

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 November BelSoc Newsletter.

It was a sunny day when Averil Nottage led an historic walk, talking about the artists, refugees and spies that lived in the Parkhill area of Belsize. We had so much interest that the walk was run twice in the course of the day, with the walkers then gathering at the Belsize Community Library for tea and cakes. Thanks are due to Averil for the stimulating event.

An artist linked to the other side of the Belsize area is featured in an exhibition currently on at the Freud Museum. The Newsletter looks at the links between the paintings Lucian Freud produced about his family.

On planning matters, the Newsletter includes an update on Howitt Close where we are objecting to a proposed development. There is also a report on the Society's joining with other residents' bodies in an appeal of a recent planning application decision.

It is good news that events organised by local groups are returning to being face-to-face, with the Friends of Belsize Community Library writing about their upcoming events. We were also able to attend the University of Third Age Open Day, and the Newsletter include a piece about what is being offered at Hampstead Town Hall, and online, to those enrolling. The Belsize Community Choir has let us know about their upcoming events. There is also a report about a workshop on energy efficiency organised by Primrose Hill CAAC, and the Royal Free Hospital tell us about their winter appeal.

We look forward to seeing many of you at the Society's carol singing this year. Please note we're starting at 3:30pm, which is a little earlier than in past years.

Hope you enjoy this Newsletter.

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BELSOC CAROL SINGING 2022

*Belsize Terrace,
Saturday, 17 December
from 3:30pm
Mince pies, singing and great
company!*

Donations to Marie Curie Hospice



LUCIAN FREUD: THE PAINTER AND HIS FAMILY

Freud Museum London until 29 January 2023; curated by Martin Gayford

A small but well-curated exhibition at the Freud Museum in Maresfield Gardens looks at the relationships between artist Lucian Freud and his family - up and down the generations. Given that the Museum is dedicated to the life and work of Sigmund Freud who lived there, it is not surprising that there are some photographs and film footage of the young Lucian with other family members in his grandfather's back garden. Less expected in a museum not dedicated to art exhibitions is the collection of portraits of other family members. The individual personalities of his children in particular are reflected in Lucian's striking compositions.

Lucian was born in Berlin on 8 December 1922 to Ernst and Lucie Freud. Ernst (1892-1970) was an architect. He was already living in St John's Wood with Lucie and their three sons when Sigmund fled to London in 1938. Ernst had arranged the purchase of the Maresfield Gardens house where Sigmund lived with his wife and daughter Anna (who was herself a founder of child psychoanalysis) until his death in 1939.

The exhibition describes the friction between Lucian and his father. But a sketch (ink on paper, 1965-66) shows Ernst in older age in a sympathetic light: his worn face and patient smile suggest a caring nature.

Lucian was his mother's favourite child, a status which he disliked. Lucie Freud (1896 -1989) was university-educated, studying classical philology and art history. Her desire for her son to be an artist was so strong that Lucian said it made him "feel sick." She is best represented in the exhibition through family photos. Sitting on grass in the sunshine with Lucian and his brothers Clement and Stephen Gabriel Freud, she looks the devoted mother (photograph, c.1930).

It is however the paintings of Lucian's children that are perhaps the most evocative. *Head of Ali* (etching, 1999) captures the worldly experiences of his son Alexander Boyt. The exhibition quotes Boyt (born 1957) as saying that he battled with a drug problem for a lot of his life. At the time of the etching he was "pretty wild" after the death of his girlfriend and a stint in prison over Christmas of 1997. The etching shows a half-closed left eye which is a visible sign of drug-taking. Much of the exhibition emphasises Lucian's own wildness. He was expelled from school, gambled for much of his life and rode horses without a helmet even in his 80s. At around the time of the etching, he had made a concerted effort to spend time with his son, painting a portrait of him and making the etching immediately afterwards. The wildness of the father shows in the sympathetic treatment of the son.

