

Spring 1993

The second of a series of articles

THE HISTORY OF CLISSOLD COURT, 1945-1959

In 1945 life began to return to normal after the war, though there was much evidence of bomb damage in the area.

In 1947 the Gregorys moved into their flat. Mrs Gregory told me how she had frequently visited Mr Marshall, Hickman's manager, in his little office by the side of Flat No. 1, to ask if there was a flat available for rent. At last she was lucky and could move into a top floor flat with a lovely view of the park. She was delighted!. Mr Gregory told me that the annual rent was £75 4s 6d and that Hickmans paid the water rates. There was a deposit of five shillings for two keys.

At that time the road was private. There were no street lamps until the residents asked for these to deter the large numbers of courting couples who made use of the area next to the park fence. There was a movement to put a gate in the park fence but Mr Hickman opposed this and the gate was never put in.

As Mrs Little had told me previously, Flat 22 was occupied by Laurie Price and his wife, known as Pinky, who was secretary to Norman Hartnell, the Queen's dressmaker. When the Queen was getting married there was much secrecy and speculation about the whereabouts of her wedding dress. In fact the dress was kept in Flat 22 and Mrs Gregory had a small piece of the material to prove it!

Apparently Laurie Price was not good at waking up in a morning and George Little used to lean out of the window above and tap the bedroom window with a billiard cue. Laurie Price was most annoyed one morning when he forgot!

Good references had to be presented before anyone could rent a flat. Children and animals were not allowed, nor were cars to be parked in the road. Mr Hickman inspected the estate at least once a week. Mr Marshall, the manager, was available in his little office and dealt with phone calls, collection and delivery of laundry, etc. It was possible to choose wallpaper from Sanderson's catalogue to be charged on the next bill from Hickmans. There were two non-resident porters who cleaned, did the gardening, and carried up coal from the coal bunkers at the back of the flats.

Mr Gregory told me how he and Alf Barnett and Jack Jason founded the original tenants' association. Other residents were Miss Sheffield, who moved in with her father and sister, and Mr Bedford, Town Clerk, and Mr Kent Wright, Borough Treasurer of Stoke Newington. Mr Gregory recalled an occasion when the residents played football in Epping Forest.

In August 1959 Mr Hickman sold the estate.

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WELCOME TO NEW BABY

Our congratulations to Deirdre and Steve Rose at No. 48 on the arrival of their baby, Thomas Ian Elliott on 5th February. Thomas was born at Homerton Hospital and weighed in at 8 lbs 4 oz.

Steve and Deirdre have written to thank the Residents' Association for the 'lovely green dungarees'.

Correspondence

"I remember the Bomb mentioned in the article on the History of Clissold Court in the last Newsletter. I believe that it was a land mine and fell at the back of the Convent in Manor Road. At that time I was living in Manor Road quite near to the Convent and as I was expecting to be called up, my wife had gone, with her parents and sisters, to the West Coast of Scotland.

On the evening in question, I had spent the time with my wife's cousin. He was staying at the Cumberland Hotel and, during the evening, the air raid sirens sounded and nearly everyone made their way to the basement. In the morning, I returned to Manor Road and went up the front steps to the door. It wasn't until I got inside that I realised that the house had become a "war casualty". It was the rear of the house that had taken the brunt of the blast. The large french windows had been lifted bodily out of their frame and apparently had been desposited literally inches from the wall and left leaning against it. I cannot remember the state of the glass in the windows.

One thing I shall never forget is that on entering the house I had to use more force than usual and on the mat was a card with a personal message which read "Welcome to H.M. Forces"...

Jack Fasht, No. 19"

WE ARE SORRY TO ANNOUNCE

the death of Mr J Chevern of Flat 19B on Friday, 16 April.

Mr Chevern had been in and out of hospital since the autumn and died in Bart's. He will be missed in the Court, though the roses he pruned so lovingly for many years will continue to remind us of his gentle personality.

THE NEW CHERRY TREES

We hope that residents have noticed the flowering of the two cherry trees planted last September in memory of Alf Barnett and Helen Freedman. Alf's cherry tree had white blossom and Helen's pink. Both have added to the pleasure of living in the Court in the springtime and are a poignant reminder of all that Alf and Helen did for the Residents' Association.

"Good Neighbourliness"

Ray and Jack Fasht (Flat 19) would like to thank the residents of Flat 49A for the gift of a bottle of champagne to celebrate their fifty-fourth wedding anniversary.

The gift was much appreciated, but the thought behind the gift is appreciated even more.

THE NEWSLETTER

The Editor would like to thank all those who supplied ideas and articles for this edition.

The next issue will be published in July 1993. If you would like to contribute or have an item for sale please contact Annette Percy at No. 21 before July.