

BELSIZE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

February 2016

Notes from your Chair

Welcome to the February Belsize Residents' Association Newsletter.

It was great that so many of you could make BRA carol singing (see page 2). It was a successful fundraiser for Marie Curie Hospice. Also, with BRA help, Christmas lights adorned more of the area than in past years.

Since the last issue, we have been getting ready for the Annual General Meeting. Papers are enclosed with this newsletter. You'll see that we're encouraging members to join the committee (page 2).

Some planning issues are covered in this newsletter, such as an update on the Steele's ACV status. We also report on the HS2 Select Committee.

I'd like to welcome Ann McLarty to the team. She's organising newsletter delivery, replacing Ruth Sands. We are very grateful to Ruth for all her outstanding help with the newsletter for the past few years and there's a feature about her in this newsletter.

Finally, I hope to see many of you at the AGM to discuss BRA's future followed by the irresistible tea and cakes.

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BRA Annual General Meeting

Sunday 6 March

Hampstead Town Hall

3.00pm

Followed by refreshments and a chance to meet other members'

BRA members only





Outside Budgens, many gathered for a sing-a-long, homemade German waffles, brownies and cookies

Belsize-on-the-Hill Christmas Gathering

Great fun was had at the Belsize Lights Committee's festive singalong, which was held outside Budgens on November 29th. BRA contributed to the event.

As well as mulled wine and mince pies, there were homemade German waffles, brownies and cookies and the children enjoyed the Lucky Dip.

Local entertainer, Caroline Chan, provided enthusiastic and fun live music with everyone joining in - singing along, banging a drum or jingling their bells!



Carol Singing in Belsize Village

The Association's Christmas Carol Singing was a great success this year, raising over £350 for the Marie Curie Hospice. The weather was fine so there was this year no need to sing over rain or wind. Thanks particularly to Handley Stevens and family for making it such an enjoyable event.

The BRA Committee Needs You!

Would you like to help steer the Association? We'd be delighted to welcome members to shape what we do through joining the new 2016/17 BRA Committee. We're always on the look out for people with an interest in particular aspect of BRA work, such as planning and conservation or representing resident views to Camden. We're also keen to refresh what the Association does for the members so we are open to new roles.

If you would like to stand for the Committee or just find out more about what the Committee does, then please contact Prabhat, on 07930 406230. He can also provide nomination forms.

BRA presents its HS2 petition

The BRA presented its petition to the HS2 Hybrid Bill Select Committee in Parliament in December. We had submitted our written petition to the Committee highlighting the effects of construction traffic, pollution and congestion on Belsize. We had written about the loss of open space as part of the Adelaide Road Nature Reserve will be sacrificed for a vent. We also suggested to the MPs that a design competition is held for the above ground structures associated with the air vent.

The BRA Chair spoke about these themes to the Committee. The MPs asked a number of questions about the design competition. On congestion and pollution, a lot of concessions had been made to earlier petitioners. Vehicles used in construction will meet the highest emissions standards. For BRA, Susan Massey added the need for vehicles to have livery so that residents can identify HS2 vehicles.

A key change that had emerged prior to our appearance was an agreement between HS2, Camden and TfL to move spoils from the Euston construction works by train rather than road. This single concession removes a lot of the traffic that earlier proposals had intended would have travelled through our area by trucks.

Some traffic issues remain, particularly for residents near the Adelaide Road vent construction. Spoils from this will still travel by road; also, for four months, Adelaide Road will be closed. BRA member Roxy Wilding spoke on this and the discussion clarified the extent of the impact, including some of the measures taken to lessen impact.

The Committee report is due in the coming weeks. The BRA is grateful to all the local residents who collaborated with us at the Committee.

Sir Richard Steele Pub update

Following its listing by Camden as an Asset of Community Value, the owners of the Steele's pub are taking Camden to a tribunal to get the listing overturned. At Camden's request, the BRA has been joined as a party to the appeal. We nominated the Steele's to Camden and defended the owner's appeal at Camden's offices. Now the case will be heard by the independent tribunal on Thursday 3 March at Field House, 15-25 Breams Buildings, London EC4A 1DZ, starting at 10.00 am. The hearing is open to the public. We propose to call oral evidence about the important community activities which have taken place at the pub over the years. Camden and the owners have each instructed Counsel. Given our limited resources, a group of our Committee members has submitted our written case and is working on witness statements.

Plans for a Neighbourhood Forum

We have contributed to a meeting of the Belsize Area Action Group about setting up a Neighbourhood Forum for local people to have their say in planning policy via a local neighbourhood plan. The meeting brought together residents from around Belsize to discuss the possible area to be covered by such a plan.

