



We've had enough, say residents of Prospect Ring

By Janet Maitland

Residents living in the two tower blocks in Prospect Ring are growing increasingly angry at the sheer volume of building work being done right outside and inside their homes.

"What used to be a nice, quiet place to live has become a noisy, dirty, hell-hole," said leaseholder Dermott Donnelly. "Many Prospect Ring residents have had enough, including me," said leaseholder Maureen Antoinette. "If someone legal out there hears our cry it would be amazing."

Barnet Homes began building another tower block between the existing blocks two years ago and it is still unfinished. A few months into the new build, the two neighbouring blocks were shrouded in scaffolding while the roofs and lifts were repaired.

invited us to a show flat, where all the sprinkler pipework has been boxed in, the residents have not changed their minds, not least because they have not been invited to see the flat themselves.

They are being disturbed, however, by the noise of the system being installed, which takes five days per flat and will be completed in April 2021. "It is absolutely horrendous," said Mr Donnelly. "You can't hear the radio, the TV or even read."

"If only the council had spent the same effort consulting with residents as it has with making sure that the press are

provided with a point of view," said another leaseholder.

One resident, who is "still an objector at heart", has agreed to the works as he and his partner decided that "at our advanced ages we would just accept it in our wider interest".

More disruption due

Just before we went to press, residents heard yet more scaffolding is coming. Cadent plan a 14-week replacement of the gas risers

over the winter. "The work only affects 22 homes," said a spokesperson for Barnet Homes. "The scaffolding will be up for eight weeks and no properties' windows will be directly obstructed. We appreciate these works may cause disruption, but they are being carried out to ensure residents' continued safety."

The sprinkler saga

Soon after, following a fire risk assessment, Barnet Homes announced a plan to install sprinklers and smoke alarms in every flat, which many residents thought was unnecessary, unsightly and intrusive.

Despite seeing photographs taken by *The Archer* in November when Barnet Homes

Recipe: mincemeat ice cream

This grown-up ice cream is a seasonal treat but is tasty at any time of year. You can adjust the ingredients according to your taste and the number and size of portions required.

Ingredients:

1 1/2 pints/850 ml of best vanilla ice cream
1 lb/ 500 g mincemeat
2 tablespoons of rum or alcohol of your choice.

Method:

Mix together the mincemeat and rum.
Thaw the ice cream.
Beat the mincemeat mixture into the thawed ice-cream.
Re-freeze until needed.



Work in progress on the new sprinkler system being installed at Prospect Ring. Photo Mike Coles



Birds of a feather: Writer Louisa Green and illustrator Dee Mclean with Wallace and Mrs Newbie and their family on the water at Hampstead. Photo Caroline Egen

The love story that's taken wing

By Hilary Townley

If there was ever a story to lift the spirits in these troubled times it's the lockdown love story of two swans on Hampstead Heath. Making national news earlier in the year, their extraordinary story has now inspired a book.

There's Something About Wallace is co-written by Dee Mclean, a well-known local illustrator, and Louisa Green, an East Finchley resident and a scientist working at the Royal Free Hospital in Hampstead.

It tells the true story of how widowed Mute swan Mrs Newbie, resident of Hampstead Heath, unexpectedly found love during a brief stay at the Swan Sanctuary in Shepperton, south-west London.

Wallace was a single swan and the minute they met it was clear that they were destined for each other. An unusual snap decision by the sanctuary brought them both back to the Heath, where love flourished and you can now see Wallace and Mrs Newbie happily nurturing their growing brood on



Love at first sight: Wallace and Mrs Newbie share their affection. Photo Louisa Green.

the Highgate Number 1 Pond, south of the men's bathing pond.

Global response

The book has only just been published and the reaction has

been explosive. A BBC News online article about it became the second most viewed story after the US election on the weekend that saw Joe Biden take the presidency.

Initially the writers hoped the book would raise enough money to buy a rescue kayak but they reached their goal in only a few days and have extended their print run to cover the overwhelming demand.

Radio interviews, more newspaper features and interest in this charming and informative book is growing around the world. Schools are thrilled by the book; its positive message full of love is a counterpoint to everything children have had to cope with over the last few months. For more information visit www.deemclean.co.uk.

Festive spirit in historic setting

Stephens House and Gardens in East End Road, N3, is hosting three events this month to get the Christmas spirit flowing.

On Saturday 12 December, visitors can take a walk through the gardens lit up with winter lights and warm up afterwards with mulled wine, hot chocolate or something else from the café. The event runs from 5.30pm to 7.30pm and tickets cost £4.50 per person. Booking is essential at www.tickettailor.com/events/stephenshouseandgardens/425278 (ignore hyphens).

Then on Sunday 13 December and Sunday 20 December there will be Christmas Lunch in the historic setting of Stephens House, all decorated for

the festive season. Lunch runs from 12noon to 3pm and again booking is essential by calling 020 8346 7812, option 1. Find the menu online at www.stephenshouseandgardens.com/events

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