

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 Newsletter of the Belsize Society.

You'll see, with this Newsletter, the papers for the Annual General Meeting (or you have had the papers emailed). We will be returning to meeting in person at Belsize Square Synagogue, able to talk about the Society and enjoy cakes and tea together. We do look forward to the event.

In this Newsletter, we're covering the outcome of the 100 Avenue Road appeal, where the Society played an active part. We were very pleased with the outcome, as the inspector rejected the appeal. We also report on the Society work to plant trees in the area, an initiative to commemorate the Queen's jubilee, and the successful carol concert we held in December. The issue also reviews a recent play at the Hampstead theatre with strong local links.

As we restart events and other Society activities, we are looking for volunteers. Across the Newsletter are some of the opportunities for members to help, whether with the Newsletter itself or on our Committee. You'll see the annual request for recommendations for Tradesmen You Can Trust. Let us know about the tradesmen that you have used, as that helps us keep the list up-to-date. Also, Belsize Library Friends are on the look-out for volunteers.

We were sad to hear of the passing of former Treasurer Jill Tyrell. Current Treasurer Neil Harris remembers her.

The Newsletter describes changes the Council are making to improve cycle paths in Belsize and - as May sees Borough-wide local elections - we highlight the new boundaries that will be used for the elections.

Hope you enjoy the Newsletter.

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Belsize Society Annual General Meeting

*Sunday, 6 March 2021
at 3pm*

*Belsize Square Synagogue,
51 Belsize Square*

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

Members only

100 Avenue Road: Essential Living loses appeal to modify planning consent

Tom Symes, our Committee member with joint responsibility for planning, writes:

Members may be aware that the appeal by Essential Living (Swiss Cottage) Limited against Camden's refusal of its application to modify the consent it obtained in 2016 to build a 24 storey block of 186 flats at 100 Avenue Road by the tube station at Swiss Cottage has been refused.

Essential Living started work in 2017, demolishing the existing building and completing the piling and basement box, but "paused" significant construction works on the site in the summer of 2020. The new application in 2021 had sought to remove the obligation agreed in 2016 to include at least 36 affordable units in the new block, leaving as the only "affordable housing" obligation that 18 of the 186 flats would be available on a "discounted market rent" basis. Essential Living said that due to Covid-19, the increased cost of the main contract plus other mounting costs, and significant delay to the original project timescales, meant that it could no longer afford to include the affordable housing.

Camden had refused the new application because of the loss of affordable housing. Its annual delivery of affordable homes has consistently fallen below the target of 353 homes per year since at least 2012/13. There are several thousand people waiting for affordable housing. Current waiting times for social rented housing range from 2 to 9 years depending on house size. There was little dispute between the main parties that Camden has a significant affordable housing need.

The public inquiry into the appeal was held between 9 and 12 November, and BelSoc was one of the speakers. Essential Living did not provide any evidence about its financial backers or any commitment to build the scheme even if it was successful in the appeal. Camden and Essential Living agreed that under the existing consent the scheme will lose c£70m and removing the affordable housing would reduce the deficit to about £56m. On that basis the Inspector decided that the scheme was still not going to be deliverable and refused the appeal.

Essential Living has spent more than £60m to date. It is not clear what will happen next: there could be court proceedings and further applications. For the moment it is unlikely that there will be further work on the site, which remains surrounded by hoardings. BelSoc will continue to monitor the position.

Haverstock Hill Pop-up Cycle Lanes

January 2022 will see construction of the trial Haverstock Hill pop up cycle lanes begin. This will provide protected cycle lanes in both directions on Haverstock Hill/ Rosslyn Hill (between the junctions with Prince of Wales Road and Pond Street). Having consulted and made several amendments to the scheme, the changes to be made include:

- Adding 4 new zebra crossings and one new signalised pedestrian crossing.
- Introduce new benches along the Haverstock Hill / Rosslyn Hill corridor.
- Extending the hours of operation of the bus lane to Monday - Sunday 24/7.
- Add shared use bus boarders at bus stops to enable cyclists to remain separated from traffic
- Improving the junctions/traffic lights for those walking and cycling.
- Removing the majority of parking provision on Haverstock Hill/ Rosslyn Hill and relocating some of this provision to adjacent side roads.
- Install more cycle parking to help people switch their journey to the shops by bike.

