

*The Belsize Society is a Registered Charity (number 1180842), continuing the work of the Belsize Residents Association.*

**[www.belsize.org.uk](http://www.belsize.org.uk)**

## Notes from your Chair

Welcome to the August Newsletter of the Belsize Society.

It was very nice to see many of you at this year's Summer Party. The weather proved excellent and we had the benefit of a garden in full bloom. Thanks to many members for helping and to the hostess for making the party so successful.

This Newsletter gives you a chance to enjoy the sunshine with a walk guiding you to many of the Blue Plaques placed on Belsize buildings. This historic theme continues with a piece about a new book that charts efforts to maintain Hampstead Heath since the 19th century, and a feature about the venerable Belsize Rugby Football Club.

The second round of consultation about ward boundaries in the borough ended a few weeks ago. We describe the views the Society put to the Local Government Boundary Commission of England, and some of their early recommendations.

This Newsletter also covers some recent initiatives in the Borough. We cover a meeting about curbing school-related traffic. We also let you know what residents might do if they spot the notes on trees asking a passer-by to "help water me".

We'll continue to keep you updated about the steps being taken as the BRA changes more fully to the Belsize Society, but - in this issue - we also report on the website changes made in the last months.

Hope you enjoy this Newsletter.

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## OPEN HOUSE LONDON

*This year's Open House weekend is on 21-22 September. There are over 800 buildings, walks, talks and tours in the programme. This year's programme will be launched on 20 August.*

*[openhouselondon.org.uk](http://openhouselondon.org.uk)*

### Ward boundaries in Camden: Review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England

The Local Government Boundary Commission is undertaking a review of the ward boundaries in Camden. This review is part of a wider programme of electoral reviews of London boroughs that have not been reviewed in the last five years, meaning that 25 of London's 32 boroughs will be reviewed before the end of 2020. The Commission aims to recommend ward boundaries such that each local councillor represents approximately the

*This map represents the present recommendations of the Local Boundary Commission for new ward boundaries in Camden. If the recommendations remain the same after the second stage of consultation, all wards except for Regent's Park would change to some extent. The number of local councillors would rise from 54 to 55, reflecting demographic changes.*



same number of voters and such that the boundaries reflect the interests and identities of local communities, as well as promoting effective local government.

The review is a lengthy process, with two stages for the public to make their views known. We are pleased to say that the representations that we made to the Commission at the first stage were accepted and helped to persuade the Commission to have doubts about Camden Council's proposals to split up Belsize ward.

The Commission's draft recommendations recognise that "Belsize Residents' Association [opposes] the Council's proposed ward on the grounds that it would split the Belsize community between a number of wards and would not allow for effective and convenient local government. In particular, both the Residents' Association and a local resident described the roads with 'Belsize' in the street name as being a central part of the Belsize community, and that these roads should all be included in a Belsize ward". The Commission took into consideration that the BRA is a large and active association and saw the advantages of a Belsize ward that (i) reflects the area that the BRA covers; (ii) keeps the whole of Belsize Village in Belsize ward; (iii) includes both sides of Eton Avenue in Belsize ward; and (iv) includes Belsize Park Underground Station in Belsize ward.

The second-stage consultation saw BelSoc make further representations on the Commission's draft recommendations. The Commission will publish its final recommendations to Parliament on 1 October 2019. For full information, see <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/greater-london/greater-london/camden>. Whatever the outcome of the review, BelSoc will continue to work hard for the amenity of Belsize Park as a whole with no change in the substance of what we do or the services we provide for members.

## Young tree maintenance

You may have spotted the new tree watering bags on saplings round Belsize

*Camden Council writes:*

“After planting, trees have three seasons of young tree maintenance. This includes weeding, watering and adjustment or removal of stakes. Young trees are watered for the first three seasons after planting. Trees are watered from May to September every two weeks.

Any water residents can add to the trees would be beneficial to helping the trees establish. To use the irrigation bag just pour water into the hole on the bag above the new ‘help water me’ sticker. The bag will slowly release the water into the soil over 3-6 hours.

Please share your help using #camdentreesneedyou on Twitter.”

## Changes to our website

You’ll see some changes to the [www.belsize.org.uk](http://www.belsize.org.uk) site as we change from the BRA to BelSoc. We are making use of some fantastic photos kindly made available to us by David Percy. The photos cover the tapestry of Belsize architecture, places and life, both during sunny days and in the night.

The site is also sporting the new Belsize Society branding and we’ve begun to reorganise material a little to reflect the change to the charitable incorporated organisation.

There are still pages about Belsize and the Society; there is a section containing the BRA’s archived material. We’re planning to post online more of the Newsletter content so that readers will receive a paper copy, but also be able to read the Newsletter from the website.

