



THE ALBANY ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER No. 80

April 1988

This is an extra large issue of the Newsletter which we hope will help to compensate for the long gap since the last one (for which we apologise).

There have, in the meantime, been various Letters to All Residents from our Chairman, George Newman - and of course his Annual Report gave a comprehensive survey of the Association's activities.

It was very nearly a "full house" for our annual general meeting, held as usual in what was Tudor School and is now Tiffin Girls. The occasion was rounded off in a pleasant social atmosphere with wine glasses raised to toast the successful launch of our Albany Riverside Company Limited and the completion (at last!) of the purchase of the Albany Freehold.

Since then we have had to deal with the damaging effects on property and gardens of the great winter hurricane and with the swimming pool - details of both inside - as well as with the usual routine matters.

#### THE LODGE

The Janitor's Lodge, exposed on four sides to the elements, occupies probably the draughtiest spot on the Albany site. Early in February all its somewhat rattly windows and the inner front door were replaced with double-glazed uPVC units. It was a pity the installers chose a day of Force Seven gales to start on the work!

Never mind. All went well, and the new windows have made a world of difference. Mr and Mrs Webb say they are very happy with the results. And that makes us happy too.

#### FEDERATION OF PRIVATE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS

What a mouthful of a title! And it can't easily be abbreviated. Now that we are permanently independent of property-speculating landlords, we feel there is little point in remaining a member of the Federation. So we have written explaining why we are discontinuing membership, but thanking them for valuable past information and advice received.

Had we not bought the Freehold, and been at the mercy of successive landlords selling on, continued membership of the Federation would have been very important indeed. As it is, the Association will now save about £200 a year in subscriptions.

## PEOPLE

Deaths - Sadly we record the deaths of Mr Harry Fugner of 8 Ulster Court; Mr Richard de Kerckhove of 2 Ulster Court; Mr Charles Smith, formerly of Ulster Court, for 13 years secretary of this Association.

Welcome to new residents: Mrs P Vandersluis, 18 Ulster Court; Mrs M J Heppner, 1 York Court.

Mr Paul Temple, 16 Ulster, has again provided all the delightful illustrations to this Newsletter - so once again, Thank you Paul!

Mr Edmund Russell, 4 York, was responsible for refurbishing The Albany name signs at our entrances to Albany Park Road, cleverly adapting some surplus "No Circulars" boards for the names of the three Courts. Now even the postmen have less difficulty in finding us.

Miss Winifred Ferrier, 12 Ulster Court, sister of the great singer, last week attended auditions of the 33rd Kathleen Ferrier Memorial Scholarship. There were 60 entries and at Friday's Final, the Duchess of Kent, the Patron, presented the £5,000 Scholarship to a young bass baritone and the Decca £1,000 prize to a soprano.

The day before, Hutchinsons published a new book - 'Kathleen' the Life of Kathleen Ferrier 1912-1953 by Maurice Leonard. And Decca issued three more compact discs of her recordings. When she died of cancer at the age of 41, a Cancer Research Fund was started. It has done so well that a Kathleen Ferrier Chair of Oncology has been founded at University College London. These two memorials would have delighted her. Miss Ferrier and Mr Leonard can be heard talking about the book in the Brian Matthew programme on Radio 2 at 11 p.m. on May 3 and Miss Ferrier will be reviewing the book in a future World Service programme.

## SMOKE DETECTORS

Domestic fire fatalities and lethal fumes from foam-filled upholstery have been much in the news of late. Following a resident's suggestion that smoke detectors might be installed on all landings, the Chairman made extensive inquiries about DIY items, big building security systems, and Fire Service opinion.

The result, in brief:

Battery-operated units at about £14 can be bought at such outlets as Homebase DIY Centre. Ideally, detectors should be inside individual flats, preferably one in each room. You can get free leaflets about smoke detectors from your local fire station.

The Fire Officer felt that fires would be contained within flats, there being nothing to catch fire on our landings, where the wired glass has a time resistance and all have fire extinguishers, etc. Incidentally the lobby doors to each pair of flats, sometimes propped open for ventilation, are designed to contain fire, and should be always kept closed, therefore, overall detector systems are unnecessary and would not justify cost.

