

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 May Newsletter of the Belsize Society.

We held our AGM in March, and this issue describes some of the discussion. We were pleased to host Camden's Clean Air Strategy lead who spoke about the new action plan.

This Newsletter has two articles with a royal feel, with Averil Nottage writing about the connections between past kings and queens and Belsize. Her research even includes a coronation event. We also report on the planting of trees to commemorate last year's Platinum Jubilee, with Eton Avenue now enhanced with three trees currently relishing the spring rains.

The Newsletter reports on events in the coming months organised by the Friends of Belsize Community Library. We hope to see some of you in June when we co-host with the Friends a talk about Erno Goldfinger's Willow Road house. The Newsletter also covers an exhibition currently at the Isokon Gallery about the Mall Studios, an artists' enclave in NW3.

There is a piece in the issue about retrofitting our homes to reduce energy usage. It looks at options especially where properties are located in a conservation area. The piece also asks for members to contact the Society if they are interested in retrofitting.

With the Newsletter, you'll see the annual request for members to let the Society know about any trades people they would recommend. We would welcome suggestions for the 2023 Tradesmen You Can Trust.

We were saddened to hear about the passing of Neil Harris, the Society's Treasurer. The Newsletter includes some memories of Neil, who will be much missed.

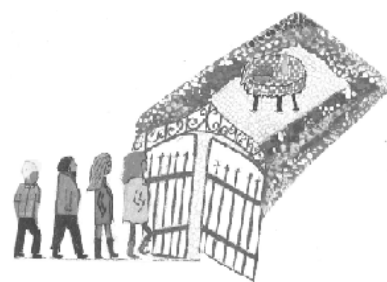
We are holding the summer party in the next month. Details are in the Newsletter and hope to see you there.

Enjoy this Newsletter.

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Belsize Society Annual Summer Party



3pm - 4.30pm, Sunday 18 June
Garden Flat, 17 Lambolle Rd,
NW3 4HS

Tea, cakes, strawberries
Members only

BELSIZE AND THE MONARCHY

Averil Nottage, local historian and former BRA Chair, gives us some interesting and amusing links between Belsize and royalty:

In the Middle Ages monarchs determined who owned land. King Ethelred the Unready granted the manor of Hampstead, including Belsize, to the Abbot of Westminster in 986. Henry VI granted land to the south of Belsize to the newly created Eton College in 1449.

By the 16th century Belsize House was a desirable aristocratic country residence. From 1557 Amigail Waad, an explorer and statesman who became Clerk of the Council to Henry VIII and Edward VI, leased the property. He passed it on to his son William, who became Clerk of the Council to Queen Elizabeth and James I. William died in 1623.

Belsize House and Park opened as a pleasure garden in 1720. Read's Journal of 15 July 1721 reported:

"Last Saturday their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales dined at Belsize-house near Hampstead, attended by several persons of quality, where they were entertained with the diversions of hunting, and such others as the place afforded, with which they seemed well pleased, and at their departure were very liberal to the servants."

However, the benefits of this royal patronage were short lived as in 1722 Belsize was described as "a scandalous lewd house", and fashionable visitors soon moved on.

Baron Loughborough bought Shelford House, a substantial property on the northern boundary of the Belsize Estate, shortly before becoming Lord Chancellor in 1783. He was known for his pomposity and siding with whichever party was in power. He held extravagant banquets with guests including the Prince of Wales. By 1801 King George III and the Prime Minister wearied of his "domineering tactics" and dismissed him whilst granting him an earldom. He became Lord Rosslyn and the house was renamed after him. When he died in 1805 the King exclaimed, "He has not left a greater knave behind him in my dominions".

George IV was determined that his Coronation would eclipse all others. In July 1821 the Morning Chronical promised: "At night, several of the largest rockets will be thrown up from Primrose Hill, by which light balls will be suspended by parachutes in the air, nearly a mile high, where they will continue to burn for many minutes." Belsize residents were ideally placed to enjoy this spectacle.

A local woman wore a white frock and black sash to mourn the death of William IV in 1837. Sadly, as she walked down England's Lane, then just a farm track, she fell into the drainage ditch and spoilt her costume.

Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were given a pair of exotic fowl in 1842 and established a large royal fowl-house at Windsor. Poultry keeping soon became very fashionable and poultry shows proliferated. Elizabeth Watts, of Monk Barnes in England's Lane, was a



Uncle Sam and Cora, a pair of Brahmas owned by Miss E Watts

...continued

serious breeder and writer and highly respected in poultry circles. She sold eggs for a guinea (£1.05) a dozen. At the first Windsor show in 1855, Elizabeth won two prizes and Prince Albert was highly commended.

In the early 1850s Queen Victoria went to see if Rosslyn House would be a suitable summer home for her children. A small girl stopped her carriage at a toll gate in Belsize Lane demanding payment of a penny charge. The Queen was apparently amused and paid the toll, but she didn't rent Rosslyn House. Soon afterwards it became the home of 70 girls orphaned by the Crimean War. On a sunny day in 1858 Prince Albert led the girls up the hill to a new home in Hampstead.

It was said that T. Gurney Randall, a butcher in England's Lane, drove his pony and trap to Buckingham Palace to wait upon Her Majesty for orders.

Queen Victoria's Golden and Diamond Jubilees were celebrated with great patriotic zeal. A beacon was lit by Whitestone Pond on both occasions. In 1897 the Hampstead Vestry, which covered Belsize, organised a three-day Diamond Jubilee fete in Kenwood. In a large marquee, ceremonial speeches were followed by a series of concerts. In another tent there were performing dogs, royal marionettes, ventriloquists, magicians and a knock about cycling act. And outside there was an old English fair, a grand military tattoo and a full programme of sports races. Inmates of the workhouse were given special leave and free tickets to take part in the rejoicing.

The Hampstead and Highgate Express praised the general excellence of the Jubilee decorations on houses and shops, singling out the chaste and artistic decorations and illuminations of the Vestry Hall in Haverstock Hill for special mention. In February 1901 they noted that all classes across Hampstead loyally observed the Queen's funeral. In the following year a merry peal of bells rang out from St Stephen's Church to celebrate King Edward VII's Coronation, but the decorations and illuminations were disappointing because of unsettled weather.



Hampstead: Building the Bonfire on the Heath

Isokon Gallery: Modernism at the Mall

The Isokon's 2023 feature exhibition tells the story of the Mall Studios, an artists' enclave in NW3 where Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson, Henry Moore and Herbert Read changed the face of 20th Century British Art.

Built in 1872, in a quiet alley behind Parkhill Road, these purpose-built artists' studios became the home, workspace and social nexus of Britain's avant-garde in the 1930s. This fascinating exhibition is curated by architect, artist and sculptor, Celia Scott - herself a Mall Studios resident. It outlines the origins of the Mall Studios and their celebrated residents over 150 years; from the buildings' construction and first artists; their development as the epicentre of the Modern Movement in London; through to the present day.

For further information, including a brilliant video interview of Celia, visit isokongallery.org/blogs/exhibitions/2023-modernism-at-the-mall.

Isokon Gallery, Lawn Road, London, NW3 2XD; free admission from 11 am to 4pm on Saturday and Sunday; no booking required.



NEIL HARRIS: IN MEMORIAM

The BelSoc Trustees and Committee were deeply saddened to learn of the sudden death of Neil Harris, our Treasurer. Neil served as the BRA and then BelSoc Treasurer for many years. He oversaw the financial side of our conversion to charitable status and was meticulous in keeping our accounts updated. He hosted BRA and then BelSoc meetings with generosity in his Belsize Lane flat. He was committed to keeping the Committee informed of the work of local charities and in driving forward our charitable donations.

Neil at the first AGM as a charity.

Neil described himself as a North London boy. He was born in what was St Mary's Hospital in Heath Street. He lived in Belsize Park for 20 years.

A civil servant for nearly thirty years, Neil worked in the Home Office and the Department for Communities and Local Government. He was intellectually curious and widely read about all manner of things. We will remember him for his commitment to BelSoc and to Belsize Park. He will be greatly missed in the community.

