

*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 November BelSoc Newsletter.

It has been a pleasure to welcome you to some events over the last months. We have had almost a year and half without this being possible but this Newsletter reports on two lively and successful events.

Averil Nottage provided an excellent tour of both Belsize and local history, with a walk that gathered 50 of us despite the threat of rain. The library also hosted a screening of David Percy's "The Story of Moll King's Belsize Houses", an illustrated presentation of his recent book. The event also gave us an opportunity to celebrate 50 years and we reproduce in the Newsletter Averil's talk about our first half-century.

The Newsletter also draws from our archives, looking at the community events that have been a feature of the past half century of our work and TYCT. The Newsletter also covers the Belsize Community Choir and notes some of the planning matters that are live in the Belsize area (100 Avenue Road, HS2).

We look forward to seeing many of you at the Society's carol singing this year.

Hope you enjoy this Newsletter.

### CONTENTS

Celebrating 50 years - 2
Belsize Community Choir in 2021 - 3
From the Archives: Celebrating 50 yrs - 4
100 Avenue Road Planning Inquiry - 5
Society's Historical Walk in Belsize - 5
Event: The Story of Moll King... - 6
Streaming Moll King's Belsize Houses - 6
HS2, BelSoc subs, Are you a baker? - 7
Camden consults, Belsize/Argentina - 7
Dates for Your Diary - 8



## **BELSOC CAROL SINGING 2021**

*Belsize Terrace,  
Saturday, 18 December  
from 4.30pm  
Mince pies, singing and great  
company!*

*Donations to Marie Curie Hospice*



# CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF THE BELSIZE SOCIETY AND ITS PREDECESSORS

*We asked Averil Nottage, former Chairwoman of the Belsize Residents Association, to address our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary event. Here is what she said.*

As we celebrate 50 years of the Belsize Society and its predecessors, it seems appropriate to remind ourselves of our key achievements. So here is a whistle stop tour of 50 years in five minutes.

Our greatest achievements were usually secured through campaigns. Our first campaign, in 1971, was probably the most significant. There was a plan to build a London Motorway Box that would cut through Belsize, destroy swathes of Victorian houses and St Peter's Church, and split the community in two. Fortunately, faced by widespread opposition, the plan was dropped.

Amongst other successful planning campaigns, we helped to:

- conserve six significant houses in Haverstock Hill as co-operatives to house local homeless single people
- preserve Hampstead Town Hall, St Stephen's Church and the Spence-Webster houses in Belsize Park Gardens
- save public spaces in Belsize Wood and Swiss Cottage
- persuade Camden to ban estate agents' boards in the Belsize Conservation Area.

Despite our best efforts, we couldn't stop planning permission being granted for the 24-storey tower block in 100 Avenue Road.

Our campaigns have also had a significant impact on traffic and parking in Belsize. We argued forcibly, and successfully:

- to stop a complicated one-way system being introduced
- for parking controls to stop people from outside the area parking near the local underground stations
- to pedestrianise Belsize Terrace and so block a busy rat run and create a peaceful oasis in Belsize Village
- to support the introduction of green travel plans for local schools
- to improve pedestrian crossings
- to reduce the planned impact of HS2 traffic in the area.

We hope that the results of our recent survey of air pollution will help to inform future traffic policy.

Taking part in campaigns about public services has had mixed success.

- The first four campaigns to save Belsize Library as part of Camden's Library service were successful although the opening hours were reduced.
- The fifth campaign in 2012 failed, but we are fortunate that the Winch stepped in to run the library as a community resources.
- Sadly, we were unable to save the sub post offices in Belsize Village and England's Lane. We were very pleased to regain a sub post office in Budgens on Haverstock Hill.
- Campaigns to save local police and fire stations unfortunately failed.
- Wheelie bins were introduced despite our protestations.

## *50 years of Belsize Society and its predecessors continued...*

When the Society was formed 50 years ago, it was called the Three Roads Association. Shortly afterwards, it became the Belsize Residents Association. In 2019 the Belsize Society took over its role, structured in a way that is better suited to the contemporary world. It is impossible to count the tens or hundreds of thousands of hours that committee members and other volunteers have devoted to conserving and improving Belsize over this time.

