



*The Belsize Society is a
Registered Charity (number
1180842), continuing the
work of the Belsize
Residents Association.*

www.belsize.org.uk

Notes from your Chair

Welcome to the February BelSoc Newsletter.

It was good to see many members at this year's carol singing. We were joined by Primrose Hill Community Choir, raising funds for Marie Curie. In January, local historian Martin Sheppard attracted a large audience when, at a joint event hosted with the Friends of the Belsize Community Library, he spoke about Belsize during the Second World War. An interesting talk included some music from the period.

This Newsletter features a piece by Averil Nottage about Belsize House, other mansions and the development of Belsize since the 16th century. There is to be a local history walk around this theme in May led by Averil and the Newsletter also gives details about how you can book for this using Eventbrite or by contacting us if this option is not possible.

Whether there is adequate provision for those in our community who are not online has become a concern as Camden considers removing paper visitor parking permits. The Newsletter covers our contribution to the consultation where, with other resident bodies, we are raising the need for scratchcard permits for those unable to access services online. This Newsletter also covers the consultation on the Camden Local Plan, and has a piece about what's on at Hampstead Theatre.

We are getting ready for the AGM. Papers are with this Newsletter, and you'll also see an article about our request at the AGM to raise the membership fee level. There is a request for volunteers, especially if you are interested in joining the Society's committee. We would also be grateful for any member recommendations for Tradesmen You Can Trust, with a form enclosed with this Newsletter.

We hope you enjoy this Newsletter.

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Belsize Society Annual General Meeting

*Sunday, 3 March 2024
at 3pm*

*Belsize Square Synagogue,
51 Belsize Square*

*Followed by refreshments and
a chance to meet other
members from 4:15pm*

Members only

BELSIZE HOUSE AND OTHER LOCAL COUNTRY MANSIONS

In this article Averil Nottage provides a short taster of her local history walk on 12 May

Belsize means beautifully situated. Surrounded by open countryside and with fine views of London, Belsize was a perfect location for an aristocratic country estate.

Belsize House, situated near the junction of Belsize Park and Belsize Avenue, was probably built at the end of 15th century. In 1568 the house had 24 rooms, including a hall, long gallery, and a great chamber. Its 25 acres park was enclosed in a pentagonal wall surrounded by over 200 acres of farmland. The estate was leased to William Waad, an eminent statesman and diplomat whom Queen Elizabeth entrusted with her most delicate missions.



Belsize House in 1800

After the Restoration the house was rebuilt, and the estate passed to the Chesterfield family. By the early 18th century, they had moved out and the house was sublet. In 1720, with a flourish of trumpets, James Howell opened the house and grounds as a pleasure garden. It offered fine dining and wines, music, dancing in the lavish ballroom, fishing, hunting and betting. Initially it was very fashionable, and the Prince and Princess of Wales dined there, but soon after it was described as a “scandalous Lew’d House.” Magistrates intervened to prevent unlawful gaming and rioting.

It wasn’t until 1746, when the house was rebuilt as a private residence, that the area regained its respectability. After Ken Wood, it remained the pre-eminent park on the northern heights for another century.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries several houses were built around Belsize Lane. In 1794 Baron Loughborough, the Lord Chancellor, bought one as his country residence. It was a substantial mansion in 21 acres and had a private drive. He held extravagant banquets there with guests including the Prince of Wales. The house was renamed Rosslyn House after he received an earldom in 1801.

Queen Victoria visited it to see whether it would be a suitable place for her children to spend their summers. In 1808, when the 5th Earl of Chesterfield needed to clear his debts, the Belsize Estate was sold off as 8 sub estates. These miniature country estates, with “capital mansion houses” set in a few acres of park and surrounded by meadows, would be within the reach of successful businessmen.

The lease for the most northern plot went to George Todd, a Baltic merchant who had made his fortune in Riga. He demolished a house in 16 acres of land to build a magnificent mansion called Belsize Court. Opposite the mansion, William Tate build a large *cottage orne* with gothic towers on the site of a “Chinese” cottage. Now known as Hunters Lodge, it remains on the corner of

Belsize Lane and Wedderburn Road. Todd also built a grand house between Belsize Lane and Belsize Avenue called Ivy Bank.

Edward Bliss, who made his fortune by manufacturing gun flints in the Napoleonic War, bought the sub-estate between England's Lane and Belsize Grove. He leased individual plots to builders, creating a piecemeal development.

