



HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

FROM THE HIGHBURY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Proud to Support Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants

This year the AGM supported Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants and Teresa Dodgson (Robertson), a trustee and art facilitator at the centre, presented the charity and its work to HCA members at the meeting. For the newsletter we asked her about the history of the organisation, what she does there and about some of the changes that she has seen over her time at the centre.

The charity was set up in 1997. Malcolm Rogers, the vicar of St Mary Magdalene's church at the time, wanted to make use of their crypt space so asked his congregation what group of people they would like to help and the congregation voted for refugees and asylum seekers. Three years ago after a change of vicar and persistent flooding at St Mary Magdalene's, the Centre moved to its present home at Cross Street Baptist Church (entrance in Fowler Road), and has been warmly welcomed there. I joined the Centre in January 2005 as their fundraiser, then stayed on the management committee and became a trustee when it became an independent charity 3 years ago. I also run art workshops with Jane Ray at certain times of the year and pick up meals cooked for the Centre by a group of Seventh Day Adventist women. I love seeing people from different cultures really getting on with each other - the Centre end-of-term parties are great for this, with music,

dancing and food from all over the world happening in the big communal hall at the Centre.

When I first joined the Centre, the typical client would be a Turkish woman who had been in the UK for 15 years and was very isolated as she had no English - 85% were women at that time. Now the gender split is almost 50/50 and the countries of origin are wider, with South Americans, Russians, Africans and Chinese joining the Turkish, Iraqi and Iranian people that we had more of originally. A big change is reflected in our new name - we have a few migrant workers in each class, most of whom are in low-paid jobs so would struggle to pay for English classes. They inspire the refugees with how it's possible to get work though, so there's a new dynamic to the Centre now.

The main benefit of the charity is the lessening of social and cultural isolation for the students whose

ages range from early 20s through to 70s. The main activity is the English classes - the students study from 10.00 - 2.30, 5 days a week. The total immersion in English classes, and the qualifications received, help the students either in to college for further study or to jobs, or to meeting people beyond their own smaller world of their own cultural group. But what makes the Centre so lovely is it's home-from-home feel, with all the other things that also go on: enrichment classes, activities, trips to museums, meals, companionship. There are over 50 volunteers and nearly 200 students, all working together to help the students get the most out of being in the UK. And the volunteers definitely get as much out of the relationship as the students - it's a two-way process!

continued on page 4

PARTY!

Come and meet neighbours & members of Highbury Community Association! We will be hosting a social at the Ecology Centre, Drayton Park, 6.30-9.30pm on Friday 26 September 2014.

All welcome & please RSVP to hcanews@hotmail.com so we have a rough sense of numbers, and bring some food to share. Wine and soft drinks at the bar.



The HCA represents over 900 residents and businesses on all aspects of living and working in Highbury, Lower Holloway and Finsbury Park.

Membership is free. Members receive bi-monthly newsletters like this one. New members will receive the newsletter by email (unless you don't have email).

To join or talk to us about anything Highbury-related, please email hcanews@hotmail.com

The opinions expressed in HCN are not necessarily those of the Highbury Community Association and its committee members.



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The Finsbury Park Events Stakeholders Group

On the 9th April this year, I attended the latest meeting of the Finsbury Park Events Stakeholders Group, held at the Haringey Civic Centre in Wood Green. As their name suggests, this Group consists of representatives of organisations and individuals who take a close interest in the entertainment events staged in Finsbury Park (the Park itself). Full membership of the Group is 14. It includes: Friends of Finsbury Park, Finsbury Park Trust, Stroud Green Residents Association, Manor House Development Trust, and Haringey Green Lanes Traders Association. There are also officials of Haringey, Hackney and Islington Councils, and police representatives. Their interest is multi-faceted, and includes: the physical impact of the event on the Park, especially on the grass; health and safety considerations; side-effects on neighbourhood localities, with a special focus on problems of litter and disorderly behaviour.

Under the chairmanship of Haringey Council's Simon Farrow, all the above issues were discussed, chiefly in connection with the forthcoming Wireless Festival, to be held in the Park over a 3-day period in July. Representatives of the Festival's organisers, 'Live Nation,' were present, explaining their ground plan and answering questions from the Group. Both explanation and Q&A were thorough—indicating both 'Live Nation's' professionalism and the Group's strong desire to ensure that all goes well during the event.

