



Hole in the ground: Caroline Broome gets plenty of help planting the new tree at Bishop Douglass School

New growth takes root in the grounds of green school

By David Melsome

Bishop Douglass students and staff chose to mark the start of the secondary school's 60th anniversary year by celebrating their green credentials with the planting of a tree. Guest of honour Caroline Broome, who lives in Church Lane, N2, and is the chair of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Horticultural Society, joined in the planting in the school's grounds off Hamilton Road.

The school already has a Green Flag award recognising its biodiversity projects such as bee-friendly beds and bee houses, a wildlife pond, a weekly gardening club and setting up recycling points.

Headteacher Michelle Henderson said: "We were delighted

Caroline Broome could come along and mark the start of our Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Having achieved a Green Flag award already, our students and staff are committed to being good stewards of our planet, so this seemed the perfect event for starting the celebration of

our 60th year."

Science teacher Sue Williams added: "We are fortunate in having a large playing field with 'wild margins' and some growing areas, but realise that we are not currently using it to its fullest potential and would love to have help for us to do so."

Open invitation to Patsy and John's garden party

By Lynn Winton

Patsy Bailey and John Rance have lived in their Edwardian home just off Muswell Hill Broadway for 25 years, and for the last ten have opened their garden for the National Garden Scheme, which raises funds for nursing and caring charities.

I had a sneak preview. Visitors are in for a visual treat, as well as a wonderful selection of potted plants to buy, including a large variety of hostas, their speciality, which will be for sale alongside everlasting wallflowers, penstemons and a host of other perennials. Patsy told me: "I've even got my family in Gloucestershire driving down with a car full of tomato plants and friends in Shropshire busily growing cuttings ready to sell."

Family affair

As you would expect, Patsy and John are very keen gardeners, but from visiting over the years I can attest they also succeed in creating a garden party atmosphere, with several tables (if necessary safely dry under a pop-up awning), at least 16 varieties of cake freshly made the day before by their baker daughter Joanna, who commandeers their kitchen, and the Secret Life sax quartet playing a mix of jazz and classical at the bottom of the garden.

It's a real family affair.



Easy on the eye: Patsy and John's garden

As well as Joanna on her baking marathon, artist daughter Imogen sells her greeting cards and son Edward is 'the accountant' on cash box and credit card duty.

Come with all your gardening queries as John also volunteers in Highgate Cemetery grounds under the watchful eye of their chief landscape gardener, and there's not much Patsy doesn't know about urban gardens.

Sunday afternoon

"There are the most wonderful gardens open but they are in the middle of nowhere,"

said Patsy. "Here, just off the Broadway, people can walk in after they've done their shopping, no special trip or booking necessary, and relax with tea and delicious cake with some live music. I like to introduce people to each other and friendships are made. What could be a nicer way to spend a Sunday afternoon?"

Patsy and John's garden at 17 Princes Avenue, N10 3LS, is open on Sunday 14 May from 12 noon to 6pm. They partner with a neighbouring garden opened by Ian and Viv Roberts at no 28 and the combined entry fee is £5.

RICKY SAVAGE ...

Coronation chickens

This is the moment an old man has been waiting more than 70 years for. Finally, he has got his mother's job and on 6 May he gets the crown, orb and sceptre and can really feel that he is king of all he surveys. What must make it even better is that the only people who can remember when his mother got the crown are now pushing 80. So in this weird world of the Windsors it's my job to remind you of what happened last time.

First off, it had taken 15 months from the death of George VI for them to organise Elizabeth's bash. Something about a suitable period of mourning, but probably mostly about sending out the invites to 8,000 guests and inventing a suitable recipe consisting of cold chicken, curry powder and mayonnaise to mark the start of a new Elizabethan age. Oh and don't forget lining up 197 ships of the Royal Navy at Spithead for the new queen to review.

There was also television to be thought of, with good old Auntie Beeb showing the whole thing live to anyone who could cluster round a tiny set. They reckon over 277 million people worldwide watched the thing. There was even a colour film made, complete with a narration by Sir Larry Olivier just to get the right level of pomp and circumstance. And you could buy coronation mugs, plates and flags to welcome in the new age.

This time it's the short version. They have got the whole thing nailed down in nine months, maybe because you can't afford to waste time with old folks. There won't be a long procession through London so the new King can survey his subjects, just a quick dash back to Buck House for a wave from the balcony and an afternoon nap.

The gang will still be there, mostly wearing uniforms from the Ruritanian dressing up box. Expect the new Prince of Wales to be dressed as an air marshal, his aunt will turn up in her admiral's uniform and you'll have to feel sorry for the spare forced to wear a suit. Not quite as grand as last time, not with a guest list limited to 2,000 and 40% of them normal people.

There won't be a naval review because we haven't got enough ships and no one has said anything about a special recipe to celebrate the coronation. I don't reckon this will be the start of a new age of optimism; all we'll get is an extra bank holiday.

Anyway, don't worry, he's an old man, so it won't be that long before we can all do it again. Next time with just a few family members and a couple of Uber hire cars. William V anyone?

GoodGym good ideas

GoodGym, the group that combines a run with a community activity each week, is looking for more people to get involved and for suggestions of good deeds they can do in the East Finchley and Muswell Hill area.

The tasks they undertake include sprucing up community gardens to helping isolated older individuals who need help. In the past, GoodGym Barnet runners have repainted the side of the Phoenix Cinema. The group is open to everyone regardless of age or fitness and you can pick or choose the runs or activities that you want to get involved with. It's a great way to connect with local people and projects, and to increase motivation through exercising with a group. Find out more at www.goodgym.org/join-goodgym

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