Nearly 38 houses were built by 1830 and occupied by "persons of quality". Three "post Waterloo" houses at 129-133 Haverstock Hill, and a row of 1820s stuccoed houses on the south side of Belsize Grove, remain. John Maples, who owned the furniture store, lived for many years in Bedford House, a substantial property on the corner of Belsize Grove. It was advertised in the Times in 1905 as comprising of 13



The Ivy Bank estate from Belsize Lane with Hunters Lodge (left) in early 19th century.

bedrooms with dressing rooms, three bathrooms, dining, drawing, morning and billiard rooms, a library, conservatory, stabling for five horses and a garden with lawns, greenhouses etc.

BelSoc Spring Walk:

Belsize House and other local country mansions - the story of the Belsize Estate before the 1850s

Join us for a guided walk led by Averil Nottage.

12 May 2024 at two times
11:00 am 2.30pm



Book on Eventbrite or contact BelSoc

There will be tea and cakes after the second walk at Belsize Community Library

By the middle of the 19th century London was extending northward, creating demand for suburban housing. Belsize House was demolished in 1853 and replaced with the large stucco villas that characterise Belsize Park. In the 1860s land from the Rosslyn Estate and Belsize Court was taken to build Lyndhurst Gardens. Gradually other grounds and mansions made way for housing. Rosslyn House was sold to developers in 1896. In the 1920s the site of Ivy Bank became a motor car garage. Belsize Court was demolished in 1937 and replaced by blocks of flats of the same name. The houses on Bliss's estate were mainly replaced by flats in the 1960s and 70s to meet the needs of the time. Bedford House wasn't demolished until the 1980s. But whilst the mansions and estates have gone, we can still see their traces all around us when we know what was there before.



Belsize Society's Annual Membership Fee

The Belsize Society annual membership fee has remained at £10 for over a decade and, at the March 2024 AGM, a resolution will be put forward to raise the level of fees for 2025 up to at most £20.

The reasons for this are probably widely recognised. The main costs of the Society have risen markedly over the last couple of years, with the costs of printing, hiring venues, and postage all higher and the Society continuing to purchase these items at similar levels to the past. In addition, new costs have begun to appear with digital services now involving purchasing more products as our use of the internet increases.

The Society's finances remain healthy, but this has been as much due to some success in raising funds and the reduced activities in the Pandemic. But the expectation is that the now raised activity levels of the Society and the costs of renewing some of the Society's equipment will begin to erode the position if fees continue at £10.

You'll have a chance to discuss this at the AGM, where we will put forward a resolution: "The Society resolves to allow the Committee to raise the annual membership fees to at most £20 with this being applied to 2025 membership at the earliest". If the resolution is passed, there will be a good deal of work to inform members and then to encourage members to change payments.



TRADESMEN YOU CAN TRUST

Time for a new TYCT

So please get busy with email or pen and form, to send us your new tradesmen 'finds', plus re-recommendations for existing entries. All this input is for members, by fellow members - so mutually beneficial!

Our thanks to all who have already contributed. As a reminder to those who intend to do so, please use the form enclosed with this Newsletter, or download the same form from www.belsize.org.uk/membership/-you-can-trust, or just email full details, including your own, to

TYCT@belsize.org.uk by 29 March 2024.

VOLUNTEERING for the Society

As the new year begins, perhaps your wearable is suggesting you walk more, or your gifts of recipe books are encouraging cake making. Whatever your new year resolution, perhaps it can translate into helping the Society. The range of Society activities means a selection of ways to help, such as helping at events, delivering newsletters, creating posters, baking cakes.

We have a few gaps on the Committee which urgently need filling. The Committee is a great place to help the Society, in that you both hear about what is happening in Belsize, and then lead some aspect of the Society's involvement. The Committee meets each month, except August, at members' homes and there is team of people looking at planning matters, the various publications, Society events and engaging with Camden Council about the policies that are being pursued in the Borough.

We are always looking for new Committee members, but we would particularly welcome help in two areas:

★ **Events organisation.** The Society holds about four main events a year, having a party in the summer, organising an annual walk, the AGM, and bringing the community together at Christmas for carol singing. Organising this involves a small number of set-up tasks, and then working with others to make an event a success. Also, there is scope to update the calendar with new activities.

