

BELSIZE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

May 2014

Notes from your Chair

Welcome to the first BRA Newsletter since I took over from Averil Nottage as Chair of the Association. Members expressed their thanks to her at the recent **AGM** (see page 2), and I'd like to add my own gratitude for all her support. Big boots to fill!

I've lived in Belsize for four years and have sat on the Committee for the past two, primarily dealing with planning issues. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible and hearing your views on our beautiful and important part of London.

We have been active on a number of fronts, including **HS2** (page 7). The newly elected **Committee** includes Sheila Wrigglesworth, who will co-ordinate members' events, such as our Summer Party (page 7).

As with previous local elections, BRA will host the political parties at a **hustings**, to which members and non-members are invited.



BRA Chair Prabhat Vaze takes up his new role in interesting times ...

	page
AGM report, new Committee	- 2
Green Camden, paint disposal	- 3
<i>Tradesmen You Can Trust 2014</i>	- 3
<i>Lawn Road Flats</i> book review	- 4
<i>Camden Goods Station</i> book, Newsletter deliverers	- 5
100 Avenue Road, planning breaches	- 6
HS2, hustings, garden party	- 7
Belsize Film Society	- 7
Who's who and diary dates	- 8

Questions are requested in advance (see flyer and page 7). One issue likely to be raised is the proposed development at **100 Avenue Road** (see page 6).

Finally, you'll find the new **Tradesmen You Can Trust** booklet with this Newsletter (page 3). Please continue to support it.

Don't miss these BRA Events!

Council Election Hustings

Sunday 18 May, 3pm to 4.30pm
Sarum Hall School, 15 Eton Avenue
SEE PAGE 7

Summer Garden Party

Sunday 15 June, 3pm to 5.30pm,
67 Haverstock Hill
SEE PAGE 7

Questions, welcomes and thanks: the BRA AGM



QUESTIONS Members turned out in force on Sunday 9 March to voice concerns about the 100 Avenue Road development, the protection of trees, the monitoring of the 20mph speed limit and recycling (see page 3); A few argued that “someone” should initiate annual Christmas lights on Haverstock Hill



THANKS Averil Nottage received a bouquet and a well-deserved round of appreciative applause for her work as Chairwoman



WELCOME Committee members (*left to right*) Deborah Buzan, Prabhat Vaze, Neil Harris and Ruth Sands were re-elected, as were Gordon Curtis, Judith Farbey, Judith Gubbay, Pat Holden, Consuelo Phelan and Anne Stevens; we welcome new Committee member Sheila Wrigglesworth

New BRA Chair Prabhat Vaze writes: This year’s AGM was the last with Averil Nottage as the Chairwoman. Averil has spent six and a half years on the Committee, five of those as Chairwoman. In countless aspects of the Association’s work, she has been an enthusiastic and effective leader. Averil has made chairing the organisation an art, so it should, perhaps, be no surprise that she leaves the Committee to spend more time on her passion for painting. We are pleased that she’ll still be active in the area and hopes to spare some time for us in the Autumn: more details to come.

And **MANY THANKS** to all those of you who helped organise the AGM - not least, of course, those who baked yummy cakes and made all those cups of tea!



WELCOME Our speaker after the AGM was James Dunlop from Green Camden (cheerfully answering members' queries, *above*), who gave a fascinating and entertaining talk on recycling, energy use and food waste reduction. It seems that pretty well anything we want to dispose of can be recycled or made use of in one way or another – from food waste to electrical equipment. His colleague, Paul Nuckley, the designated Belsize environmental officer, answered specific questions about day-to-day issues such as wheelie bin collection.

You CAN get rid of it!

Paul and James gave plenty of useful information at the AGM about disposing of unwanted items, but couldn't answer Sheila Wigglesworth's query on the spot. She wanted to dispose of part-used tins of paint, and she believed – rightly – that they shouldn't go in the dustbin.

The chemicals in paint mean it counts as a hazardous substance, and can't be collected by the Council or dumped at Regis Road. Instead, there's a London-wide service run by the City of London on behalf of most London boroughs, including Camden. Cans of paint or chemicals need to be in secure cardboard boxes; asbestos needs to be wrapped in plastic.