## Your Society Needs You!

The Committee is working hard to establish BelSoc as a modern charity providing activities and information for members and all those who love Belsize Park. We have refreshed and updated our website. We continue to look for ways to keep in touch with our members electronically and we want to increase the events available for members. But we need people to help us at this exciting time. Specifically, we are looking for people able to donate a small amount of time and who have the following interests or expertise:

- IT skills
- Interest in local history
- Artistic and design skills
- Hosting local get togethers for BelSoc members who live in the surrounding streets - we provide all food and drink.

If you think that you fit the bill please contact Anne Stevens at [info@belsize.org.uk](mailto:info@belsize.org.uk).

### THE BELSIZE SOCIETY

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#### Events

The Belsize Society organises social events throughout the year. These may include guided walks, an annual garden party, Christmas carols in Belsize Village, neighbourhood get-togethers and talks on topics of local interest. Events often conclude with tea and home made cakes or a glass of wine. Some are open to non-members.

Forthcoming events are listed below and on our [Dates for your Diary](#) page. They are also published in our newsletters, on the BelSoc noticeboards

### A walk through the Blue Plaques of Belsize

*Planning and community expert Barrie Tankel shares a historical walk*

If you're about to take a quirky walk around the United Kingdom you might plot the route to visit the 940 Blue Plaques adorning the faces of old buildings. Historical markers honouring notable individuals commemorating a link between the location and the famous person, event or former building on the site.

The common denominator connecting each of these individuals is death.

The process of erecting a Blue Plaque will only be initiated after the person concerned has been deceased for at least twenty years or passed the centenary of their birth.

English Heritage, responsible for Blue Plaque installations, describe the history of the plaque.

"The renowned London blue plaques scheme began 150 years ago and is the oldest scheme of its kind in the world. Blue plaques have played an important role in the history of the conservation movement pre-dating the foundation of both the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (1877) and the National Trust (1895). The idea of a commemorative plaque scheme was first put to the House of Commons by William Ewart MP in 1863. Three years later the Society of Arts (later the Royal Society of Arts) took the scheme on, erecting two plaques in 1867."

A "Brown" (Blue) Plaque is occasionally spotted, like the one on Vane Court in Vane Close, just off Rosslyn Hill. This one is dedicated to Sir Harry Vane, a Parliamentarian executed for Treason in 1662.

Belsize Park is home to a dozen or so plaques. These can be found by following the three-mile circuit described in this guide.

A good place to start is outside **31 Steeles Road**, the home of Hutch Hutchinson, an American entertainer. A remarkable singer and pianist remembered for his versions of Cole Porter songs particularly "Let's do it, let's fall in love"...ctd on pg 5.

Belsize Park and its neighbouring wards have proven to be a popular area for artists, politicians and writers to live. Our Blue Plaque neighbours living outside the boundary of Belsize include...

- **Sylvia Plath** one of the most dynamic and admired poets of the 20th century. She lived in Chalcot Square close to **Frederick Engels** the German socialist philosopher and closest collaborator of Karl Marx in the foundation of modern communism.
- **John Keats** the poet lived in Keats Grove although he did not own the property.
- **Aldous Huxley** best known for his book "Brave New World" lived at 16 Bracknell Gardens.
- **Ruth First & Joe Slovo** lived in Lyme Street Camden. Ruth First was a South African anti-apartheid activist and scholar born in Johannesburg, South Africa. She was killed by a parcel bomb addressed to her in Mozambique, where she worked in exile from South Africa. Joe Slovo was probably the most important figure after Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo in the Anti-Apartheid Struggle.
- **Hugh Gaitskell** lived at 18 Frognal Gardens. Hugh was leader of the Labour Party between 1955 and 1963 but died the year before Labour won the election.
- **John Galsworthy** lived in Admirals Walk. This English novelist and playwright won the 1932 Nobel Prize in Literature for his distinguished art of narration "*The Forsyte Saga*" published between 1906 and 1921.



## MAP OF BELSIZE BLUE PLAQUE WALK



A short walk across Haverstock Hill to **Parkhill Road** will take you to the homes of painter Piet Mondrian (No 11A) and sculptor Henry Moore (No 60).

Then wander up to **Lawn Road** where three pioneers of Modern Design, Walter Gropius, Marcel Breuer and Laszio Moholy-Nagy resided at various times in the Lawn Road flats. Close by, Sir Rowland Hill originator of the Penny Post lived on the site of the **Royal Free Hospital**.

Returning across Haverstock Hill stop by the corner of **Ornan Road** where David Devant, a Magician, lived for a year in Ornan Court.

Continuing on, **6 Lyndhurst Road** was the home of actor Richard Burton. Burton, nominated for seven Oscars was one of the highest-paid actors in the world during the late 1960s.

