

TO: ALL RESIDENTS

FROM: LADY MARSHALL

MONTPELIER SQUARE GARDEN REPORT
FEBRUARY 1991 - JANUARY 1992

The general standard of the garden continued to improve in 1991. It was a busy year in which the work agreed at the AGM was completed.

On completion of the railings in early May an immediate start was made on the restoration of the paths and installation of the extended sprinkler system. It was decided that the two projects should run concurrently to avoid any duplication of work and to try to minimise disruption of the garden during the Summer period. With thorough advance planning and the co-operation of the two contractors it worked well and I am confident that a high standard was achieved on both jobs.

We were fortunate to find much of the original rope edging of the paths buried under many years' accumulation of silt. It was lifted and relaid and broken tiles were replaced with matching second-hand tiles to ensure a uniform finished appearance. The paths were cleaned back to the original base, a 4 inch layer of hoggin laid and rolled in and a final top dressing of small shingle applied. Nothing more than a periodic raking and freshening of the shingle should be necessary for many years to come.

The comprehensive sprinkler system is fully zoned and has been well tested and adjusted during the late Summer and Autumn. It is almost impossible to achieve perfect head-to-head cover but we have achieved near-perfection and I am grateful for the co-operation and patience of the contractor, Mike Bayon Garden Design, in this respect. The regular Winter draining and Spring servicing of the system has been arranged with them. A new larger water storage tank with specially made security lid was installed and painted.

The shed was repaired and repainted.

A sundial was purchased and placed at the Eastern end of the Square.

The final planting of the original landscaping plan was completed in the Autumn. Routine pruning, fertilising and mulching all took place. For the first time we were able to use our own leaf mulch. Some of the long-established philadelphus needed hard pruning and do not look attractive at present but they should produce healthy, young growth in the Spring.

The hedge was badly damaged in places during the installation of the railings. Some of the privet is old and would benefit from hard pruning to produce new thicker growth from the roots. I recommend that this is done in stages to avoid a sudden drastic change in appearance. Privets have been planted to fill in the areas where the hedge did not survive. They are young and healthy and are the recommended size for transplanting - they will take 2 - 3 years to mature. Inevitably we must expect further damage to the hedge whenever the railings are repainted.

The plane trees were attacked by a virus which was prevalent throughout London in the Spring and the red hawthorn in the NW corner suddenly shrivelled and died in the Summer. It was presumed to be the result of a virus and the dead tree was cut down and the root removed.

A magnolia was planted opposite No.23 in recognition of the long association of the Swann family with the Square. The choice of tree was made by Lady Swann and planted by her before she moved in late July.

The Spring bulb display was very successful and appears to have been particularly enjoyed. This year we have added snowdrops, hyacinths, 500 crocus and approximately 600 more daffodils which should ensure Spring 'colour' throughout the Square.

The Christmas tree has received favourable comment and our thanks are due to Mrs Mackay-Lewis who again made the bows and decorations.

There was an accident to the tap by the North gate which unfortunately fractured the mains supply resulting in flooding and considerable inconvenience. Repairs took three days to complete and the bill will be around £500.

Two small jobs remain for the Spring of 1992 - to oil the garden furniture and to paint the surrounds of the Garden Rules Notice Boards.

The three-year plan recommended in 1989 is now complete. A large amount of money has been spent and much time and effort given but the garden is well stocked, in excellent condition and should need only regular care and maintenance to provide pleasure and enjoyment for current and future residents of the Square.

I think we are fortunate in having our present contractor, whose work has been much admired by other Squares.

GARDENS CHAIRMAN
2.1.92