

# BELSIZE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

August 2014

## Notes from your Chair

Welcome to the August Belsize Residents' Association Newsletter. It was a pleasure to meet so many of you at this year's **garden party**. A sunny day allowed us to really enjoy Aileen Hammond's hospitality (see page 2).

Since the last issue, we've been busy on a number of fronts. May saw the **local elections** and a number of the candidates answered members' questions at the BRA hustings (see page 3).

Two big planning issues have continued to concern the BRA on behalf of local residents. On the proposed development near **Swiss Cottage** tube, we've made some funding available to pay for the preparation of expert evidence on the heritage impact of the current plans. We have also submitted a petition to Parliament detailing our views on **HS2** (page 6).

During the next few months, look out for us at the



Belsize gardens have enjoyed a long hot summer - and so have we all!

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**Belsize Green Fair** (page 7). We also hope you can join us on our **walk** around Belsize Park with former BRA Chairwoman Averil Nottage (page 7).

## BRA Local History Walk

**Sunday 12 October**

**2.30pm**

**from Belsize Village**

*followed by tea and cakes!*

**SEE PAGE 7 FOR DETAILS**

# Our garden party: Belsize gets together under the sun

Take one gorgeous garden, mix with great company, add sunny weather, and refresh with tea and delicious home-made cakes - that's the BRA garden party recipe, and we followed it to the letter on Sunday 15 June



A garden to glory in: all Aileen's spadework paid off on party day with a much admired display of flowers, shrubs and trees (it looks even better in colour!)



Our hostess, Aileen Hammond (*left*), with new BRA events co-ordinator Sheila Wrigglesworth, about to tuck into the goodies produced by our tireless bakers



The BRA welcoming duo: Membership Secretary Anne Stevens (*left*) and Consuelo Phelan; they signed up two extra members at the gate



Plenty to talk about: around 80 neighbours of all ages took the opportunity to get to know each other better



Thanks are due from us all to our shy heroines, the brilliant BRA cake-bakers and tea-makers

# Asking the candidates for answers

The local elections may seem like a distant memory, but we're pleased to recall the success of the BRA hustings. An audience of around 75 people braved a very hot early summer's day (Sunday 18 May) to hear what candidates had to say.

Representatives from the Conservatives, Greens, Labour and LibDems answered questions from BRA members and other local residents on topics such as Camden's spending priorities, 100 Avenue Road, HS2, local amenities and social housing. Most of the candidates were standing in Belsize ward, but there were representatives from other wards, too.

The BRA is extremely grateful to Jean Seal and to Sarum Hall School for allowing us to use such a lovely venue.



**Judith Farbey, BRA's new Secretary, put members' questions to the panel**



**The line-up: BRA Secretary Judith Farbey (centre) chaired the hustings, with candidates from the Liberal Democrats and Labour to her right, the Green Party and Conservatives to her left. Conservative candidates Jonny Bucknell (not present), Leila Roy and Claire-Louise Leyland were elected for Belsize ward four days later**

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## Let's light up this Christmas!

Hampstead has them, Steele's village has them, Belsize village has them, so surely there should be Christmas lights on 'our patch' of Haverstock Hill, near Belsize Park tube and the BRA noticeboard.

The height of summer may not seem the time to think about winter illuminations, but a group of BRA members, headed by Anne Ward and Linda Grove, is already gearing up to make it happen this Christmas. If you'd like to get involved, please email Anne at [anniew@btinternet.com](mailto:anniew@btinternet.com).

## Greened homes you can visit



Two Victorian houses in Camden are opening their doors to show how they have saved energy and become more comfortable, without losing their period looks.

John and Zoe Doggart live in one of those houses, The Coach House in 2A Belsize Park Gardens (*shown above*), and have saved over 70% of their energy, through wall insulation, a better boiler, low energy lights, draught proofing and double glazing. 'The house is called a SuperHome because it now uses less energy than a modern house,' says John. 'In addition to lower fuel bills, it is comfortable day and night, throughout the year.' The Coach House is open Sunday 21 September from 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm.

The other Camden SuperHome, at 8 Bertram Street, N19, was improved by Camden Council, saving 77% of the energy previously used. Open Saturday 20 September. Please book via [www.superhomes.org.uk](http://www.superhomes.org.uk).

These open days are part of the wider London Open House weekend, 20 and 21 September; see [www.openhouselondon.org.uk](http://www.openhouselondon.org.uk).

Another chance to look into energy efficient homes is Eco Open Homes weekend, 1 and 2 November: [www.21stcenturyhomes.org.uk](http://www.21stcenturyhomes.org.uk).