**20 Maresfield Gardens** is a ten-minute walk from Lyndhurst. Sigmund Freud, the neurologist and founder of psychoanalysis, lived here working in the Viennese consulting room he recreated in faithful detail. The house is now a museum dedicated to his memory and the memory of his daughter Anna, considered to be the founder of psychoanalytic child psychology. Hence there are two Blue Plaques.

Cecil Sharp a collector of Folk Songs lived at **4 Maresfield Gardens**. A building in Primrose Hill is also named after him.

The next stop will be **14 Adamson Road**, close to Swiss Cottage tube station, the home of Robert Bevan, Painter and founder of Camden Town Group.

From here head towards **44 Belsize Park Gardens**, home of Frederick Delius whose musical compositions were performed by Thomas Beecham; then across the road **No 37** was the home of Henry Brailsford, a writer.

The final destination of this tour is **No 9 Howitt Road**, where Ramsey McDonald lived. Ramsey was the first Labour Party politician to become Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

*The official blue plaques app is available to download for free for iPhone and Android.*

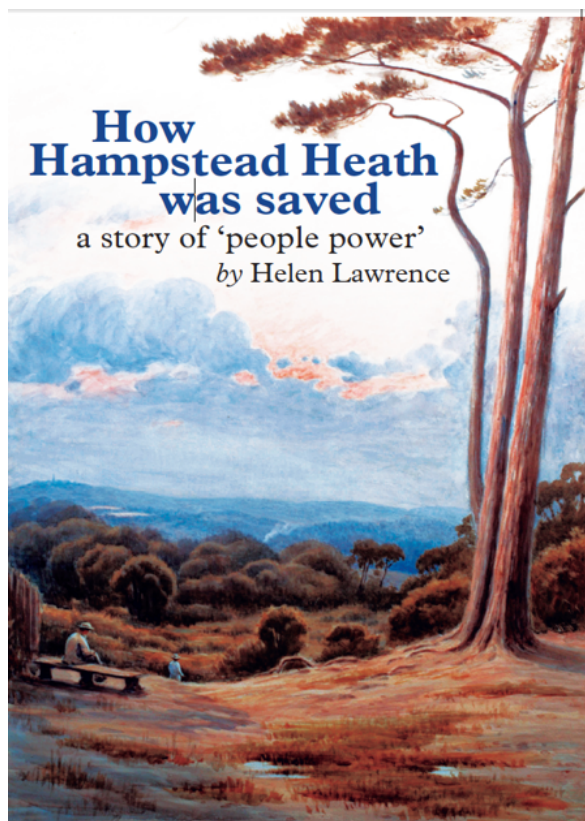
### New book about Hampstead Heath

The campaign to save Hampstead Heath in the 19th century was at the heart of what became the new conservation movement. The campaigners set up the Commons Preservation Society in 1865, (now the Open Spaces Society), and the National Trust in 1895; and they were all involved in the founding of the Hampstead Heath Protection Society in 1897—today's Heath & Hampstead Society.

Extensive new research has uncovered layers of fresh information about this fascinating story and rediscovers the remarkable people who played their part in the battle to save London's commons. Helen Lawrence's new book, *How Hampstead Heath was saved: a story of 'people power'*, examines the political and social upheavals, the cultural developments that led to a new understanding of the value of open space, and the rise of Town Planning.

It records for the first time the battles of the Heath & Hampstead Society in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when they played a significant part in the development of modern democratic accountability. In the 1970s they joined with other amenity groups to fight the London "motorway box", and in the 1980s they had to fight a roller-coaster battle for the integrity of the Heath all over again when the Greater London Council was abolished, taking their campaign to the heart of government.

*Published by Camden History Society, jointly with the Heath & Hampstead Society at £14.95*



### Belsize Park Rugby Football Club: roots in history

Did you know that, in 1871, Belsize Park RFC was one of twenty-one clubs at the inaugural meeting of the Rugby Football Union? It can truly be said to have been a pioneer of the game of Rugby Union. However, in 1878, Belsize moved to form Rosslyn Park RFC - going on to become one of England's leading clubs. It was not until 1971 that the current incarnation of Belsize Park RFC was re-established. It is London's most central rugby club with its home grounds in Regent's Park and training by Russell Square.

2019/20 marks the first season for Belsize's new women's team. The Club welcomes women of all levels of rugby experience. It is a fantastic opportunity to be a founder member of the women's teams.

The Club is excited to be growing women's and ladies' rugby in central London. In 10 years, it has grown the men's club from around 50 players to around 350 each year. It has won an RFU President's award for recruitment and two Middlesex awards for growing the game. The aim is to have a similar positive impact on growing women's rugby.

The Club is considered to be the most widely toured amateur clubs in the world. It tours twice a season as a club (one autumnal domestic and one spring international) unbroken since 1989 to as far afield as Barbados, Brazil, China, Mozambique and the USA. The 1st XV recently won the London 2 NW Division and have been promoted to London 1 South.

