


NEWS LETTER



THE ALBANY - SUMMER 1993



PROFILES

Those of us who were able to attend the recent Drinks Party held on July 4 will, I hope, agree that we were blessed with fine weather (if a little breezy), good food, wine and conversation, and in particular the opportunity to chat with neighbours we may not have met previously. In an effort to get to know each other a little better I have managed to persuade one or two 'newer' residents to submit a few words about themselves and their first impressions of 'Life at the Albany'. My sincere thanks to Lesley Sirrell and John Williams of 22 York and Mark Swanwick and Linda Bloomfield of 9 Brunswick for their contributions.

Lesley Sirrell is an Accountant in the Treasury Department of British Steel PLC and her partner, John Williams, is Principal Chief Technologist at St. Bartholomews Hospital. Lesley advises: "We moved into 22 York Court at the end of June last year with the intention of spending less time maintaining a UK property in order to spend more time at our French holiday cottage. Since then we have had the kitchen and bathroom refitted in the flat, installed an en-suite shower room and are currently half way through a complete redecoration programme, which hasn't left a lot of time for holidays! In recompense, however, we find simply living in such a beautiful and tranquil setting (barring Saturday night sailing club discos) to be a holiday and hope that when we've finished decorating, and unpacking, we'll really be able to enjoy life at The Albany to the full."

Mark and Linda echo these sentiments: "We are both very happy at The Albany, and after some considerable delay, actually have the furniture and fittings that we ordered. I do not suppose that we were the first new residents to have an army of people seemingly for ever delivering and installing things, and whilst we tried to keep it to a minimum, we do appreciate the tolerance and understanding of those who silently put up with the inevitable noise created. Both of us looked forward to life by the river and now, we hope, to a glorious summer in which to start to enjoy it."

In this issue

Profile.....	1
Kingston Hospital.....	1
Scanner Appeal.....	1

Directors Reports:

Major Repairs.....	2
Finance.....	3
Swimming Pool.....	3
Gardening News.....	3

Letters to the Editor.....	4
Nature Notes.....	4
Welcome to Newcomers.....	4

Acknowledgements:-

Apologies to Mr Paul Temple for omitting to thank him in the last issue for allowing us to use some of his delightful drawings which make such a difference to the layout of this Newsletter. My thanks also to my fellow Directors and Mr Hugo Steinnes and Mrs Brenda Lewis for their continued support.

Vivienne Abel - Editor

Kingston Hospital Scanner Appeal

It is always difficult to choose who to support from the many worthwhile charities but this Appeal may be worthy of consideration - after all, some of us may benefit from it in the future! At time of going to press the Appeal stands at £940,000 and needs to raise another £60,000 to meet their target. Anyone interested in making a donation should made their cheque payable to 'Kingston Hospital Scanner Appeal', c/o Kingston Hospital.

The Chairman's Comments

RE-ROOFING ULSTER COURT

I think we are all pleased to see the last of the motorised hoist and the asphalter's equipment from our premises. The contract is virtually complete but as is inevitable in works of this nature the 'snagging' items are still to be completed and our surveyors are chasing the contractors to get this done.

Generally speaking the work has been carried out with the minimum of inconvenience to all concerned and the workmen seem to have been pleasant in their dealings with residents. A progress payment of some £19,000 (including fees) has been made and we hope to receive a guarantee from the manufacturers of the 'Permanite' asphalt in due course.

VERTICAL CRACKS IN BRICKWORK

Mention was made in our Spring issue that a firm providing Specialist Civil Engineering Services had carried out a survey of the cracks which had appeared in the brickwork of the Courts. They had also examined the structural frame behind the brickwork and in their very comprehensive report confirmed that the frame is in good condition. They recommended that in order to obtain an overall picture of the amount of cracking in progress, a few individual 'crack monitors' should be fitted, to which electrical wiring would be connected to a sealed unit containing continual automatic datalogging equipment. This would monitor both the crack width and the brick temperature.

Our surveyors considered this should be done and the directors approved the estimated cost of some £2,000. The necessary equipment was installed and left in situ for several weeks. It has now been dismantled and sent back to the laboratory for analysis. At the time of going to print the report has not yet been received.

REVISED ALBANY HANDBOOK

You will re-call that Peter Clarke (10 Brunswick) kindly agreed to completely re-write the House Rules. Having produced the first draft, some twenty-seven pages, it was then sent to each of the directors for their comments and suggestions for improvement. Quite a number of amendments were listed and sent back to Peter who prepared a second draft. Again this was sent to each director to read through to ensure there were no spelling howlers etc.

Peter has now produced the master copy on his word processor and quotations for its production are awaited. The new Handbook will be larger than the old one, what is known as A4 size paper (the same as this Newsletter) as it was thought it would be easier to read. In due course each resident will be sent a copy and it is hoped everyone will read it with interest; a great deal of work has

gone into making it as comprehensive as possible. Thank you Peter for the many hours you have spent on this matter.

