



Left to right: Coach Theo Hyman, [REDACTED], Jeremy Rosen, Club Chairman Alison Newton, Becky Alton, Josh Sweiry, Ranya Mulchadani and Ben Coombes.

Success for Farm Walk Tennis Club

The club has had a particularly good summer after 4 of the 5 courts were renewed over winter.

In particular the junior section has gone from strength to strength under coach, Theo Hyman. Lila Brown, our other coach continues to encourage all our members and our Ladies 3rd team had an unbroken

success rate in its division of the Middlesex League.

The finals results were Men's Singles Josh Sweiry; Ladies Singles Dawn Moses; Mixed Doubles Sally Botterill and David Botterill; Men's Doubles Josh Sweiry and Theo Hyman; Ladies Doubles Christine Geissmar and Dawn Moses; Under 18 Boys

Singles Josh Sweiry; under 18 Girls Singles Becky Alton; Boys Doubles Ben Coombes and Jeremy Rosen; Girls Doubles [REDACTED] and Ranya Mulchandani; Boys under 14 singles Jeremy Rosen. For more information, call the secretary, Carol Clark on 02074354891 or visit www.farmwalktennis.net.

New wings for Mercury

Mercury Tennis Club, behind Fellowship Hall, has recently had a face-lift and is looking for new members. The Club has been on the Suburb for many years and is in a particularly pretty rural location in Willifield Way. With four newly repainted all-weather courts and a refurbished clubhouse, the Club offers social sessions on Wednesday evenings and 'Rusty Racquets' sessions for adults on Saturday afternoons, with arranged doubles or singles on Sundays. The current all-weather courts will be resurfaced with astro-turf or similar as and when a new lease is negotiated.

In addition, coaching is available throughout the week for adults and juniors and an extremely popular group coaching programme for juniors is already up and running.

The two people behind Mercury's regeneration are Ros Edwards and Danny Ward. Ros has long been involved with the running of various North London clubs and plays tennis to Veteran County standard; she is also a PTR qualified coach. Danny used to play full-time on the Men's Circuit and, having turned 35 last year and, therefore, officially a veteran, is ranked no. 2 in Great

Britain and no. 12 in the world. He is an LTA licensed coach and has always wanted to run his own club. Ros and Danny reached agreement with the chairman and committee of Mercury Tennis Club to offer Life Membership to existing members and to bring a new energy into a formerly thriving Club. Their aim is to revive the Club with the support of the Suburb and anyone wanting to play tennis in a friendly environment.

Email: eTennisMania@aol.com for details including membership or you can phone 8340 1280 or 807921 675371 / 206.

Straighten and strengthen with Tai Chi

Many years ago I flew to Paris for a Gaugin exhibition at the Palais Royale and was knocked down by a car driven by the chauffeur of a certain M. Johnny Halliday – so achieving my quickest ever journey by ambulance into central Paris.

I wasn't badly injured but healing took a long time and I needed some urgent therapeutic strengthening and straightening exercise. I chose Tai Chi.

Laila de Lys was an inspiring teacher, fostering in me a real appreciation of the Yang Lang Form – I was so lucky to have had her as my mentor for 13 years.

Over time the alignment, balance and flexibility of my body improved and I grew to love the calmness and relaxation that came with practice.

When Laila became too ill to teach she asked Gim Goh and I to

run the class. Gim has the most exquisite flowing movements and I knew all the form and am a trained teacher. We formed a club and then a beginner's class to teach the form and prepare for membership of the club.

Recently we have written books, with an accompanying DVD following the lesson plan, to aid practice. The Institute has kindly allowed us to stay in the wonderful Free Church Hall in the heart of our Suburb where parking is easy.

Tai Chi is such an ideal form of health exercise and we have this crazy dream of the whole Suburb taking part in Tai Chi on Central Square – influenced, no doubt, by the Olympic opening ceremony in Beijing.

You can try out the class for one free session before enrolling to see if it suits you so do come and join us if you can.

Tai Chi Chuan Yang Long Form (Beginners) takes place in the Free Church Hall, Northway on Tuesdays from 12.15-1.30pm.

WENDY BRENNAN

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‘Romeo and Juliet’

The Garden Suburb Theatre had a tough time in the wood in July with rain and the soggy ground. Tony Newton, Martin Hinkes and their team must be congratulated for getting the set looking so good under these conditions.

The open air is not entirely suited to ‘Romeo and Juliet’, especially towards the end, but Richard Kinder’s Centenary production was strong, fast moving and imaginative enough to overcome the lack of enclosure in bedchamber and tomb. In Christian Radnedge and Natalie

Rowland, he had an excellent pair of lovers who overcame the problems. Juliet’s speech about the horrors of Tybalt ‘lies festering in his shroud’ and being ‘stifled in a vault’ was gripping and mad one forget the green space about her. Romeo, at times, could have had a bit more passion, especially at the end.

It was a strong cast with a wonderful Mercutio. Alon Witzum’s performance was lively, handling the difficult ‘Queen Mab’ speech magnificently. Paul Rivera’s fiery Tybalt was

excellent. A quibble, the fights were too long and not done expertly enough.

Paula Norris got a lot of humour out of the Nurse. She and her servant, Peter (John Colmans) made an amusing pair. Fred Griessen brought quiet gravity to the Friar.

The costumes were, as usual, fine and Juliet’s ball dress really was lovely thanks to Francis Musker, Diana Darrer and Jean Solomons. It really was a most enjoyable production.