BRA Greeting Cards

We have produced our very own greetings cards (blank for your message!) featuring a view of Belsize Village. They will be launched for sale at the AGM on 6 March.

Tradesmen You Can Trust

This year, with pretty blue flowers already anticipating Spring on our hedge and rosemary bush, it's difficult to judge whether the chilly temperatures and blue sky are heralding the beginning of Winter or of Spring. Whichever it is, a new year does indicate that it's time to consider repairing and smartening up our homes and gardens for 2016.

And that means the next edition of **Tradesmen You Can Trust** is due shortly, so we are looking forward to you sending us a copious crop of recommendations for tradesmen you have tried and trusted during the past year.

Your suggestions of new tradesmen and endorsements of current entries, especially any who have reached a third year without being re-recommended, may be made on forms (which include the postal address) to be found in assorted places: the grey form enclosed with this Newsletter, the white pages in the centre of the current booklet or the form which can be printed from the BRA website. In addition, full details may be emailed to TYCT@belsize.org.uk. We need your responses **by 18th March 2016** please, so the booklet can be delivered with the May Newsletter.

A couple of addenda which we ask you to note in your 2015 booklet:

Page 3 Builders & Roofers - **DES CLARKE contact number should be 07956 263 463**. Unfortunately, the number which is in the booklet belongs to someone else who is receiving a lot of unwanted calls.

Page 5 Car Service & Maintenance - **Daleham Garage should be deleted** as Graham Clarke has retired and the property has been sold. We hope there will be a replacement garage in the next booklet.

Spontaneity beckons for Belsize book-lover Ruth

She may be hanging up her Newsletter hat, but Ruth Sands keeps enjoying her passions - for books, people and Belsize.

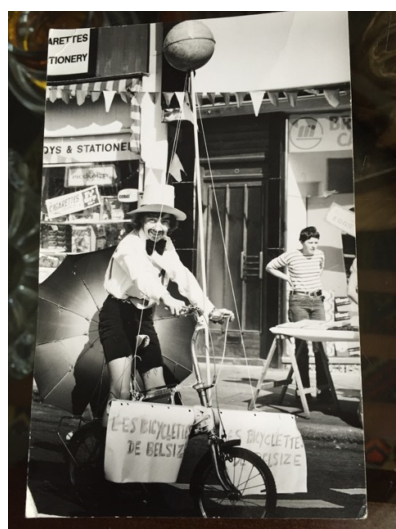
Two things strike you when you first encounter Ruth Sands. First is her indelible and delightful French accent, and the effortless Gallic style that goes with it. Second is the huge enjoyment she gets out of meeting people. That's just as well because more than 30 BRA members have been visiting her home regularly for the past 10 years. They come four times a year to collect bundles of freshly-printed Newsletters, in their addressed envelopes, ready for delivery to local households - and maybe to have a chat. "It's fascinating meeting all the different kinds of people," says Ruth. "I was encouraged to get involved in Belsize Residents' Association by Deborah Buzan, and I have enjoyed making this contribution to Belsize Park, which has been my home for 55 years."

Now, though, Ruth has decided it's time to hand over the distribution mantle - and Ann McLarty has taken it on. Says Ruth: "I'm 77 and a grandmother, and I've decided that from now on I don't want commitments at certain times of the year. In future I want to be able to be spontaneous, to do what I want when I want. I don't want to be using the words 'I can't do that because ...' any more."

But Ruth has no plans to leave our area, a part of London she discovered in the late 1950s, and has loved ever since. Born in Vienna at the outbreak of the Second World War, Ruth had lived in Paris with her parents until an Englishman swept her off her feet. "I wasn't even 19 when we got married and I came to live in this country," she says. "I looked all round London to find where I'd like us to live. I decided Hampstead was too twee," she recalls. "But Belsize Park was very grotty in those days, full of students and young foreigners, and it was cheap. I was a 'married lady', but I was still young and I liked being among the students."



Ruth Sands in her Belsize Park flat: "I like to travel, but I'm very much a home person"



Ruth's son Mark enthusiastically promoting the 1974 Belsize Village Fair

Parenthood changed that a little, but indirectly led to her 30-year career as a successful antiquarian book dealer specialising in early children's literature. Through her small son's teacher, she met former Belsize resident Monika Sears, who became her partner in the business they set up after Ruth's divorce. Regular Newsletter readers may recall the review of *Don't Forget to Lock it Away*, the entertaining memoir they wrote and published together five years ago. It was based on the day books they had kept detailing their experiences as young women in the then very masculine world of book dealing. "There were lots of men in navy pin-striped suits who didn't know what to make of us," says Ruth. "I loved going to auctions and book fairs. It was international and fun."