Afterwards, a briefer discussion along similar lines took place about a May event, organised by a different company and featuring the pop band Arctic Monkeys. As a first-time attender at these meetings, I was generally struck by the range of Group members, and the breadth of interest they displayed. The Group is clearly an important public body that actively seeks to ensure the events make a positive contribution to the locality, as distinct from being an alien and disruptive imposition on it.
TOM RUBENS

Exciting times at Islington Ecology Centre; ideas wanted!

Islington Ecology Centre, set in the beautiful surroundings of Gillespie Park, has long been valued and enjoyed by the local community. The centre, which is managed by Islington Council's Nature Conservation Team and supported by the Friends of Gillespie Park, is visited by school groups, families, local residents and tourists. At weekends, people hire out the lovely space for birthday parties and other events (sometimes even wedding receptions!) and on Sundays, Highbury Timebank run a café from the venue.

However, after over 20 years of use, some of the features in the centre are becoming rather tired and the building needs some improvement. Luckily, funding received through the Section 106 scheme will enable this to happen. Plans are in progress to improve the kitchen, install new flooring, improve IT, put in baby-changing facilities and make the foyer more welcoming to visitors.

We also want to create new interactive ways for people, especially children, to enjoy the centre and learn about nature. These may include wooden moveable panels featuring animal lifecycles, photos showing how the park has changed over time, birdsong sounds to play, a fox tunnel to explore and updates to the interactive screens.

We would like your views! If you have any suggestions on how you think we could make the Ecology Centre more interesting or welcoming to visitors, please let us know by 20th June. Note that the funding is for improvements to the centre itself and not to the park. If you would like to hear more about the ideas that we already have, please let us know. Drop in to the Ecology Centre or contact us on 020 7527 4374 or email ecologycentre@islington.gov.uk
SALLY OLDFIELD

Annual General Meeting round up

Over 60 people attended this year's AGM and party on 26 April at Christ Church. The Chair, Diane BurrIDGE, began by welcoming members and reporting on the main local developments in which HCA had been actively involved: Arsenal's proposal to increase the number of non-football events at the Emirates, rejected on appeal (Arsenal has had



approval to have a judicial review of this rejection- to be held in July 2014); their application to build a 25 storey student tower, rejected at the Court of Appeal; HCA and community pressure for football coaches to be parked under the stadium rather than in the locality, using new security technology; and finally, bringing pressure to reduce the speed of lorries using Drayton Park, now that the road width restrictions have been removed. She also reported on HCA's continuing involvement in the Highbury West

Ward Partnership, the London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies, the Finsbury Park Events Stakeholders Forum, the Islington and Camden Air Quality Summit, and on new developments such as the HCA website and use of social media. This year's accounts were adopted, and the committee was elected.



This year's speaker was the Revd. Stephen Coles of St. Thomas's, Finsbury Park, who will have been ministering in the area for 25 years this July. He entitled his talk 'On the cusp between N4 and N5', and characterised the area as still relatively stable, mixed, distinctive, tolerant and with no one dominant socio-economic group, noting the recent influx of professional couples with children, and the increasing population density of Highbury. He posed the questions whether the community was becoming increasingly difficult to organise, and whether Finsbury Park as a major transport hub would continue to be rather different from the area around the top of Highbury Hill. In connection with the centenary this year, Revd. Coles reminded us that no less than 90 young men from the area lost their lives in the First World War.

Issues raised in Questions and Proposals from Members included the state of the 'desire path' across

Highbury Fields, the need for the HCA to make contact with residents in the new housing developments, the need to maintain the use of the Sotheby Centre for the elderly and others, and the fact that the former police station on the Blackstock Road is listed locally but not nationally as an historic building.

The evening concluded with a vibrant party, and a raffle and auction for this year's local charity, the Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants. Over £450 was raised, and our thanks are due to our members and the following local businesses and organisations whose generous donations made this possible: Arsenal in the Community, Five Boys Drug and Health Food Store, Kobkun Thai Massage, The Master Cobbler, Meek and Wild, Mother Earth, San Daniele del Friuli, Seasons and Blossoms, To Be Established, and Woodland Hardware.

SARAH POTTER

Islington In Bloom

Islington in Bloom is the annual local horticultural competition run by the group



Islington Gardeners (www.islingtongardeners.org.uk) and Islington Council. There are categories for residents, schools, businesses and community groups. Judging will take place 16-28 June 2014 with the prize giving ceremony at the end of September at the Town Hall.

Seasons and Blossoms

We are a new shop in Highbury selling a large range of fresh fruit and vegetables and organic health foods.