The scheme will be implemented under an 18-month Experimental Traffic Order, which will enable the improvements to be implemented on a trial basis. This will allow the Council to observe how the proposed changes are operating before carrying out a full public consultation, after twelve months, to decide whether or not the scheme is made permanent. There is also a window to make formal objections to this scheme within the first six months of the scheme's operation, 27 January 2022 to 27 July 2022. Details on this and the scheme are online: <https://safetravelcamden.commonplace.is/proposals/haverstock-hill-pop-up-cycle-lanes>.

Jill Tyrell

Neil Harris, Treasurer, writes:

We were saddened to learn that our sometime Treasurer and Independent Examiner of Accounts, Jill Tyrell, passed away last November. As you may know, Jill was a long-standing BRA committee member, serving as Treasurer for some seven years until I took over in 2013. Thereafter she acted as Independent Examiner of Accounts, continuing in that role after we became a charity in 2018. A charity of our modest annual income (about £5K) is not required under charity law to have its accounts examined at all (£25K is the threshold for this), so I and my Committee colleagues were hugely grateful to Jill for agreeing to do this work each year and performing it with such diligence, and unrewarded to boot (apart from the price of a cup of coffee and a gossip after the examining was completed, which we felt didn't compromise her independent status. The latter was something she was very properly anxious to preserve).



Jill requested that anyone wishing to make a tribute in her memory might like to make a donation to the Royal Free Charity. BelSoc has recently done this.

Jill's passing means that the independent examining of accounts role is at present vacant. As explained above, it is not mandatory for BelSoc to have this work undertaken at all, but the Committee feels that having an examiner of this kind has always afforded members an extra assurance that our financial affairs are run as well as they can be. For that reason we are minded to look around to see if anyone might be interested in taking over the function, and our membership seems a good place to start. So please get in touch if you are interested yourself or know of anyone who might be. The Charity Commission website offers detailed advice about what the role entails (including what "independence" means in this context), and we are happy of course to answer questions ourselves.



BelSoc's unique TRADESMEN YOU CAN TRUST booklet

Yes, it's that time of year again: the "Happy New Year"s have all been said and many of us will be deciding what we need done to house and garden and who to approach to do the work. And where do many of us look first? Why, to BelSoc's TYCT booklet!

The form for suggestions, enclosed with this Newsletter, has been redesigned and is hopefully easier to use (comments welcome). If 20% of our members (the usual is nearer 10%) were to contribute new tradesmen this year and comment on how well currently listed tradesmen have worked as well, we could have a bumper harvest of entries by the end of March and maybe the booklet would revert to or even exceed its pre-covid entry numbers and remain as useful as so many of you tell us it is.

Please do your very best to recall all the repairs and renovations you've had done during the year and the tradesmen who've done them and just **use the enclosed form or email us at tyct@belsize.co.uk**, to send us their contact details, brief description and any comments you have. We'll do the rest and send you a unique booklet of local Tradesmen You Can Trust with our May newsletter.

Folk: Hampstead Theatre production with Belsize connections

I'll tell you one more thing. I got more songs in my head than I ever told you. I got enough to sing for days...

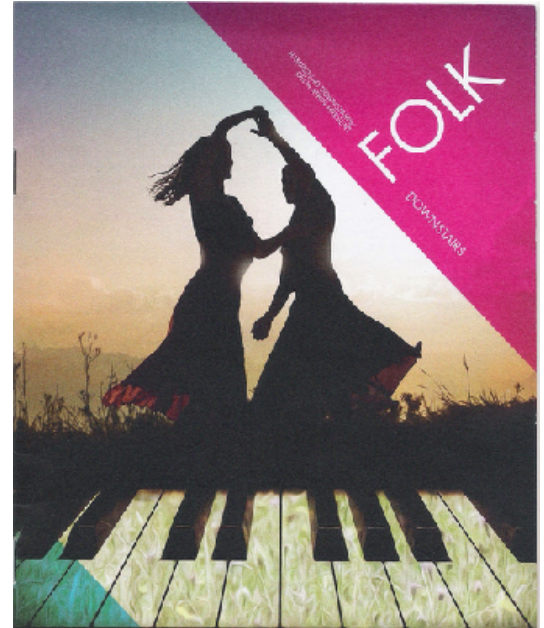
Readers may well have seen Nell Leyshon's play *Folk* at Hampstead Downstairs. Louie and Lucy are sisters whose mother has recently died. They live in South Somerset and make just enough to live on as glovemakers. The two sisters have been handed down an abundance of songs which they know by heart and which they sing in homage to the traditional rural life to which they feel bound. The songs are an inheritance from their mother and help them to temper their grief and reflect on their loss.

