

Ham & High

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Murder on the estate of terror

THE MURDER of an 84-year-old man in sheltered housing in Hampstead has provoked calls for a vigilante squad to be set up.

James Alexander was found on Tuesday beaten to death at his home on Russell Nurseries Estate, off Haverstock Hill. Tenants say his death is the violent culmination of a crime wave sweeping the estate.

Mr Alexander's body was discovered at noon on Tuesday by council warden Bridget Bowles. A post-mortem revealed he died of multiple injuries.

Just hours after police swarmed the estate in the search for clues, tenant Victor Hammond woke up to find a burglar in his bedroom.

The thief, who stole a video recorder, had jemmied open the front door.

"The level of crime on this estate is outrageous," said Mr Hammond. "I've got five kids — what would have happened if they had woken up?"

Last week a cement mixer was stolen and a house attacked on the estate. On the night Mr Alexander's body was found council security guards were called to deal with a group of teenagers who



● **Murdered: James Alexander.** were intimidating tenants.

A tenants' representative, who did not want to be identified, told the Ham & High: "I have heard a vigilante group is being formed. People are fed up — the police have done nothing."

At least half a dozen other tenants told the Ham & High they supported a vigilante group.

One 37-year-old resident, whose house was burgled in July, said: "If this vigilante gang goes ahead, I will join. Something has to be done about crime here, even if it means doing it ourselves."

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● **A healthy Louise Troostwyk celebrates her A-level results.**

Cancer is no match for Louise

WHEN she was diagnosed as having cancer halfway through her A-level course, Louise Troostwyk never lost hope of doing a degree in classical civilisation at Leeds University.

Channing School pupil Louise, 19, of Netherhall Gardens, Hampstead, even worked on her dissertation while in hospital having chemotherapy for Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, and managed a grade B A-level in classical civilisation a month after finishing her treatment.

She remained positive throughout her illness, even treating her hair loss through chemotherapy as a joke. "I used to turn my wig round the wrong way when the teacher wasn't looking."

Her illness made her more determined to succeed, particularly when she realised she would have to stay at school an extra year.

"I just had to go to Leeds. There was no way I was going to do three years of A-levels and then fail. I have never worked so hard in my life."

The frustration of doing an extra year paid off. Louise got a grade B in biology in January, another B in history, which she took this summer, and starts at Leeds in the autumn.

Following her treatment — which was a complete success — Louise is as active as she ever was. As she put it, she can do everything except give blood. "Now I just tell every else to give it."

● See results, page 4.

Suburb 'referendum' may be held on latest plan for eruv

A "REFERENDUM" in Hampstead Garden Suburb has been proposed to determine public opinion on the controversial eruv scheme.

The Ham & High learned this week that at a meeting on September 7, the Suburb Residents' Association is to decide whether to call in the Electoral Reform Society to conduct a vote on the scheme.

Eruv supporters want to create a symbolically enclosed area within which Orthodox Jews would be exempt from religious laws concerning pushing and carrying on the Sabbath.

The proposal, the subject of a planning inquiry in November, has caused a bitter split in the

area, with both sides claiming large numbers of supporters.

Peter Loyd, vice-chairman of the association, was furious when he discovered the Ham & High had heard about the plan. "It is obviously an irresponsible source that you have picked this up from," he said. "I can't give you any information about that."

Barnet leader Roy Shutz, a Suburb councillor and opponent of the eruv, said he did not know what the aim of such a vote would be. "Whether it is in favour or against, what then?"

Another Suburb councillor, Frank Davis, also saw no point in having a so-called referendum. "It is going to ask them whether they

want it or whether they don't. It isn't a question of want. It is a question of what is town planning law. It's a dreadful waste of time and money."

Barnet is in the ironic situation of spending hundreds of pounds on press advertising for a revised eruv application which may end up being withdrawn. Public works committee chairman Don Goodman has told eruv campaigners the application stands little chance of being granted because it proposes using lamp-posts, which would set an awkward precedent.

Eruv supporter Edward Black said his committee was still considering Mr Goodman's advice and had not been consulted about the adverts.

Virus hits patients at Free

AN OUTBREAK of a dangerous bug at the Royal Free Hospital in Hampstead has led to the infection of five patients and the closure of four wards to new admissions.

The strain of staphylococcus aureus, which causes infection to wounds and can lead to symptoms including fever, is resistant to the drug methicillin — usually used to treat such infections.

It is a recurring problem in most London hospitals and was detected more than a month ago in a routine check on a patient.

All patients and medical staff in the area were immediately screened and isolated and those found to be infected with the organism were given drugs in an attempt to wipe it out.

Dr Chris Kibbler, consultant in medical microbiology, said that of the five who needed treatment, only one is now still receiving a course of drugs.

There are also eight MRSA carriers who do not need drugs but have to stay in side rooms to prevent the spread of the organism.

Of the four wards temporarily closed to new admissions, three of them have now reopened and it is hoped to reopen the fourth in the near future.

INSIDE

Dame Judi to restore home

AFTER Dame Judi Dench's home in Hampstead was severely damaged by fire the actress told the Ham & High she was relieved that no-one had been hurt — and was determined to restore the building. **Page 5.**

Move on, please

TENANTS in Hornsey Lane, Highgate, who were themselves once homeless, are being asked by Haringey Council to move to estates in Tottenham — to make room for other homeless people. **Page 11.**

Broken link

THE man in charge of the projected Channel Tunnel rail link at St Pancras returned from holiday to find his job gone. **Page 7.**

education 93/94

● See our special, 20-page, pull-out supplement.

Tube campaign

HENDON SOUTH MP John Marshall is promising to keep up pressure on Ministers to secure a better deal for passengers on the Northern Line. **Page 1.**

Creaks away

IT'S never too late to get the benefits of knee-bends and arm stretches, as 90-year-old Lillian has discovered by taking part in a project run by Royal Free Hospital exercise physiologist Dawn Skelton. Ruth Gorb reports: **page 29.**

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