Alongside conservation we have always seen it as important to organise social activities to bring people together. Some key events were:

- the Belsize Festivals that were held annually from 1973 to 1989 until a series of washed-out events dampened the organisers' enthusiasm
- annual garden parties and carol singing
- historic, architectural and tree walks
- new members' lunches and local neighbourhood get-togethers.

Apart from the Belsize Festivals, the most popular event was the jointly sponsored premier of David Percy's first Belsize Story film at St Stephens. Although nearly 300 seats were available, we still had to turn more than a hundred people away!

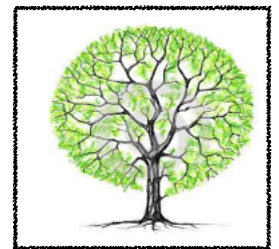
But that is probably enough history for now. I hope you'll agree that after fifty years we have plenty of achievements to celebrate.

**For our account of "Shaping Belsize and the BRA campaigns"** see our website at [www.belsize.org.uk/features/2021/shaping-belsize-and-the-bra-campaigns](http://www.belsize.org.uk/features/2021/shaping-belsize-and-the-bra-campaigns)



## *Belsize Community Choir in 2021*

Belsize Community Choir was founded in 2010, and embraces a blend of eclectic music from secular and sacred traditions worldwide. The Choir has 30-40 members and is a non-auditioned choir so that anyone can join it. It is an inclusive, fun and engaging community that values the playful and relaxed pursuit of choral excellence.



The Choir rehearses at St Peter's Church on Thursday evenings from 7 pm - 9 pm. There is a break during rehearsal for a drink (or two), some nibbles and some socialising. Concessions to the subscription available. See [belsizecommunitychoir.wordpress.com](http://belsizecommunitychoir.wordpress.com) for further details.

Here is a taster of future events:

- Wednesday, December 8 at 7:00 pm. Concert raising money for Maggie's Cancerkin. Featuring Belsize Community Choir, a gospel group, and other local singers.
- Sunday, December 19 at 6:30 pm. Annual carol service at St Peter's, led by Father Paul Nicholson, with music by Belsize Community Choir.

## BELSIZE COMMUNITY EVENTS OVER THE YEARS

Over the last 50 years, we have aimed not only to contribute to the amenity of Belsize Park but to bring residents and supporters of the area together. The summer garden parties - hosted in the gardens of our members - have proved enduringly popular with legendary cakes baked by members and enjoyed by everyone. There was a Jubilee Garden Party in Mary Shenai's garden at 1 Belsize Park in May 2002 which featured a brass band. We are hugely grateful to all our hosts over the years and to our loyal bakers and servers without whom we simply could not hold this event.

A highlight of the calendar has been community carol singing in Belsize Village. This started as a last minute idea in December 2003 under the talented leadership of Handley Stevens, BRA Chairman. Over 100 people attended, joining in the singing, eating mince pies and giving money to the local Marie Curie hospice. This set the pattern and tone from then until now. The weather has not led to any dampening of spirits! In December 2012, it rained non-stop but Belsizers simply raised their umbrellas and carried on.