Events at the Library and BelSoc support

BelSoc is making a contribution to the Belsize Community Library. We are helping to fund (with the Friends of Belsize Library) the much needed interior renovation of the Library. A start has been made on replacing the blinds, which are in very poor condition. Our funding goes towards the overall amounts of money needed to complete the works.

We are also hosting an event with the Friends in June, at which Fabian Watkinson will speak on "The house that no one wanted - Erno Goldfinger & 2 Willow Road".

Fabian has a passion for architecture and is author of "The Golden Age of Camden Housing". He has been a National Trust volunteer guide at 2 Willow Road in Hampstead for the past five years and he will tell us about the controversy surrounding its building in the 1930s and the equal controversy surrounding its acquisition by the National Trust in the early 90s.

The talk is part of a series of exciting events that the library has in plan, with dates in the box.



Friends of Belsize Community Library
together with the Belsize Society
present

THE HOUSE THAT NO ONE WANTED

Erno Goldfinger & 2 Willow Road

A talk by Fabian Watkinson

National Trust Volunteer Guide

**Thursday June 15th
7:30pm**

Belsize Library
Antrim Road
NW3 4XN



£5 suggested for donation and refreshments

Events at the library

There is an exciting programme of in-person speaker meetings at the Belsize Community Library. All on Thursday evenings, 7.30pm and £5 is suggested for donation and refreshments.

18 May: Rosmond Kinsey-Milner:
Vermeer - the Sphinx of Delft

15 June (joint with BelSoc): Fabian
Watkinson: The house that no one
wanted - Erno Goldfinger & 2 Willow
Road.

21 September: Tudor Allen: Treasures
of the Archives – Highlights from the
Collections of Camden Local Studies
and Archives Centre

19 October - Carole Isaacs: The Wolf
of Baghdad

16 November - Lester Hillman: William
Camden

14 December - Karin Fernald: The
Blue Hour: Painting the North

18 January - Martin Sheppard: The
War in Belsize Park

Queen's Green Canopy Tree Planting

The Queen's Green Canopy was a nationwide initiative created to mark the Platinum Jubilee of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and was due to conclude in December 2022, the end of the Jubilee year. However, in accordance with the wishes of His Majesty The King, the initiative was extended to the end of March 2023 so that more trees could be planted in memoriam to honour Her Majesty and create a living legacy and lasting tribute to Her Majesty's extraordinary service to her country and her people.

We are happy to announce that three trees were planted at the beginning of March on the 'island' at the junction of Eton Avenue, Lancaster Grove,

Lambolle Place and Eton Garages, and the planting is recorded on the

QGC map - <https://queensgreencanopy.org/map-education-hub/qgc-map>



Cherry in blossom



Guided by Camden Tree Department, we chose a Crab Apple (*Malus yunnanensis* var. *veitchii*), a Hazel (*Corylus colurna*) and a Tasselled Cherry (*Prunus litigiosa*). It is hoped that these three trees (plus the established Horse Chestnut) will provide interest from spring through to autumn. Immediately after planting, we were somewhat underwhelmed by the overall impact but the three trees have evidently enjoyed the wet spring and are growing apace, with the Cherry producing a good display of blossom in April.

We were pleased to have the trees planted in time to appear on the Queen's Green Canopy map but the project is not yet complete. The project has local CIL funds earmarked for resurfacing the island and adding an extra bench or two. We will press on with our efforts to get these improvements implemented. This project has had the unwavering support of all Belsize Ward's councillors, from both before and after the May 2022 local elections, and we are particularly grateful to Cllr Matthew Kirk, without whose determined efforts we would still be waiting for the trees to be planted.

Marie Curie Hospice, Hampstead: serving the community

The Marie Curie Helper Service provides trained volunteers to support anyone residing in Camden, Islington and 8 other boroughs living with a terminal illness. Its volunteers offer everything from companionship and a friendly ear, through to helping someone get to a doctor's appointment.

This service is totally free, simply aiming to improve the lives of people living with a life limiting illness. So if you know someone within your community who is suffering with a life limiting illness who might find this service useful, you can refer them to Marie Curie or point them in the right direction. Self-referrals are also accepted, to make it even easier.

