

Haven't we had a glorious May! Let's hope that June will be just as nice...especially

SATURDAY 17 JUNE

which is the date planned for our evening "Get Together" in the garden. The Committee thought the event should be run on the same lines as last year: nothing too complicated, so that if the weather turns absolutely foul we can put the whole thing off at short notice and, hopefully, find a luckier date soon afterwards.

Our two buffet organisers are ready to take the same job on again. If you are willing to contribute a Tray or a Plate of something that can be eaten with fingers only, please let them know:
Mrs Frances Roberts, 13 Ulster, 546.0426 Mrs Pam Smith, 23 York, 546.1977
This will enable them to co-ordinate a menu.

The ladies put on a marvellous display of food last year. Of course this doesn't preclude the men from making an offering too, if they wish; we probably have some good chefs modestly hiding their talents.

Once again we'll all bring our own drinks, for which chairman George Newman will arrange an adequate supply of glasses. We trust Freddie Pountney will be good enough to conjure up some tables with cloths on, as he did last year.

Suggestion. We have quite a few artists, amateur and pros among us. Would it be a good idea to use the Garden occasion to mount a display of some of their drawings, paintings, woodcuts, photography? Outdoors, or in the foyers if wet and windy? It's only an idea, but if popular we'd need a couple of volunteers to do the actual organising. Comments, urgently, to the secretary, please.

Planning

ALBANY PARK ROAD

CONSERVATION AREA

EARLY this year proposals were submitted to Kingston Development Committee for the creation of a new Conservation Area based on the 55 residential properties nos. 2 to 36 Albany Park Road and nos. 179-to 213 and 194 to 234 Richmond Road, Kingston.

The Kingston Society then proposed to the Council that the conservation area should be enlarged to include properties, some of which were of a later period and smaller and more cheaply built, in St Alban's Rd, Latchmere Rd and Studland Rd. Details of these

proposals were put up on the notice boards of our three Courts.

Following further consultations with owners and amenity organisations the enlarged area has been designated for conservation. A relief, perhaps, that here at least the bulldozers should be kept at bay!

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ALBANY BOATHOUSE

WE LEARN that Creed Miles have recently withdrawn a one-year old application to have their business re-registered as Class B1, which was said to be merely a "regularising" procedure. There is a strong feeling among local residents that such a business shouldn't be there at all. Protests continue about their riverfront car parking and heavy goods vehicles impeding local traffic. It all seems especially incongruous, adjoining the new Conservation Area.

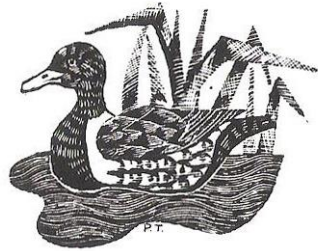
Moreover, the stretch of riverside land is identified in Kingston's development plan as a Strategic Area of Special Character; its use, according to the Plan, should be restricted to public open space, water-related recreational use, other leisure use, and residential or hotel.

Originally, of course, the business in the Albany Boathouse had to do with boats.

FIRE! At present we have portable fire-extinguishers standing on alternate landings of the three Courts. The Committee feel it would be an improvement to have them on all floors so that nobody need run up or down steps looking for one in an emergency. The extra appliances are on order, and should turn up soon. [Ceiling smoke detectors, as recommended by the Fire Service, are best installed inside flats.]

FACELIFTS? Every now and then we get complaints that the lifts are getting shabby, let the place down, need "refurbishing". On the other hand quite a strong body of opinion feels there's nothing wrong with them and we shouldn't spend money on them. So we've been having a look at what the costs might be...
A full-scale refurbishment, including Formica linings, would cost thousands, which we feel is out of the question. At the other end of the scale we could consider a modest rear-wall mirror with a protective buffer rail, and perhaps some concealed strip lighting in the ceiling. So far, quotations even for this have been unacceptably high. If we find anything reasonable, we'll put it to residents for their views.