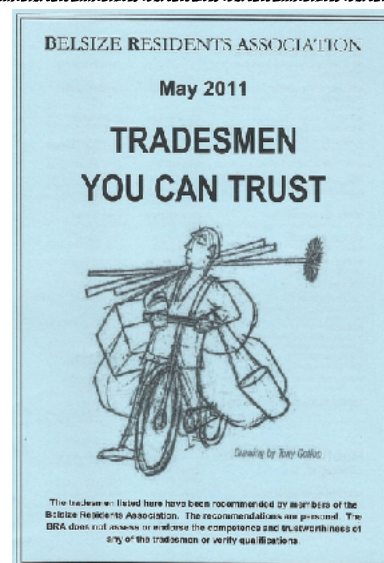
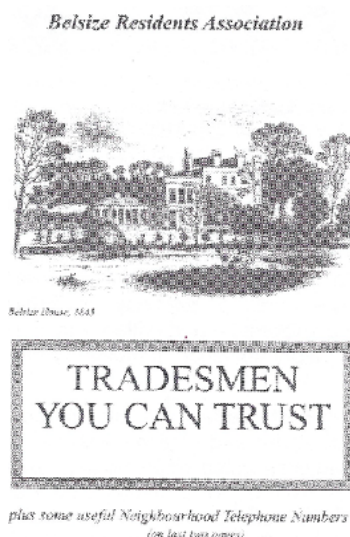
Handley and his family continued to lead the carols until 2017. Choir leader Matthew Watts led the carols in 2018 and 2019 in great style before the pandemic led to the cancellation of this event in 2020. We will be celebrating Christmas again this year with carols in Belsize Village on Saturday 18 December. The generosity of everyone in giving donations to Marie Curie has been consistent. For instance, over £300 was raised in 45 minutes of singing in 2019.

Although the annual meetings with Belsize Councillors are open only to Committee members, we have for many years held successful hustings in advance of local elections. Candidates in the Belsize area from across political parties have spoken and been questioned by the audience on local issues. Venues for our hustings have included Hampstead Town Hall on Haverstock Hill, Sarum Hall School in Eton Avenue and latterly Belsize Square Synagogue.

The archives cover hustings in location elections in the 2000s. In 2002, the hottest issue was the proposed market at the end of Eton Avenue, which the meeting overwhelmingly supported. Other issues included the Belsize Library's future and the proposal for a 20mph speed limit which was substantially supported by the audience. In 2014, questions from BRA members concerned 100 Avenue Road, HS2, local amenities and social housing.

### TYCT over the years

The archives record how, in December 1993, a committee member "will really get it done soon", with the "it" being a Tradesmen's List. Updated regularly, TYCT has been very useful and always popular. During much of its history, it boasted illustrations by Tony Gollop (who also provided material for the newsletter), with earlier issues having images of Belsize House, in 1845.





## 100 Avenue Road Planning Inquiry

A second 100 Avenue Road Public Inquiry is taking place about this development this month. The focus is Essential Living's appeal of Camden Council's refusal of application to amend/reduce the amount of affordable housing. Camden Council will be defending their decision and the Belsize Society is supporting this, with our planning committee member, Tom Symes, presenting his submission to the Inquiry.

Many will remember the application made by the developers over five years ago to build a 26-storey residential block for rental. While many objections were made to the scale and nature of the original application, the first planning inquiry's recommendations to approve did expect considerable social contribution by the developer. In a recent application, Essential Living had asked to significantly reduce these. There were also some amendments proposed to materials used in the building.

Both aspects the Council refused. The Society are making a strong case supporting Camden's refusal. The Public Inquiry will take place on 9th, 10th, 11th & 12th November, at Committee Chambers, Crowndale Centre.

---

## Society's Historical Walk around Belsize

We were delighted to be able to resume our hitherto regular historical walks in September, having been prevented for so long by events from organising these. On the day the weather seemed distinctly unpromising, but the rain happily relented in the afternoon. We were rewarded with a large attendance.

On this occasion, our former Chair Averil Nottage conducted a stroll through parts of Belsize that gave an insight into some representative aspects of our locality's rich social and architectural history, dating back 1,000 years. Starting in Belsize Terrace and taking in Belsize Square, Lambolle Road, Eton Stables, Eton Avenue and finally Chalcot Gardens, we learned how the name "Belsize" came about, how what was originally forest became farmland and then, with London's expansion over the centuries, its transformation into a middle-class suburb, with reference in particular to the changing fashions in housing that we still see.



It was very apparent afterwards (over tea and cakes!) how pleased everyone was to be able to participate after so long in a collective event of this kind, and one which was so informative and instructive. We owe our sincere thanks to Averil and to those of our members who made and served the tea and cakes. Some very good news is that Averil is planning a further walk for May next year, this time centred around the artists, refugees and spies (!) who lived in the Parkhill and Lawn Roads areas of Belsize (off Haverstock Hill, round the corner from the tube) in the 1930s.