By contrast, the group portrait of Lucian's daughter Rose Pearce with her husband Mark, baby Stella and stepson Alex is almost kitsch (oil on canvas, 1999). Rose Pearce has described how she did not like sitting for the portrait as she wanted to focus on her new marriage. She is quoted as saying that the portrait liberated her as it showed her as part of the Pearce family and not just as Freud's daughter. The painting seems to echo her thoughts, emphasising the division between its subjects and the artist. It shows the family as entirely ordinary except the oversized baby with enormous feet being held close to her father by his oversized hand. The family have unremarkable clothes and sit in a featureless corner of a bland room. They look bored and only the baby's eyes meet the viewer. The subjects each look in different directions as if disdainful of the task of sitting for the painter.

Not all the works in the exhibition depict family members. Other works show Freud's art as a child and young man, such as a wood box painted in c.1935 for his maternal aunt Gerda. The cover of the box depicts brightly coloured fish swimming among leafy sea plants. There are leafy trees such as the vibrant and expressive *Palm Tree* (pastel, chalk and ink on paper) from 1944. There are pictures of horses (painted and drawn) as well as a photograph by David Dawson showing Freud in 2003 holding the bridle of a grey gelding. Dawson captures Freud's own painting

of the gelding mounted on an easel nearby. The head of the painted horse faces the viewer with its lightly outlined body merging into an abstract background. Dawson (born 1960) was Lucian Freud's assistant and remains an artist and photographer of standing.

The exhibition is accompanied by an intelligent catalogue written by its curator Martin Gayford (the art critic) and Bryony Davies of the Freud Museum.

It was the artist R.B. Kitaj who first used the phrase "School of London" to describe "strange and fascinating" artists who worked in the capital in the post-war years. They included Freud, Frank Auerbach, Francis Bacon, David Hockney and Howard Hodgkin. Although Kitaj did not seek to draw strong parallels between members of the School, there are similarities between Freud's work and (say) Francis Bacon. The exhibition catalogue quotes Dawson as saying that Lucian Freud "believed in the individuality of absolutely everything." Whether people, animals or plants, the Freud Museum has gathered a diverse collection of his work helping us - the viewers - to see the individuality of his subjects.

Lucian Freud died in London in 2011. This thoughtful exhibition, marking the centenary of his birth, is well worth a visit by Belsize Parkers interested in art, even those who have visited the Museum on other occasions.

The Freud Museum is at 20 Maresfield Gardens NW3 5SX. For further information and booking, visit www.freud.org.uk

If you are interested in Lucian Freud's work, you may also want to know about:

Lucian Lates: Playing Up - artist interventions, performances and films:

A night of artist interventions, performances and films that explore the relationships between play and family dynamics. Journey around the Freud Museum to experience poetry, creative activities and evocative films. Freud Museum, 24 November, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Lucian Freud: New Perspectives: This first major exhibition of Lucian Freud's work in 10 years brings together paintings from more than seven decades. National Gallery, Trafalgar Square until 22 January 2023

Lucian Freud: Plant Portraits: The first exhibition to delve into Lucian Freud's paintings of plants and gardens. Garden Museum, 5 Lambeth Palace Road, SE1 7LB until 5 March 2023

Modernists & Mavericks Bacon, Freud, Hockney & the London Painters by Martin Gayford. Published by Thames & Hudson and available in the Freud Museum shop at £12.99 (some of the information in our article is from it).

Belsize Community Choir in 2022



Belsize Community Choir was founded in 2010, and we embrace a blend of eclectic music from secular and sacred traditions worldwide that captures a broad spectrum, with around 30+ members, and is a non-auditioned choir so anyone can join us. We are 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) for nibbles and socialising. Concessions to the subscription are available. See belsizecommunitychoir.wordpress.com for further details.

Here are our Christmas events:

- Sunday, December 11 at 5 pm (tbc). Christ Church, Hampstead.
- Sunday, 18th December: St Saviours Chalk Farm at 4.30pm (tbc) and onto St Peter's Belsize Square at 6.30pm for our annual carol service led by Father Paul Nicholson.



**BELSIZE
COMMUNITY
CHOIR**

Planning matters

Howitt Close Update

BelSoc Committee member Barbara Abraham writes:

Following up on the article on Howitt Close in the May Newsletter, readers may be interested to hear that on 3 August Camden Council firmly rejected the 2021 planning application to add an additional floor to the building. But unfortunately the relief of residents and neighbours was short-lived because, by the end of August, the freeholder/developer had submitted a new planning application to add a fourth storey of seven flats, this time in a slightly different design.