To join, you can contact: <https://bprfc.co.uk/join-the-club/>.



## Belsize Society summer party

The Society's summer party took place on a June afternoon in the beautiful garden of our member Barbara Frost. The occasion was a great opportunity for members to meet each other and chat while devouring delicious cakes and strawberries. We are indebted to all who baked cakes and served tea. We are particularly grateful to Barbara for generously allowing us to use her garden and helping to make the event such a success.



Members enjoy tea and cakes in the sunshine, surrounded by a garden in full bloom.  
Thanks to all who helped!



## Neighbourhoods of the Future: Schools Engagement Meeting, 19 June 2019

BelSoc Committee member Sanya Polescuk attended this meeting on Camden's proposals to curb school traffic in the roads between Fitzjohn's Avenue and Finchley Road. The proposals include closing certain roads to incoming traffic at school peak times, fitting cameras, providing a "park and stride" option, encouraging the use of a new phone app geared towards parents sharing car journeys, and working with schools and parents' groups.

Camden was awarded "Neighbourhoods of the Future" funding from the Mayor of London in March 2018 to improve London's air quality in the chosen project area. Camden successfully bid for £359,500, which has been match funded, to create a Schools Low Emissions Neighbourhood (SLEN), and will help to fund the measures.

An element of the funding will be used to implement a minimum of three Healthy School Streets across the SLEN. Healthy School Streets aim to restrict traffic on those streets, at the start and end of the school day, except for residents of those streets, essential access and those who drive electric vehicles.

All proposals will be subject to consultation and any changes implemented will be subject to robust monitoring,

## Dates for your diary

Camden Arts Centre, Arkwright Road, NW3  
[www.camdenartscentre.org](http://www.camdenartscentre.org)

8 Sept, 2-3pm. Poetry: Bob Holman performs a collection of poems describing Elizabeth Murray's paintings (exhibiting at the Centre, 5 July - Sept). Free, but booking is essential.

8 Sept, 4-6pm. Film Screening & Q&A: 'Everybody Knows...Elizabeth Murray' and 'Talking Pictures' with Bob Holman and Kristi Zea. Event at JW3 opposite Arts Centre, booking at [jw3.org.uk](http://jw3.org.uk), £12.

15 Sept, 3-3.45pm. Exhibition Tour: Wong Ping. Curator Gina Buenfeld leads a tour on the final day of the exhibition. Free, but booking is essential.

Burgh House, New End Square, NW3

Friday 30 August, 7.15pm. Maria and Loredana Duo: Remember Puccini. Opera arias performed with commentary. Free.

Friday, 6 September, 7pm. Tobiah in Concert. Singer songwriter with an evening of songs and stories from her new album *Are We Angels* with special guests. £10, profits to Animal Asia.

Wednesday, 25 Sept, 7.30pm. 'In search of Mary' with Bee Rowlatt. Writer/journalist in conversation and discussing her book, *In Search of Mary*, inspired by the life of Mary Wollstonecraft. £10.

Sunday, 29 Sept, 2pm. Mark Crooks Jazz Trio comes to Burgh House for an afternoon of swinging jazz standards. £12.

St Peter's Church, Belsize Square, NW3

Sunday 29 Sept, 6.30pm. Belsize Baroque play music by Vivaldi, Telemann and others. Tickets £12 available [www.belsizebaroque.org.uk](http://www.belsizebaroque.org.uk) or at the door.

Belsize Community Library, Antrim Road, NW3

Thursday, 19 Sept, 7.30pm. Talk: Rosalind Eyben (daughter of John Horner, General Secretary of the Fire Brigades Union and Politician) 'Political Activism in Hampstead in the late 1930s'. Donation £3.

Keats Community Library, 10 Keats Grove, NW3

Thursday 12 September, 7pm. Sara Wheeler: Mud and Stars. A Journey across the history and 8 time zones of Russia by one of Britain's leading travel writers. Tickets by phoning 020 74311266.

## Contact Us

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For Newsletter submissions and letters:  
[info@belsize.org.uk](mailto:info@belsize.org.uk). Deadline for next issue is: **27 October 2019**

To send posters for noticeboards:  
[haverstockboard@belsize.org.uk](mailto:haverstockboard@belsize.org.uk)  
[villageboard@belsize.org.uk](mailto:villageboard@belsize.org.uk)

To send details for Tradesmen You Can Trust:  
[TYCT@belsize.org.uk](mailto:TYCT@belsize.org.uk)

For planning matters: [info@belsize.org.uk](mailto:info@belsize.org.uk)

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 BelSoc. If you wish to receive emails and are not already on our list, please send your email address to [info@belsize.org.uk](mailto: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](http://www.belsize.org.uk)