LÉONIE STEPHEN

‘Mischief in the Wood’

The Garden Suburb Theatre’s mini drama festival, involving groups from different parts of the country, was judged a great success. This was despite the fact that it was moved into St Margarets Hall, Finchley on the Friday very rapidly indeed – the decision having been taken that rain had well and truly settled in.

Potters Bar Theatre Company were soon underway with ‘Between Mouthfuls’, the first of our offerings by Alan Ayckbourn. Two restaurant tables are linked by a hitherto concealed love affair between the managing director and an employee’s wife. The team had a very good support crew and real food for the other four actors to eat and act with!

Wiz Productions gave us three very well known and much loved sketches, including Alan Bennett’s sermon from ‘Beyond the Fringe’ which put everyone in a very good mood, ready for the Essex-based Bejou Productions play, ‘Five Blue-Haired Ladies Sitting on Green Park Bench’ by John A Penzotti. Five women and a man gave us a view of ageing, dying and heaven. A lovely play well presented under these trying circumstances and much appreciated by the audience.

The following day the sun came out to play, as did Year 2 of Garden Suburb School with ‘Animal Antics’ written and directed by Fiona Coote of the Garden Suburb School. 37 kids in yellow, singing, dancing and doing cartwheels, dressed as animals for half an hour gladdened everyone’s spirits and set a fine atmosphere.

The clouds appeared again half way through GST’s own play ‘Gosforth’s Fete’, also by Alan Ayckbourn and directed by John Woolf. In this delicious archetypal English setting, Milly (Susan Ramsey) announced her pregnancy to the rumbustious pub landlord, her father (Amos Witzum) over the tannoy, upsetting the batty vicar (Malcolm Stern), the outraged scoutmaster, Milly’s fiancé (Edward Smith) who took immediately to drink and the confused visiting dignitary (Pam Walker) as the tea urn went wrong and the rain began. Well done indeed to newcomer Edward for doing this barmy role as well as Benvolio in ‘Romeo and Juliet’.

Wakefield Little Theatre treated us to ‘The Main Coarse’, a slick presentation outlining the pitfalls of ‘amdram’ as we know

and love it. Especially funny were the references to the (very real) risks of outdoor shows and those with tiny roles getting overweening.

Martello Productions from Wicklow then gave us ‘A Talk in the Park’ by Alan Ayckbourn – five neurotics and obsessives moving between four park benches, each in turn giving a monologue that upsets his neighbour on the bench.

Bob and Trish Brown, amateur folk singers from the Isle of Man, were included in the programme as many of the contributors had met in Douglas at festivals.

Kings Langley Players ended the festival with ‘Singing in the Wilderness’ by David Campton. Set in, would you believe, a clearing in a wood, this showed the fairies from ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream’, ageing and adjusting to the modern age; feeding on the contents of discarded take-away cartons instead of sipping from the leaves of eglantine. Two humans come along and sense the mischief in the air. A great choice to end on. Sadly, the weather was now indicating that it was time to repair to ‘another part of the wood’!

TONY NEWTON

Join HGS Theatre Club

The Hampstead Garden Suburb Theatre Club is nearly 20 years old and is still going strong!

Would you like to buy reduced tickets for popular West End plays

and Musicals, be taken to the Theatre by coach and brought home again to either Central Square or Temple Fortune? If your answer is yes then you will

be pleased to know that membership of the Theatre Club for 2008/09 is now open. Apply to Membership Secretary, Elaine Grays. Tel: 8458 8018.

Horticultural Society set to celebrate its Centenary in 2009

Next year, on 20th May, it will be 100 years since a small group of Suburb residents, under the leadership of Dame Henrietta Barnett, got together to found the Hampstead Garden Suburb Horticultural Society.

It is almost the only one of the Dame’s original clubs and societies to survive to the present day in almost its original form and is thriving with well over 400 members.

A Horticultural Society Centenary Committee, chaired by Diane Berger, is planning many one off, innovative activities to celebrate the Centenary and involve the community, starting in January 2009. In addition, all of the Society’s regular events will take place but they will be bigger and better than usual, with many birthday extras.

The full programme must stay under wraps until it is unveiled at the Annual General Meeting on 25 November by Chairman Michael Franklin. At

the AGM the Mayor of Barnet Cllr John Marshall, a Vice-President of the Society, will present the cups and prizes to this year’s show winners. Some of the events will involve ‘personalities’; some will be accompanied by music; some will be social; some will repeat successful activities from the past 100 years. All will have a horticultural theme, but not always too seriously!

The ‘big’ date for your 2009 diary is Saturday 18th July, when there will be some very special happenings. Other important dates to keep free are Saturdays 21st March, 13th June, 21st June, 25th July and 12th September, and Tuesday evening, 3rd November. Full details of all events will appear in the next issue of Suburb News.

The founders held their first Flower Show in a marquee on Central Square in 1909. Almost 100 years on, the Spring Show on 21 March 2009 will be the Society’s 266th, with shows

taking place every year, except briefly during the Second World War. Nowadays, there are also talks, outings, open gardens, quizzes, gardening question and answer sessions, parties, scarecrow and ‘Best Suburb Garden’ competitions, workshops, and a brand new Gardening Buddy scheme for those who feel the need of a bit of on-the-spot horticultural advice.

All members of the Society will receive a free copy of a Centenary desk calendar for 2009, with stunning colour photographs taken around and about the Suburb. Copies are also on sale at £3.50 from Yvonne Oliver (8455 8741).

A special commemorative Centenary Members’ Handbook listing all the events and activities for 2009 will be circulated at the end of this year.

To join the Horticultural Society in its 100th birthday year, visit www.hgs.org.uk/hortsoc; email membership@hortsoc.co.uk, or call 020 8455 7334.