Howitt Close residents and neighbours have redoubled their efforts in opposing the new application, with full support again from the Belsize Society, Belsize Conservation Area Advisory Committee and the Twentieth Century Society.

If you wish to object or otherwise comment on the new planning application (ref: 2022/3635/P) please email planning@camden.gov.uk as soon as possible. All comments received before a decision is reached must be considered by the Council.

In 2015, Camden Council established a "Local List" of historic buildings, spaces and features that are valued by the local community. The list identifies parts of the historic environment that are not already designated in another way, for example, an unlisted building which still adds to a sense of place, local character and civic pride.

The Belsize Society was heavily involved in suggesting buildings and spaces within the Belsize Conservation Area for the local list established in 2015, but gave priority to those places that were not already mentioned in the Conservation Area Plan. Howitt Close was mentioned in the Plan as a "a building making a positive contribution to the special character and appearance of the conservation area" so was not included in the original list.

However, Howitt Close fully satisfies the criteria for local listing and therefore, in view of the current threat to the architectural integrity of the building, the Belsize Society has written to Camden Council to request that it be added to the Local List.

Resident bodies support Camden as Deliveroo appeal

Earlier in the year, a planning application from Deliveroo to put kitchens and a delivery unit in premises in Finchley Road was refused by Camden Council. There is to be an appeal and the Society has joined other resident bodies, including Save Swiss Cottage and the Combined Residents' Associations of South Hampstead, in opposing Deliveroo.

The application was refused because of traffic effects, the paucity of the proposals for the community to have input after operations begin, and concerns about the odours affecting nearby properties.

We will keep you updated as the appeal progresses.

Energy Saving in Primrose Hill: One-day Workshop

The Primrose Hill Conservation Area Advisory Committee (PHCAAC) marked its 50th anniversary this year by holding an open day at the Primrose Hill Community Centre about making our homes more energy efficient, reducing carbon emissions, and lowering our energy bills while preserving our heritage. The day covered what we can do and what really works, drawing on retrofitting experience in London.

The PHCAAC welcomed the participants from neighbouring areas, including Belsize, recognising how the challenges of making homes more energy efficient are similar across Camden as so many residences are in conservations areas, or are listed, or are properties with special heritage characteristics. This was reinforced by a presentation from Camden's head of conservation, Jane Wylie, who talked about the planning requirements for insulation, changing windows, installing solar or heat pumps, measures usually requiring planning permission so that heritage impacts are minimised.

The day's focus however was on practical examples, with one presentation drawing from the portfolio of a leading architect, another looking at the first steps of a home owner as retrofit options were scoped (through an Energy Plan by a retrofit co-ordinator, who also gave a presentation). There was a case study of an architect's personal refurbishment of a Kentish Town home. This presentation brought the scale of savings in energy use to life by using an easy to understand metric: energy saved by switching off an electric oven.

What was striking was the potential to reduce considerably energy use for heating, primarily by combining insulation, improved windows, air source heat pumps and solar panels. Apparently a home can use around 24 electric ovens of energy to keep warm if it's freezing outdoors, but measures taken reduce this to around half a dozen. However, it was also apparent that the upfront retrofit costs are high. Buildings from the 18th and 19th centuries are built from materials that need to breathe; also, energy reducing measures can remove or hide features that are special. Retrofits are therefore complex.

It was really welcomed that the PHCAAC (supported by the Community Association and Community Library) brought the architectural, engineering and planning/heritage experts together specifically to interact with residents. There was certainly a lot to learn and share. And the rather warm early autumn minimised the electric oven count.

If you're interested in energy efficiency...

We would be keen to hear from you, especially if you are either considering options, or have implemented some energy savings measures, or you're an expert in this area. Over the next several months, we would like to consider whether and how the Society can share information about this. More details to follow, but do get in touch if interested in helping (info@belsize.org.uk).