INTERIOR REDECORATION seems to be going along well, and the two Courts where the work is completed show a great improvement. Under the terms of the Lease this work couldn't be put off any longer.



CARPORTS. We are still pestered regularly by trespassers breaking into cars and pinching such things as engine or bodywork parts, or radio sets, or parking money. Petrol may get syphoned off, and wheels have been known to disappear. Over the years many proposals have been investigated for making the carport area secure, with various alarm systems - but all too costly and none, one should imagine, 100% vandal-proof. The only reasonable measure is for individual car owners to equip their vehicles with good anti-theft devices.

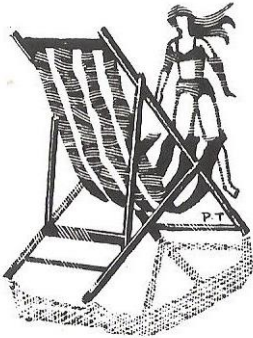
THE HOSE REEL at the car wash stand got very tatty and came to the end of its natural life. Now we have a nice new one.

NEW STRIP LIGHTING has recently been installed in the Lift motor rooms, and also in the rooftop water tank rooms.

SWIMMING

WE WERE ABLE to start the swimming season earlier this year, which was fun. Yes, it would be nice if the pool were larger - but really, we're lucky to have one at all. Perhaps this is the moment to remind all residents, and to invite new ones, to look at page 6 of the Association Housebook. It explains the agreed conditions for Swimming Pool use which we should all take care to observe.

If you should see, or hear, trespassers round the Pool in the night - possibly chucking garden furniture into the water - please dial 999 and tell the Police immediately... all part of our Neighbourhood Watch requirement.



THE REPAIRED and repainted fountain looks rather nice, doesn't it?

SORRY about the area of broken paving behind the pumphouse still needing attention. It was excavated last year to see if there was any serious cause of the constant subsidence of paving round the building.

Since then, experts have analysed soil and drainage samples, and probed with TV camera to see what's going on down below, before we go to the expense of having the subsided area repaved again. It seems

there's nothing more dire than normal old age. So the restoration work will start soon.

WE'RE GRATEFUL to Alan Spong [14 Ulster] and to janitor Harry Webb for their labours in looking after the pool and keeping it clean and functioning efficiently.

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THANKS to Paul Temple [16 Ulster] for designing our Newsletter heading and for his illustrations. One of these days, when he isn't too busy, he is going to do us some more!

APOLOGIES from the secretary for the too-long delay since the last Newsletter. Her excuse: floodlights!

THE GARDENS

DOESN'T THE ALBANY garden look nice these days? Our Kew-trained gardener Ian Grisenthwaite adapts his hours to the weather, rather than hang about when it's too wet to do anything. Mowing the lawn in "stripes" again is being done to suit popular demand. (Rotary mowing, which doesn't look so smart, has the advantage of returning clippings to the soil to make mulch and food for the lawn.)



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REMEMBER our lime tree (subject to a Tree Preservation Order) which was decapitated by the 1987 hurricane? It's to be replaced, by agreement with Kingston Planning office, by a gladitzia. This, we are assured, is a slowish-growing tree which is even more splendid than its name. Frank Armstrong, our Gardens Committee chairman, will be able to tell you what it looks like. We're very pleased to learn that it doesn't attract the clouds of greenfly that used to make the evening lime tree look as if it was smoking. Unfortunately the gladitzia won't be available for planting until the autumn. In the meantime the hole in the ground is filled, temporarily, with a lavatera, the up-market name for a mallow which may grow up to 5 ft and is supposed to flower all July to September.

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YOU MAY HAVE NOTED a number of new trees and shrubs in the borders, some of which have been donated by residents. There is still a little surplus donation money in hand for further replantings.

Our thanks to the Garden Committee, our janitor Harry Webb, for all their hard work, aided at times by green-fingered residents.

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DID YOU HEAR THE BUZZ?