**A Swiss Cottage sapling**

## Money from the movies



We live in an area of London that's packed with photogenic streets, so it's hardly surprising that filmmakers are attracted to it;

recent locations include Belsize Park Gardens for the drama series Mr Selfridge and Glenilla Road for a photo shoot. There's often a downside in parking bay suspensions and traffic hold-ups, and it's the job of the Camden Film Office to manage any disruption, as well as marketing the Borough to production companies. The Office expects production companies to make a financial contribution to the local community through the BRA, a sum of about £400.

We're keen for ideas about how we might use this money, especially from those living nearest the affected areas. Also, if you want to let the Camden Film Office know of any problems (or positives) about the recent filming, do email or call Anne Stevens (see back page).

## Seen a thirsty-looking tree?

Some recently-planted street trees may have been suffering in this summer's hot spells. They are particularly vulnerable to dry spells until they have had time to establish deep root system.

Young trees are supposed to get 25 litres of water a week from Council contractors - that's an awful lot of watering-can-fuls! But if you notice a tree near you looking thirsty and a bit shrivelled, do inform one of Camden's tree officers: [Robert.Butcher@camden.gov.uk](mailto:Robert.Butcher@camden.gov.uk) or [Cameron.Brown@camden.gov.uk](mailto:Cameron.Brown@camden.gov.uk).



## What do you do with a problem like wheelie bins?

Considering how much care is taken to keep Belsize's streets attractive, it's surprising how many eyesores remain - in the form of telecoms boxes, bins and other badly sited and designed street furniture.

There are some clever solutions, however, and we'd like to see more of these.



**Before: an awkward green giant making the place look untidy**



**After: bit of building work done, and the bin is neatly tucked away but still accessible for filling and wheeling in and out**



**Seen a good example of a potential blot on the streetscape that has been well designed or neatly disguised? Please email photos to [editorbra@gmail.com](mailto:editorbra@gmail.com)**

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## Winning letter promotes DIY clean-up days

The art of letter-writing is alive and well - at least among Year 5 pupils at one of our local schools. Isabella Lakey, the winner of this year's annual letter-writing competition, earned a book token for herself plus a £700 prize for Rosary School (both donated by Camden Civic Society, which runs the competition in co-operation with the Council's School Improvement Service).

Children in 15 classes from 11 Camden schools took part, writing 'letters to the Mayor' about their local neighbourhood - the good, the bad and the improvement ideas.



**Prizewinning letter-writer in the Mayor's Parlour: Rosary School Year 5 pupil Isabella Lakey with the Mayor of Camden, Councillor Lazzaro Pietragnoli**

Isabella's favourite local features were Hampstead Heath, Primrose Hill and the City Farm. Her particular dislikes: litter on the streets, dog mess and offensive graffiti. Improvement ideas: provision of plastic bags attached to dog waste bins, youth clubs to discourage young people from violence and gang membership, and 'play buses' to get children out and away from their computers. But the suggestion that really caught the Mayor's attention was for a special 'Clean Up Camden' day, when people in Camden would come and help clean up the litter in the streets. He said at once that he would pass on this idea to the Councillor in charge of the Environment, to discuss whether this could be set up\*.

Runner-up prizes and commendations for other schools in NW3 went to Eleanor Palmer, St George the Martyr, Argyle and Christ Church.

\*For help in setting up local clean-up days, visit [www.camden.gov.uk/cleancamden](http://www.camden.gov.uk/cleancamden) or ring 7974 4444

# UPDATE: Fighting for Belsize: patient progress

On HS2, our views are on the agenda - but don't hold your breath. Meanwhile, we're still pursuing our objections to the 100 Avenue Road development plans. And there's good news about Hampstead police station, which is to have a new life as a schoolhouse

## HS2

After much detailed work in drafting and working through procedures to a tight deadline, BRA has petitioned Parliament on behalf of our members. A copy of the petition appears on our website. In it we raise the fate of the Adelaide Nature Reserve and the issues around construction works, which would affect local roads with noise and pollution. We also mention the need to ensure that any above-ground structures should be well-designed.

The legislation to allow HS2 to be built is now in its Committee stage, with MPs considering petitions from many members of the public, organisations and businesses. The Select Committee is working its way through them, starting with those from Birmingham petitioners, gradually moving south to London. Given the numbers, we don't expect petitions from the Camden area to be heard until the New Year.

## 100 Avenue Road

The proposal to demolish the present Swiss Cottage office block and build two residential structures is expected to come before Camden Council's Development Control committee in August. Once we have the date, we will let members know how we plan to use that opportunity to raise our concerns about the scheme once more.

