

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.

The Newsletter includes updates from the Retrofitting Group, who recently visited a Council-managed refurb project in Belsize and who report on the improvements being made at 5-7 Belsize Grove. These homes will have solar, insulation, double glazing and enhanced thermal performance.

We are also supporting the Council in a bid for a retrofit accelerator. Securing funding will mean a series of workshops that would bring together residents with planners, retrofitting experts and other organisations to understand how to reduce the hurdles for those seeking to make old buildings more sustainable. This all occurs as the local Pears Building of the Royal Free wins an award citing its contribution to sustainability.

It was a pleasure to present David Percy with an award on behalf of the Society for his contribution to local history. Over the last decades we have seen Belsize through his lens, and his writing. The Newsletter also covers his most recent, remarkable, contribution: a book covering 100 houses in Belsize and neighbouring areas.

We held our AGM in March, and a new committee was put in place. This issue covers the discussion at the meeting. We have begun to follow up a request from members that we allow them to choose not to receive a paper Newsletter. There was also a desire to change the name of our popular Traders You Can Trust. This is the new name of TYCT, replacing Tradesmen, and you'll have received the 2024 edition with this Newsletter.

There is a piece about what's on at the Hampstead Theatre and the exhibition at the Isokon. We also provide an update on the Council's removal of paper visitor permits for general use by residents.

Details of the venue of the summer party are in the Newsletter. We will confirm the date electronically.

Enjoy this Newsletter.

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Belsize Society Annual Summer Party



Date to be circulated by email
Garden Flat, 7 Buckland Crescent

Tea, cakes, strawberries
Members only

5-7 Belsize Grove Retrofit

David Thomas, lead Committee member on retrofitting, writes:

Upgrading work is nearing completion on this Camden Council-owned block of 58 bedsits and self-contained flats. Most of the residents have been able to stay in their homes while the work was carried out. The two original mid-19th century buildings were converted in the 1950s, with a connecting block added in the 1980s.

In late February, Sim Dhinsa, Camden's Retrofit Programme Manager, accompanied by a representative from their energy consultants and main contractor, kindly gave three of us a guided tour of work in progress. We were impressed.

The thermal mass of the building has been upgraded using wall insulation fitted externally on three of the elevations and internally on the fourth where space was limited. This has ensured the minimum disturbance to the residents and avoided any reduction in the usable internal floor area of most of the flats. It extends up to the soffit at the underside of the roof and ties in with additional insulation within the roof area. A render finish has been applied externally on the three elevations.

The original single-glazed timber sash windows have been removed and replaced with thermally improved, slim, double-glazed timber sash windows to match. The existing internal timber door sets with single-glazing panels have been replaced with more robust and thermally efficient double-glazed ones. The improvements to the windows and doors were necessary to meet the revised approved documents "L- Conservation of Fuel and Power" and the London Borough of Camden carbon climate emergency targets.

New architectural features have been installed on the front and rear elevations. Mouldings with stone effect form new quoins at wall corners, window surrounds, dentils and bands to recreate the appearance of the original two detached pairs of houses. The rear elevation is less decorative, with quoins, window surround and bands.

With the external walls upgrade and the improved airtightness of the building, it has been necessary to provide adequate ventilation to prevent overheating and high moisture content.

The mechanical ventilation system in the communal areas has been repaired and extractor fans now replace the airbricks in the individual flats.

Photo-voltaic panels have been installed on the front elevation roof to provide renewable energy. The building is four storeys high so that their visual impact from the street level will be minimal.

The Council and its residents were consulted throughout to ensure that the design is the best solution to improve thermal performance, reduce carbon emissions and combat fuel poverty.

In a separate scheme, heat pump adopters open up their homes to encourage other UK householders considering swapping their gas boiler for an electric heat pump: they can see how they work by visiting an early adopter in their area. A new service aims to help would-be heat pump adopters to book a visit with households that already have one installed through a website launched by the innovation charity Nesta. The site, VisitAHeatPump.com, allows potential users to locate one of 150 households that have signed up to show them their low-carbon heating systems.

Stay in touch on retrofit@belsize.org.uk.