A first step is that, in 2023, we will have the opportunity to visit a local Pioneer SuperHome. BelSoc member and long-standing expert in these matters, John Daggart will host us, showing the measures he has taken in his home, part of the SuperHomes Network (<https://superhomes.org.uk/>). The Pioneers were home owners who retrofitted their homes to achieve at least a 60% carbon saving and opened their homes to the public once a year, with the original project running since 2007. The network was relaunched recently, adding an array of organisations and a new set of those starting on a retrofit.

University of the Third Age (U3A)

Neil Harris, BelSoc Treasurer, writes:

In October I looked in on a well-attended University of the Third Age (U3A) London Open Day, which took place at their base in the handsome Grade II - listed old Town Hall on Haverstock Hill, where it occupies rooms over two floors. Over 20 classes took place over the day, showing a typical variety of classes on offer, including Computer, I-pad and I-phone Tips, The Elderly and the Law, Politics and Current Affairs, Medicine Today, Films, Theatre History, Voice Matters and Beautiful Belly Dancing (I was sorry to have missed that one). These only scratch the surface of what is available.

U3A, which has charitable status, consists of groups of men and women, no longer in full-time employment, who enjoy meeting together to study a wide range of subjects, such as those listed above - there are currently over 150 study groups which are run by members. All are volunteers: no-one in the U3A is paid in any capacity. U3A in London is one of over 1,000 U3As throughout Britain and all are autonomous. U3A in London is the largest of these.

U3A is not a university in the modern sense of a body that awards degrees, but in the original sense of a community of people engaged in learning - and learning from each other. It offers no examinations, certificates or degrees: study is for the pleasure of learning. The leaders of its groups are called co-ordinators rather than teachers or lecturers, since learning is seen as a co-operative process.

Once you have paid the annual fee (reduced to £40 this year to mark U3A London's 40th anniversary) there are no other charges (except for some optional special events). You can attend any group you wish without further payment. U3A does not enrol people specially for classes and suggests that once you have joined you come along on the day the class you have chosen takes place. The only limitation is that groups may become full, in which case you may put your name on a waiting list.

For a full range of classes available and dates please ring 020 7692 5540, email office@u3alondon.org.uk or consult the website www.u3alondon.org.uk.

Society's Historical Walk

We were delighted that our former Chair Averil Nottage could conduct a stroll through parts of Belsize centred around the artists, refugees and spies who lived in the Parkhill and Lawn Roads area of Belsize in the 1930s.

It was a sunny day and 40 individuals in each of the two sessions were guided to around 10 buildings, with Averil connecting together a fascinating collection of biographies and insights into architecture, art and politics. Highlights included the Mall Studios, Tasker Road.

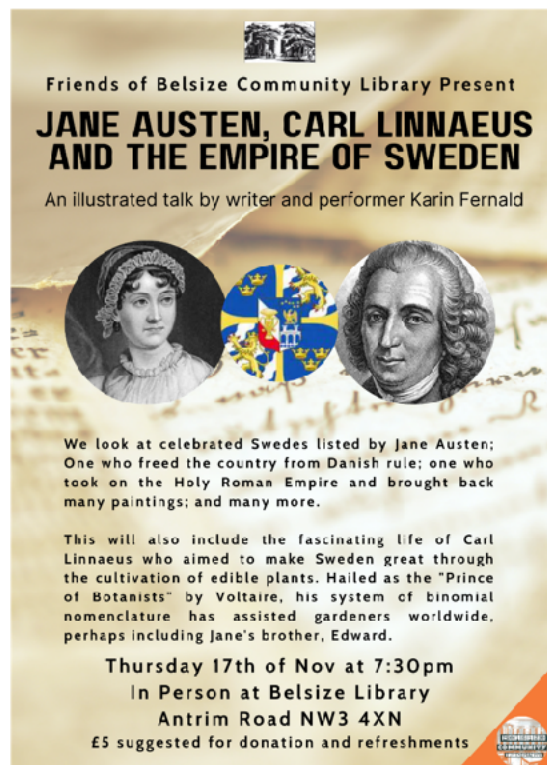
You can download Averil's handout from our website.



Back In Person In The Library

You may have enjoyed the online events organised by the Friends of Belsize Community Library during the lockdowns. The Friends are now planning an exciting programme, but returning to the in-person format at the Library. The first event is on Thursday 17 November at the Belsize Community Library, Antrim Grove NW3 4XN, at 7.30pm.