To find out more about this service, please search online using the words Marie Curie Helper volunteers befriending service; phone: 020 7853 3400; email: hampstead.hospice@mariecurie.org.uk.

Marie Curie Hospice Hampstead is at 11 Lyndhurst Gardens, London NW3 5NS.

Climate change: retrofitting our homes

We are fortunate to live in a beautiful conservation area like Belsize Park. But there is a downside: our Victorian and Edwardian homes are chilly in winter and expensive to heat. They are not very “climate friendly”, one of our local councillors says that Belsize ward has one of the highest carbon footprints in Camden.

We are planning to run a half-day event later this year to learn more about what is involved in “climate proofing” our homes. We also hope to organise a visit to a local house to see for ourselves the benefits - and pitfalls - of a retrofit.

On average 35% of our homes’ heat is lost through the external walls, 25% through the roof, 15% through the windows, 8% where the roof meets the walls, and 5% through the chimneys and the party walls.

We plan to discuss how to reduce these losses and the amount of heating needed.

External walls can be lined with wood or mineral fibre insulation. Front walls of buildings in a conservation area cannot be lined on the outside, but they can be lined on the inside. This reduces the room sizes slightly, involves removing and replacing the radiators and electrical points and is disruptive. So what else can we do? There are many options. Side and rear external walls which can’t be seen from the street can be lined on the outside. This involves removing and replacing the rainwater downpipes and extending the window sills.

Laying mineral wool insulation, the more the better, in the roof space is relatively simple and cost-effective.

Double glazing traditional single glazed sash windows should replicate the original window design, with thin glazing bars and timber framing.

You will need planning permission for these changes, but it shouldn’t be a problem on this basis.

A lot of us live in flats. It is unlikely that you will be able to insulate your external walls on the outside, and you may not have a roof space. Double glazing should be possible.

Gas or oil boilers can be replaced by an air source heat pump or by electric heating. An air source heat pump looks a bit like an air conditioning unit, so it has to be positioned carefully. Larger radiators will be needed because a heat pump produces heat at a lower temperature than gas or oil. Underfloor heating should be considered when installing a new floor.

Solar panels, positioned on the sunny side of the roof and not visible from the street, help provide electricity and hot water.

Retrofits are complex and demand expert advice and skilled tradesmen. So we are planning to expand Tradesmen You Can Trust to include them. We also want to discuss what measures homeowners can take collaboratively to cut costs.

Have you got experience about your own retrofit plans you would like to share with us? Would you like to hear more about the options and join our new retrofit initiative? We will share more details of our plans in the next Newsletter, but it would be very helpful to know how many members would be interested. Please contact us on retrofit@belsize.org.uk.



Tradesmen You Can Trust

If you’re looking at work to be done to house and garden, you’ll probably turn to BelSoc’s TYCT booklet! We’re looking for your suggestions of trades people, and a form is enclosed with this Newsletter.

Please do your very best to recall all the repairs and renovations you’ve had done during the year and the trades people 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 August newsletter.

COULD YOU BE OUR TREASURER?

As you may know, our charity relies on the support of volunteers to help us achieve a meaningful impact in our community. Currently, we are seeking a volunteer Treasurer to join our team and help us manage our finances.

The Treasurer will be on the Committee and ideally become a Trustee. The role will involve managing our accounts, preparing the annual statement to the Charity Commission, and overseeing the bank accounts and Gift Aid claims. We are looking for someone who is detail-oriented, has experience with financial management, and shares our passion for making a positive impact in our community.

If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about this opportunity, please contact us at info@belsize.org.uk. We would be happy to provide more information and answer any questions you may have.

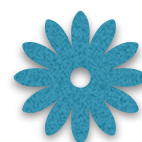
NEWSLETTER EDITOR: CREATIVE & TECH PEOPLE WANTED

We are also looking for two people to edit and produce this Newsletter! Produced and circulated on a quarterly basis, the Newsletter appears in print and online. Currently, the work is undertaken by two individuals, a Creative Editor and a Technical Editor.