The LARA Project

Chris Langdon, Committee Member, writes:

Are you considering improving your home to cut fuel costs or reduce draughts, but not sure how to find the right suppliers? Are you are concerned about contradictory messages from Camden about what you are allowed to do in a Conservation Area like Belsize?

If so, join the club!

That's why the Belsize Society has recently set up an informal group of members who plan to retrofit their homes. The group met on 30 April in the Washington pub. We discussed Camden Council's call for support for its bid to join a new project designed to overcome some of the blockages making domestic retrofit so hard. Camden is applying to be one of three Councils to pilot the new Local Area Retrofit Accelerator. It's called LARA for short.

The LARA pilot project will also aim to set up local delivery groups, which will aim to turn the plan into substantive action, working with local supply chains, businesses, colleges and installers.

For the LARA pilot, the initial funding would go to Camden - if they are successful. Camden's bid would, they say, "allow residents and local groups to work together to develop an action plan to accelerate domestic retrofit in Camden." A main plank of Camden's bid are a series of workshops in the autumn. They ask organisations like Belsize Society to commit to engage seriously with the co-designing and participating in the workshops.

Having offered our support to Camden in principle, we will wait to see if Camden's bid to join the LARA pilot is successful.



Royal Free wins architectural accolade

The Pears Building, commissioned by the Royal Free Charity and designed by Hopkins Architects, has won a 2023 RIBA London Award. News of the RIBA award comes a month after the building achieved a highly commended accolade at the 2023 Civic Trust Awards, which celebrate excellence in architecture that is sustainable, accessible and provides a positive civic contribution.

The building houses UCL's Institute of Immunity and Transplantation (IIT), two floors of accommodation for patients of the Royal Free Hospital and those taking part in clinical trials, and the Charity's office headquarters. There's also a café, open to the public, in the building's main atrium.

The building allows scientists to have greater access to patient samples, and patients have greater access to clinical trials and new treatments.

All RIBA London Awards winners will be considered for the RIBA National Award, scheduled to be announced on June 22nd.

Located on the Royal Free Hospital campus, the building's innovative design includes a green roof, solar panels, and rainwater harvesting systems, reducing its carbon footprint and contributing to the RFL's commitment to environmental sustainability.

PARKING SCRATCHCARD UPDATE

Camden Council's decision to scrap visitor parking scratchcards for general use has not changed. However, there remain ways to obtain cards for residents that find using the online options impossible, by calling Camden Council on 020 7974 4646. Members have reported that once any difficulties accessing visitor parking permits have been explained, permits can be ordered.

In the next months, the Council is monitoring how the "digital first" policy on visitor parking permits is operating. We continue to collect observations from members on how they are finding the new systems. Comments on the convenience of the scratchcards, and their importance to local businesses, have been made to BelSoc.

So far, comments have indicated frustrations with the Camden online system - "going to my Camden Council account... Sadly, I got nowhere". The difficulty with accessing services through the internet more generally has also arisen: "(we) are over 78, ...(and) I use email but find it very difficult to use any online system to scan or log on".

At the recent Camden Cabinet meeting on parking policy, the Council parking team undertook to work with resident organisations to make sure the new policy operates without imposing a digital divide on accessing visitor parking permits. We continue to seek your views on this matter.

Events at the Library and BelSoc support

BelSoc held a joint event with the Friends of the Belsize Community Library on 18 April. Local historian and former Chair of this organisation, Averil Nottage, presented an illustrated talk about the development of the Chalcots/Eton College Estate in the first half of the 19th century.



The talk started by introducing us to an Elysian Field of pastures and meadows, which was the portion of Belsize that is now home to England's

Lane, Fellows Road and parts of Primrose Hill. The talk introduced us to Cut Throat Lane and to the proposals for Primrose Hill, including a large pyramid, that were rejected so that it was maintained as an open space as it is today.

The well-attended event ended with drinks and a chance to engage with the presenter and catch up with members.

The Friends have an excellent series of talks for the rest of the year, starting with Dr Bea Lewkowicz speaking about the 85th Anniversary of the Kindertransport, on 16 May 2024, 7.30pm at the Library.