For more information, please ring the City of London Hazardous Waste Collection and Disposal Service on 020 7332 3433.



Tradesmen You Can Trust - the member-to-member guide

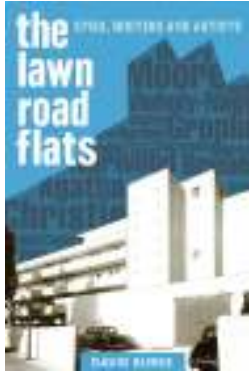
A huge and sincere thankyou to the 60-odd BRA members who took the trouble to share the names of their trusted tradesmen with the rest of us. Their contributions, coupled with the tireless work of *TYCT* Editor, Sarah Courtin, have helped us produce another bumper crop of recommendations in the 2014 booklet, enclosed with this Newsletter.

The total number of entries this year is just one shy of 200, with 40 new individual entries. Most are builders, who make up by far the largest category. There were a fair few deletions, too – mainly because tradesmen are automatically removed from the list unless they've earned a new recommendation in the last three years, but also because, sadly, we received more adverse reports than usual. We lost one category and gained one – Chimneys & Fireplaces. But nobody took up our suggestion in the February Newsletter, to recommend any Car Clubs or Caterers.

As ever, we are open to suggestions for new categories, as well as commendations of new and existing tradesmen for next year's edition. Remember: the more contributions we receive, the more useful *TYCT* will be for us all. You can give us the details on the forms inside the booklet, via www.belsize.org.uk, or by emailing TYCT@belsize.org.uk. Full details are on the back cover of the booklet.



Historic Local Landmarks -



As the Isokon building nears its 80th birthday in July, Gene Adams (right) has been delving into a new book about the spies, writers and artists who have lived in and around it



Karl Marx, father of communism, lived in in Maitland Park, on Belsize Park's southern edge, in the mid-19th century. It seems fitting, then, that

German Jewish communists fleeing Nazi Berlin in the 1930s should have settled nearby, in Lawn Road, Hampstead. Among them, writes Cambridge historian Dr David Burke, in his second brilliant study of Soviet espionage in this part of Belsize Park, were the Kuczynskis. "They were a highly educated and gifted family, already involved with the British and German Communist Parties." A network of shadowy folk worked with them against Hitler's Fascism, providing secret information to the GRU (Soviet Military Intelligence) in Moscow.

Some of Professor Robert Kuczynski's adult children, all dedicated Soviet spies, found space in the state-of-the-art brand-new Lawn Road Flats, along with many famous foreign artists such as architect Walter Gropius, designer Marcel Breuer and sculptor Moholy Nagy. The flats were built in 1934 by entrepreneur Jack Pritchard and designed by a talented young Canadian architect, Wells Coates. They exemplified a new social idea of a "machine for living" developed from the Bauhaus School in Berlin, closed down as one of the Nazi cultural targets.

Dr Burke provides a concise and readable analysis of the ideological twists driving the espionage activity in and around the Lawn Road Flats. It is hard to

believe that at one time, "There were no less than 32 agents or sub-agents connected to Soviet espionage associated with the Lawn Road Flats", and with some older houses nearby. Some are notorious, like Klaus Fuchs, Arnold Deutsch and Kim Philby; others, such as the Kuczynskis, have remained secret until now.

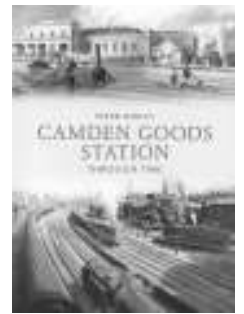
Dr. Burke knits together an illuminating context of social history with the sudden dawn – in Lawn Road of all places! – of Modernism. Wells Coates' striking design was understandably strange and alarming to the natives in 1934, but the ISOKON, as we now call it (from Isometric Unit Constructions), is now our most distinguished Grade I Listed 20th century building in Belsize Park, conserved by numerous local and national campaigns, and restored after 40 years of neglect. Now it is poised to celebrate its triumphant 80th birthday on 9 July.