The Creative Editor is in charge of content in liaison with the Committee and has reliably to assemble the content of the Newsletter on a pre-defined schedule. That involves receiving and editing articles and seeking out items where there is a need.

The Technical Editor puts together the content, currently using Mac OS Pages, to produce copy for sending to the printer; and uploads content online on the BelSoc website.

If you are interested in either of these roles, please contact info@belsize.org.uk for a further conversation.



BelSoc Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM was held at Belsize Square Synagogue on Sunday 12 March, with about 50 members attending.

The Chair reported on the year, highlighting the successful historic walk and a well-attended carol singing event. There had also been progress on the planting of trees celebrating the late Queen's jubilee.

The Society's finances remain healthy, and

there was room this year to make donations to local charities. There was a discussion about the NW3 Community Land Trust donation, confirming its not-for-profit status.

A new committee was agreed, and - soon after this year's AGM - the committee has been joined by two further co-opted members, Angela Alban and Peter Wallace. We did subsequently hear of Neil's passing and the box provides the current committee and trustees.

The meeting heard a presentation from Tom Parkes, Programme Manager, Camden Council, about the new Camden Clean Air Action Plan, which is anchored in Camden's commitment to reaching the WHO air pollution guidelines by 2030. The programme is also built on engagement and Tom was asked about the links between transport and pollution especially in areas of high pedestrian use, the uses of barbecues in public spaces, and domestic heating and its effects on air quality.



BelSoc Trustees and Committee members, 2023/24

Prabhat Vaze (Chair, Trustee)
Sarah Courtin (Secretary)
Tom Symes (Planning)
Barbara Abraham (Trees)
Anne Stevens (Membership Secretary, Trustee)
David Thomas (Local Services)
Michael Jampel (Trustee only)
Sanya Polescuk
Peter Wallace
Angela Alban

Dates for your diary

Belsize Society

18 June, 3pm: Annual Summer Party at Garden Flat, 17 Lambolle Road. All members welcome.

Camden Arts Centre, Arkwright Road, NW3

www.camdenartscentre.org

13 Jun - 17 Sep. Martin Wong: Malicious Mischief presents a survey of over 100 of the artist's works, depictions of social, sexual and political scenographies from the 1970s, 80s, and 90s. Free.

10 Jun, 2-10pm. Long Song For Summer II. Day-long festival organised by the87Press and F(r)ictions, focusing on live poetry, short film, and music. Free

St Peter's Church, Belsize Square, NW3

Sunday 23 July, 6.30pm. Belsize Summer Baroque with music by Vivaldi, Bach and Telemann. Tickets in advance £15: www.wegotickets.com/event/580705.

Burgh House, New End Square, NW3

Wednesday, 28 June, 6.30pm. Simply George, a collaboration between singer Oliver Darley and pianist Chad Lelong, presenting George Michael's most iconic hits in a new and unique way. £15.

Belsize Community Library, Antrim Road

Thursday, 18 May, 7.30pm. Rosmond Kinsey-Milner: Vermeer - the Sphinx of Delft. Illustrated talk. £5 suggested for donation and refreshments.

Thursday, 15 June, 7.30pm. Fabian Watkinson: The house that no one wanted - Erno Goldfinger & 2 Willow Road. £5 suggested for donation and refreshments.

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

Keats House, 10 Keats Grove, NW3 2RR

Sunday, 2 July, 12-5pm. 2023 Hampstead Summer Festival "Big Fair" on Heath Street. Free.

Saturday, 24 June, 2pm and 6pm. Macbeth by William Shakespeare, designed for outdoors. Tickets £25 with concessions, tickets from eventbrite.

Sunday, 18 June, all day. Hampstead Summer Festival Art Fair, in association with the Hampstead School of Art, free.

Contact Us

For membership and general enquiries:

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07930 406230

chair@belsize.org.uk

Vacant (Secretary)

secretary@belsize.org.uk

For Newsletter submissions and letters:

info@belsize.org.uk. Deadline for next issue is: **16th July 2023**

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/navigationenvironment/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