



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 February Newsletter of the Belsize Society.

It was a pleasure to see many of you at the Belsize Society carol singing, which raised £309 for the Marie Curie Hospice. Many thanks to Matthew for leading the singing and those who helped with the event. With this Newsletter, you'll see the papers for the Society's AGM. We look forward to seeing you then.

In this Newsletter, you'll see the annual request for recommendations for Tradesmen You Can Trust. Do remember that it is really helpful if you can also let us know about the tradesmen that you have used from TYCT, as that helps us keep the list up-to-date.

The Newsletter features two local community organisations and improvements they are considering to their buildings and the settings for the buildings. At WAC Arts, there are plans to invest in the Hampstead Old Town Hall, while the Friends of Belsize Library are celebrating illustrator Arthur Rackham with a bench near the library.

January also saw the conclusion of the air pollution monitoring project that the Society has been running for the past year. We would like to thank the members who helped to make this a success. The results are due to be released in the next weeks and we will report on that in May.

Hope you enjoy this Newsletter.

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Belsize Society Annual General Meeting

**Sunday, 8 March 2020
at 3pm**

**Belsize Square
Synagogue,
51 Belsize Square**

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

Members only

Successful conclusion of the community air quality monitoring study

Teresa Poole, Committee member, updates us:

Thank you to all the Belsize Society members and other volunteers who have helped to bring to a successful conclusion the community air quality monitoring study in Belsize Park / Swiss Cottage. We are now excitedly awaiting the results, hopefully due around the end of March 2020.



Test-tubes in England's Lane

Since early January 2019, up to 30 volunteers have been tending the 10 monitoring locations, mostly situated in the area between Finchley Road and Haverstock Hill. Every month the teams organised themselves to take down the test-tubes from high on kerbside lampposts / signposts, post them back to Camden Council for analysis, and replace them with a new set of tubes. Inevitably some passers-by could not restrain themselves from taking a few tubes and there was one explicit act of vandalism to destroy one set of tubes but these instances were thankfully rare. Overall the study managed to collect enough data for all 10 monitoring locations.

The tubes (three at each location) have been measuring the levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), the main source of which is vehicle

exhausts. The 10 locations were agreed during consultations with the volunteers to provide readings from a mix of busy and quieter roads. The study was funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy, initiated and supported by officers at Camden Council, whom we also thank for all their help in setting up and providing back-up administration for the study.

Camden Council is now processing the data and we will be able to see how NO₂ levels at the 10 locations have varied over the 12 months. If any locations have levels above the recommended healthy levels then we can ask what actions might be taken to alleviate the NO₂ pollution.

Towards the end of March 2020 Camden Council will host a meeting to report back on the results to the volunteers and all interested Belsize Society members and local residents. Details of this event will appear on the Belsize Society website and will be sent out by email to volunteers and members.

Gift Aid

Many thanks to all members who have completed Gift Aid forms - which helps to increase our revenue. All those who have sent their forms should have been sent a written acknowledgement. Please contact info@belsize.org.uk if you have not received a receipt. Please do send us a form if you are able.

Camden Borough ward boundaries

BelSoc have during the past year contributed to the consultations about the new boundaries in the Borough. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England will report its recommendations in early February.

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 2020/21 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 find out more about what the Committee does, then please contact us at info@belsize.org.uk.



A new decade and nearly time for a new TYCT

So please get busy with email or pen and form, to send us your new tradesmen 'finds', plus re-recommendations for existing entries. All this input is for members, by fellow members - so mutually beneficial!

Our thanks to all who have already contributed. As a reminder to those who intend to do so, please use the form enclosed with this newsletter, or download the same form from www.belsize.org.uk/membership/-you-can-trust, or just email full details, including your own, to TYCT@belsize.org.uk by 3rd April 2020.

**THE
BELSIZE
SOCIETY**

TRADESMEN YOU CAN TRUST 2020



Tradesmen listed here are personal recommendations by BelSoc members. No other assessment is made of tradesmen's qualifications, competence or trustworthiness.

