jewish community of over 100 families and singles which has been holding services for Suburb residents in the St Jude's Church Rooms on Sabbaths and Jewish Festivals since 2003.

CSM's Suburb roots go back over 50 years through Sabbath evening services which have been held in the homes of various members in a number of locations on the south side of the Suburb each Friday evening.

CSM recently entered into a 10-year lease of the St Jude's Church Rooms - replacing earlier ad hoc rental agreements - and has undertaken a significant refurbishment of the building. This gives CSM an improved environment for its religious services and educational events. Crucially, it also provides a charming modern community venue at the heart of the Suburb which can be hired for lectures, parties and other events. It has already played host to charity lunches, family celebrations, lectures and children's parties. In addition it has hosted AGMs of local groups as well as other meetings, film shows, a packed candidates' hustings during the general election campaign and was used as a general election polling station.

The refurbishment of the Church Rooms has meant

upgraded facilities throughout, creating a space which is light and airy, while retaining the feeling of being a 'venue in the woods' as it nestles among the surrounding trees. The main hall can seat 90 people at tables for a lunch or dinner, or up to



The large hall

150 for a lecture or meeting. There is now also a separate small hall with which can seat up to 30 people for a lecture or meeting. The lighting is much improved, modern kitchen facilities have been installed with new dishwasher, hob and

oven, and - essential facilities, usually little talked about - the new loos are much admired.

For enquiries about venue rental you can either e-mail Beth Laufer at bethlaufer@gmail.com or Chaim Coutts at coutty13@gmail.com.

Property Lawyers

Serving the suburb for 30 years
You'll want us on your side.

For fast and competitive conveyancing, call Oliver Joseph on **020 8209 0166**



746 Finchley Road, Temple Fortune, London NW11 7TH
Email: info@gadllp.co.uk
www.gadllp.co.uk

