

Belsize Residents Association

Newsletter

February 2019

Notes from your Chair

Welcome to the February BRA Newsletter.

It was great to see many of you at recent BRA events. Many came to the carol singing, where we raised a considerable sum for the Marie Curie Hospice. Thanks to Matthew Watts for leading the singing. And in November, over twenty-five members enjoyed the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama's production of Flare Path.

We are getting ready for the Annual General Meeting with the focus for the meeting being the Association continuing its work as a charity. The centre pages present some background for this. We also celebrate some of the Association's past work. At the AGM, members will be asked to transfer the Association's assets and activities to a new organisation, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation called Belsize Society, that has now been set up and which replicates the objectives of the association, but in a formal entity. We look forward to seeing you at the AGM to explain more and to initiate the new Society.

Featured in this Newsletter is the Hive Centre, an organisation supporting young people in our part of Camden. We also update you about the pollution monitoring project being run by us, which has now started. Also in this Newsletter is an appreciation of Gordon Maclean's contribution to BRA.

Hope you enjoy this newsletter.

www.belsize.org.uk

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BRA Annual General Meeting

Sunday, 10 March 2018
at 3pm

**Belsize Square
Synagogue,
51 Belsize Square**

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

BRA members only

FOCUS ON: THE HIVE CENTRE

Neil Harris, BRA Treasurer, writes:

As members will know, every year BRA makes donations to bodies that the Committee judges on your behalf to be worthy of support. In 2018, among other donations, we gave £200 to the Hive Centre, a youth base for Camden young people aged 16 to 24 which opened in Swiss Cottage in 2015. As usual, as Treasurer I will be speaking to all donations at the AGM, but we thought it might be an idea to use a newsletter space to explain a little about the work of this valuable organisation.

The Centre is situated at 18 Harben Parade, Finchley Road, on the corner of Fairfax Road, opposite the BP garage (for those that remember, it is the site of the old Post Office). It is designed to be a safe and welcoming social hub for young people in the borough who may be caught in the gap between children's and adults' services. Axis, a borough-wide health and wellbeing service for the same age group, is based at the Centre and employs a team of young adults to help in many areas of their life, including education, employment, housing, social care, health and wellbeing.



It is also a place for young people to relax, study, meet new people and get information about local services. There are spaces for e-learning and personal study, as well as a social enterprise where young people can get experience to help build their CVs.

The Hive and Axis are managed by social (not for profit) business Catch22 in partnership with local specialist organisations. The base and service were jointly commissioned by Camden Council and the

NHS Camden Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). Partners include the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, the Anna Freud Centre and The Winch (which of course engages in similar work and has itself been the recipient of BRA donations in the past, as members may recall).

I know that the staff at the Centre would welcome the chance to explain its work, and would encourage anyone passing to drop in for a chat and learn more (contact krystal.donaldson@catch-22.org.uk; Tel: 0203 1980520). The Centre's activities take place 3pm – 7pm Monday to Friday, but there is an admin team on site that keeps essentially office hours. Behind a rather unprepossessing exterior you will find a comfortable welcoming space, on two levels with an external area at the back (where I understand a community barbecue is due to be held late August/early September). As a sad reflection of the times, the Centre also operates as a food bank, and would of course welcome any contributions of that kind from anyone.

Community air quality monitoring project has a healthy start

Teresa Poole, BRA Committee member, writes:

Sharp-eyed residents of Belsize Park and Swiss Cottage may have noticed the recent appearance of red-capped test-tubes attached high on a number of local street-side lampposts and signposts.

As of 9 January 2019 the community air quality monitoring project is up and running, organised and supported by 30 local volunteers. Ten monitoring locations were agreed during consultations with the volunteers, spanning the area between Finchley Road and Haverstock Hill. They were chosen to provide readings from a mix of busy and quieter roads.

The tubes (three at each location) will be monitoring levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), the main source of which is vehicle exhausts. Every month the tubes will be sent to Camden Council for analysis and new ones put in place by the volunteer teams. We will collect monthly readings for 12 months and at the end of the period the council will process the data and provide us with annual nitrogen dioxide readings that can be compared with the legal limit for that pollutant. The exercise is funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy, initiated and supported by officers at Camden Council.

