

## THE ALBANY ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER No. 78

November 1986

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The first annual general meeting in the Association's history was held on 10 November at 7.30 p.m. at Tudor School. The retiring Chairman, Mr Hugh Parkinson, presided. The meeting was attended by representatives of 52 flats. Letters from seven absentees supported the freehold purchase.

The meeting:-

- approved the adoption of the new Constitution
- agreed that the Association should join the Federation of Private Residents' Associations
- raised our own annual subscription to £5 per flat
- took further steps towards buying the freehold

After serving as Chairman for the past eleven years, Mr Parkinson had announced his decision to retire in his Chairman's Report, previously circulated to members. At the close of the meeting he handed over to his successor, Mr George Newman, who paid tribute to Hugh's long record of service to the Albany.

George then presided over a happy ceremony which quite took Hugh by surprise for . . . . .

### Happy retirement Hugh!

. . . . . on the platform there suddenly appeared a hitherto hidden bridge table (a little bird having told us that was what Hugh wanted). George presented this as a "thank-you" gift from Albany residents for his many years of voluntary service on their behalf. There was also a cheque to buy some bridge players' "extras" to go with the table. A bouquet was presented to his wife, Margaret, by Mrs Frances Roberts, our Treasurer for the past 17 years and the Committee's longest-serving member.

Hugh seemed quite stunned by these events - the secret had been well kept! Thanking everybody, he said he would always be ready to assist the Association in any way he could.

George Newman - 28 York, the new Chairman, is in his third year on the Committee. Trained as an accountant, he has been employed by a large group as Managing Director of its property interests for the past 10 years, having previously been Company Secretary and Administrative and Commercial Manager.

Our Committee meets on the first Tuesday of every month; if there is any matter you wish to raise, please contact your Court representative.

## Our New Constitution

The Association's new Constitution, previously circulated in draft form to all members, was adopted with amendments listed below. Some members had reservations about rules concerning nominations for and elections of committee and officers, but these were not pressed after Mr H Parkinson, AGM Chairman, said they could be reconsidered during the coming year. There would be opportunities to make further amendments to the Constitution if the majority so wished.

Meanwhile, the Committee appreciated the forbearance of those at the meeting who refrained from urging other alterations so that the Constitution could be adopted quickly. As the Chairman pointed out, the original Constitution, drawn up 24 years ago, did not meet the requirements of current legislation, nor was it adequate to deal with situations arising from increasing costs of maintenance and repairs. In its new form, the Constitution met the requirements of Schedule 19 of the Housing Act 1980 and followed the guidelines for Residents' Associations issued by the Environment Department (housing). This would qualify us for a Certificate of Recognition without which the Association could not represent the residents in any court action.

Please amend your copy as follows:-

2	OBJECTS	Line 3: for 'or' substitute 'and/or'
4	ORGANISATION 4.3	Line 2: delete without nomination
7	VOTING 7.3	Line 2: after "show of hands" insert "including proxy votes"

## Federation of Private Residents' Associations

In view of change of landlords, and our uncertain future, we are to join the Federation (pity it hasn't an abbreviated title!). It is a non-political, non-profit making voluntary organisation of tenants'/ residents' associations in privately owned blocks of flats. It has member associations throughout the UK with a concentration in Greater London.

The Federation provides legal and other advice and information to members, who thus benefit from shared experiences, offers various services and publishes a quarterly Newsletter. It acts as a ginger group seeking to alter legislation regarding tenancy and management of flats and was successful in influencing the composition of both the 1974 and 1980 Housing Acts.

Subscription for an Association with more than 88 flats, such as ours, is £198 p.a. - the maximum. There is also a once-only entrance fee of £40 covering registration.

But by joining on 1 January, we would qualify for three months' free membership because the subscription year doesn't actually begin until 1 April - i.e. our subscription would cover our membership until 31 March 1988.

## Houseboats

Proposals for residential houseboat moorings at the North (Albany) end of Canbury Gardens caused widespread dismay. They would need road access, power, sanitary and parking facilities etc. We sent objections to the Planning Officer, pointing out that this floating camping site would be as incongruous as a caravan site in Canbury Gardens. Kingston Society supports us. Norman Lamont MP held a meeting with objectors including Albany reps. We now have Guildhall's assurance that our views will be taken into account.