"Books are my life. I will go on working with them forever. But when I retired, I wanted to give something back," says Ruth. She continues to work in the U3A office in the old Hampstead Town Hall on Haverstock Hill, and to volunteer at the Wiener Library, a specialist contemporary history library concentrating on the Holocaust, fascism, racism and homophobia.

Belsize Residents' Association owes heartfelt gratitude to Ruth, for the charming and fuss-free way she has made sure the Newsletter reached us all, every time.

*If you'd like to join the BRA Newsletter deliverers team, please get in touch with Ann McLarty: 020 7431 8920

Get involved in your neighbourhood!

Fairtrade Fortnight

Sit down for breakfast, Stand up for farmers! Fairtrade Fortnight 29 February – 13th March.

Camden Fairtrade Network will be joining the campaign to "make your breakfast count" this Fairtrade Fortnight.

Look out for displays, stalls and other events in schools, shops, libraries and places of worship. Or why not organise your own Fairtrade breakfast - any time of day! Follow @camdenfairtrade on Twitter and like us on <https://www.facebook.com/CamdenFairtrade/>.

Or you can contact the Steering Group on camdenfairtrade@googlemail.com or your local Traidcraft Fair Trader ft.mehill@gmail.com.

In support of the initiative, St Mary's Hampstead will hold a Traidcraft Big Brew on Sunday 13th March.

For more information about Fairtrade Fortnight <http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/breakfast>

Belsize Community Library

We have supported the national listing of Belsize Community Library, responding to the consultation by Historic England about this architecturally significant (and much-valued) building.

A Message from the Marylebone Birdwatching Society

Our local bird club has lots of exciting events in the coming months. Indoor Meetings at Gospel Oak Methodist Church take us to Africa 19/2 and East Anglia 15/4 while 18/3 we'll be learning about owls from around the world. Our Coach Outings now leave from near Euston Station and cost just £17 (£15 to MBS members). We're off to Dungeness 2/4, Rye Harbour 30/4 and Minsmere 21/5.

Closer to home we have a weekly walk on Hampstead Heath setting off from Parliament Hill Staff Yard NW5 1QR 10am every Tuesday. And we've an extra joint MBS/LNHS Heath bird walk on Sunday 6th March setting off from Belsize Park tube station 9.45am or Hampstead Heath Overground station 10am.

Details on our website www.birdsmbs.org.uk or contact Marion Hill birdsmbs@yahoo.com

T: 020 7722 2965. You can also find us on Facebook, Twitter and Project Dirt!

Regent's Park Decorative & Fine Arts Society

The Regent's Park Decorative & Fine Arts Society, a Member Society of the National Association of Decorative & Fine Arts Societies (NADFAS), is currently seeking new members.

Membership of the society allows you not only to attend the monthly lectures and to take part in the Society's other events but also to take part in other NADFAS activities. Members also receive NADFAS News which is published quarterly.

The Society invites anyone interested in joining to either contact the membership secretary using the following link, or to complete the application form found in the "documents" section of the website: regentsparkdfas.org.uk. BRA members are particularly welcome.

Belsize in View Exhibition at Burgh House

Burgh House in Hampstead is due to host a selection of photographs and engravings of Belsize under the title Belsize in View from Wednesday 2 March until Sunday 29 May 2016.

This new exhibition, curated by David Percy, features the captivating evolution of Belsize Park from the original Belsize House and its extensive estate, with its open views over Primrose Hill towards Westminster, to the development of central Belsize as it is today.

In addition to many original photographs of the area taken during a recent documentary film project, the exhibition includes a number of carefully restored archive images. These include coloured engravings as well as paintings and other archive photographs – some featuring parts of Belsize that are no longer with us.

David S Percy is a long time resident of Belsize Park and an award-winning documentary filmmaker.



Need to know

Dates for your diary

Valentine's Sacred Sound Ceremony on World Sound Healing Day

+ Sunday 14 February

Burgh House

3pm

Ticket Price: £21

Details: www.burghhouse.org.uk/events

The Elgin Marbles: A History of Meaning - Alan Read

+ Tuesday 1 March

St John's Wood Church Hall

8pm

Details: regentsparkdfas.org.uk

BRA Annual General Meeting

+ Sunday 6 March

Hampstead Town Hall

3pm

Details: www.belsize.org.uk/events

The Founders and Treasures of the Wallace Collection - Stephen Duffy

+ Tuesday 7 April

St John's Wood Church Hall

8.00pm

Ticket price: £6

Details: regentsparkdfas.org.uk

From War to Peace 1944-49

+ Thursday 10 March

JW3, NW6 6ET

10.30

Tickets: £16 - £20

Details: www.jw3.org.uk

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www.belsize.org.uk