## Fiftieth Anniversary Event: The Story of Moll King's Belsize Houses

On 4 November, we celebrated our 50th anniversary with a very special event, hosted at the Belsize Community Library. David Percy presented his illustrated production about Moll King's Belsize Houses. It was our first indoor event for many months: it was wonderful to see our members face-to-face again and within Belsize Library.

Projected onto a big screen, David's production is a mix of historical analysis and images with a series of readings from David's book "The Harlots of Haversack Hill". It starts with the early origins of Moll King as she begins to develop her businesses including running houses of disrepute. The story of Moll is brought to life, most vividly by a series of readings by Dame Janet Suzman from the text of David's book.

The presentation charts decades and centuries of a part of Belsize, the stretch of Haversack Hill as it climbs towards Hampstead, particularly between Chalk Farm and Belsize Avenue. The film's careful consideration of the history of the area, drawing in the evidence from maps, paintings and photographs, is as strong as David's past studies of Belsize history. By focusing in on the changes in Haverstock Hill, the production has a different richness, introducing us to the cluster of buildings (Dawsons Villa, Field Cottage), and to a history of the people (Tom King, Moll's son, through to the modern owners).

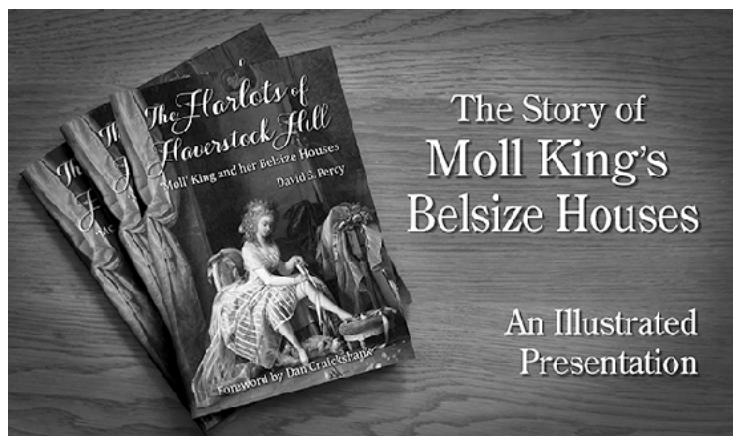
In questions after the screening, David explained how the production was a development of his book, and his own pleasure at seeing the character of Moll King voiced so perfectly by Dame Janet Suzman.

After the event, wine and nibbles were served. We were treated to a speech by our former chairwoman Averil Nottage who gave us a poignant history of BelSoc and its predecessors over the years.



---

*Streaming "The Story of Moll King's Belsize Houses", 20 Dec-6 Jan*



### The Story of Moll King's Belsize Houses

An Illustrated  
Presentation

David Percy's presentation will be available to stream online over the seasonal period, in case you would like to see this excellent presentation again or were unable to go to the recent screening. David has kindly allowed his illustrated production to be available for a limited period, streaming from 20 December to 6 January. We'll email the details and provide links online nearer the time.

### **Are you a keen baker?**

We are looking to update our rota of people able and willing to make a cake or savoury snack for our events. If you want to contribute to this much-appreciated aspect of BelSoc, please contact [info@belsize.org.uk](mailto:info@belsize.org.uk).



### **BelSoc subscription reminder**

Your £10 annual subscription to the Belsize Society is due on 1 January. We do not send out a separate invoice, but in the envelope with this newsletter you will find an individual letter about your payment method. Please ensure your subscription is paid on or before 1 January 2022.

Remember all the benefits of the membership, such as the “Tradesmen You Can Trust” booklet and the chance to be involved with local issues. Also, if you are able, please use gift aid when making membership payments.