## Riverside Hedge and Trees

Following our complaints to the Council that the hedge outside our wall had been left half-pruned, workmen returned to finish the job. There is a possibility that the hedge might be removed altogether. Low-level flats are delighted, as it spoils their view. For high level flats, of course, it masks the road traffic and improves the scenery (but we can't please everybody!).

Following residents' requests, we also asked for the neglected riverside trees to be pruned. Thames Water is liaising with the Council's Highways Department about this.

## Carport Security

Thieves and vandals - how to keep them out of the carports? This was raised at the May general meeting. Mr Parkinson consulted the police who recommend multiple warning floodlights activated by any movement in the parking area. It would mean that our own cars would activate the lights for a few minutes but the alarm lights should also scare off intruders. We have two quotations for equipment and installation of systems with Infrascan detectors activating:-

- a) 6 tungsten halogen spotlights      £1,625 + VAT
- b) 11 enclosed 250 watt floodlamps      £1,700 + VAT

If you have any views on this, contact your Committee representative.

## Pool Area Security

A time-switched sodium lamp is to be installed on an outside pump house wall to help keep intruders from the pool area, end a nuisance to ground floor flats

## CHANGES IN 1986

Welcome to the following residents who have come to the Albany this year:-

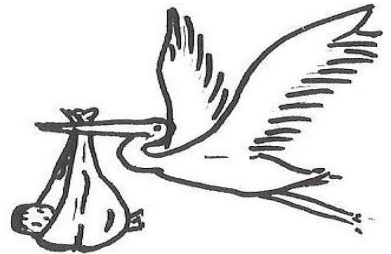
Mr and Mrs D E Austin, 20 York  
Mr and Mrs D Vaughan, 28 Ulster  
Lt Col and Mrs H Docherty, 27 Ulster  
Mr and Mrs Langhead, 27 Ulster  
Mrs Waight, 26 Brunswick  
Mrs Strauss (on the way), 12 York and a

. . . . . specially warm welcome to Daniel, born 15 October to  
Mr and Mrs R R Solomon, 20 Brunswick  
(How nice to have a new baby in the Albany!)

Deaths this year:

Mr E J Scrimgeour, 26 Brunswick  
Mr H Bate, 26 York

Mr R Day, 17 Ulster  
Mrs Z tlackburn 21      Brunswick



### PURCHASE OF THE FREEHOLD

Every resident will have received the Chairman's letter about the proposed purchase of the freehold. It explained the need for URGENT completion and return of the Form (by 24 November).

If you have mislaid this document, please ask the Secretary for a replacement.

Points recently raised by residents show that two matters need clarifying:-

1. Proposed Government legislation would enable residents of long leasehold flats to buy out the interest of an unscrupulous landlord if they first satisfied a court that he had persistently failed to maintain and repair the property. Could such a law benefit the Albany?

At present the answer must be NO. Our property IS well maintained and repaired. We already HAVE the offer to buy the Freehold - without the hassle and expense of having to take any landlords to court.

Surely nobody will suggest we should WAIT for the Albany to fall into such a chronic state of neglect that, after costly legal proceedings, we could buy the landlord out? During such a process, the Albany's value would depreciate alarmingly.

2. "Flying Freeholds"  
To underline George Newman's warning, legal advice is:-

Never accept an offer to sell you, separately, the freehold of your individual flat (called a "flying freehold"). The law in England and Wales makes it virtually impossible to sell a "flying freehold" flat; NO building society will provide a mortgage for one. Its value would slump. Moreover, a block of flats containing flying freeholders and leaseholders would be impossible to manage and become a disastrous shambles.

### ADVERTISEMENTS

(Replies to Janitors Box)

SIXTH FLOOR	2-bedroom front flat for sale.	Box No. 1
WANT TO EXCHANGE	66" x 24" Hurseal radiator, working well, for one approx 52" x 24" maximum.	Box No. 2

### Newsletters

This one cost £8.28 to print (labour free). We'd like to make Newsletters bigger and more frequent - but even two-monthly issues would make quite a dent in our funds. Any ideas for special Newsletter fund-raising? Raffles? Ladies' coffee mornings?

### Christmas

We plan to bring the Christmas spirit to the Albany earlier this year, poinsettias and Christmas trees appearing in the Court foyers during the week-end of 12 December.