As an excellent Financial Times article (*Air pollution: why London struggles to breathe*, 21 August 2018) recently pointed out: "While cities such as Beijing or New Delhi usually attract more headlines, the stubborn air pollution in London shows just how intractable the problem can be ... [In] terms of nitrogen dioxide, which inflames lungs and is linked to shorter life expectancy, London is nearly as bad as the Chinese and Indian capitals – and much worse than other developed cities such as New York or Madrid." If our data confirm that NO₂ levels are too high then this will strengthen the case for taking action to improve air quality in our local area.

We will update BRA members as soon as we have useful results. In the meantime if anyone spots a person tampering with, or removing, the tubes please alert us on localservices@belsize.org.uk.

Many thanks to Teresa and all the BRA volunteers who have enabled this valuable project to happen.

The Future of Queen Mary's House

Queen Mary's House (QMH) on East Heath Road in Hampstead belongs to the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust which is thinking of selling it. The building is currently used for offices and staff accommodation.

Queen Mary founded a maternity home in Hampstead in 1919 for the wives of servicemen. Lord Leverhulme housed it temporarily at Cedar Lawn, North End Road, then donated the present site for a permanent building.

The maternity home opened in 1922 in QMH with 16 beds, nurseries for infants and accommodation for 18 nurses and maids. The design and construction was supervised by the recently formed Ministry of Health as a Model Maternity Hospital with a homely character surrounded by gardens and trees.

Queen Mary made frequent visits, donating her own crochet work for the cots. In 1929 she partly funded an additional ward of 9 beds and further extensions brought the total to 38 in 1937.

At Queen Mary's request the NHS London Hospital Group took over administration of the building in 1946, and in 1972 it was taken over by the Royal Free Hospital. The Home closed in 1975 but reopened as a care home for the elderly in 1991. It has now been let to Newlon Housing as non-self contained rooms for about 50 people until 2020.

Although the building is outside the BRA area, we hope that Camden will ensure that its original exterior features are preserved in any sale and subsequent re-development.

BELSIZE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION AGM 2019

On 26 November 2018, the Belsize Society was registered by the Charities Commission. It has been set up with five trustees and has been modelled as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). On 10 March, we will vote on transferring the Association (its financial and non-financial assets, website, archive, on-going activities) to the new Society and, if passed, winding up the Association so that its work can continue under the CIO.

Belsize Society: Setting up the Society

The registration of charity number 1180842 in November last year probably went unnoticed. However, it marked the end of a phase of work improving how the Association undertakes its activities. At the last BRA Annual General Meeting, the membership asked the Committee to set up a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and, a couple of days after this, Committee member Michael Jampel started the ball rolling by applying to the Charities Commission.

The journey to successfully starting a CIO has been educational, working with different public bodies and advisors – all kindly offering help freely – to shape a way of working for the future.

The Committee had a good idea of why the AGM wanted to set up a CIO. We would have a legal entity contracting for services rather than individual members. Also, we felt we were “charitable”, seeking to support the Arts/Culture/Heritage/Science (our classification in the Charities Commission register), through providing education/advocacy/advice/information (again from the register). This work was non-political, not-for-profit and for the general public as well as people living in Belsize area

But setting up the CIO did make the Committee look at what we do and how it should be presented, teasing out why our work is for the public good.

The BRA name was a hook for this. The Commission asked whether we were a residents’ body, in the sense of representing residential interests to a landlord or to the Council. The name Belsize Residents Association was always a little misleading, risking giving this impression. The name makes sense in that we are an association of residents seeking to make Belsize a better place. However, it may fail to show that we do this for residents, visitors, businesses and all those that have an interest in the area.

Articulating this wider benefit has been a focus as the Commission probed our application. We were able to observe that the website, newsletter and noticeboard are freely accessible; equally, where we comment on planning matters or undertake pollution monitoring, residents are putting time in for the wider community. Interestingly, using the word “Society” – making us more recognisable as an amenity body – was also scrutinised. There was some relief in March when Michael confirmed with Companies House that we can use the word Society, after answering questions (this time from Companies House) that this restricted word was being used in acceptable way.

What happens next

At the BRA AGM, a motion to transfer assets and wind up the Association will be voted on. If passed, we would plan to hold the first AGM of the Society after this motion. All BRA members will be eligible and encouraged to join the Society as members. The trustees of the Society (five of the BRA Committee) intend to stand for re-election as trustees of the Society. Then, the rest of the Committee for the Society will be elected.

