

Belsize Residents Association

Newsletter

November 2018

Notes from your Chair

Welcome to the November BRA Newsletter.

We look forward to seeing many of you at the BRA carol singing this year. This newsletter features an interview with musician Matthew Watts. Having taken on the Association's carol singing last year, Matthew introduces us to the local landscape for those interested in joining a choir. He also describes his career in singing and music. The BRA is looking forward to him heading the carol singing this year.

Also in this newsletter are comments from our BRA planning expert on 100 Avenue Road construction plans, alongside an update about the recent judicial review of CS11. There is also a note explaining the Community Infrastructure Levy, a source from which the BRA has successfully received funding. One funded project, just starting, monitoring pollution is described at page 6). Camden are currently consulting on ways to use the CIL.

The next weeks see a few BRA events. As well as the annual carol singing, we're looking forward to attending Flare Path, with tickets kindly donated to the Association by the Royal Central School.

Hope you enjoy the newsletter.

www.belsize.org.uk

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BRA CAROL SINGING 2018

**Belsize Terrace,
Saturday, 22 December
from 4.30pm
Mince pies, singing and great
company!**

Donations to Marie Curie Hospice



AN INTERVIEW WITH MATTHEW WATTS

The Editor writes:

Ahead of BRA Carol Singing next month, we spoke to musician Matthew Watts who will lead the BRA carols in Belsize Village for everyone who lives in Belsize Park or just wants to join in.

Matthew Watts, who is very much a member of our community, is looking forward to his second year of leading BRA carols (22 December at 4.30pm). Brought up in Primrose Hill, his musical talent was fostered at University College School where he sung in choirs and played in instrumental ensembles. Matthew always wanted to work in the Arts. He won a choral scholarship to Glasgow University and went on to study singing and conducting at the prestigious Trinity College of Music, London. He has been conducting choirs ever since he finished university.

At present, he runs four local choirs: the Primrose Hill Choir, Primrose Hill Children's Choir, Camden Chamber Choir and London Classical Choir. This wide mix enables him to work with singers of all ages and standards. People who are new to singing may have natural talent even if they have not had lessons. New singers generally show enthusiasm and open-mindedness, which makes working with them very exciting. Other choir members have decades of experience which allows Matthew to undertake much more challenging music.



Singing in choirs has received a big boost recently through exposure on TV. The 'Gareth Malone effect' has led to the formation of many new community and rock choirs which bring people of all ages together. Singing in a local choir can make a big difference to life in a large city such as London. It allows people to meet others in their community and is a great way of making friends in an enjoyable atmosphere. There is no need to travel large distances to take part. Everyone who is interested in singing can find a choir to suit them. Membership of the Primrose Hill Choir does not need an audition. The Choir has a wide repertoire: Gospel, world music, classical and pop. Local residents make up the core of the Choir though people come from outside the area too.

Matthew has worked extensively with children, harnessing their energy through playing games, and mixing music and movement. His Children's Choir appeals to lots of different ages as the children are well-supported by parents and family. There are always good audiences! Matthew also runs an after-school singing club at a local school. Singing at school helps boost pupil confidence. It fosters a sense of social responsibility because even young children appreciate that, if they do not contribute to a choir as a member of a team, they will be letting down other people. After-school singing helps adults to relax as they know that their children are doing something worthwhile. At primary school level, boys are just as keen as girls.

Matthew himself listens to classical music and particularly loves jazz. He is a fan of Lindy hop dancing; but he finds that he cannot listen to choral music at home as his professional knowledge makes him too critical!

Matthew chooses his Christmas repertoire early – his neighbours are sometime surprised to hear him playing carols in July! Christmas and singing go hand in hand. Churches make good performance spaces, but the BRA carols are an outdoor event which gives them a special feel. Outdoor carol singing catches those who live in the area and those who are merely visiting. The words to carols, and their messages, are often about cold evenings, about the gulf between rich and poor, and about charity. These themes and values are traditional; and they are just as relevant now as in previous centuries.