THE PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARIES

As reported in the local press the Government Boundary Commission have been busy making proposals to move the 'goal posts' of the parliamentary boundaries. This will affect both Richmond and Kingston. In particular our Ward - TUDOR - together with those of Cambridge, Canbury, Coombe and Hill wards will possibly be transferred from Kingston into a new Richmond & Barnes Borough Constituency. This would make some 69,000 electors which will then be the average electoral size of London Constituencies. They are being reduced in number from 84 to 71 seats.

In effect this will mean that the Boundary Commission plan to abolish Norman Lamont's Kingston constituency and divide those voters between Richmond and Surbiton. If this is agreed it could be (but is by no means certain) that our MP would be Jeremy Hanley. However, as far as paying our Council Tax is concerned, we would still remain in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. If sufficient objections are received by the Commission a public inquiry will be held later in the year. The proposal will go before Parliament in 1994.



ASSIGNING THE LEASE ON YOUR FLAT

There have recently been one or two hiccups in the sale of flats, purely due to the fact that residents omit to notify me (as representative of The Albany Riverside Co. Ltd) at the outset that they have agreed a sale and appointed a Solicitor. It is essential that I am informed of the name and address of that Solicitor so that the requirements under the lease can be adhered to.

The lease cannot be assigned until the Company has granted written consent and in order to do this its Directors must be satisfied with the credentials of the intended assignee e.g. Bank reference in confirmation of their financial stability to pay the Service Charges, and a personal character reference. Obviously all this takes time and it cannot be suddenly undertaken just prior to the completion of the sale.

I am only too willing to give every assistance to residents when they are selling their lease, but I would appreciate early notice of their intentions.



Reg Cook - AGM

You may remember that at our last Annual General Meeting held in October 1992 it was requested that the Management Accounts for the year ending September, together with the budget of estate expenditure for the following year, be presented at the AGM for discussion. It has been agreed that this presentation and discussion will take place immediately following Company business at the next AGM.

In view of the timing of the Management Accounts and the need for these to be audited and a budget produced, it will be necessary to delay the date of future meetings to allow this item to be covered. The next AGM is now most likely to be held on a date in **January 1994**.

As a consequence of this change the Company has altered its year end date from June 30th to September 30th in order that the two account dates coincide. The company accounts will, on this next occasion, be for a fifteen month period ending September 1993.



The Swimming Pool by Alan Spong

You will remember that in the last newsletter I was concerned about the possible breakdown of the old filter system, and advised I would speak to pool service contractors. This I did in the middle of March and an estimate and specification, for the removal of the old filter with its attendant pipework and the installation of a new hi-rate sand filter, was accepted at the end of March.

The concern I expressed was confirmed when, after cutting up the old tank to facilitate its removal from the pump/filter room, it was found that the filter bed plate was full of rust holes. This allowed the sand to enter into the pipe system and then the pool, which of course was thus continually depleting the amount of filter sand.

All the work was completed in early April and the pump/filter room now has space for the Janitor and an occasional member of the pool Sub-Committee to work more easily. The new filter is about a tenth of the size of its predecessor which was over fifty years old.

Since the beginning of May the pool has been drained, cleaned and painted with two coats of special paint (with thanks to some members of the Sub-Committee and also Mr Desmond Higgins, the Janitor and Mrs Brazier), and finally opened on 28th May.

The subsequent weather since then has not been continually conducive to a lot of activity but your Sub-Committee and I believe that more residents have used the pool this year than heretofore, and as a registered optimist I believe the weather must change for the better in the coming weeks that are left of our summer!!



Gardening News by Frank Armstrong

TARAXACUM OFFICINALE

I have been taken to task by friends, and indeed by one member of the Garden Committee, for using latin names for plants in our gardens. Sorry about this but our suppliers and gardeners tend to stick to the latin and in the report of mine which caused the greatest comment only one of the plants listed had a common name. I promise in future to avoid the latin if possible and to call a dandelion, a dandelion.

BRUNSWICK MAIN BORDER

The large border along the wall by Brunswick Court has been a source of concern for many years. An old beech tree was removed many years ago - a few of the older residents will recall it - but the roots were left and have become the source of honey fungus which has caused the death of many shrubs including a flowering cherry and a laburnum. The cost of removing large quantities of infected soil, including the lawn, would have been prohibitive and after long correspondence and discussions with experts at Kew Gardens and the Royal Horticultural Society we have decided to replant the border with perennials which should be more resistant and of course much cheaper to replace if they also succumb. Our thanks to Mrs Turner for providing the larger part of the new plants.

DONATIONS

My thanks to other residents who have continued to give generously to the Albany Gardens Donations Account. Whilst there have been no other major projects in the last year, many of our shrubs are becoming old and weak and a continued programme of replacements is necessary.