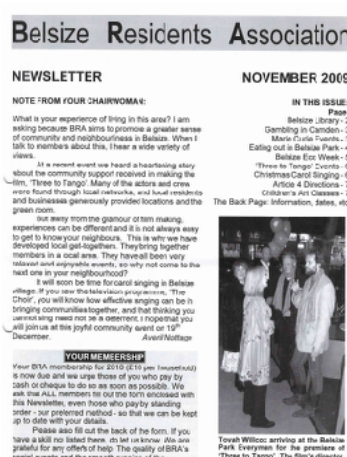
From the members’ perspective, very little of the BRA’s way of working will change. BRA activities will continue (newsletters, TYCT etc) though we will rebrand these. The annual subscription will be unchanged and as the bank account will transfer we would expect not to need to trouble members for new payment details.

Changing organisational form is only a first step. BRA Committee are keen to explain more of the plans at the March AGM, but also hear from members about what we should do next.

Four decades of the BRA Newsletter

The AGM will see a motion for us to wind up the Association and transfer its assets to the new charitable Belsize Society. So this may be the final BRA Newsletter in its present form. Below we capture some of the highlights from four decades.

Left to right: Festival Programme and Newsletter, Sept 1988; BRA Newsletter Feb/Mar 1999; BRA Newsletter Nov 2009 with Toyah Wilcox at the Belsize Park Everyman for a premiere; BRA Newsletter August 2017



Belsize Society Constitution

BRA Committee have developed a new constitution for the Society, modelled on the standard CIO templates, with objectives based on BRA's key strands of work:

1. To promote for the benefit of the public high standards of architecture, conservation, planning, design, and use of buildings and infrastructure in and/or affecting Belsize Ward, its adjacent areas and its historical environs and to promote the protection development and improvement of features of historic or public interest in that area;
2. To encourage and promote for the public benefit high standards in urban planning, infrastructure and transport including in the identification of traffic solutions, the maintenance and improvement of streets and public places and the protection of the environment and improvement of air quality in Belsize Ward, its adjacent areas and its historical environs.
3. To foster interest amongst the public in Belsize Ward, its adjacent areas and its historical environs and to educate the public in the history, including natural history and architecture, of the area by organising lectures, visits and other events.

The full document is on the website. Thanks to Anne Stevens for reviewing the CIO templates for us.



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 2019/20 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 stand for the Committee or just find out more about what the Committee does, then please contact us at info@belsize.org.uk.

Gordon Maclean: An Appreciation, 1932-2018



It was with great sorrow that we learned of the death of Gordon Maclean, a former Chairman of the BRA who passed away on 12 November 2018 aged 86. Gordon was a member of the BRA committee for over a decade, taking responsibility for planning matters and much else. Born in Birkenhead, he was educated at Bedford School before going on to study architecture at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. Gordon returned to England in 1957 as he could not tolerate the horrors of apartheid, and began work at a small architectural practise, before joining and then becoming a partner in Murray Ward. He became a fellow of RIBA in 1970.

Gordon specialised in airports. His impressive portfolio included the terminal building for Al Ain Airport in the UAE; Gaborone airport in Botswana; the terminal building at Lilongwe Airport in Malawi and a terminal building at Doha Airport in Qatar.

Gordon moved to Hampstead with his wife Lysiane Bysh in 1990. Active in both the Heath & Hampstead Society and the BRA, he scrutinised and responded to hundreds of planning applications over many years. He set the tone for BRA's perspective – to conserve

the best of history with the development of the best of modern architecture. His careful analysis and eye for detail were hugely appreciated.

Gordon's commitment to BRA was immense. Not only did he contribute vastly to the work of the Committee but he also encouraged a new generation of Committee members to learn about architecture in Belsize Park and contribute to the community. We will miss him very much.

In Gordon's words...

On **St Peter's Church** (1998): "Architecturally, the building is of great importance to Belsize Park. Its intrinsic architectural qualities are perhaps recognised by its Grade listing, but not less important is its setting. The building's size and scale, and its central location, give it an extraordinary dominance. In its gothic style, so contrasting with the classicist white stucco style of the area as a whole, sets off and enhances each element splendidly".

On **Antrim Grove** (2000): "Any house surviving from the period 1820-30 is important to this area, since very little of this age has survived; all else has been swept away by the successive waves of development during the 19th and 20th centuries".

On 2c and 2d **Belsize Park Gardens** (2010): "The unique virtue of these 2 houses is, we believe, their significant contribution to the character of Belsize Park Gardens, and the Conservation Area. This contribution lies in their almost complete invisibility from the roadway. Here are 2 quite large houses hidden from view behind a length of original 1860's boundary wall, planned in low-built unassuming modest style, not thrusting themselves forward as architectural monuments. This would have been the case notwithstanding their actual high architectural quality. What a lesson for developers, urban planners and architects today!"