Writer and performer Karin Fernald will give an illustrated talk on JANE AUSTEN, CARL LINNAEUS AND THE EMPIRE OF SWEDEN. The talk looks at celebrated Swedes listed by Jane Austen; one who freed the country from Danish rule; one who took on the Holy Roman Empire and brought back many paintings. Please come along and meet your neighbours. Suggested donation £5 to include refreshments.



Royal Free Hospital: Winter appeal

Belsize Park residents are being urged to support a fundraising appeal that could see the introduction of London's first one-stop NHS lung cancer diagnostic service at the Royal Free Hospital.

The introduction of a medical thoracoscopy service at the Royal Free Hospital would mean patients with a fluid-filled lung cavity could have a biopsy taken and receive treatment during the same procedure.

At the moment, patients are referred for surgery to have their biopsy. A thoracoscopy service could shave up to four weeks off the time it takes to receive a diagnosis.

It is one of three cancer improvement projects the Royal Free Charity is raising money for this winter on behalf of the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust. With funding, the other two areas that could see changes are:

- Expanding a digital mammography service to Barnet Hospital so that people with suspected breast cancer can have a quicker and more accurate diagnosis followed by faster access to treatment.
- Using virtual reality to improve the experience of patients with cancer receiving chemotherapy at Chase Farm and Finchley Memorial hospitals.

Jon Spiers, Royal Free Charity chief executive, said: "We're extremely grateful that the support of our local community in recent years ensured we could address some of the most pressing needs of the Royal Free London's staff and patients in the immediate aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Now, we're turning our attention to cancer. We want to fund projects that will speed up diagnoses for lung and breast cancer - getting patients onto their treatment pathways sooner than would otherwise happen - and introducing virtual reality therapy to give patients receiving chemotherapy a better experience during their treatment."

Scan the QR code to find out how you could make a life-changing difference for patients with cancer or visit www.royalfreecharity.org/future



Dates for your diary

Belsize Society Carol Singing

Saturday, 17 December, 3:30pm, Carol Singing, Belsize Terrace. Donations to Marie Curie Hospice

The Freud Museum, 20 Maresfield Gardens NW3 5SX

24 November, 6:30pm, Lucian Lates: Playing Up – artist interventions, performances and films: A night of artist interventions, performances and films. £12-15. www.freud.org.uk.

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

3 December, 1pm. A day of academic, artistic and curatorial reflections on the life and work of Forrest Bess, concluding with a screening of Chuck Smith's celebrated film, Key to the Riddle. £10/£8.

10 December, 4pm. Chiron Choir with Hannah Catherine Jones. Performance by this vocal ensemble of all vocal abilities. Free

Burgh House, New End Square, NW3

Burgh House bookings on eventbrite.co.uk.

Thursday, 24 Nov, 6.30pm. Rebecca Wait - I'm Sorry You Feel That Way. Join author Rebecca Wait for an evening discussing her latest book. £6.

Thursday, 26 Jan, 6.30pm. As Happy as God in France. A reading written and directed by Julia Pascal reveals a little-known incident in the life of Hannah Arendt. £12.

Wednesday 1 February, 6.30pm. George Blake: The KGB spy who hid 100 yards from Burgh House. Join Stewart Purvis to hear the extraordinary true story of George Blake, the KGB spy. £10.

St Peter's Church, Belsize Square, NW3

Sunday 22 January, 6.30pm: Belsize Baroque plays Fiddler Tam in Edinburgh. Music performed in 18th century Edinburgh and London that showcase Scottish cultural heritage. Tickets at www.belsizebaroque.org.uk.

Belsize Community Library, Antrim Road, NW3

Thursday 17 Nov, 7.30pm. Jane Austen, Carl Linnaeus and the Empire of Sweden. Karin Fernald provides and illustrated talk. Suggested donation £5.

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info@belsize.org.uk. Deadline for next issue is: **23 January 2023**

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: 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

To find out the latest about Camden Planning:

<https://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment/planning-and-built-environment/>

Would you like to join our committee and/or help with events, distribution and other tasks? If so, please email

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www.belsize.org.uk