But how many people really know the words to carols or can sing them without a song sheet? Matthew is concerned that most people do not have a good grasp of even the most popular carols, and that the ability to sing in harmony is being lost too.

In addition to BRA carols, Matthew has several other events in the run-up to Christmas, including the Primrose Hill Choir's concert of carols and popular song. The concert is suitable for families and will take place at St Mary's Church on 1 December. Matthew confesses that he will breathe a sigh of relief on 26 December, with no more carols for another year!

In the meantime, we are looking forward to seeing him (and you!) at the BRA carols, for what is bound to be an excellent programme.



& London Classical Choir

pianist: Hannah Gill musical director: Matthew Watts

Christmas Concert



Saturday 1st December 2018 at 6pm

Carols for choirs & audience, mulled wine & mince pies

Songs by Bach & Franck, *The Lord Is My Shepherd* from *The Vicar of Dibley*
O Holy Night, *Ding Dong Merrily On High*, *Auld Lang Syne*
Do You Want To Build a Snowman? & *Last Christmas* by George Michael

St Mary's Church

London NW3 3DJ. Enter via King Henry's Road
Tickets on the door, £10, under 13s free. Ends 8pm

www.primrosehillchoirs.com

BRA Carol Singing -
Belsize Terrace, Saturday
22 December from 4.30pm
Come and join us at the annual BRA Carol singing. We cannot promise a dry time, but we certainly can promise plenty of singing and mince pies! We will provide the song sheets, so just wrap up well and bring an umbrella, just in case. Proceeds to Marie Curie Hospice.

A Century-old Problem

One of the BRA Committee planning experts, Barrie Tankel FRICS, writes:

Essential Living will redevelop 100 Avenue Road with a 26-storey residential tower block, after planning permission was granted despite the considerable number of objections from local residents. The construction work will inevitably start. It will disrupt the lives of residents with its heavy traffic muddying the streets of Winchester Road and Eton Avenue, from massive amounts of demolition, to tonnes of excavated material and then of course the construction process and associated pollution. From piling to cranes to deliveries to hundreds of workmen. Sadly it doesn't bear thinking about but we need to think about it because it will last for years.

On 28 September 2018 Camden sent a letter advising us about Essential's latest request for the 'temporary' use of an area of our Swiss Cottage Open Space during construction, removing it from public use. The Council say they are considering the request. There is no Essential reason for the developer to use our Space when they can access and construct the development from the Avenue Road side, staying within the confines of their site.

As John Heywood wrote, *Give an inch and they'll take a mile*. From my long experience in construction I have seen minimum periods expand to protracted periods of delay. Major contracts expected to last 3 years can take 5 years. Areas of land borrowed can creep from 5 metres wide to 10 metres wide, for a variety of reasons. If permission is refused we don't have to suffer the aggravation from contracts poorly managed, that go wrong, that subsequently impact on us.

I have objected to Camden about the use of the open area for any part of this proposed construction project. Our priority is now to protect this area and importantly this Open Space. This green facility should not now be taken away, even temporarily, from families with young children now growing up in this area.

The developer took a commercial decision to build this project without the beneficial use of our Park. They must develop their plan to retain all work within the confines of their site. Essential Living knew the site boundaries when they bought the site and there is no intrinsic right to now use our Open Space.

News from the Charity Commission

We have been exploring whether the Association's work might be conducted through a charitable entity rather than the current association of members, following the last BRA AGM's discussions about this. How long an application to form a charitable body may take and how many steps would be involved was an unknown. The most recent dialogue with the Commission suggests we are very close to what they require and the Commission have been very helpful in suggesting what (modest) changes might help.

So, we are hopeful that we will report fully on the outcome in the next newsletter, which will also contain Annual General Meeting 2019 papers and details.

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Help Camden to invest local Community Infrastructure Levy funds in your ward

BRA Treasurer, Neil Harris, writes:

In our August newsletter we gave details of BRA's proposed air pollution monitoring initiative and asked for volunteers to staff it (an update on this can be found on page 6). That article explained that Camden had offered Community Infrastructure Levy money to fund the project. We thought that members might like to know a little background about this important local financial resources

When new building projects take place in Camden, the developers are usually charged a fee known as the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Some of this money is used to fund key infrastructure across the borough and some of it is used to help make sure that the development contributes towards the local area. This is known as the local CIL and it can be used to fund projects such as improvements to streets and spaces or health and community facilities.