GARDEN SEAT

The son of the late Mr C Bowra has donated a large iron garden seat, left by his father. It has been placed in the sunken garden and is an interesting and attractive addition to this quiet spot.

10,000 BLOOMS

I have been asked how many plants we have in our two acres. I know from previous counts that we have over 80 trees and between 800 and 1000 roses but no knowledge of how many shrubs, perennials, annuals etc. A subsequent check has indicated the following approximate number:

Trees	80 plus
Shrubs	850
Roses	800/1000
Annuals	300/400
Perennials and bulbous plants	2,500/3,000
Total - around	5,000

Continued Overleaf

To assess the number of actual blooms is impossible. Roses and hydrangeas and some perennials commonly have 20 or more blooms on each plant and half of the shrubs have flowers. A physical count in July indicated some 10,000 blooms and this after roses had completed their first flush.

HERBS

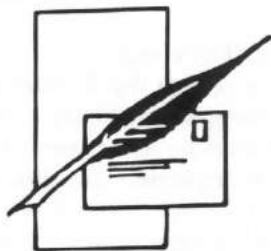
A problem occurs in implementing a request for basil. This, together with the parsley, is normally grown as annual and requires more attention than our professional gardeners can give in their one day per week. Until we can obtain a volunteer to look after this sometime costly development it may not be possible to extend this feature. In the last News Letter I advised that we had a herb - "singularly good for the head and braine, quickeneth the senses and memorie, strentheneth the sinews, restoreth health to those that have the palsie". The herb - common sage!

Equally available is a herb which "boiled in water and honie and drunken, is good against the cough and shortness of the breath. The oyle that is Chhimically drawn out is used in pils for the head and stomach. It is also used for toothach". These remedies are from herbals published in 1597 and 1629. Wait for the next issue for the answer.

Letters to the Editor:-

Thanks to Mr John Reed of 1 Ulster Court who was the only resident to respond to the request for contributions. Mr Reed raised two matters that concerned him. Firstly he asked if anything further is being done in the area of carport security to which Mr Russell, the Director responsible for security, responded that "A great deal of time was spent on Mr Reed's suggestion that the carports be turned into garages but regrettably this was not found to be a feasible solution. Security is constantly under consideration."

Mr Reed also commented on the "lack of colour in the service road border after the Spring flowers are over. No pansies, petunias, bizzie lizzies, marigolds, lobelia to brighten the scene". Mr Armstrong responded "that the planting plans were well displayed for residents before progressing. The suggestion of bright colour annuals is interesting but would be expensive for the numbers required along this border. Our very limited plantings around a few trees cost between £100-£200 and I would suggest we would need at least 10 times this amount to make any impression. In addition they are very labour intensive and would involve considerable extra contractors' costs."



Nature Notes by Brenda Lewis

The Sad Story of Jemima the Duck

By the time you read this, all the drama concerning one duck, called Jemima by Cynthia and Peter Francis of Brunswick Court, will be, to coin a phrase, water under the bridge. But it is a delightful tale and certainly extraordinary.

After laying her first egg in our swimming pool with dismal failure, she and her mate flew up to the top of one of our cedar trees to survey likely sites. The mallard chose the Francis's penthouse garden, and particularly a well planted terracotta pot, with its honeysuckle, wisteria and Chlorophytum (the spider plant). Clearly these long grasslike leaves appeared to be planted merely to weave into a nest, which is what Jemima did. She also enjoyed eating the other plants while she laid an egg daily, until there were seven in total. She didn't leave the nest again, except for a brief swim in the river in the evenings.

Meanwhile there was the problem of her diet. Both for her sake and their garden plants, Cynthia served her half a slice of home made bread, some wheat seeds and a flat dish of water daily.

The books say that ten hours after hatching the ducklings get used to their legs, after which Mum would normally lead them to the water. Here was a how-d'ye'do! Too high even for the ducklings to get up to the top of the balcony, never mind dropping to the ground from that height. The R.S.P.B. advised the Francis' to cover Jemima with a dark cloth, hold her carefully and put her in a box. Then collect the ducklings and put them in a separate box. Both boxes to be taken down in the lift, carried to a suitable place and then released near the river together.

But the 'best laid plans'... By 24th July the hatching was 12 days overdue and clearly was never going to occur. The R.S.P.B. were again consulted and their advice followed to the letter. Hugo Steinnes played midwife, gently taking Jemima off the nest, wearing gloves, stroking her and talking gently to her, while he put her up on the balustrade. She flew down to the river and then he carefully placed the cold eggs into a container and took them away for disposal. Cynthia and Peter blocked up the nest with numbers of canes, but poor confused Jemima returned again and again for days, trying to get into her old nest. We hope she has learned a lesson from all this!



Welcome to Newcomers:

Mr G.F. MacAulay, shortly to move into No. 16 York Court and best wishes to Mrs Gray in her new home.