Events at the Library

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

16 May - Dr Bea Lewkowicz speaking about the 85th Anniversary of the Kindertransport.

19 June - Author Jennie Ensor will talk about how lockdown inspired her fifth novel "The Bad Neighbour".

19 September - Finding Nemon by Aurelia Young. The extraordinary life of the outsider who sculpted the famous. Aurelia Young tells the remarkable story of her father's career which brought him close to those who shaped and impacted the 20th century.

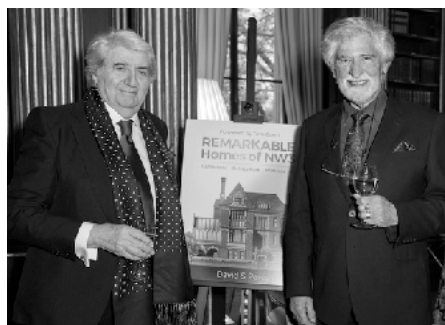
17 October - Michelene Wandor will talk about her novel "Orfeo's Last Act". Set against the backdrop of seventeenth century Italy, Orfeo's Last Act brings the magic of Mantua, Florence and Venice to vivid life.

21 November - Pamela Holmes will give a talk about Elizabeth Blachrie Blackwell (c1700-1758) the first British woman to produce an illustrated book on herbs.

12 December - An illustrated talk by Karin Fernald. Hans Christian Andersen. A question of Imagination. Wit, Traveller and Artist

Launch of Remarkable Homes of NW3

At an event in central London, NW3 residents gathered to celebrate the launch of David Percy's book, "Remarkable Homes of NW3". Local resident David has brought together stories about 100 houses in our area as well as Hampstead and Primrose Hill. The selected houses are a diverse pick of the fine homes in the area. The book combines history with architecture, interior design and also insights from the current residents of the houses. Many of these residents were able to attend the launch.



Tom Conti wrote the book's introduction; photo Marcus Dawes

At the event, David was presented with a commemorative award sponsored by the Belsize Society and the Belsize Conservation Area Advisory Committee to mark David's contribution to local history. Members may remember the premiere of the second part of the Belsize Story that the



David being presented with his award, photo Marcus Dawes

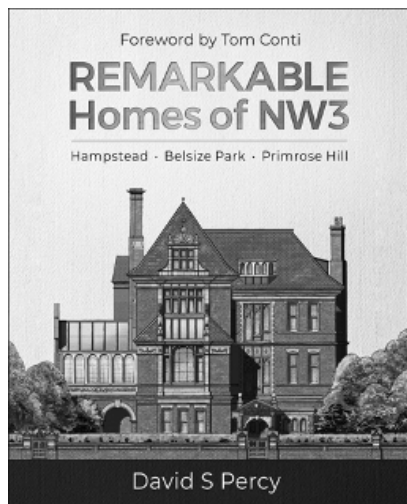
Belsize Residents Association, BelSoc's precursor organisation, hosted over ten years ago. David has also been responsible for compelling glimpses of the past and present of the Belsize area through other books, writing and photography as well as through the belsizevillage.co.uk website.

Remarkable Homes is published and supported by local independent estate agency, KIRE, who teamed up with David to produce this iconic book in 2022. KIRE's Mike McHale and Samuel Patterson described how it was conceived and the effort and care taken to assemble the rich historical detail, the 750 photographs and the participation of homeowners. They gave thanks to the homeowners that helped.

Remarkable Homes of NW3

"David S Percy's beautiful book brings out the remarkable variety of architecture from magnificent mansions to charming cottages, built in so many different styles over the last 300 years or so, that make every Hampstead street so intriguing. He looks at who built them, how they have fared over time, and talks to present owners about how they care for them. Wonderfully illustrated, with interiors and gardens, this book is a 'must-have'; a most welcome contribution to Hampstead history which will give hours of pleasure to anyone who, like me, loves looking at and reading about interesting houses."

- Helen Lawrence, former Chair, The Heath & Hampstead Society



"At the heart of this fascinating book are David's stunning photographs. NW3 at its most beautiful. And as David guides us systematically around the area, he introduces us not only to the houses, but also to the streets and neighbourhoods where they are located. We find out about the country estates that predated the housing, and why and when they were developed. And we see how they looked in previous centuries through a wonderful array of engravings, paintings and old photographs. And if you want to lift your spirits on a damp grey day, the bright sunshine and clear blue skies in David's photos will surely provide the perfect tonic!"

