

Good neighbours

In the days before electric hoists and regulations protecting the disabled (and thereby opening the way for claims against people kind enough to help a neighbour) the ladies in our road were real good neighbours.

Opposite us in St Anne's Road, Wembley, there lived Mrs Crick, an old lady who frequently fell out of her chair, never seriously hurting herself but always needing help to get back into her chair. Her husband had a horse and cart and from it sold fruit and vegetables round the town. When he was out selling his wares his wife was dependent upon kind neighbours to help her up from the floor – and my mother was one of the neighbours frequently called on to help.

My sister can recall being sent to gather reinforcements from the ladies in our road. The interesting thing was the way in which these ladies helped to get the old dear back into her chair. Each of them brought a roller towel which they fed under the old lady's body so that the loops at the end of the roller towels could be hung round the neck or over the arms of the lifters and, *voilà*, when the helpers lifted Mrs Crick was back in her chair.