Dr David Burke at the March 2014 launch of his new book in the Isokon's penthouse flat; *The Lawn Road Flats: Spies, Writers and Artists*, Boydell, 2014. £25 from Daunt



well worth reading about

Local author Peter Darley "discovered" the Primrose Hill Tunnel in the winter of 2002/2003, when bare trees made it more visible than usual; the rest, as they say, is history ...



The London & Birmingham Railway was the major project of its day, designed by Robert Stephenson, one of the great railway pioneers, who also supervised its opening in 1837. Camden Goods Station became the goods terminus and Euston Station the passenger terminus.

Peter Darley's new book takes the reader on a railway journey between Euston and Primrose Hill, and into sidings at Camden Goods Station, from where goods were transferred to road and canal or carried on the North London Railway to the Docks. The separation of Camden Goods Station from the public domain was symbolised by the "Great Wall of Camden", which ran along the Hampstead Road from just north of the Regent's Canal bridge to beyond the Roundhouse. The book shines a light on the little known world beyond the wall.

The L&BR and its successors have left a strong footprint on the landscape. Four grade II* listed buildings survive in this

internationally important location: the Roundhouse, Primrose Hill Tunnel east portals, the stationary winding engine vaults and the Horse Hospital, as well as a host of grade II buildings. The historic features in and around the former goods station have provided the basis for Camden's transformation through its markets, media, music, food and entertainment into a global brand.

Peter Darley is a chartered engineer and lives in Primrose Hill. He conducts guided tours and gives talks on the area's industrial heritage. His quest for information led to the founding of Camden Railway Heritage Trust, which aims to explain the heritage to a wider audience, open up the sites to the public and consolidate the historical record.

Camden Goods Station Through Time, Available direct from the Trust for £12 including postage (email Darleyp@aol.com) or from good bookshops, £14.99). Proceeds go to Camden Railway Heritage Trust.

Sign up for the Great Belsize Walkabout!

Could you find your way from the Isokon to the Primrose Hill Tunnel? Do you know which of the streets with the word Belsize in them is which? Join the BRA Newsletter Deliverers and you'll learn all sorts of intriguing facts about the area you live in.

Sorry, but our DIY keep-fit walking tour is strictly limited to four opportunities a year. And remember: the more deliverers we have, the easier the task. So why not bring a friend?

Arrange to collect your pack of newsletters by contacting Ruth Sands (7794 4827; ruthsands@talktalk.net).

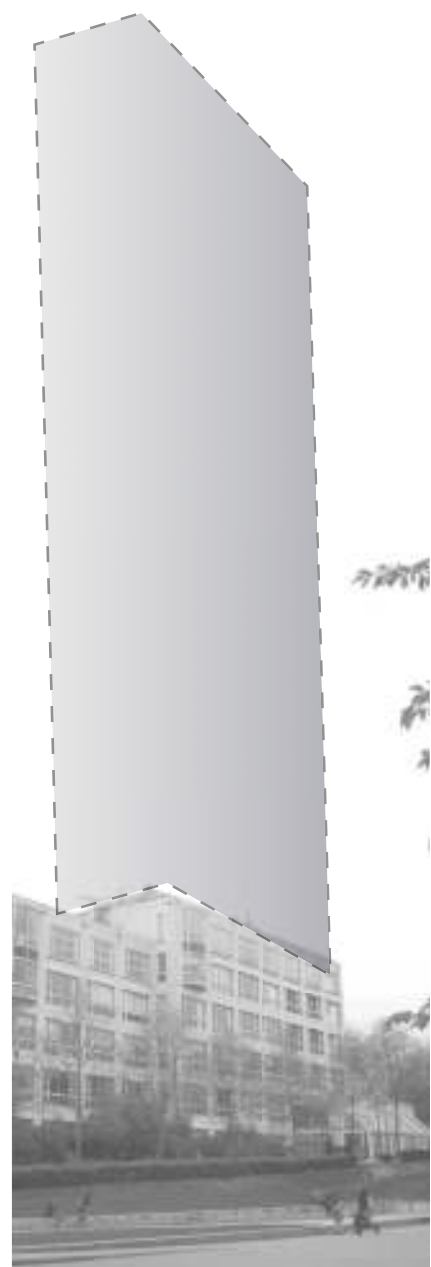
A towering threat to Belsize

To say that the proposed development at 100 Avenue Road has attracted significant local criticism is something of an understatement. We responded to the planning application on behalf of BRA members with a detailed formal objection, which we summarised on our website, in an email to BRA members and on a poster on the noticeboards to alert people to the need for prompt responses.