- Averil Nottage, former Chair, Belsize Residents' Association,

Hardcover 320 pages, full colour throughout with over 750 photographs, and available at Daunt Books £60

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, noting the sad loss of our Treasurer at the start of 2023, and the steps that had to be taken to fill the substantial gap for the Society. Eva Papadopoulou was welcomed as the new treasurer.

The year saw a successful historic walk and a well-attended carol singing event. The Society was also able to co-host a talk with the Friends of the Belsize Community Library, also contributing to the Library's refurbishment. The Society had also continued its initiative supporting retrofits.

The Society's finances remain healthy, and there were donations to local charities. In the context of rising costs, discussion about raising the annual subscription fee to £20 led to a resolution enabling the committee to raise 2025 subs. There was also the suggestion that the committee consider how printing costs may be reduced through electronic publications.

A new committee was agreed, and - soon after this year's AGM - the committee has been joined by two further co-opted members, Heather Harte and Alan Selwyn.

BelSoc Trustees and Committee members, 2024/25

Prabhat Vaze (Co-chair, Trustee)

Peter Wallace (TYCT)

Tom Symes (Planning)

Barbara Abraham (Co-chair, Trees, Trustee)

Anne Stevens (Trustee only)

David Thomas (Retrofit, Trustee)

Michael Jampel (Trustee only)

Sanya Polescuk (Planning)

Eva Papadopoulou (Treasurer)

Heather Harte

Alan Selwyn

NEWSLETTER ONLINE

Members who have provided email addresses to the Society are sent links to the content of the Newsletter. This means you could be reading this on your tablet, phone or computer.

If you prefer reading the Newsletter online and you'd like to save the paper and printing of a paper newsletter, then let us know at membership@belsize.org.uk. Later this year, you will be removed from the paper circulation.

If you choose the online version, we will still send you the paper TYCTs, usually with the May Newsletter. You can also opt back into the paper version. At the same time, we will be seeking to make the online/email version of the Newsletter an easier online read.

We know many members prefer paper. So we will still need members that can help with deliveries. It involves a pleasant stroll four times a year. Do volunteer if you can help on this, emailing info@belsize.org.uk.

Traders You Can Trust

We enclose with this Newsletter the renamed and updated Traders You Can Trust. Thanks to all who contributed to this year's issue offering new recommendations and confirming their use of the tradespeople they found in TYCT. As usual, the issue covers electricians, plumbers and other tradespeople.

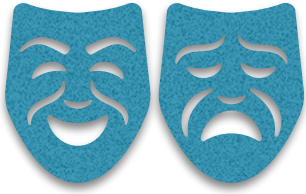
Just a reminder that your contributions are very welcome all through the year and can be sent by email to TYCT@belsize.org.uk, be it on the form in the centre of the booklet or otherwise. Please give full details for the entry (website addresses are very useful) as well as whether you prefer your phone number or email to be used by other members to contact you for more information.

THE
BELSIZE
SOCIETY

TRADERS YOU CAN TRUST 2024



Traders listed here are personal recommendations by BelSoc members. No other assessment is made of their qualifications, competence or reliability.



What's coming up at Hampstead Theatre?

On the main stage - Visit from an Unknown Woman, 21 June - 27 July.

Merril is one of Silicon Valley's leading software engineers, but her life disintegrates when her younger sister Vienna, 1934. Stefan is one of the world's most successful authors – widely read, universally admired, and translated into every language. His is the life of a wealthy playboy, enjoying only the finest things in life - from luxurious world travel to the company of his most dazzling contemporaries in Europe's most fashionable restaurants. Only two things cloud his prospects: the rise of the Nazi Party, and the sudden appearance of a woman who he clearly knows... but who he cannot, for the life of him, remember...