BRA, along with other local groups including the Save Swiss Cottage group, continues to object to the scheme, primarily because of the visual impacts of the proposed 26-floor tower, the impact on the Swiss Cottage public space and the level of community benefit. We are working with Save Swiss Cottage in commissioning an independent view on the scheme's heritage impact, an aspect that concerns members and which focuses on the contentious height of the tower.

## Hampstead Police Station

The Education Funding Agency (EFA) has completed the purchase of the former Hampstead Police Station on Roslyn Hill as a permanent home for Abacus Belsize Primary School. The school opened in September 2013 and is currently sharing premises with WAC in Hampstead Old Town Hall. The police station building is Grade II listed, which means it will need careful conversion and preservation to turn it into a school. It will retain the beautiful façade you can see from both sides and be newly built behind that. Its size means that

Abacus will be able to increase its numbers and eventually offer two classes per year group. The conversion will take time and although EFA has suggested that it could be ready to move into for September 2016, there are so many complications and hoops to jump through that it seems more likely it will be 2017. So while this is good news in the long term, it will mean a further spell of temporary accommodation beyond September 2015 and the school is working on where exactly that will be.



## Meet us at the Green Fair

The Transition Belsize team is busy getting ready for the annual street fair, this time on Saturday 27 September, from 10am to 4pm. Local traders, community groups and maybe a few goats will descend on Haverstock Hill, near Budgens.

Transition Belsize always welcomes any help on the day itself, especially at the start and end of the day. If you'd like to volunteer, we'd be happy to put you in touch with the organisers or you can email [info@transitionbelsize.org.uk](mailto:info@transitionbelsize.org.uk)

As last year, there will be a BRA stall, too, so do come and have a chat - and don't forget to bring along any potential new members!

Not quite Wizard of Oz Dorothy's "Lions and tigers and bears! Oh my!", but there were plenty of animals on show at the 2013 Belsize Green Fair, as well as stalls featuring everything from crafts and fruit foraging to local community groups



### Neighbourhood sharing scheme

Is your home cluttered with things you no longer use? By signing up at [www.streetbank.com](http://www.streetbank.com) you can lend or give them to someone nearby who needs them. You can also swap skills, such as computing or gardening.

BRA PRESENTS:

## "A stroll through the history of Belsize"

OUR AUTUMN LOCAL HISTORY  
WALK

Guided by Averil Nottage, our stroll will lead us from ancient woods cleared for farming, via a 16th century gentleman's country estate that became a bawdy 18th century pleasure garden, to the roads and housing developed by Victorian speculators that shape Belsize as we know it today.

Sunday 12 October  
2.30pm

Meet by the noticeboard in  
Belsize Terrace, Belsize  
village

OPEN TO ALL

The walk will end at Sarum Hall  
School, 15 Eton Avenue  
around 3.45pm,  
with tea and cakes!

### Watch the birdie on Hampstead Heath

The Marylebone Birdwatching Society is our local bird club, with illustrated talks at Gospel Oak Methodist Church NW3 2NT and weekly Tuesday morning walks on the Heath. For full details visit [www.birdsmbs.org.uk](http://www.birdsmbs.org.uk) or contact BRA member Marion Hill: 7722 2965; [birdsmbs@yahoo.com](mailto:birdsmbs@yahoo.com).

# Need to know

## Dates for your diary

### Children's summer reading challenge

Various dates during August. Details from Belsize Community Library, Antrim Road  
[www.belsizelibrary@thewinch.org](mailto:www.belsizelibrary@thewinch.org); 7078 7483

### Hampstead & Highgate Literary Festival

+ Sunday 14 to Tuesday 16 September

Ivy House, 94-96 North End Road, NW11 7SX  
[www.hamhighlitfest.com](http://www.hamhighlitfest.com) or ring 8511 7900.

### Open House London

+Saturday 20 and Sunday 21 September

Including 2a Belsize Park Gardens; see page 4.

### Belsize Green Fair

Saturday 27th September

10am to 4pm, outside Budgens on Haverstock Hill. See page 7.

### Belsize Music Festival

+Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 October

Chamber music concerts, 7.30pm Saturday, 4pm Sunday. St Peter's Church, Belsize Square.  
£10 per concert (concessions £5).

+Sunday 12 October

Free outdoor jazz in Belsize Village, 7.30pm.  
Details: [www.belsizefestival.co.uk](http://www.belsizefestival.co.uk)

### \*\*\*BRA Local History Walk \*\*\*

+Sunday 12 October

Meet 2.30pm in Belsize Village. See page 7.

### Eco Open Homes weekend

+Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 November

Details: [www.21stcenturyhomes.org.uk](http://www.21stcenturyhomes.org.uk)

## How to contact the editor

Comments, contributions and events welcome!

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**\*Friday 24 October\***

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