Rattigan's Flare Path at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama: On 22 November, over 25 members of BRA were treated to a student production of Terence Rattigan's play Flare Path. First performed in 1942, the play covers the themes of war, loyalty and social class. This production at the Embassy Theatre on Eton Avenue was directed by Lindsey Posner (known for his work at the Royal Court and the National Theatre) with an excellent set design and some wonderful acting from the student cast. It provided our members with the chance to see an interesting play close to home, and to chat about it over refreshments kindly provided by RCSSD.

We are very grateful to RCSSD for their hospitality.

Meanwhile, the new North Block of the School is now in use. This provides a Sound Stage dedicated to film, media and digital work; five new double-height rehearsal studios including a movement studio, a white walled experimental studio with flexible seating for up to 60 people; and a new public, courtyard theatre.

We hope to maintain our links with the School and wish the new building every success.



Belsize Carol Singing

The Association's Christmas Carol



Singing was well-attended with over fifty braving the cold to sing along with Matthew Watts.

During the 45 minutes, some old

favourites were rolled out, along with a few magical rounds. Also, over £250 was raised for the Marie Curie hospice, a good local cause. Mark Drain, their Community Fundraiser, thanking us all for our "amazing support".

Tradesmen You Can Trust: May 2019

Our first Newsletter of 2019 also means giving you a timely reminder that YOUR Tradesmen booklet requires new recommendations and re-recommendations of tradesmen which you, our members, have used in the past year and would happily use again if needs be. Some of you might also need to let us know if a tradesman hasn't been quite up to the mark and others might like to see a new category or two (a lot of dogs on the streets so dog walkers and pet carers?). That's all to keep the booklet as useful and up to date as any of you could possibly wish.

A number of you have already sent in contributions, for which a big 'thank you', others can let us have details by completing the cream coloured form enclosed with this Newsletter, also available to download from the website (publications>tradesmen you can trust), or simply email full details to tyct@belsize.org.uk.

We're looking forward to full post and email boxes over the next 6 weeks. The boxes will be open until the 29th March 2019 (and we do realise other important things may be happening that day too). SO, OVER TO YOU!

Dates for your diary

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

27 February, 7pm. Talk: Gertrude Stein: Community and Kinship. Sian Norris leads a talk on the work of the American novelist, and her infamous weekly literary salons with leading modernist figures. £5

3 March, 2-4,30pm. An Afternoon of Mayhem with Obie. Suitable for children, an afternoon of making, dressing up and general mayhem. Free.

20 March, 7pm. Two Poets Talking. Two of the USA's most significant poets, Eileen Myles and CAConrad will share their poems and ideas. £8

Burgh House, New End Square, NW3

Thursday 28 February, 7pm "Keval Shah in Residence; A Hampstead Celebration". Keval Shah is joined by regular duo partner Michael Pandya. Concert includes Schubert's monumental *Fantasie in F minor*. £25 online.

Wednesday, 13 March, 7pm Join cartoonist and Cartoon Editor at The Spectator Michael Heath in conversation with Clare Lynch. £10

Thursday, 21 March, 7pm Middlesex University Singers' and Instrumentalists' Ensemble. Annual Burgh House concert. Free.

Thursday, 4 March, 7pm. "The Joy of Maps" Join Travis Elborough for a fascinating talk on the extraordinary and bizarre destinations to which maps can lead us. £10

www.burghhouse.org.uk.

Isokon Gallery, Lawn Road, NW3

2019 Feature: George Adams. A new display to celebrate the life and work of Bauhaus-trained graphic designer and Belsize Park resident.

Keats House, 10 Keats Grove, NW3 2RR

Sunday 10 March, 2-3pm. Afternoon Poems: London in Verse. Join the Keats House Poetry Ambassadors for a reading in which they explore one of the greatest cities in the world. Free.

Thursday 28 March, 6.30pm. Byron's Poetic Afterlife, a talk by Dr Matthew Ward considering the poetic afterlife of Byron focusing in on Matthew Arnold's criticism and poetry. £5 booking essential.

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For Newsletter submissions and letters:

info@belsize.org.uk. Deadline for next issue is: **15 April 2018**

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:

brapanning@gmail.com

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/>

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