★ **Editing the Newsletter.** A Committee member is needed to bring together the materials for the Newsletter each quarter, gathering an array of interesting writing drawn from the pen of our members or news articles about what is happening in BelSoc or the area. It would suit someone who enjoys commissioning and then compiling pieces, with IT used to produce the Newsletter being undertaken by others. Again, there is scope to update how the Newsletter is presented, such as adopting online tools. If joining the Committee is of interest or you would like to volunteer some time to help the Society, then please do contact info@belsize.org.uk if you can help.

Do you have a garage to store BelSoc equipment?

The photo indicates the scale of the storage needed: around five boxes of BelSoc's plates and tea making equipment. It would be great if someone with space in a garage or ground level store could look after these. They are used each year for two or three events, for which access that allows transfer to a car would be ideal. Contact info@belsize.org.uk if you can help.





Belsize Carol Singing

The Society's Christmas Carol Singing was well-attended with over fifty singing along with Matthew Watts at Belsize Terrace. We were joined by the Primrose Hill Community Choir and rattled through some old favourites as well as many carols and songs with our youngest singers leading. Also, over £225 was raised for the Marie Curie hospice, a good local cause. Thanks to all who contributed.

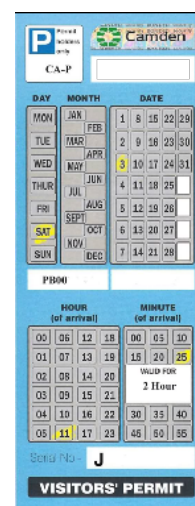
Scratchcard parking permits

Scratchcards are safe, for the moment at least. The controversial subject came up before the latest Town Hall meeting of Camden Council.

Following a strong defence to councillors of the hourly paper parking permits from Camden's community groups including the Belsize Society, the Council agreed to look again at the future of the cards.

Key to the final decision will be a review of the number of users with no online access to the permits. The Council may consider whether a special dispensation for the digitally excluded is feasible.

Community groups will be meeting to discuss the next steps. Meanwhile, the campaign to save Scratchcards goes on.



Help Save Scratchcards

If you use a Scratchcard and are over 75, and/or have a disability not yet registered with Camden Council, could you please email the Belsize Society at info@belsize.org.uk or call Peter Wallace on 07551 686 668.

Thank you.

Have your say on Draft New Camden Local Plan

Camden is consulting on their draft new Local Plan from Wednesday 17 January to Wednesday 13 March 2024.

The draft new Camden Local Plan sets out the Council's vision for future development in Camden for the next 15 years and includes the planning policies and site allocations to help achieve this. It identifies how many new homes and jobs are needed to support Camden's population, and where and how they should be provided. The Local Plan also has an important role in shaping how Camden's places look and feel, promoting inclusion, reducing inequality, enhancing the environment, tackling climate change, and securing sustainable neighbourhoods.

To read and comment on the draft new Local Plan please visit <https://newcamdenlocalplan.commonplace.is/en-GB/news/have-your-say-on-the-draft-new-camden-local-plan>

Martin Sheppard speaks at Belsize Library

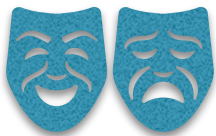
The Society supported a recent Friends of Belsize Library talk at Belsize Community Library. Martin Sheppard spoke on The War in Belsize Park. The event was very well attended, with the Library fully crammed as Martin presented a picture of a wartime London. He described where and when bombs landed on the Belsize area presenting material from the archive of bomb maps and showing us photos of the effects on local buildings.



His talk also covered the suburban lives people led as they sheltered from the bombings, inhabiting both purpose-built shelters and the Underground stations. Martin explained how Swiss Cottage tube proved a vibrant location, with its own magazine associated with the shelter there.

Most delightful was that Martin was joined by another Martin (Nelson) who sang for us, starting with an 1860s music hall classic about perambulators on Primrose Hill, and ending with a song made famous by "Cheeky" Charlie Chester.

Next events at the library include an illustrated talk by Tudor Allen drawing from the collections of Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre (15 February, 7.30pm).



What's coming up at Hampstead Theatre?

On the main stage - Double Feature - From 8th February

Alfred Hitchcock - the world's most celebrated filmmaker

Tippi Hedren - Hitchcock's muse and leading lady

Michael Reeves - brilliant new director trying to prove his worth

Vincent Price - seasoned hero of the horror genre

Two stories splice together seamlessly, exploring the glamour - and the grit - associated with the silver screen. Where does the power in Hollywood truly sit: with the star on screen, or in the director's chair? **John Logan** is an American playwright and screenwriter with first-hand experience of the movie world having written the screenplays for *The Aviator*, *Skyfall* and *Gladiator*. His stage work includes the Tony Award-winning play *Red* (West End and Broadway), *Peter and Alice* (West End) and the book for *Moulin Rouge* (West End and Broadway)

Jonathan Kent returns to Hampstead where his previous productions include *Good People*, *The Slaves of Solitude* and *The Forest*.

