

Belsize Residents Association

Newsletter

November 2017

Notes from your Chair

Welcome to the November BRA Newsletter.

It was great to attend the launch of Belsize Remembered in late October. We featured this important work in the last newsletter. This issue contains a short piece about its launch at St Stephen's church, a memorable evening.

We also update you on planning, crime and security and ask for your help if you're a local historian. We're hoping to increase the local history content on the website and so we are looking for volunteers.

We look forward to seeing many of you at the BRA carol singing this year. This newsletter features an interview with Handley Stevens. Having led the Association's carol singing for nearly two decades, Handley is taking a well-earned rest and in the interview he discusses some of the other things keeping him busy. The BRA is incredibly grateful for all his work for the BRA over many years.

Hope you enjoy the newsletter.

www.belsize.org.uk

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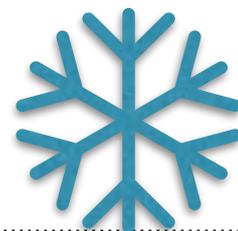


BRA CAROL SINGING 2017

**Belsize Terrace, Saturday,
16 December 2017
from 4.30pm**

**Mince pies, singing and great
company!**

Donations to Marie Curie Hospice



AN INTERVIEW WITH HANDLEY STEVENS

This year, Handley Stevens steps down from leading BRA Carol Singing after more than 15 years. On behalf of all BRA members, we extend our huge thanks to him and to his family who established this annual Belsize tradition. We thought that it marked a good opportunity to ask Handley about his life in Belsize Park.

He and Anne (who you will all know is our membership secretary) moved to Belsize in 1998. At the time, Anne was working in Birmingham and Handley was living in London. They canvassed their children's opinion and were told that London was the best place for visiting parents – and so the decision was made. They needed a location close to Euston Station so that Anne could get to Birmingham easily by train. Handley had been undertaking a recording with the Bach Choir at University College School. During an interval, he had wandered round the neighbouring streets and instantly thought that the area looked special. So that is where he and Anne decided to live.

Just as Belsize Park was in its early days a retreat from the noise and grime of London, so Handley likes the clean fresh air, the spacious pavements, wide roads and residential feel. While previously enjoying the central location of Pimlico, he wanted to live somewhere more relaxed and Belsize certainly fulfils that description.

Handley became BRA Chairman in about 2000. During his time as Chairman, the BRA's main focus was the school run. Handley negotiated a policy with Camden that survives until today. Children need to get to school on time and safely. But Camden needs also to encourage walking, cycling and traffic reduction. The current arrangements strike a balance between allowing car to drop children quickly and safely while not clogging streets with four wheelers.

It was in his first year as BRA Chairman that Handley started the community carol singing in Belsize Village. His aim was to use the Village as a fabulous space in the middle of Belsize, believing that it should be used by and for the community. Since then, the carols have taken place every year whatever the weather. Handley recalls pouring rain, gusts of wind, bright wintry days and the snowy blanket of 2010. Despite the varied weather conditions, the atmosphere is always warm and spirits always high. The event not only raises considerable money for Marie Curie but attracts lots of different people including lots of children. The shopkeepers too look forward to it as something that makes working in Belsize worthwhile. They often chat to Handley about when the carols will next be happening.

The carols reflect Handley's talents as a musician. Having sung since he was a child, he was a member of the Bach choir from about 1991 until about four years ago, taking part as a tenor in around twelve major concerts each year. He also has considerable experience singing Church choral music.



Handley enjoyed a distinguished career in the Civil Service. He originally joined the Foreign Office working with the European Economic Organisations Department. This was shortly after Charles de Gaulle had said 'non' to the British application to join the EEC. As a result, Handley was one of only two people put in charge of EEC relations. How times have changed! He and Anne married just before leaving for Malaysia, where he had been posted to the British Embassy. On his return Handley was appointed to the Private Office of the Lord Privy Seal in the Civil Service Department, but he remained keen to work in a role which had significant foreign content, so he moved to the Board of Trade where he rose to become Head of International Aviation. When aviation policy moved across to the Department of Transport, he moved too. He moved between several roles in that Department ending with responsibility in central government for dealing with London Transport. Handley says that his time in transport was a lot of fun and he has continued in retirement to write about transport issues.

Soon after his retirement in 1994, he and Anne decided to write a book about bureaucracy in Brussels. Anne was an expert on administrative structures and Handley an expert in European finance, which are the two staple ingredients of Brussels. Together they wrote "Brussels Bureaucrats? The Administration of the European Union" (Palgrave's European Union Series). Handley admits that Anne was the senior partner in the book. He recalls that some of those they interviewed for the book assumed that a woman could not be in charge and got a shock when they learned that Anne was in the driving seat!