Christopher Hampton's adaptation of the short story by Stefan Zweig (1881-1942) receives its English Language premiere following a triumphant run at Vienna's Josefstadt Theater. Winner of multiple awards including two Oscars, Hampton's plays include *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *Tales from Hollywood* and *The Philanthropist*, and he is celebrated for his translations of Reza and Zeller. Chelsea Walker returns to Hampstead to direct following her acclaimed productions of *Yous Two* and *This Much I Know*.

Downstairs - Grud, 28 June - 3 August

It's a new term at college and, after losing the election for student president, Aicha is throwing all her energy into the school's 'Extended Physics Project' – or, as she calls it, Space Club. One afternoon, Aicha is surprised by the appearance of the usually introverted and distant Bo, doubling the membership of Space Club. Whilst Aicha is thrilled to have a mysterious new friend, Bo is distracted by the black hole at the heart of her home life. She's worked so hard to launch herself into bigger and better things – but will Grud eclipse her efforts and pull her off course?

Writer Sarah Power is an alumnus of Hampstead Theatre's INSPIRE 2022 programme for emerging playwrights. Director Jaz Woodcock-Stewart makes her Hampstead Theatre debut, with previous credits including *Paradise Now!* (Bush - 2022 Olivier Award nominated), *Civilisation* (New Diorama, HOME Manchester, Underbelly Edinburgh) and *Electric Rosary* (Royal Exchange).

For further details, visit <https://www.hampsteadtheatre.com/whats-on/main-stage/> or phone The Box Office on 020 7722 9301, or visit Hampstead Theatre, Eton Avenue, Swiss Cottage.



ISOKON GALLERY, LAWN ROAD, NW3

CURRENT EXHIBITION ON EDITH TUDOR-HART

Bauhaus student, photographer and Soviet spy recruiter

Interested in social housing, photography, spies or local history? This exhibition will be a "must" for you. Edith Tudor-Hart was called the grandmother of the Cambridge Five but was also a groundbreaking photographer whose images showed the ordinary lives of working class Londoners and – from a Belsize perspective – the construction of the Isokon Building in Lawn Road which opened in 1934. There is a fascinating video on the Gallery's website to introduce the life and work of Tudor-Hart; and you can visit the Gallery from 11am–4pm every Saturday and Sunday until the end of October. Free entry. No booking required. Further details are available at <https://isokongallery.org/>.

Did you know that the Isokon Gallery relies on charitable donations and the proceeds from the shop to care for the collection?

Dates for your diary

Belsize Society

TBC, 3pm: Annual Summer Party at Garden Flat, 7 Buckland Crescent. All members welcome.

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

26 Apr - 23 Jun. Matthew Krishanu: The Bough Breaks. Matthew paints atmospheric, pared-back compositions including scenes from the artist's life, particularly his childhood years in Bangladesh. Free.

26 Apr - 23 Jun. Andrew Omoding: Animals to Remember Uganda, repurposes new and abandoned materials and objects in an installation. Free.

St Peter's Church, Belsize Square, NW3

Sunday 9 June, 6.30pm. Belsize Baroque with music by Corelli, Vivaldi, Pissendel and Zavatieri. Tickets in advance £15: www.wegotickets.com/event/615608.

Burgh House, New End Square, NW3

Wed, 23 May, 6.30pm. Talk about 'Unravelling' by Fanny Mills, a memoir about her wider family. Free.

Belsize Community Library, Antrim Road

Thursday June 19th at 7.30. Author Jennie Ensor will talk about how lockdown inspired her fifth novel 'The Bad Neighbour.'

Thursday 19th September at 7.30. Finding Nemon by Aurelia Young. The extraordinary life of the outsider who sculpted the famous. Aurelia Young tells the remarkable story of her father's career which brought him close to those who shaped and impacted the 20th century.

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

27-29 June, (Thur/Fri 7pm; Sat 2pm and 6pm). Much Ado about Nothing by William Shakespeare, designed for outdoors. Tickets £25 with concessions, tickets from eventbrite.

Sunday, 30 June, 2-5pm. Family Garden Party. Free.

Contact Us

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chair@belsize.org.uk

Vacant (Secretary)
secretary@belsize.org.uk

For Newsletter submissions and letters:
info@belsize.org.uk. Deadline for next issue is: 17th July 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