


NEWS LETTER



THE ALBANY - SPRING 1993

In this issue

Editorial	1
Kingston Library	1
Directors Reports:	
Major Repairs	2
Finance	3
Swimming Pool	3
Gardening News	3
Residents News & Views	4
Nature Notes	4
Letters to the Editor	4
Welcome to Newcomers	4
Directors and Sub-committee Members	4

Acknowledgements:-

I would like to thank my fellow Directors for their support and informative contributions, and a particular 'thank you' to Hugo Steinnes and Brenda Lewis for their encouragement, ideas and practical help in producing this newsletter.

Vivienne Abel - Editor

Kingston Library

Keen readers will be pleased to hear that Kingston Library is due to re-open on 29th March. During the closure a new computer system has been installed and the building has been totally refurbished. In the meantime the Mobile Library continues to provide an excellent service and can be located outside The Albany on Thursday mornings between 10.15 - 10.45.

Message from the Editor

We hope residents will approve of the new layout of the Newsletter incorporating larger type for easier reading! This is our first issue since the Association ceased to function at the end of last year and we hope the Newsletter will prove to be a useful aid for the Directors of the newly structured Board to keep residents advised of present and future plans for The Albany.

As you will have seen from the recent Notice distributed by the Chairman, each of the Directors has agreed to accept a particular area of responsibility and we shall be including reports from each Director, where applicable, to keep you abreast of developments that affect us all.

It would be helpful however if residents would bear in mind that any day to day problems should, in the first instance, be referred to Judith Jones, our Managing Agent. She will then contact the relevant Director to discuss the action to be taken. Additionally, Hugh Parkinson, (27 Brunswick) in his role as Residents Liaison Officer, will be happy to give guidance to any resident as to whom they should contact regarding a particular problem.

Residents will have noted that Mr Peter Clarke has reluctantly resigned from the Board of Directors due to pressure of other commitments. Peter has been a great stalwart in the management of The Albany affairs over the past twenty years. He was Secretary of The Association followed by membership of the Committee and for the last 5½ years served as a Director of Albany Riverside Co. Ltd. As George Newman remarks- "I would think this has probably been a record for any resident who has given so much of his time in helping to keep The Albany on an even keel. Fortunately we will still be able to draw upon his expertise, for not only has he agreed to remain as a member of the Finance Sub-Committee, he has also agreed to update the House Rule book - a time-consuming job. Thank you Peter, your efforts past and present are greatly appreciated."



The Chairman's Comments

The vertical cracking of brickwork

You will all have recently noticed the acrobatics of several men abseiling down the face of the Courts and cutting and drilling into the brickwork. Last year, cracks were noticed at the corners of the Courts and our surveyors were asked to give an opinion.

They thought these were possibly more than just superficial cracks and that they should be investigated. They thought it would be opportune to do this when cradles were in position at the time of the external redecoration programme. This proved not to be possible as the cradles were not always in the position where the cracks were evident and further, most of the cracks were now covered by the ivy in its full growth. It was decided to delay inspection until all the foliage had fallen.

Our Insurance company were informed of the problem and they instructed a structural engineer to report on the matter. He could find no basis for the crack damage being as a result of building subsidence and stated he was therefore unable to recommend to the Insurance Loss Adjusters that any remedial work would fall within the Insurers liability. He did however give an opinion that the cracks were possibly the result of thermal movement or a lack of torsion stiffness to resist wind forces and considered an in depth investigation be carried out to establish the condition of the structural element.

Rather than scaffold the whole buildings (a very expensive operation) the surveyors recommended a specialist firm providing Civil Engineering Services be asked to quote for an inspection and subsequent report on laboratory tests of the concrete samples which would be removed from several points. They would also test by laser the verticality of the concrete columns within the structure. This is now being carried out, the likely cost being something between £3,000 - £4,000. The abseiler in charge of the investigation is a Chartered Structural Engineer and we shall await his firm's report and recommendation for any remedial works necessary with interest. I will see that you are kept apprised of the results of the investigation and also ensure that any minor damage caused to lintels will be attended to when the remedial works are carried out.

Roofing

Several years ago it was agreed that the asphalt roofs of the 3 Courts were coming to the end of their useful life (over 25 years old). Brunswick was done in 1990 and we have been making large reserves in our annual budgets to re-asphalt the other two. Ulster is due to start some time in April.

Estimates are now to hand and the detail will be checked by our surveyors, references will be obtained as to their work on other projects and as



to their financial stability to carry out a contract of this size. As soon as the Board have had an opportunity of examining the surveyors report, a Notice will be placed on each of the boards in the Courts giving details of cost and a copy of the Specification of Works.