Since then, he has contributed to a number of books on transport policy. Very excitingly, he has just finished a book called "The Life and Death of a Treaty" which will appear at the beginning of 2018. The book is about the Air Services Agreement between the UK and the USA. While it is aviation oriented, the purpose of the book is to remind people how much work is involved in making and maintaining bilateral treaties. This single treaty took a year to negotiate, spread over fifteen weeks of intensive negotiations, and in its thirty year life there were ten to twelve major rounds of negotiations to adjust it to continually changing circumstances. In the age of Brexit, and as the UK starts to contemplate bilateral agreements on so many fronts, it is not a bad time to remind people that 'taking back control' is not a cost-free option. Who better than Handley to do so.

*BRA Carol Singing -
Belsize Terrace, Saturday
16 December from 4.30pm*
Come and join us at the
annual BRA Carol singing.
We cannot promise a dry
time, but we certainly can
promise plenty of singing
and mince pies! We will
provide the song sheets, so
just wrap up well and bring
a brolly in case. Proceeds
go to the Marie Curie
Hospice.



PLANNING MATTERS

Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan

Our neighbours up the hill in Hampstead have submitted their proposed Neighbourhood Plan to Camden. The Council is now consulting residents and interested stakeholders. Readers will recall that a Neighbourhood Plan is a statutory planning document setting out planning policies for the development and use of land in the area. The Hampstead Plan sets out a range of policies on matters including design, the natural environment, basements, transport and housing. If approved, the Plan will be used to guide Camden's planning decisions. You will find the proposed Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documents (including a map showing the boundary for the Plan) on the Camden website. It can also be viewed at Keats Community Library, 10 Keats Grove, London, NW3 2RR and 5 Pancras Square Library, London, N1C 4AG. The consultation closes on Wednesday 13 December so there is still time to take part.

The Council will then forward the consultation responses to an independent examiner who will assess whether the Plan meets all the requirements. If so, a referendum will be organised to allow the community to decide whether the Plan should come into effect. We wish our colleagues in Hampstead every success in bringing the Plan to fruition.

BRA Policy on Business Premises in Belsize Park

The BRA is regularly approached for its views about change of use or development of business premises in the area. The BRA Committee will respond to planning applications relating to commercial entities where they raise concerns relating to the amenity of the community and the character of our neighbourhood. We will not usually respond to pre-application campaigns or consultations because the real issues are clarified only when planning permission is sought. Nor will we endorse pre-application plans from developers. In exceptional circumstances, where the issues are clear and where we can have a significant impact, we will engage with developers or interested parties prior to any application to Camden. This will be decided in the interests of the community on a case by case basis.

Planning objections made to Camden by the BRA

Every month BRA Committee members Barrie Tankel and Sanya Polescuk look at new planning applications to Camden and send objections to projects that do not suit our neighbourhood. Some recent objections include:

1 Lyndhurst Road: BRA objected to a rear basement extension, because an extension should be subordinate to the building.

For planning application 2017/4653/P, involving the erection of a single storey rear outbuilding at 3 Akenside Road, BRA objected because of its size; the proposed room is 6.0 metres wide x 10.0 metres long. Its location will have a major impact on the adjoining gardens and its height of 3.6 metres above the garden level (12' 0" high in old money) will eliminate visibility over the adjacent garden fences.

18/20 Lancaster Grove: This application was a variation of a previous application, focusing on conditions about the replacement of sash windows. Our objection was that the application takes no account of the traditional Arts and Crafts design that was fundamental to previous approvals being granted.

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

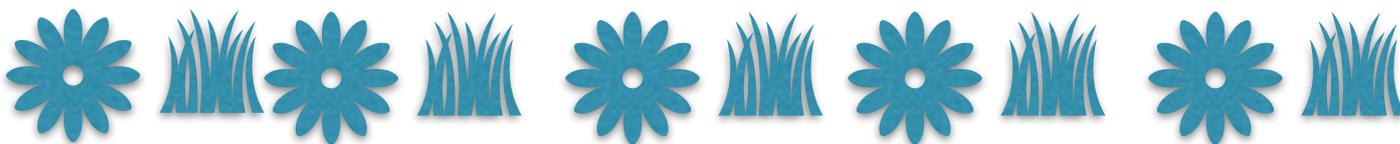
New grants to help generate renewable energy for homes and the community

Camden has launched a new fund which will help lower energy bills and cut carbon emissions for residents across the borough. The Camden Climate Fund will offer grants to home owners and community groups to install renewable energy systems for their properties. Homeowners can apply for a grant of up to £1,500 towards solar photovoltaic panels (to provide electricity for the home) or a solar thermal system (to provide hot water for the home). Applicants will be required to fund 50% of the cost up to (and any additional costs over) £3,000.