## THE GARDENS

The Albany is fortunate to have such extensive and well landscaped grounds. We are grateful to the earliest residents who, through the Association, supplemented much of the original planting, and to the volunteers who have successively backed up the contract gardeners' work by weeding, watering, pruning etc. In recent seasons, the gardens have suffered losses through frost, gales and the hurricane, or natural old age, honey fungus, disturbance by reconstruction work, and by theft of rose bushes.

Last October's hurricane also savaged the Cedar Trees and practically decapitated the Lime. As all three are subject to Preservation Orders, forms had to be filled in and written permits awaited from the Planning Department before surgery was done - hence the long delay. It may prove necessary to remove the Lime; if so, we will be legally required to plant a replacement tree.

We used to have a Gardens Committee and now, at the Association Committee's request, Mr Frank Armstrong of 4 Brunswick, has formed one again. Serving under his chairmanship are Mrs Frances Roberts of 13 Ulster, for long our sole Gardens representative; Peter and Cynthia Francis, 29 Brunswick and Mr Grenville Lucas, owner of 15 Ulster. Mr Lucas is keeper of the Herbarium at Kew Gardens, where the post requires him to live, but he and his wife hope eventually to make their home in the Albany. Meanwhile his professional advice is proving invaluable to the Gardens Committee.



Maintenance - This year we have a new contractor, Mr Ian Grisenthwaite, Dip. Hort.(Kew), whose work has already brought many compliments. A word of appreciation here for the many hours of hard work Mr Webb regularly devotes to gardening and looking after the garden furniture and the pool.

For Gifts, or Offers, of New Trees and Shrubs, our thanks to Mr and Mrs R Fleming-Yates, 17 Brunswick, who have given us a new ornamental cherry tree to replace one that died; Mrs May Bate, 26 York, for a Malus Tschonoskii (autumn bonfire) replacing gale loss opposite Ulster; Mrs A Spong, 13 Ulster, Mr N Pearson, 11 Ulster and Mrs Roberts, 13 Ulster, who have offered new trees and shrubs.



October's storm has led to considerable extra costs, and there may be other residents who would like to contribute to replanting. However it must be emphasised that agreement on species and siting must rest with the Gardens Committee. Offers, or cheques (payable to Billinghamst Higby-Chard) should be sent to Mr Armstrong.

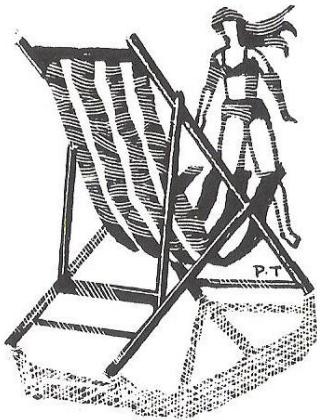
## THE SWIMMING POOL

### Current Repairs

The pool is about 50 years old, with visible evidence of past repairs. Circulation pipework is also old. Before the 1987 repainting, we consulted BTU Poolservices, our suppliers for many years. A technical consultant considered the shell to be sound but advised that it should not be tampered with, also that water levels should be carefully monitored. Through the swimming season levels seemed normal, but at the close we suspected an abnormal loss. Signet Pools Ltd, called in by Billinghamurst to give a second opinion, made protracted tests over many weeks, the monitoring of levels being complicated by excessive rainfall which broke 100-year-old records. They reported on 29 February 1988 that there were leaks through cracks, and produced estimates for repairs. After further consultation with a structural engineer, estimates were also sought from Structoplast, a firm specialising in concrete repairs. Estimates from both firms were circulated to all residents in early March. During the ensuing 28 days, there were comments from four leaseholders:-

- \* one asked how the cost would be apportioned
- \* one discussed the alternative vinyl lining
- \* two suggested that while repairs were afoot, the shallow end of the pool should be deepened. (See below).

As residents have already been advised, by foyer board notices, the contract was placed with Structoplast and work began last week. If all goes according to plan, and weather permitting, the pool should be ready for use for the swimming season.



### PROPOSALS FOR DEEPENING

We're all aware that the mere existence of a heated swimming pool enhances the value of our property. Our swimmers also know that half of our pool is too shallow, so that if you swim lengthways you scrape your knees, and if you circle the deep end you can get giddy. The Committee has never disputed that a deeper pool would be a better amenity.