WAC Arts and Hampstead Town Hall

Neil Harris, our Treasurer, writes:

Members may recall that over the years Belsize Residents' Association made a number of donations to the WAC Arts organisation, based in the old Hampstead Town Hall on Haverstock Hill. In 2019 BelSoc continued this with a further donation of £200. For members unaware of the organisation's work, we thought some account of its history and activities might be welcome, particularly in view of its intention to carry out some building work within the Town Hall. As you may know, the Town Hall is a Grade II listed building. BelSoc now has as one of its charitable objectives to promote high standards of architecture, conservation, planning, design and use of buildings in Belsize Ward, and to promote the protection, development and improvement of features of historic interest in the area. So it will be part of our responsibility to take an interest if significant changes of this kind are planned.

WAC Arts is a charity that has been in existence for forty years and provides access to the performing arts for the young, the disabled and the disadvantaged. It also provides support and services to other charities and organisations to help them promote their own effectiveness, offering professional advice, training, event and conference management and accommodation. It began life in a community hall and then quickly moved to the Inter-Action site in Kentish Town, where access to studios and a large hall afforded opportunities to increase its intake of young people and extend the range of programmes on offer at

weekends. Twenty years later and with a full weekend of activity for 5-26 year olds, it found itself to have outgrown the Inter-Action space and in 2000 secured the Old Town Hall, which was about to be turned into a commercial site, as its new home.



In March 2019 Wac Arts appointed Ash Sakula Architects to develop the "Inside Out Wac Arts" design.

At the start of its 40th birthday year WAC Arts was awarded a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, allowing it to launch a Connecting Communities



Wac Arts

Project enabling its young people, building partners and the wider community in Camden to explore the organisation's abundant participatory artistic heritage. It identifies particularly with the Town Hall's own occasionally radical history. An illustration of this came in 1959 when David Pitt was chosen a Labour candidate for Hampstead, becoming the first person of African descent to stand for Parliament. After his selection he gave a speech on the steps of the Town Hall which a mob tried to disrupt, the disturbance eventually turning into a riot. He went on to lose the election, but later founded the Campaign against Racial Discrimination and became a member of the House of Lords in 1975.

As custodian of the Town Hall WAC Arts is responsible for the maintenance and management of the building and grounds. In March last year it appointed Ash Sakula architects as partners to help it restore some of the Hall's original features (including restoration of the "imperial staircase" and carry out a wide-ranging refurbishment to transform what is already a considerable community asset for wider public benefit. One of the proposed changes involves a new large cafe open to all, spilling into the central staircase area and expanding onto the Hall's terrace space, allowing it to connect with a greater number and range of people, supporting the organisation's ambition to develop its inter-generational appeal. The intention is that the new spaces will allow year-round, community-led activities helping to reduce isolation and foster social cohesion among people of all ages. WAC Arts also hopes that improving the accessibility of the building will help increase the number of people able to benefit from its programmes, for example young people with special education needs and disabilities.

Costs for the building work are in the region of £3.2 million. More Information on the plans, including how to donate, can be found at www.wacarts.co.uk/homepage/inside-out-wac-arts

What's on at the Hampstead Theatre

Until 7 March, you'll be able to see the new play "The Haystack", an espionage thriller about two twenty-something computer whizzes. The main stage then hosts Harold Pinter's "The Dumb Waiter".

At Downstairs, Sleepwalking is a story about a grandparent supporting a daughter as she juggles the school run, preparing meals and a high-pressure full-time job.

Bench commemorating Arthur Rackham

Friends of Belsize Library are seeking funds from Belsize ward's Community Infrastructure Levy allocation for a bench commemorating the life and works of Arthur Rackham.

Born on 19 September 1867, English illustrator Arthur Rackham was recognised as one of the leading literary figures during the Golden Age of British book illustration. Famous for drawing sensitive and scary images of fantastical woodland creatures and enchanted trees, Rackham's influence continues to this day with Director Guillermo Del Toro and Brian Froud, illustrator for the recent Dark Crystal series on Netflix, citing him as a big inspiration on their own work.

From 1906 Rackham and his family lived in Primrose Hill Studios (near Fitzroy Road) and Chalcot Gardens, spending 15 years in the area. With the recent celebration of the 150th anniversary of his birth, Myra Newman, a member of the Friends of Belsize Library and a fan of Rackham's work, decided to commemorate it with some local community-led activities.