When Louie takes a job as a maid in a large house, she meets Cecil Sharp who has come to Somerset to record folk songs. Louie sings to him and he writes down the songs which are published. Louie regards the publication as a betrayal: the songs are not commodities but part of the very essence of the community which owns them and passes them down. The physical act of singing is an emotional reflection of the fields, gates and landscapes of the countryside. Better to lose the songs than to tie them into a world that excludes those who are their true guardians.

A play about Cecil Sharp (1859-1924) has a special resonance for Belsize residents. In 1896, he was appointed as the Principal of the Hampstead Conservatoire of Music at 64 Eton Avenue. The building was later the Embassy Theatre and is now part of the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama - right opposite the Hampstead Theatre. The Principal's job came with a house: Sharp lived in Maresfield Gardens as marked today by an English Heritage Blue Plaque. Sharp stood down as the Principal in 1905 to concentrate on collecting folk songs. His life and work is now celebrated at Cecil Sharp House at 2 Regent's Park Road in Primrose Hill. He died at his home in Hampstead and is buried in Golders Green Cemetery.

Louie and Lucy are based on real women: Louisa Hooper (1860-1946) and Lucy White (1849-1923). Sharp collected songs from them in 1903. The play includes ever-more evocative singing, dancing and piano playing from its small, multi-talented cast. Louie is played by Mariam Haque whose voice is a real treat.

For further information on Cecil Sharp, visit: <https://www.efdss.org/cecil-sharp-house>. For information about Louisa Hooper and Lucy White, visit <https://cecilsharpspeople.org.uk/>. For the BBC's coverage on *Front Row*, visit <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m00139cw>. *Folk* is directed by Roxana Silbert; details at <https://www.hampsteadtheatre.com/whats-on/2021/folk/>.



A Blue Plaque marks Cecil Sharp's house in Maresfield Gardens

What's coming up at Hampstead Theatre?

Next on the Main Stage - The Forest

At this turning-point of his life, Pierre finds himself tormented by the conflicting demands of family, career and sexual desire.

The World Premiere of Florian Zeller's uncompromising and mysterious play is translated, as ever, by Christopher Hampton and directed by Jonathan Kent, who re-unites with Zeller after his production of *The Height of the Storm*, which was critically acclaimed in London and on Broadway.

Next on Downstairs - The Animal Kingdom

Sam is struggling. Being a human has never been simple for him. Sam's family don't understand. But then they barely understand themselves.

The world premiere of Ruby Thomas' *The Animal Kingdom*, directed by Lucy Morrison, is an observation of family dynamics told with wit and compassion. Ruby Thomas returns to Hampstead Theatre, following the premiere of her first full-length play *Either* in 2019.

Coming soon

- *The Fever Syndrome*, 19 March - 23 April

Alexis Zegerman's vivid, new play directed by Hampstead Artistic Director Roxana Silbert is a thrilling portrait of a brilliantly dysfunctional family.

- *Some Old Street*, 2 April - 7 May

Lisa Hammond and Rachael Spence are an artistic partnership, known collectively as Bunny. Expect interviews with real people, homemade songs and double act comedy antics.

Helping our Newsletter to thrive

We would welcome help to maintain our popular Newsletter. Do you go to concerts, exhibitions or plays in the Belsize area? If so, perhaps you would like to write a review? We would then complement your review with details of other forthcoming related events, helping to publicise the wonderful arts in the area as they emerge from lockdown.

And we are dependant on our trusty Newsletter deliverers to make sure that you get your copy delivered to your front door. Do please let us know if you are able to help with delivery - which involves a pleasant walk around a small part of the area covered by BelSoc four times a year.

Do you have desktop publishing experience or other IT skills? We would like to hand over the layout of the Newsletter to new blood. Please volunteer if you are interested.

For further information, please contact info@belsize.org.uk.