---

### **HS2 Update**

Works are continuing to set up the Adelaide Road site for HS2. From mid-November for up to six weeks, HS2 will start to remove further vegetation and trees within the site boundary. The works do not include removal of vegetation or trees within the Adelaide Nature Reserve. Please visit [HS2inCamden.co.uk](http://HS2inCamden.co.uk) for more information. If you have a question about HS2 or the works in Camden, please contact the helpdesk on 08081 434 434 or email [HS2enquiries@hs2.org.uk](mailto:HS2enquiries@hs2.org.uk)

---

### **Belsize and Argentina**

We have had a request for information about the family of General Juan Manuel de Rosas, President of the Confederation of the United Provinces of Rio de la Plata, the precursor of Argentina, who was a dictator and exiled to Britain in 1852. His descendants had connections with Belsize Park. Any information about where they lived would be welcome and, in particular, we have been asked about whether No 88 Belsize Park Gardens ever existed as an address. If you have any clues about this, please contact us at [info@belsize.org.uk](mailto:info@belsize.org.uk).

---

### **Have your say on the Community Vision for Gospel Oak and Haverstock**

Camden Council is consulting until 17 December about a draft planning guidance document, setting out the key issues and opportunities seen in the Gospel Oak and Haversack area. The context is an anticipated large amount of changes happening in the coming years, highlighting the development proposals that are to be built or likely to come forward. This includes sites for new homes or modern replacements for existing homes. There are also plans for community and health facilities. Further details: [bit.ly/gohvision](http://bit.ly/gohvision)



# Dates for your diary

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

10 September - 23 December. One in the Other takes over the Centre's three spaces using work of exhibiting artists, Phoebe Collings-James, Adam Farah and Zeinab SalehFestive, as a starting point.

11 December, 6-9pm. Producer, DJ and songwriter Ms Carrie Stacks who will close out the programme with a stripped back piano performance.

12 December, 3-6pm. Afternoon of live music from Petit Oiseau and POOL. Free

Burgh House, New End Square, NW3

Wednesday 24 November 6.30pm. Simply Bowie. Vocalist Oliver Darley and pianist Chad Le Long play classics. £15 on the door and Eventbrite.

Sunday 28 November, 6pm. A Celebration of Music by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. Tanja Goldberg on violin; Shiry Rashkovsky viola; Caroline Palmer piano. £15 on the door.

Wednesday 1 December, 6.30pm. Jon Allen's Christmas Acoustic Session. On tour after new album '...Meanwhile' released in summer 2021. £15 at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/jon-allen-christmas-acoustic-session-tickets-182726388547>

St Peter's Church, Belsize Square, NW3

Sunday 28 November, 6.30pm: Belsize Baroque directed by Simon Standee perform works by Vivaldi and Bonporti. Tickets on the door £15 at [www.wegottickets.com/events/524213](http://www.wegottickets.com/events/524213).

Sunday 23 January: Belsize Baroque plays Handel directed by Catherine Marine. Details TBC at [www.belsizebaroque.org.uk](http://www.belsizebaroque.org.uk).

Belsize Community Library, Antrim Road, NW3

All Zoom meeting ID 889 6466 1765, no password  
7:30pm, Thurs, 18 Nov. Writing the World: Former ambassador Leigh Turner discusses how diplomacy inspires writing and vice versa.

7:30pm, Thurs, 15 Dec. Pat Saiman (local author) The Missing Baluster.

7:30pm, Thurs, 20 Jan Colin Pinney. Alice Newly Illustrated.

7:30pm, Thurs, 17 Feb. Tudor Allen. Elizabethan Camden.

## Contact Us

For membership and general enquiries:

Anne Stevens

020 7794 0874

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

Prabhat Vaze (Chair)

07930 406230

[chair@belsize.org.uk](mailto:chair@belsize.org.uk)

Sarah Courtin (Secretary)

[secretary@belsize.org.uk](mailto:secretary@belsize.org.uk)

For Newsletter submissions and letters:

[info@belsize.org.uk](mailto:info@belsize.org.uk). Deadline for next issue is: **24 January 2022**

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 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](mailto:info@belsize.org.uk)

To find out the latest about Camden Planning:

<https://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigationenvironment/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](mailto:info@belsize.org.uk)

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