Camden Community Energy Groups will be able to apply for a grant of up to £15,000 to install community renewable energy generation systems within Camden. All renewable installations must be carried out by a MCS certified installer.

The Fund will also offers grants up to £7,500 for solid wall insulation (up to £5,000); boiler replacement (up to £1,500); floor insulation and glazing replacement (up to £650); loft insulation and draught-proofing/radiator panels (up to £150). Applications cannot be retrospective so you must apply for a Camden Climate Fund grant before you undertake the work.

The Camden Climate Fund is financed by Camden's carbon offset payments, which are collected through the planning system when developments in Camden fall short of the Mayor of London's carbon targets. For more information, go to the environment section of Camden's website.



CRIME AND SECURITY

On behalf of BRA, Consuelo Phelan attended the drop-in session on moped crime organised by Tulip Siddiq MP on 26 October. There were two pairs of policemen present, from Camden and Brent. Consuelo was directed to one pair who were very pleased to know we had put up their leaflets on our BRA noticeboards. They gave some useful advice:

- Use common sense: none of us would walk around in public waving £1000 in our hands, so why have our phones in public which are worth about the same?
- Where one uses one's phone is also important. Avoid using it at major hubs, like station exits and bus stops. Keep it in your pocket or bag. If you must use it, go into a shop or an alcove, e.g. a doorway.
- The thieves can be as young as fifteen, with no licence, and the scooters are often stolen. They are not bothered about knocking you down - they grab the loot and are off.
- It seems to be an opportunistic crime, so we should do our best to lessen the opportunities. It is not really surprising, as the effort is less and reward likely to be greater than with, say, burglary. Less skill required, too!

The session was well attended, and Tulip Siddiq was answering questions too.

Notable Past Belsize Residents

Spencer Perceval, the only British Prime Minister to be assassinated (1812), lived in Belsize Park. His assassin John Bellingham stood trial at the Old Bailey. Emotions ran so high that Sir James Mansfield, Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, said to the jury in his summing-up:

“Gentlemen of the jury, you are now to try an indictment which charges the prisoner at the bar with the wilful murder . . . of Mr. Spencer Perceval, . . . who was murdered with a pistol loaded with a bullet; . . . a man so dear, and so revered as that of Mr. Spencer Perceval, I find it difficult to suppress my feelings.” (Extracted from *The Public Domain Review “The Assassination of the Prime Minister, Spencer Perceval”* by David C Hanrahan.)

Other notable Belsize residents include: Sir Alexander Korda (film producer); Jerome K Jerome (novelist); Lytton Strachey (artist; critic); Frederick Delius (composer); and John Logie Baird (television pioneer).

There is more about the history of Belsize and notable residents who lived here at: www.belsize.org.uk. But we’re looking for contributors to the website, who would like to write something on any notable resident. Please contact info@belsize.org.uk if you can help.

BELSIZE COMMUNITY LIBRARY FILM SCREENING

Friends of Belsize Community Library together with JCORE (Jewish Council for Racial Equality) are to screen the new Sue Clayton film “Calais children: a case to answer”. When the Calais jungle was razed in October 2016, over 1900 unaccompanied minors were left stranded. Sue Clayton fought to get these young people recognised and their cases heard. Her film follows them over the months after the closure of the camp and records her legal fight on their behalf. Tickets: £5 in advance (online from www.jcore.org.uk/calaisfilm) or £7 on the door. The screening will be at Swiss Cottage Community Centre, 13th December, 7pm. Proceeds to Calais Children and JUMP, JCORE’s befriending project for unaccompanied young asylum seekers.

Change at the Winch

The Winch’s CEO Paul Perkins is moving to Save the Children after nine years at the Winchester Project. The BRA Committee is grateful for all his work for our community. We look forward to continuing to work with Paul’s successor, Rashid Iqbal.



ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE

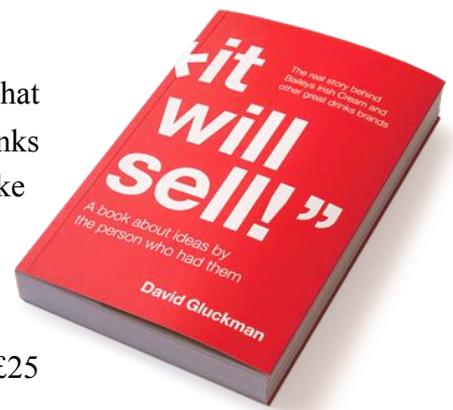
Did you know that the Camden Arts Centre, the Freemasons Arms, the West Heath Lawn Tennis Club and the Primrose Hill Community Library are all classified as Assets of Community Value? The full list of Camden’s ACVs is available on the Council’s website. The BRA has written a letter in support of the Globe Tennis Club’s application to become an ACV.