JOIN THE COMMITTEE

Would you like to help steer the organisation? We'd be delighted to welcome members to shape what we do through joining the new 2022 Committee.

We're always on the lookout for people with an interest in representing residents' views to Camden, organising events and contributing to the Newsletter.

If you would like to find out more about what the Committee does, then please contact us at info@belsize.org.uk.

Plant a Tree for the Queen's Jubilee

Barbara Abraham, our Committee's tree expert, writes:

We announced in last August's Newsletter that the Belsize Society was hoping to participate in the tree planting initiative marking Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 and plant some extra trees in public areas in Belsize. We drew up a shortlist of four possible locations and put the proposals to Camden tree department and to our three Belsize Councillors. Our Councillors are enthusiastic and supportive of the project and have suggested that we apply for Local CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funding for the tree planting, and we have begun the application process.

In discussion with Councillors Steve Adams and Tom Simon, we have narrowed down the shortlist to a single location: the triangular-shaped island at the junction of Eton Avenue, Lancaster Grove, Lambolle Place and Eton Garages. This island currently has one medium-sized mature tree and a bench but

its main use is as a dumping ground for Christmas trees once a year. BelSoc is proposing planting a cluster of native fruit trees (cherries, apples or pears) with a view to transforming this under-utilised site into a small green park - a mini-orchard. The existing mature tree and the bench would be retained, and an additional bench or two added. As well as providing a more environmentally attractive space, the grouping of trees would improve air quality in the vicinity and create a wildlife habitat.

We are excited about the project but it is at an early stage.

Crucially, a survey needs to be carried out using detecting equipment to identify the presence of any underground infrastructure, such as pipes and cables, and determine if space is free to plant a tree. The successful locations are then marked and the second phase of the survey, involving trial excavations, can take place to ensure that the proposed locations

for tree pits are in fact free of services and other obstructions. Until we know the results of the surveys we cannot be sure that the tree planting project is feasible - but we are optimistic!

A spot at the junction of Eton Avenue, Lancaster Grove, Lambolle Place and Eton Garages



Dates for your diary

Belsize Society

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

Camden Arts Centre, Arkwright Road, NW3 www.camdenartscentre.org

3 Feb, 7pm. Touching Distance. To complement Allison Katz's exhibition *Artery*, 17th-century literary scholar Dr Kathryn Murphy's lecture explores traditional motif in art history. The *Artery* exhibition of over 20 paintings runs until 13 March. Free.

10 Mar, 7pm, Versions - anais. London-based singer-songwriter and artist anais will perform music created in dialogue with long-term collaborator Julien Creuzet, whose exhibition "Too blue, too deep, too dark we sank" ends 13 March. Free

Burgh House, New End Square, NW3

27 Feb, 1.30pm. Knots: Behind the Scenes Q&A. Artist Jonny Briggs and curator Nicola Baird discuss the development of Briggs' exhibition at Burgh House, Knots, a site-specific, multi-media exhibition using the museum collection. Exhibition free, talk free to Burgh House members.

9-13 Feb. Branch Hill Pond and the River Westbourne. An exhibition by Redington Frognal Association about the reinstatement of the wildlife pond, its exploratory and design work. Free

Belsize Community Library, Antrim Road, NW3

Online monthly, 7.30pm-9pm, first Mondays from 7 Sept, Belsize Book Club. Reading books from around the world. Email: belsizelibrary@thewinch.org

Online, 7:30pm, Thurs, 17 Feb. Elizabethan Camden presentation by Tudor Allen, Camden Historian and Archivist. Zoom ID 889 6466 1765. Free.

Online, 7.30pm, Thurs 17 Mar. The Power Of Place, presentation by Carol Cooper, Doctor, Journalist, Author, Broadcaster. Zoom ID 889 6466 1765. Free.

Every Friday, 6.30-9pm, Open Mic and Poetry. Zoom id: 898 4229 5129; Facebook: Belsize open mic.

Images of Belsize at Tate online

Siberecht's picture of Belsize House, thought to be from the 1670s. It is available to view online at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/siberechts-view-of-a-house-and-its-estate-in-belsize-middlesex-t06996>

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For Newsletter submissions and letters:

info@belsize.org.uk. Deadline for next issue is: **11 April 2022**

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