'I went to the British library and they weren't doing anything, so, inspired by his wonderful illustrations, we decided to have a tea party at the Gallery in Chalcot Road and Belsize Community Library with members of Kilburn Older Voices Exchange and a group of young people from Elfrida Rathbone. The Mayor of Camden Richard Cotton even attended as the master of ceremonies, dressed as the Mad Hatter.'

Following the success of the events and sensing a general lack of recognition for the influential artist's anniversary, Primrose Hill Neighbour's Help and the Friends of Belsize Library decided to apply to Camden Council for funding for benches to be placed outside the libraries close to where he lived.

Myra is now working with Martin Grierson & Georgy Metchian of the Art Workers' Guild, of which Rackham himself was a Master, as well as Graham Wade, a local illustrator and designer working for local charity Queens Crescent Community Association, to raise funds for the erection of a bench. The group is currently looking at finding more sources of potential funding and sponsors for the project.

Wade explained the group's enthusiasm for the project: "As someone with a keen interest in illustration, I think it would be fantastic to recognise Rackham's beautiful and influential work while also providing Belsize Library and Primrose Hill Library with a wonderful, practical piece of art that people of all ages can enjoy".

If you are interested in learning more about the project or would like to suggest potential sources of funding, please email to: arackhambench@gmail.com.

Belsize Library talk on Picasso and Printmaking

The Friends of the Belsize Library's next event is to be a talk by Frederick Mulder on Picasso and Printmaking, to take place on Thursday 20 February, 7.30pm at Belsize Community Library, Antrim Road, NW3 8XN.

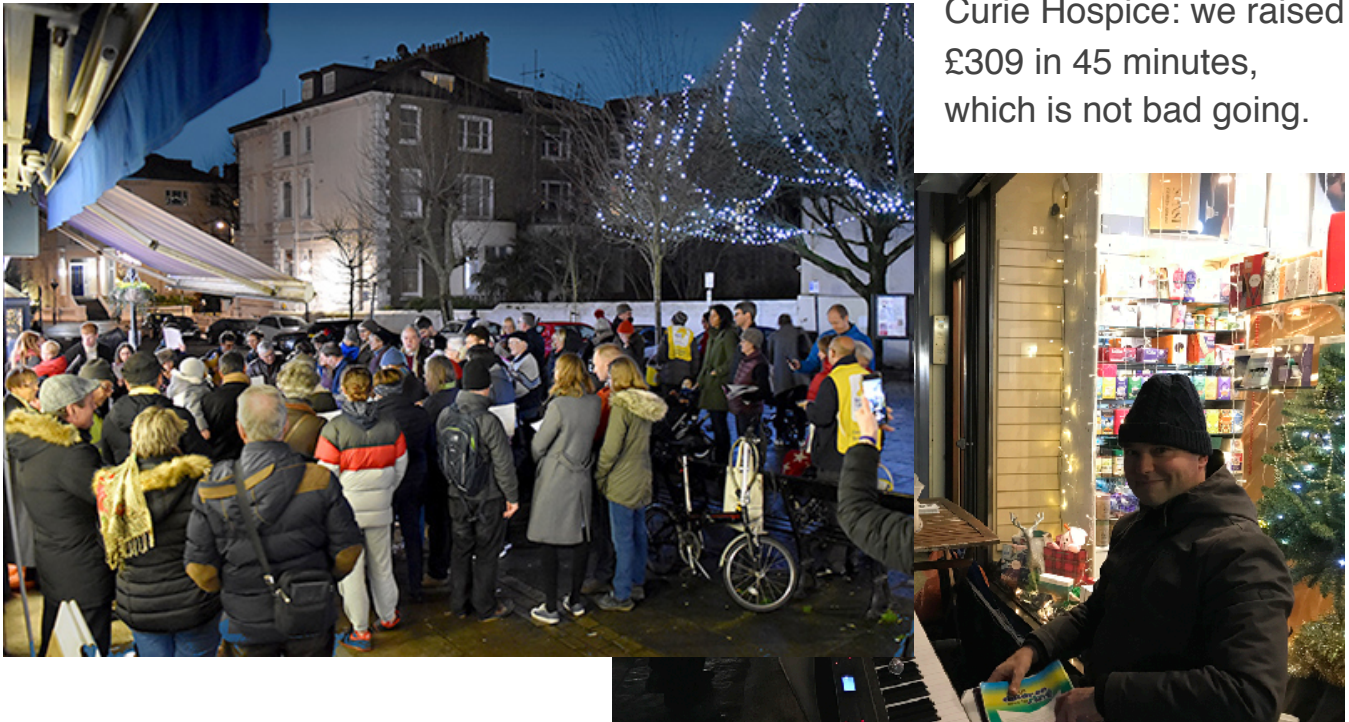
There is a donation £5 including refreshments.

