

Beauty and the Borough

*"Nothing great was ever achieved
without enthusiasm."*—EMERSON.

HORNSEY was once part of the vast forest of Middlesex. The Kings and Bishops hunted stag and wild boar through its forest glades, whilst the traveller to the North struggled along its ill-conditioned roads and tracks at the mercy of every knave and cut-throat that menaced the highway.

To-day Hornsey is a borough of 2,872 acres, populated by almost 100,000 people. Its undulating terrain fringes the vast Metropolitan area of the London County Council, other neighbours being the Metropolitan Boroughs of Islington and St. Pancras and the Middlesex Boroughs of Finchley, Tottenham and Wood Green. The Urban District of Friern Barnet also has a common boundary.

Of its 2,872 acres, all but 329 are developed, and there are to-day approximately 23,000 dwellings within the borough with a rateable value of more than one million pounds.

Here fell some of the first fly-bombs and rockets of the war, and throughout the years of hostilities the borough suffered grievous damage from enemy action. Yet whilst the

bombs fell the Council planned anew, to turn misfortune to advantage and to reconstruct and build again in the days of peace. It was perhaps inevitable that the early post-war years should present many difficulties, and progress therefore was slow. The fruition of planning schemes appeared more and more remote as we planned for the years ahead, yet around us lay many urgent tasks of rehabilitation, which needed no vast planning scheme, but only the enterprise and energy of those who were enthusiastic in the well-being of our borough.

In my journeys around the borough I was convinced that much could be achieved at a moderate cost, provided help and support were forthcoming from all concerned.

A preliminary report on open spaces and gardens was prepared and this came before the Council in January, 1947, when an extract from the Council's Minutes records as follows:

"Works and Estates Committee; Paragraph 22. Public Amenity Scheme 1947. The Committee had before them for information a report by the Borough Engineer and Surveyor upon the possibility of developing small open spaces as gardens."

Thus was born an idea which has now been warmly approved by the people of the borough and encouraged by the Local and National Press and all who have followed the Council in this sphere of its activities.

