



REMEMBER, REMEMBER: IT REALLY IS THE 5TH OF NOVEMBER!



After a hectic summer of social events we are left with just one more date in the Formosa calendar: Bonfire Night, which this year falls on the **5th November** itself. We've been running this hugely popular event, with its unbeatable combination of bonfire & firework display, for well over 25 years now & the ground rules have remained broadly the same:

- No personal fireworks in or around the Garden at any time
- Safe distance to be kept from the bonfire
- No glassware to be brought into the garden
- Children to be supervised at all times
- Pets to be kept indoors to help keep them safe
- Castellain Road residents to ensure all their windows & doors are closed.

Don't forget that unless you have direct access to the Garden you will need a working fob to get in. The Castellain Road gate will be shut at **6.50 pm & 7 pm** will see the start of the firework display, during which there can be no entry to or exit from the garden. All no-go areas will be clearly marked with tape on the night to keep spectators at the necessary distance.

As has become traditional Crescent Garden will be synchronising their own display with ours to enable residents to enjoy the benefits of both, if only from afar (The Crescent display begins at 7.30 pm but with their main gate locked at 7.15 pm, in the middle of ours, Formosa residents will not be able to physically move from one garden to the other!)

Full details of the timetable for the evening will be published on the website in coming weeks.

WHAT A GREAT SUMMER IT'S BEEN!

It started off with the return by popular demand of our wine-tasting session, followed by Open Square Gardens (which attracted 80 visitors) & a sell-out performance of *The Tempest* by the touring company Shakespeare in the Squares (250 tickets sold!).



The culmination was the traditional Summer party in July in glorious 28-degree sunshine.



See the January 2023 edition of the Newsletter for first details of next year's events!

DOG-OWNERS: A HEARTFELT PLEA

It seems there are still a few dog-owners who are failing to pick up after their pets – please take care to do so as their poo is unpleasant & a health hazard, particularly for the large number of children who use the garden. The arrangement by which dogs are allowed off the lead until 10am is much prized by all, & one of the reasons I'm told why dog-owners moving into the area are particularly keen to find a property



on Formosa, but this concession can only be expected to continue with the co-operation of all parties.

RESIDENTS HAVE THEIR SAY

Thanks to all who came to the meeting on July 5th which followed on from the Formosa AGM. It was a highly respectable turn-out considering that Boris Johnson's government was busy imploding at the same time, with a slew of ministerial resignations prompted by the departure of Messrs Javid & Sunak! There was much praise for the garden & the new irrigation system, plus discussion of the appropriate colour for the footings at the base of the house railings on the street side. It's now been agreed with WBM that both black & magnolia are accepted.

There was an appeal for smokers in the garden to pick up their cigarette butts which were often being found discarded under the benches by the gardeners. And more than one resident expressed uncertainty over the planning rules & the circumstance in which approval for works needed to be sought. The rule of thumb here: best seek advice on *anything* that impacts on the exterior of your property!

OUR PATHS & BENCHES TRANSFORMED

Residents will have spotted, & no doubt already been enjoying, the radical make-over that's been given to the paths through the Mediterranean & Warrington flower beds which had previously either been worn away or reverted to mud, particularly in wintertime. Now the paths have been re-defined in natural stone – for the Med bed a vintage-style herringbone brick..



...and for the Warrington bed, & the areas under the benches, sets of cobble stones:

The benches themselves are to be either re-furbished or replaced & the noticeboard in the Med bed is now more accessible through a raised winding path. The whole effect is something akin



to being in the actual Mediterranean, according to Board member (& seasoned traveller) Peter Cross. Our thanks to him & Board Chairman Sandy David for all the hard work they have done to bring about this impressive transformation.

HOW FORMOSA DEFIED THE DROUGHT

Although during the extended drought the grass took a hammering – now largely restored to a verdant green after a period of rain – the flower beds have continued to thrive, thanks to the extensive irrigation system we put in a year ago. The Board chairman Sandy David pointed out that without that we would have lost everything that had been planted earlier this year & would now be facing the considerable cost of replacing them.



At one point it looked as if we would lose the wild flowers growing under the big tree because the canopy of leaves meant that the ground beneath remained very dry, but of recent weeks even they have started to flourish again!

FORMOSA REMEMBERS HER MAJESTY

You may have noticed the little oak tree which has been planted on the Sutherland Avenue side of the garden. The Board agreed to purchase it to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in June but the English oak was not in stock at the time. Following the sad death of the Monarch on September 8th the plaque we intend to erect is likely to



commemorate instead her long life & service to the nation.

Oak trees are relatively fast-growing at two feet a year, incidentally, but it will still take a while before this one rivals the remaining plane trees on the perimeter!

SECURITY BOOSTED AT GARDEN BOUNDARY...

This new high iron fence has been installed above the gate at the corner of Sutherland Ave & Warrington



Crescent. It's in response to nearby residents' concerns following a break-in at the Warrington end & is the latest measure to increase security in the garden after the introduction of the CCTV camera at the Castellain Road gate.

... AND TOWARDS A SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD

Many of you will have seen a flyer from Owain



Richards, police Borough Commander for the City of Westminster, giving details of Safer Neighbourhoods officers within the Borough who deal with local issues such as crime & anti-social behaviour. Our own team

can be contacted on LittleVenice@met.police.uk. The mailboxes are not monitored 24/7 however, & you should continue to dial 999 in an emergency or 101 for non-emergency calls.

THEY'RE COMING AFTER OUR BUSES....AGAIN!

Cash-strapped Transport for London are at it again – after scrapping the 414 bus between Warwick Avenue & Hyde Park & unhelpfully re-routing the no. 6 away from Oxford Street they say the devastating impact of Covid on their finances is forcing them to slim down the capital's bus network still further, with 22 routes due to be axed under proposals published at the beginning of June. These include the no. 16 which currently runs along Edgware Road at the top of Sutherland Avenue on its way to Victoria.



Proposed changes to the route of the 98, which currently runs from Willesden Bus Garage to Red Lion Square, mean that it would no longer serve Oxford St & would terminate instead at Victoria. However in what looks like a direct trade-off the plan is for the no 6 to run again along Oxford St instead of Piccadilly – a welcome return to the status quo ante of a few years ago!

I must admit this was all news to me until a neighbour mentioned it – I'm not sure TFL publicised it as widely as it might have done -- but if you are also hearing about it here for the first time & would like to make your views known, well – too late, I'm afraid! The consultation period closed on August 7th!

PRINCE ALFRED GOES UP IN THE WORLD

The Prince Alfred on the corner of Castellain Road & Formosa Street has been given Grade II* listed status to protect its so-called “snob screens” -- rare etched



glass partitions that were originally designed to afford privacy to women ordering at the ladies' bar. The pub, built in 1856, also has five bar compartments, each with its own entrance & low door to allow the “pot boys” through to pick up the empty glasses.

THIS NEWSLETTER IS NOT ALL ABOUT ME....

...or at least it doesn't have to be! If anyone out there would like to send in a letter, article, or other comment, about any of the topics raised here or indeed something completely different, I would be only too pleased to consider publishing it (subject to the usual laws of libel & defamation) & end up writing a bit less myself!

Please send contributions to vivvy.robins@gmail.com. The next Newsletter is published in the New Year & material needs to reach me by January 9th 2023.