SUPPORT OUR LOCAL SHOPS

Belsize Park residents have the privilege of fantastic local shops. Whether you want fresh fruit, a bagel, vitamin pills or a mid-morning coffee, you do not have far to go. The BRA supports small businesses which provide variety and local employment. Please use them!

NEW BOOKS BY LOCAL AUTHORS

Longtime Belsize resident, David Gluckman, has recently published "That s*it will never sell!", an anecdotal history of his lifetime creating drinks brands. A beautifully illustrated 336 pages, it features famous names like Baileys Irish Cream, Le Piat D'Or, Aqua Libra, Purdey's, Ciroc vodka and Tanqueray Ten. The book is available at Waterstone's or, if you live in the Belsize Park area, the author would be happy to deliver a copy. His email is david@thatshitwillneversell.com. Retail price is £25 and it will make an unusual Christmas present.



LAUNCH OF BELSIZE REMEMBERED

There was a tremendous turnout for the launch of "Belsize Remembered" at St Stephen's on Rosslyn Hill on the evening of 26 October. This wonderful book (compiled by Rane Barr and David Percy, and edited by Peter Woodford) is a collection of memories of life past and present in Belsize Park – engaging, at times moving personal accounts that together show how the area evolved from the 1930s to the present. Fully illustrated in colour with contemporary and archival images, the book presents more than ninety chronicles from Belsize residents revisiting experiences and feelings.

The launch was an opportunity for the Belsize community to come together to celebrate the book and Belsize over drinks and food. We were treated to a film of Derek Jacobi reading extracts. A memorable and special event.

The book is available at local bookshops and online and costs £16.99.



RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

BRA membership subscriptions for 2018 are due on 1 January 2018. We hope you will all wish to renew your membership as we are dependant on subscriptions for our work. We do not send out invoices but enclosed with this newsletter you will find a letter addressed to you personally with details of what to do. Please read it and take action before 1 January.

Remember all the benefits of the membership, such as the "Tradesmen You Can Trust" booklet and the chance to be involved with local issues.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Are you interested in the local environment? Do you know about traffic and transport? We are looking for someone to head the BRA's work on these important topics. The role involves representing BRA at meetings with Camden, the police and other local agencies and reporting back to the Committee. No need to join the Committee and suitable for job share.

If you think you could help, please contact info@belsize.org.uk.

Dates for your diary

Camden Arts Centre, Arkwright Road, Wednesday
13 December, 7:00pm-8:00pm

Performance: The PS/Y Hysteria programme presents a new performance by Ulapaarc the collaborative work of Paul Abbott and Cara Tolmie. The artists will use sound and voice as a way to look into the politics of language, repetition and appropriation. Tickets are available via Eventbrite.

Other upcoming events are a performance of "Black Atlantis - the end of eating everything", 13 January, details at www.camdenartscentre.org.

Burgh House, New End Square, NW3

Monday 4 December, 2017, 7pm
A Classical Journey with Anastasia Parker, an evening of piano playing and forgotten tales. Tickets £12, details at www.burghouse.org.uk.

Thursday, 14 December, 2017, 7pm
"A Sunday stroll up Maiden Lane". A 19th century visitor to London on business decides on a leisurely excursion from his Holborn coaching inn to Copenhagen House. Peter Darley will tell us what that visitor would have seen on this 2½-mile walk. £1 on the door.

Belsize Community Library and JCORE

"Calais Children: A Case to Answer", Wednesday 13 December. A new film by Sue Clayton about the unaccompanied minors stranded when the Calais Jungle was closed. Swiss Cottage Community Centre, 19 Winchester Rd, at 7pm. £5 in advance at www.jcore.org.uk/calaisfilm, £7 on the door.

Regent's Park Decorative & Fine Arts Society

"The art of snow and ice", Tuesday 5 December. Sue Jackson discusses how Turner and the Impressionists embraced the challenges of portraying winter. Lectures in St John's Wood Church Hall, St John's Wood Roundabout NW8 7NE at

Belsize Baroque, St Peter's Church, Belsize Square, Sunday 19 November, 6.30pm

Belsize Baroque playing Bach and Telemann, featuring Brandenburg Concerto No 4.. Tickets £12 on the door. Details are available at www.belsizebaroque.org.uk.

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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/>

www.belsize.org.uk