The latest information made available by Camden shows the wide range of projects that have most recently sought local CIL funding. Fourteen are recorded in Belsize ward alone, ranging from initiatives designed to

assist biodiversity in Camden through the installation of nesting and bat boxes and beehives in designated areas, to new or replacement tree planting and a proposal to support Belsize Community Library through the provision of buggy park/store and cycle parking.

Camden have advised that while most suggested projects would need to request funds for one-off expenditure, there is no reason why

In 2017 BRA was the recipient of considerable financial help under local CIL towards the costs of the much-needed refurbishment of our noticeboard in Belsize Terrace



in theory Camden could not allocate a sum of money to cover both initial costs plus ongoing costs (such as maintenance) over a set period of time, in practice no more than three years. Camden will treat each application on its merits.

To ensure local CIL funds are spent on projects most important to residents, Camden would like your views and ideas. For instance, do you think your area needs more investment in environmental improvements or in facilities for young people? Alternatively, do certain fixtures need maintenance which has been overlooked so far, such as repairing church railings, repainting street furniture or providing hanging baskets and maintaining them for a period of two or three years? Camden will pass your thoughts on to your ward councillors who will prepare a list of proposed spending priorities for each ward.

Send suggestions to <https://camdencilmap.commonplace.is/>.



CIL-funded Air Quality Monitoring Project

On 12 November, several BRA members gathered at Swiss Cottage Library for a briefing session about this project, that BRA volunteers are progressing in 2019. In the last newsletter, we described the project in detail. Camden have been keen to gather robust local level evidence about the levels of pollution in the borough, complementing their own monitoring programme that targets specific pollution hotspots. The gaps in monitoring data are often in residential areas, because routinely collecting the data is resource intensive. So, to understand local problems, BRA volunteers are to regularly collect samples over next year.



We think the chemistry lesson at the Library went well! The emphasis on the quality of the samples and how this is needed for good science really came through. Camden's Sustainability Team were on hand to explain what was needed and give handy tips. Another session is due to take place at 9am, Friday, 22 November. Contact us at localservices@belsize.org.uk if you want to help on this project.

TRANSPORT MATTERS

CS11 JUDICIAL REVIEW SUCCESS

On 13 September, Westminster City Council won a judicial review against Transport for London about Cycle Superhighway 11 (CS11) which (as readers of this newsletter will know) is planned to go through Swiss Cottage. The Judge decided that TfL had not taken into consideration that Westminster had not agreed to other parts of the scheme, so that the scheme as a whole (including works at Swiss Cottage) cannot start. TfL's website states: 'Following court action by Westminster City Council the start of works has been delayed'. It remains to be seen how Westminster and TfL will move forward. For details of the proposed final layout at Swiss Cottage, see www.tfl.gov.uk.

CAMDEN DRAFT TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Camden is currently consulting on a transport strategy for 2019-41. Objectives include the transformation of streets to increase walking and cycling; reducing car ownership; delivering a sustainable transport system; reducing road traffic casualties; reducing emissions; an efficient highways network; and ensuring economic growth is supported by a sustainable transport network. Camden is keen to involve as many residents as possible in formulating its strategy. If you wish to take part, go to consultations.wearecamden.org. The consultation closes on 14 December 2018.

Croquet in Golders Green: Joining the HHCC

BRA member Sue Kirby writes:

Hampstead Heath Croquet Club (HHCC) was formed in 2008 to enable players of all ages and abilities to enjoy a challenging and relaxing game in pleasant surroundings.

The club initially had just one half-size lawn but high demand in the first season led to the City of London upgrading this to two half-size, better quality lawns.

Our lawns are situated immediately below the hard tennis courts in Golders Hill Park, a short walk from Golders Green Underground Station. Buses 268 and 210 stop at the gates to the park on North End Road (the A502). The lawns are open to anyone, making them the only fully public lawns in North London.