Asphalting is inevitably one of the dirtiest jobs in the building trade and no doubt residents will be put to a certain amount of inconvenience. A motorised hoist will have to be erected on the north elevation which will be a little noisy but it is not operating the whole time, only when materials have to be lifted to the roof. I'm sure that you will all put up with it with a smile appreciating that the building is being made weather tight. It will probably all be finished prior to the commencement of the swimming season.

Drain by the side of York Court

Over the past months we have had to put up with an unsightly mound of earth and open trenches by the garden path leading to the gate to the river by York Court. Residents on the ground floor had suffered from 'blow backs' from these sewer drains and it was imperative that the drains were opened up for investigation. It was discovered that the underground chamber had tilted and cracked the pipes leading into it causing the drains to leak into the ground. Further problems were then discovered, the rainwater pipe leading to a sump had fractured together with a fractured mains water pipe to the flats on one elevation. Consequently the brick chamber had to be rebuilt and the pipes connected, trenches had to be dug to reveal the two fractured pipes, new pipes laid, trenches then filled in and the ground left to settle rather than compound it with machinery which might damage the newly laid pipes. The cost is in the order of £3,000 (some of the estimates were over £5,000). The earth has now been raked level and the gardeners will soon be able to bring it back to green lawn.

From the foregoing I think you can appreciate that we are now very much involved in the 'ageing' of the buildings with the necessity to maintain them. This highlights how essential it is to make these quite substantial reserves in our annual budgets. We need to ensure that our estate is kept up to a high standard which will be reflected by flat values in line with current market rates.



Reg Cook – Financial Matters

As Company Secretary I keep the books and accounts of The Albany Riverside Company. These accounts have to meet the requirements of our Auditors (Menzies); income is processed through our bankers (Barclays) and expenses paid with proper documentation available to the Auditors. The final accounts are prepared at each year end and, after audit by Menzies, are circulated to Shareholders.

In addition control is kept on the Albany Estate Management bank account which contains monies collected from Shareholders as service charges. Cash is released to the Managing Agent as and when required for the payment of bills. An analysis of all expenditure is made which provides details of the Estate Management Accounts prepared by the Auditors each year.

As a member of the Finance Sub-Committee I help with the establishment of the expenditure budget for the following year which is then used to calculate next year's service charges.



The Swimming Pool by Alan Spong

You will know from the Notice sent out to us all in February concerning the revised Management Structure of the Albany that I have once again accepted the responsibility of Swimming Pool Supervision, assisted by Maureen Abel, Bill Ruff and Hugo Steinnes.

The job as I see it consists of liaison between the Janitor, Managing Agent and your company Board, concerning capital equipment costs, decisions related to purchase of equipment (see note below), running costs and keeping a record of same, annual cleaning (and repainting of pool when necessary), liaison with Janitor concerning his duties when he is on holiday, and finally the open question of the temperature of the water, which I believe must be decided by the majority rule and trust a decision made on this basis will prove satisfactory.

The large amount of sand appearing in the system and through the fountain when the filter is given a back wash indicates that it has broken down inside the tank and I will speak to the Pool Contractors about an estimate for a new one to present to your Board.

The last three years, I think, the job of pool supervision has been ably carried out by Desmond Higgins and most enthusiastically assisted by our Janitor and his wife. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to publicly thank them for their efforts



Gardening News by Frank Armstrong

It is nice to be asked to contribute to the "News Letter" The Gardens Committee now comprises, Mrs Francis Roberts, who has been associated with the gardens for many years, Professor Lucas of Kew Gardens, who I have persuaded to rejoin us, and a new representative from York Court, Mrs Pam Smith. Our professional gardener, Ian Grisenthwaite, will also continue to attend meetings.

The mild winter has brought forth a very early showing of many spring flowers. In December and January we had in bloom *Bergenia*, *Forsythia*, *Mahonia*, *Winter Jasmine*, *Choisia*, *Fatsia*, *Fuscia*, *Prunus subhirtella* and several roses as well as some early flowering of daffodils and crocus, the earliest I understand since 1987.

The crocuses, donated by a resident, looked particularly brilliant this year. And now in February we already had almond in bloom. Our gardeners noticed in January quite a large number of green-fly. I hope the mild winter will not encourage earlier wasps!

Foyer Gardens. A very urgent plea –

Our three volunteers Betty Armstrong, Paul Temple and Fred Pountney are all requesting relief from their duties, which they have been undertaking for many years and they must have saved us many hundreds, if not thousands, of pounds – the alternative cost of Floral and Plant Display contractors.

May I put a very urgent and serious plea for new volunteers from each of the three Courts. The work is interesting and absorbing and the results can be very gratifying. Advice will be given if required and the cost of plants is re-imbursed. A commitment of just a year of even less would be welcomed if anyone feels they may be unable to offer a longer period.