You can get email alerts about forthcoming events and details are available at www.friendsofbelsizelibrary.com

Belsize Christmas Carols

The cold weather was no bar to a well-attended and sonorous session of carols in Belsize Village on 23 December. Special thanks to leader, Choir Master Matthew Watts. Thanks to all who made or brought mince pies. Well done to all who

contributed to Marie Curie Hospice: we raised £309 in 45 minutes, which is not bad going.



BelSoc deputation to Camden Planning Committee

BelSoc have attended meetings with Camden Council enforcement teams about the approach to be taken to large projects. Large projects could be basement developments or the 100 Avenue Road construction, where there is likely to be significant disruption during the build. We are keen to see the teams able to routinely check on how developers are meeting their Construction Management Plans, and other obligations.

BelSoc Chair Prabhat Vaze with Oliver Froment of CRAAC recently made a deputation to the Council's Planning Committee about possible ways to improve the situation, especially lessons from other London Boroughs where systematic monitoring is taking place and the funding for this has been met by developers, an innovation which the Council explained they are exploring.

Grants for home owners and private tenants

Did you know that Camden's Warmer Cheaper Greener Programme provides a wide range of grants to help people make their homes more energy efficient? If you are thinking about energy efficient measures, have a look at Camden's website: <https://www.camden.gov.uk/energy-efficiency-grants>

Camden parking suspensions

Did you know that you can find out all about parking bay suspensions on Camden's website? You can book a suspension online as well as searching for current suspensions. There is also a facility for receiving alerts about future suspensions, for those who do not want to get caught out.

Dates for your diary

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

Until 5 April. Athanasios Argianas: Hollowed Water. An exhibition presenting new film, sculpture and musical works emerging from his interest in redundant technology.

26 February, 7pm. Purr by Athanasios Argianas. This musical performance will mark the launch of Athanasios' new recording. £6

19 Jan - 5 Apr. Family Artist-in-Residence: Emily Stapleton-Jefferis is a London based artist (b. 1992) with a particular focus on clay. Free.

Burgh House, New End Square, NW3

Thursday, 20 February, 7.30pm. Camden's parish maps 1720-1900. Simon Morris talks to the Camden History Society. Free to members, £2 on the door for non-members.

Wednesday 26 February, 7.30pm. Isokon and the Bauhaus in Britain. Layla Daybelge and Magnus England give a talk about the Isokon and the legacy of Bauhaus artists. £10.

Belsize Community Library, Antrim Road, NW3 8XN

Friday, 14 Feb, 6.30pm. Belsize Community Library Open Mic Night. Every second and fourth Friday of the month, the popular Belsize open mic has performers sign up at 6.30 pm. Each act gets two songs or a maximum of ten minutes. House piano and guitar available; poetry and spoken word welcome. £3 suggested donation

Wednesday 19 Feb, 7pm. Banned Book Club + History Month Special. Book club looks at literature through the lens of censorship, this time looking at LGBT issues in children's books in the late 80s debates on clause 28. Email: belsizelibrary@thewinch.org

Thursday 20 February, 7.30pm. Talk by Frederick Mulder on Picasso and Printmaking. Donation £5 including refreshments.

Keats Community Library, 10 Keats Grove, NW3

Thursday 2 April, 7.30pm. Royal Opera House's Young Singers including Blaise Malaba on bass and Stephanie Edwards mezzo-soprano, Event at Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel. Tickets £12 from the Library or on-line at www.wegottickets.com - event 463201.

Contact Us

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For Newsletter submissions and letters:

info@belsize.org.uk. Deadline for next issue is: **12 April 2020**

To send posters for noticeboards:

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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 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.

To find out the latest about Camden Planning: <https://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment/planning-and-built-environment/>

www.belsize.org.uk