From 2011 (and continuing for the 2018 season), Club members who are also experienced croquet players have the opportunity to play on a full-size lawn shared with the Bowls Club at Parliament Hill.

We hold regular open Club sessions at Golders Hill Park, on the first Sunday of every month during the season, May to September. Non-members are welcome to come to one or two club sessions to try out the game.

For further information please contact: enquiries@hampsteadheathcroquetclub.org.uk; www.hampsteadheathcroquetclub.org.uk

Heritage Walk: Belsize Park to Camden Town

Did you know that you can follow a self-guided heritage trail from Belsize Park Underground Station to Camden Town Underground Station (3.3 miles)? The walk has no fewer than 104 points of interest and covers 41 distinguished buildings.

The Heath & Hampstead Society has produced a fully illustrated guide with lots of information and maps. So, to cheer up these winter days and get some fresh air and local history, go to www.northernheights.eu. Full booklet available for £4.00.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

BRA membership subscriptions for 2019 are due on 1 January 2019. We hope you will all wish to renew your membership as we are dependant on subscriptions for our work. We do not send out invoices but enclosed with this newsletter you will find a letter addressed to you personally with details of what to do. Please read it and take action before 1 January.

Remember all the benefits of the membership, such as the 'Tradesmen You Can Trust' booklet and the chance to be involved with local issues.

FLARE PATH AT THE CENTRAL SCHOOL OF SPEECH AND DRAMA 7.30 PM

THURSDAY 22 NOVEMBER

We are delighted that over 30 members of BRA will be treated to a performance of Terence Rattigan's Flare Path, directed by Lindsey Posner and performed at the Embassy Theatre by students of the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

If you won a ticket and cannot use it, please let us know immediately as there is a long waiting list.

Please feel free to join us by booking tickets directly with the theatre at £10.

Dates for your diary

Camden Arts Centre, Arkwright Road, 6 Jan
3pm-3.45pm

Curator Gina Buenfeld leads a tour on the final day of the Amy Sillman Exhibition (28 Sept 2018- 6 Jan 2019). Free, booking essential.

Amy Sillman is exhibiting through all the galleries for her first institutional exhibition in the UK. Sillman's wayward form of abstraction has pushed defiantly at the process-oriented approaches typically associated with the traditions of post-war painting.

Burgh House, New End Square, NW3

Friday, 23 November, 7pm. Larry Kaplan with Dave Webber and Anni Fentimen perform a charity recital in aid of Burgh House. Songs from both sides of the Atlantic, £10, details at www.burghhouse.org.uk.

Wednesday 28 November, 7pm
'Women in Art' alongside the Women of Hampstead exhibition, a panel discussion exploring the different experiences of women in the arts industry. Free, details at www.burghhouse.org.uk.

Sunday, 9 December, 2017, 2pm & 3pm
Belsize Community Choir: Winter Words and Music. A family-friendly programme of traditional carols and winter poems from around the British Isles. Admission free. Suggested donation £10 (profits to charity).

10-29 November, Hampstead Arts Festival.
Numerous events at Burgh House, St John's, Downshire Hill and Hampstead Parish Church.
Details: <http://www.hampsteadartsfestival.com/>

Regent's Park Decorative & Fine Arts Society

'Jane Austen's Christmas', Tuesday 4 December. Dr Claire Walsh looks at the balls, parties, dinners, games, traditions and celebrations that filled the festive season. Lectures in St John's Wood Church Hall, St John's Wood Roundabout NW8 7NE at 8.00pm. Coffee is served from 7:30pm.

Belsize Baroque, St Peter's Church, Belsize Square, Sunday 25 November, 6.30pm

Belsize Baroque playing Bach, Dall'Abaco, Telemann, Vivaldi, Zelenka. Tickets £12 on the door or at www.belsizebaroque.org.uk.

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Interested in keeping up with Belsize news and events? If we have your email address, we will send you occasional emails with news about Belsize and BRA. If you wish to receive emails 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/>

www.belsize.org.uk