As far back as 1964, 1965 and 1966, the Committee explored suggestions for deepening the shallow end, the costs and degree of residents' support. They tried again in 1971, but nothing came to fruition. A proposal to raise the water level with an 18 inch high parapet found only 17 supporters in a referendum.

On 26 March 1986 Mr John Reed, 1 Ulster, wrote to the Chairman with a generous proposal, namely that if the shallow end were deepened, a small group of regular swimmers would foot the bill.

At that time, Riviera Pools Ltd estimated £5,584.40 for the constructional work. The idea was submitted to Stanley N Evans, the then owners of the Albany freehold.

At this time the collapsing retaining wall was being surveyed prior to rebuilding, and a contract was placed with R J Holford Ltd to start work by April/May.

Stanley Evans did not object to the proposals, providing that:-

- \* the money was deposited with Billinghamursts in advance
- \* the plans be sent to David Goodwin Associates, structural engineers (for the wall) for approval that works would not be detrimental to the wall being rebuilt
- \* a written undertaking that the pool would remain available without restriction to all residents
- \* the agents obtain from the Chairman of the Association a letter confirming that all residents had been informed and that no objections had been received.

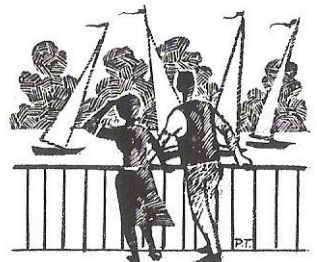
Trying to meet this last requirement alone would be a time-consuming and lengthy operation. The Committee felt that priority should be given to getting the pool re-opened as quickly as possible. Moreover, it would be unacceptable to have two contractors on such a restricted site at the same time. The matter was deferred.

Last Spring the proposals of the Reed group were reconsidered at length, and discussed with a BTU consultant. He advised against disturbing a section of such an old structure, bearing in mind also the age of the pipework and ancillary equipment, the signs of subsidence and continuing "settlement" of surrounding ground, and the possibility of unforeseen problems. Better to stay as we were until the entire installation needed major attention or replacement. Other considerations were dust, noise and disturbance to residents, insurance, responsibility for on-going problems etc.

A three page letter from the Chairman, dated 9 May 1987, explained in detail to Mr Reed, and through him to his group, why it was considered unwise to proceed on the basis proposed. Mr Newman also referred to these events in his Annual Report last October. A letter was received on 12 April from Mr Reed advocating that extensive alterations be carried out now to give the pool a further 20-30 years of life.

Another letter received in April revived the idea of deepening the pool by raising the edge by 450mm all round and graduating the surrounding paving and ground up to it. The Committee would be concerned at the extra costs involved, and probable objections on the grounds of ugliness and obstruction to view to ground floor flats.

Repairs to subsiding paved areas will not be carried out until the current pool works are finished.



### CARPORT THIEVES

Our carports continue to be plagued by intruders, thieves helping themselves to equipment and accessories. Ford models seem specially vulnerable. One car was raided on two separate occasions, its radio, spare wheel and ultimately its entire dashboard removed. In March, a particularly cheeky thief parked a car he had stolen in Ham in one of our carports where he removed all its wheels, leaving the chassis mounted on bricks which he must have brought with him.

Over the years the Association has considered various proposals for improving security, from lines of up-and-over doors, to carport entrance gates, to systems of halogen warning lights.

In the end, responsibility for security must rest with individual car owners, who are urged to equip their cars with burglar alarms.

### Car Stand

Thanks to Mr Webb for painting a car stand near our car wash and battery charger. And thanks to car owners for using it, especially when leaving vehicles unattended. It has made life such easier for owners of adjacent carports.

### NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Mr Fred Pountney has kindly volunteered to be York's co-ordinator for Neighbourhood Watch in succession to Mr H Keen, lately of No. 1, who has now left. So Albany co-ordinators are now:

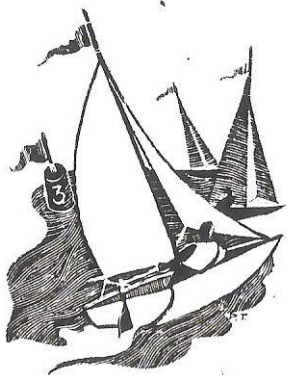
29 Brunswick	-	Mrs Cynthia Frances	Tel: 546 3663
16 Ulster	-	Mr Paul Temple	Tel: 549 4715
25 York	-	Mr Fred Pountney	Tel: 549 9155

Advice from Sir Arthur Snelling, 19 Albany Park Road, our local Neighbourhood Watch director:

- \* If you see a crime being committed - e.g. somebody breaking into a car - ring 999 immediately. The best chance of police catching crooks is if crimes are reported promptly.
- \* If you see any suspicious activity, ring Kingston police on 541 1212.
- \* In either event, please let your co-ordinator know what is afoot.
- \* If there is a recurring problem, leave a message for our Home Beat police officer - Constable G I Ray - at the Collator's office on 541 1212

In our area the most prevalent crimes involve damage to, or theft from, cars. So we should make sure that they are always locked; have registration numbers etched on the glass; are fitted with good burglar alarms; have no tempting belongings on display inside.

THE RIVER THAMES



Our Association is a member of the River Thames Society. Its programmes and activities give residents an opportunity to become more involved in river interests.

We belong to Teddington to Old Windsor branch.

Chairman: Trevor Mawhinney  
0483 225469

Secretary: Mrs Mary Howie  
0932 784528

Forward dates 1988

11-12 June	Branch rally - Ryemead, Sunbury
3- 4 September	Staines rally - 25 Thameside, Staines
11 November	Members meeting
11 December	Christmas lunch at Burnt Stubb, Chessington

Planning matters  
include:

which our Thames branch is currently monitoring  
Turks Boathouse - Kingston  
Flower Pot Hotel - Sunbury  
Riverview Hotel - Shepperton

The branch is also looking at work needing to be done to the towpath at Teddington, and reporting to the Towpath Committee.

Unfortunately we're too late to offer tickets for the Society's own enclosure with lunch, tea and champagne at Henley Royal Regatta, and a boat trip to the Armada Exhibition is already fully booked.

The 11th Traditional Boat Rally, Henley-on-Thames, will be held on 9 and 10 July at Fawley Meadow. Admission: £3 per day, Children under 13 half price. Attractions to include a variety of craft, steam boats, Dunkirk little ships, illuminated Board Run, sub-aqua display, fireworks, band, Food and Drink bars.

Our neighbouring branch down river sometimes has talks at Richmond, or boat cruises starting from there to which members from other branches are invited.

We hope to keep you informed.

## CHARITY COLLECTIONS

The Committee has received complaints from residents feeling they have been "pressurised" by telephone calls from a particular nationally-known charity asking them to become an official collector for their Court. In such a close community, there is a fear of mutual embarrassment where a neighbour might not like to say NO to a collector he or she knows well.

There are about 40 major registered charities who are exempted from getting annual police permits for collections. Clearly if all 40 appointed Albany "insiders" to canvass their Courts, we would have a different envelope collector on our doorsteps almost every week. Yet why should one charity seek an advantage over the rest, when most people prefer to choose their own charities?

This is a delicate problem. The only advice must be: if you don't wish to be an appointed collector, say NO firmly and explain why.

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## COMMITTEE

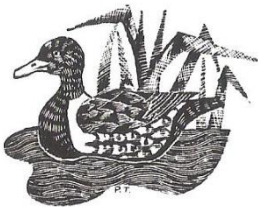
This Newsletter comes to you from the Committee, which usually meets in the first week of each month. If you have anything to bring to the Committee's attention, please contact your Court representative or, if unavailable, the Secretary.



The Committee are:

Chairman:	George Newman (York)	546 0392
Secretary:	May Bate (York)	546 1464
Treasurer:	Frances Roberts (Brunswick)	546 0426

Representatives:	Brunswick - Frank Armstrong	546 8230
	Peter Clarke	546 3276
	Reg Cook	546 7191
	Margaret Parkinson	546 4142



Ulster	- Norman Pearson	546 5385
	Frances Roberts	546 0426
	Alan Spong	546 3993
York	- Edmund Russell	546 5713
	Pam Smith	546 1977