Seasonal produce from local farms, organic dairy & delicatessen, artisan bread, freshly prepared mediterranean salads, herbs, freshly made coffee & tea.

92 Highbury Park, N5 2XE t:020 7159 4867

Timebank Café In Gillespie Park

Open on Sundays 11 - 5pm

- Delicious freshly baked cakes
- Homemade soups and snacks
- Waffles with homemade jam
- Bookings for kids' parties welcome

Islington Ecology Centre, 191 Drayton Park, Highbury N5
highburytime@live.co.uk

In search of a good read...

House Of Hodge is a tiny charity bookshop that functions as a hub of the community and, with its chaotic look and desperate need for renovation, adds even more character to Blackstock Road. Formerly it was a cobbler's shop and has been there for about 15 years.

During this time we have raised funds for animal welfare, recycling books and reselling them at reasonable prices within the community and well beyond. Arsenal supporters attending home matches from Lincolnshire and Germany are amongst our customers. We give advice to local pet owners and our profits help individuals and small organisations who look after animals wild and domestic.

The brain behind it all is Doreen Rolph - "chairman Miaow"- whose formidable memory is legendary. She will tell without a flinch where a copy of whatever title you are looking for is. Everything is perfectly arranged in her mental filing system.



However, keeping the bookshop tidy seems impossible. Books soon acquire a life of their own and move around to catch the eye of the right reader or find their place among the others. Sometimes they hide in dark corners for months and show up unexpectedly when they deem fit. Treasures that come in with each new donation (thanks to all our donors) need matching to responsible owners: an old book on maths will trigger me to call somebody who'll love it and I enjoy chatting to the students, artists, book dealers, children and parents who browse through our thousands of volumes. In short, there is never enough time to keep the shelves in order.

Technology threatens the very existence of cartaceous volumes, but we know people still enjoy turning the pages of an old-fashioned book. So come in and you could stumble upon a real bargain (like that beautiful tome on Hieronymus Bosch I really gave away too cheaply).

All the books are arranged by subject (more or less) and we have a search book. We try to stay open 7 days a week but we are always in need of volunteers, so if you can spare half a day reading a good novel give us a buzz. Your memory doesn't need to be as good as Doreen's.

Come in and have a look around, 174 Blackstock Road, N5 1HA

For info and enquiries: T. 020 8127 4765 | E. thedoreenrolph@gmail.com (Charity Reg.1135243).

CARLO BELLANOVA

continued from page 1

In terms of the major challenges, funding is always on a knife-edge. Our English classes are funded from one academic year to the next by a franchise from the Government through Waltham Forest College and we only get the funding if we meet attainment targets. It's all credit to the hard work of Andy, the Centre Manager, and his team of wonderful teachers and the many volunteer ESOL helpers - that these targets get met, but cuts from Central Government have meant we're constantly faced with the possibility of the funding for the English Classes not being renewed.

The vital extra funding we're always seeking is for everything else, probably the most important being our Support Service Coordinator. We are incredibly blessed that Nese - a young woman who happens to speak 4 of the languages most used at the Centre and has wonderful listening, practical and pastoral skills, came to offer her skills to the Centre initially as a volunteer 3 years ago. Nese proved so vital in hearing the concerns of our most fragile students and being able to signpost them to where they could get help that we've fundraised to employ her 3 days a week, and want to keep employing her. We would love to have a volunteer co-ordinator too, so will be aiming to fundraise for a part-time post for this, and always need money for new equipment - computers for students to learn ICT skills, art materials, money for travel cards, food - the list is endless! So we would like to thank the Highbury Community Association and its members for their generous donation of £450 which was raised at the AGM. As well as fundraising for larger amounts like salaries, we always need money for tea, coffee, food parcels for the 52 asylum seekers (some of whom have no other support), travel expenses (to enable some of the students to actually get to the classes and to go on trips out) and hot meals.

TERESA DODGSON

Dining Out: Prawn on The Lawn - a review

When we first arrived in Islington in 1978 the only fishmongers was Steve Hatt, on Essex Road. Suddenly we have two in Highbury and the newest is "Prawn on the Lawn" which opened in August 2013. But it's not only a traditional fishmonger - it's also a small seafood bar come restaurant, which the owner Rick Toogood says sometimes you need to book two weeks in advance.

In the window there's a wet fish counter and behind, there's a shelf bar around one side of the room with high stools providing just eight covers; downstairs there are two tables for four and two tables for two.