Herbs. Replies to my request last year for comments on the herb garden were very limited but I have received a request for Basil, Marjoram and Tarragon and we will endeavour to include these, possibly with a reduction of Sage and Thyme which have had only small demands. We do include in our garden a herb which in the 16th Century was considered "singularly good for the head and braine, quickeneth the senses and memorie, strengtheneth the sinews, restoreth health to those that have the palsie".

Here, on your doorstep is the answer to all your medical problems. Perhaps though it would be safer to consult your own doctor. Good Health! I will let you know the name of the herb in our next issue, with perhaps a further problem.

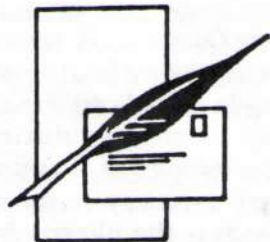
Residents News and Views:

Communication is a two way process and we would like to hear from you on any matters that you consider of general interest to us all. It doesn't have to be about The Albany; contributions concerning the environment, interesting places to visit, local history, flora and fauna would all be welcomed. A short written note, 'posted' in the letterbox outside the Janitor's Lodge with your news and views will be read with interest and, space permitting, published in the next issue.

Letters to the Editor:-

"We always place our newspapers and bottles separately outside the rubbish chutes and I believe they are then added to the rubbish. Since we are quite a sizeable condominium would it not be in the Council's interest to make say a weekly collection of these separately for recycling" (Brenda Lewis, 5 Ulster Court).

"I spoke to Laura Dillon, Recycling Officer at Council Offices, who advised that it would not be economical to provide a special collection for such a relatively small number of households. The best solution the Council could offer would be to install a set of the recycling containers in The Albany grounds, or on the road outside, but they would have to be available to other residents in the area. The management of The Albany are strongly opposed to this idea in view of noise, rubbish accumulating etc." (Editor).



We have been asked to remind residents about noise. From time to time complaints are received that residents are disturbed either late at night or early morning by the banging of doors, TV's/radios, heavy footsteps on uncarpeted floors and high pitched voices. Please remember that when all else is silent these noises are magnified and can be most irritating to others above and below.

Welcome to Newcomers

Bernard Bruynseels & Elizabeth Lindley - 17 Ulster
Mark Swanwick shortly to take up residence in 9 Brunswick

Deaths: sadly we record the deaths of

Mr Owen Davies 1 Brunswick died on 15 Nov 1992
Mr Charles Bowra 2 Brunswick died on 16 Sept 1992
Mrs Louise Spikins 3 Ulster died on 21 Feb 1993
Mr Jeff Beal 23 Brunswick died on 6 Mar 1993

Nature Notes by Brenda Lewis

For two or three years we have had the unusual visit of a solitary heron, either peering into the river from Lower Ham Road, or standing on the steps on the little island opposite Brunswick. No doubt he will be back again for the Spring and early Summer, when fish are plentiful and his patience endless. He stands on one leg with half-closed eyes; but not a ripple on the water misses his instant reflex.

Much excitement was caused this past winter with the arrival of nine cormorants, most of which used to perch on a boat moored this side of the islands. The cormorants could also be seen on the buoy or the top of a mooring post in the river, sometimes with spread wings to dry out their feathers. They are the only web-footed birds without a waterproofing oil for this purpose. Sadly they appear to have now left for their seaside rocky nesting grounds but we hope they will be back next year.

We already have more Canada Geese than the riverside can sustain, and their noisy trumpeting during the breeding season suggests an even larger colony when the goslings are proudly displayed.

The Swans: It has been beautiful watching the males with their handsome wings on display, and we can soon expect the delightful sights of cygnets some times sailing on their parents backs.

Director	Special Responsibility & Sub-Committee Members	
George Newman (28 York)	Chairman of Board Company records Legal matters/Admin Major repairs Chairman of Finance Committee with:-	Reg Cook Hugh Parkinson Peter Clarke
Reg Cook (8 Brunswick)	Company Secretary Member of Finance Committee	
Vivienne Abel (20 Ulster)	Assist with Administration Editor of Newsletter Sub Committee:-	Brenda Lewis Hugo Steinnes
Frank Armstrong (4 Brunswick)	Gardens Sub Committee :-	Pam Smith Frances Roberts Prof. G. Lucas
Hugh Parkinson (27 Brunswick)	Residents Liaison Officer Sub Committee:-	Brenda Lewis
Edmund Russell (4 York)	Estate Environment Sub Committee:-	Major Repairs Desmond Higgins Paul Rich
Alan Spong (14 Ulster)	Swimming Pool Supervision Sub Committee:-	Bill Ruff Hugo Steinnes Maureen Abel
MANAGING AGENT:		
Judith Jones	Tel No: 081-339 9911	
JANITOR:		
Fred Brazier	Tel No: 081-546 3807	