Some 300 objections to the planning application have been registered, including those of other local residents' associations.

Now that the first stage of the planning process is complete, we have to wait for news of Camden's Development Control Committee meeting, probably in early summer. Once we have the details, we will be in touch with members about continuing the campaign.

Looming over us: how the proposed 24-storey tower might look from the Swiss Cottage open space; too tall at 80 metres, too bulky, out of keeping with good local buildings



Who polices the planning rules?

There's more to planning than responding to applications for huge developments like the proposed 100 Avenue Road project. Most types of building works, changes of use and works to protected trees need planning approval, as do many advertisements. The BRA Committee members responsible for planning issues met with Camden's planning enforcement team recently to find out more.

When any development is undertaken without approval – technically a breach of planning regulations – the team can take action against the developer or homeowner. They were keen to emphasise the useful role that members of the community can play, particularly in helping to identify and report suspected breaches of planning regulations.

If you suspect a breach, you can report it to the team online on the enforcement webform, ideally attaching any photographs.

More details are available at Camden's website: www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment/planning-and-built-environment/planning-enforcement.

What's new on HS2?

As explained in the February Newsletter, we have responded in detail to the HS2 consultation on the Environmental Statement. We pointed out the range of concerns we have about the impact of the construction works, due to start in 2017 – in particular the nuisance during the construction – and the effects of a planned HS2 vent shaft to be located in Adelaide Road.

In March we were pleased to hear that the planned link between HS1 and HS2 would not be going ahead, leaving Camden Town less affected by damaging construction work. For Belsize, our worries about construction traffic and the proposed vent remain.

Committee member Sheila Wigglesworth met with our MP, Glenda Jackson, along with other campaigning groups, to discuss BRA's concerns about the proposal. This was ahead of the Parliamentary debate, at which the HS2 Hybrid Bill was passed into Committee stage. Ms Jackson offered helpful advice about how to influence this detailed planning stage, which – from her experience as a Transport Minister – was often when local views could really improve the proposal.

New name, vintage movies

Belsize Park Film Society (formerly Hampstead FS) has screenings at 7pm on Tuesdays; Old Hampstead Town Hall, 213 Haverstock Hill, £5 at the door. Programme details from: filmsocietyhampstead@gmail.com

Council Election Hustings

**Sunday 18 May
3pm to 4.30pm**

**Sarum Hall School
15 Eton Avenue**

Your opportunity to hear from the candidates in the 22 May local elections

The meeting will be chaired by BRA Committee Secretary Judith Farbey, who will put a selection of members' questions to the candidates.

**Questions in advance, only:
please see enclosed flyer**

Don't miss BRA's
*Summer
Garden Party!*

**Sunday 15 June
3pm to 5.30pm**

**67 Haverstock Hill
NW3 4SL**

Courtesy of of Aileen Hammond

BRA MEMBERS ONLY

Non-members are welcome to join at the gate

Need to know

Dates for your diary

An evening with David Burke

Dr Burke, author of The Lawn Road Flats, reviewed on page 4.

+Thursday 15 May, 7pm

Waterstones, Hampstead High Street, NW3 QP
Admission £5 at the door.

BRA Pre-election hustings

+Sunday 18 May, 3pm to 4.30pm

Sarum Hall School, 15 Eton Avenue, NW3 3EL.

Insights into Alzheimer's

Friends of BCL talk by author Maggie La Tourelle

+Tuesday 20 May, 7.30pm

Belsize Community Library, Antrim Road, NW3 4XN
Donation £3.

"Hidden Garden" Art Show

Annual outdoor sculpture garden event
17 Belsize Lane, NW3 5AD

www.maureenmichaelson.com

+24 May to 1 June on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holiday Monday.

Admission free.

National Garden Scheme open day

+Sunday 8 June 2-6pm

Adults £3.50, children free.

***BRA Summer Garden Party ***

+Sunday 15 June, 3pm to 5.30pm

67 Haverstock Hill, NW3 4SL.

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We welcome comments, contributions and event listings.

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