Next on Downstairs - Out of Season - From 16th February

The band is back in town! Michael, Chris and Dev are returning to Ibiza and the hotel where it all began thirty years ago... But Michael's stuck in London, Dev's got a bad back and Chris... well, he's just Chris. And it turns out that none of them are in their twenties anymore! As this middle-aged trip down memory lane is about to hurtle off the tracks, Holly and Amy arrive, so down-to-earth they might just save our feckless heroes from really humiliating themselves...

Neil D'Souza's comedy picks over the gulf between past aspirations and present realities - how we can come to terms with the past and find a way to face the future. D'Souza's other plays include *Small Miracle* (Colchester) and *Coming Up* (Watford).

Alice Hamilton is Hampstead Theatre's Associate Director. Her credits include the Downstairs productions of *Every Day I Make Greatness Happen* and *Paradise*, and *The Dumb Waiter* and *The Memory of Water* on Hampstead's Main Stage.

Dates for your diary

Belsize Society

3 Mar, 3pm. Annual General Meeting. Agenda and papers sent to members. Belsize Square Synagogue, 51 Belsize Square. Members only.

12 May, starting at 11.00 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. Historic walk led by Averil Nottage. Free, but book on Eventbrite using QR codes on page 3, or contact Membership and general enquiries in the Contact Us if unable to access. The afternoon walk will be followed by tea and cakes at Belsize Library.

Belsize Community Library, Antrim Road, NW3

Thursday, 15 Feb, 7.30pm. Treasures of the archives: From the collections of the Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre. An illustrated talk by Tudor Allen. £5 suggested donation.

Thursday, 21 March, 7.30pm. Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807): Artist, Entrepreneur and Progressive. An illustrated talk by Rosmond Kinsey Milner, to coincide with a major retrospective of her work at the Royal Academy 1 Mar -30 June 2024. £5 suggested donation.

Thursday, 18 April, 7.30pm. From Elysian Fields to Trains and Villas. An illustrated talk by local historian Averil Nottage on the development of the Chalcots/Eton College Estate in the first half of the C19. Joint event with Belsize Society. £5 suggested donation.

Burgh House, New End Square, NW3

Burgh House bookings on [eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk).

Sunday, 17 Mar, 2pm. Bach & Jazz for Cello. Cellist Marianne Tyler Brown performs to raise funds for the Samaritans. £15.

Sunday, 21 March, 7pm. Vermeer Chamber Concerts. Dutch mezzo-soprano Rosa Herwig plays Gershwin, Debussy, Vivaldi. £25-£35.

Freud Museum, 20 Maresfield Gdns, NW3 3DJ

17 Jan-14 Jul. Freud and Latin America. Exploration of the impact that Freud had on culture, society, art, and psychoanalysis in Latin America. £14.

Monday, 11 Mar, 6.30-8.30pm. Psychoanalysis and Brazil: Colonialism and Creativity. Belinda Mandelbaum and Stephen Frosh will discuss themes of colonialism and creativity in relation to psychoanalysis in Brazil. £25.

Contact Us

For membership and general enquiries:

Anne Stevens

020 7794 0874

info@belsize.org.uk

Prabhat Vaze (*Chair*)

07930 406230

chair@belsize.org.uk

Secretary

secretary@belsize.org.uk

For Newsletter submissions and letters:

info@belsize.org.uk. Deadline for next issue is: **7 April 2024**

To send posters for noticeboards:

haverstockboard@belsize.org.uk

villageboard@belsize.org.uk

To send details for Tradesmen You Can Trust:

TYCT@belsize.org.uk

For planning matters: info@belsize.org.uk

Interested in keeping up with Belsize news and events? If you wish to receive occasional emails from us with news about Belsize and BelSoc and are not already on our list, please send your email address to info@belsize.org.uk

To find out the latest about Camden Planning:

<https://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment/planning-and-built-environment/>

Would you like to join our committee and/or help with events, distribution and other tasks? If so, please email

info@belsize.org.uk

www.belsize.org.uk