A swarm of bees homed in on York Court recently. They decided to settle in the main ventilator-shaft alongside the rubbish chute. A couple of local beekeepers, knowing full well that "A swarm of bees in May is worth a load of hay", turned up in the hope

of collecting them to colonise a new hive. Alas, the bees were inaccessible, so had to be sealed off and annihilated.

SATELLITE T.V.

WE ARE KEEPING an eye on the satellite TV situation and are awaiting information from Kingston Planning Office about current or projected regulations controlling antennae ("dishes") for blocks of flats. As more TV channels come into service, so it seems more and more dishes will be required. The mind boggles at what the buildings and skylines may look like eventually.

The alternative is cable TV. It would be an expensive business bringing cables to the three courts. But once that was done, individual receivers in the flats could be plugged into the system on the same basis as that for our existing communal TV aerials. It's all rather complicated, and would cost thousands.

The whole business is in its infancy, but we're monitoring the general situation and keeping in touch with our TV aerial suppliers. At some future date we may arrange a general meeting for one of their experts to come and explain the options - and costs!

Meanwhile, a reminder...Our leases forbid us to fix anything to the outside walls of our flats. Individual external dishes are strictly TABU.

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THE FREEHOLD



The freehold of The Albany was only one of a number of freeholds bought by Stanley Evans Property Co from Wimpey. Among them was that of a prestige estate of 42 flats with no separate janitor's lodge and nothing like our gardens. The residents couldn't get their act together, so the landlords finally carried out their threat to put the freehold on the market. At auction it went for nearly double the rate that we paid. Since then, the residents' association has been trying to buy freehold from the present landlord - but never gets the chance.

TUT! TUT! TUT!

These are some of the messages the Committee receives, and hates passing on, because it makes them all feel Governessy. However, needs must.....!

OF COURSE we know you wouldn't do this - but please don't let your visitors throw their cigarette ends over the balconies. It does happen, unfortunately. People sitting below don't like having their hair set alight. Even if the fag ends are dead they do make a nasty mess on the lawn.

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PLEASE make sure you always leave the front entrance doors and garden gates securely shut. Also, cars should be left in the carports at night, not in the bays outside the Courts.

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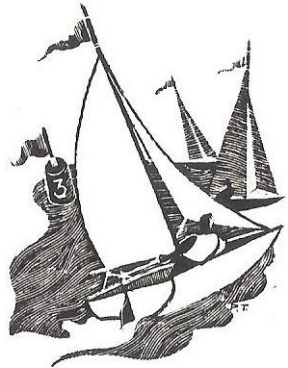
OH, DEAR! We really must not put food out for the birds. It attracts messy pigeons to the balconies, and other vermin everywhere else. Last year a pigeon pair were found building a nest on Frances Roberts's Ulster balcony. They had to be moved on by neighbour Alan Spong. Coo!

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WE STILL FIND empty milk bottles dumped in front halls and public places. Why? This isn't Peabody Buildings. And all rubbish, of course, should be wrapped and sealed in plastic - doubly important in hot weather.

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YOUR COMMITTEE now meets on the second Tuesday of every month. Contact them if you have anything to discuss about the way the Albany is run; that's what they're there for.



A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

BY THE TIME of our next Annual General Meeting I will have been honorary secretary of the Albany Association for five years. I feel that's long enough for one stretch, so I have advised the chairman and committee that I will not be standing for re-election in October.

It has been an exceptionally busy stint in which we had to revise our Constitution to bring it into line with the current Housing Act, go through the massive operation of getting general agreement to buy the Freehold and then, of course, there was the actual business of doing it, through the Albany Riverside Company Ltd. At the same time, we had one change of landlord and two changes of managing agents wished upon us.

None of this could have been done without splendid Committee teamwork. Of course, we had the existing Albany Association and all its sterling groundwork under its two previous chairmen, Jerry Matthews and Hugh Parkinson, to build on. And now we have a fine chairman in their successor, George Newman. He is looking for a volunteer to take over from me.

Please start thinking about it now.

May Bate

26 York Ct



This News Letter comes to you from the Committee
of the Albany Association