We started with six jersey rock oysters which were terrific then we had the marinated tuna, the lobster cocktail, the scallop ceviche and the hen crab. To accompany we had two salads - tomato & tarragon and beetroot & feta. The quality of everything was excellent but initially no bread was offered and we could have done with some with the oysters. However if we had asked we could have had some soda bread. This was the one criticism as the only bread was

soda bread and it had all been warmed up so that it was



almost toast. We didn't have the signature dish of "prawn on the lawn" (prawns, avocado and soda bread) but this is very popular. There are a maximum of two hot dishes a day and the plateau de fruit de mer varies according to what is available as does the price. This is really a tapas fish restaurant, and based on the portion sizes, for two people I suggest you select five or six dishes to share. Rick, who has spent the last three years in the restaurant trade and has a background in industrial design, takes a lot of interest in the menu and invents all the recipes himself.

The wine list is concise and carefully thought-out too - both a sauvignon blanc (£4.50 a glass) and an unusual grolleau gris (£5) from the same grower, Nicolas Choblet in Muscadet, had the fresh acidity and clear flavour that seafood needs.

Worth a visit as the quality is so good. Maybe a little pricey but better value than central London. Meal for two around £50. All their fish and shellfish is sustainably caught and comes direct from the local Cornish fishing community.

Opening hours: fishmongers Tue - Sat 0900 to 2200; restaurant Tue & Wed 1200 to 2300, and Thur - Sat 1200 to midnight. 220 St. Paul's Rd, N1 2LL | 020 3302 8668 | www.prawnonthelawn.com. DAVID FENTON

Voting time again! Islington People's Plaques 2014

Voting for People's Plaques usually takes place in May but coinciding with Council Elections, this year it will start in June. Every year Islington residents can vote for their favourite Islington person, place or historic event from a nominated shortlist, and the three winners will receive a commemorative green plaque. Last year over 4,700 people voted! The shortlists will be available soon on Islington Council's website along with details on how to vote.



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HIGHBURY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

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Festivities for Islington Giving Week 9 - 15 June 2014

Islington Giving is a borough wide campaign supported by the Cripplegate Foundation that seeks to improve people's lives by tackling poverty and isolation. It harnesses local knowledge and resources to both create and support existing projects that are dedicated to tackling local problems and enhancing life in Islington for everyone. The areas of action are thematically organised; Investing in Young People, Tackling Poverty and Confronting Isolation each representing specific a local issue. Seeking local solutions, the campaign works to develop diverse projects with an array of Islington based organisations including Freightliners Farm, Cubitt Gallery, Islington Boat Club, the Angel Community Canal Boat Trust, The Brandon Centre, Enabling Enterprise, Islington branches of MIND and Age UK, The Manna, Centre404, and The Law Centre, to name just a few. It also encourages Islington residents to get involved in its projects - whether that be donating time, money, expertise or talent - and to be part of a rewarding project that makes a real difference to other people, the local environment and community.

Islington Giving organises a range of events throughout the year which provide fun opportunities to learn more about Islington, visit the projects that are supported and raise money for its campaign. The money raised - over £2 million in the past three and a half years - has so far helped over 40 projects that have supported thousands of local people. The next event is Islington Giving Week 9 - 15 June 2014 and a full list of events is available on their website, www.islingtongiving.org.uk.

Here are some events during Islington Giving Week that may interest members:

Throughout the week

Islington Giving Photograph Exhibition by Eleonore de Bonneval who has been documenting Islington Giving projects including Freightliners Farm, Age UK Islington and the Supporting Families programme. Christ Church, Highbury 17.30-19.30 daily, admission free.

Saturday 14 June

My Islington Story: Come and share your stories of Islington with Eleonore de Bonneval over a coffee at the Almeida Theatre Bar, 10.30 - 12.30. Free drop-in, no booking required.

Inside Islington: The Saturday Social Film Club.
Mary Poppins Sing-a-long Special.

Enjoy a supercalifragilisticexpialidocious afternoon of fun and laughter. Tea and cakes at 1 o'clock followed by screening. Platform Hornsey Road Baths, 260 Hornsey Road, 13.00-16.00. Free & open to all ages!

Sunday 15 June

Angel Canal Boat Tour - A chance to experience a trip through the longest navigable tunnel in the South East, with light refreshments. Starting and finishing at Danbury Street, N1. Suggested donation £15pp. Places limited.

Bookings: 020 7288 6941 or
mail@islingtongiving.org.uk.