

HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

www.highburycommunity.org

No 55 February 2008

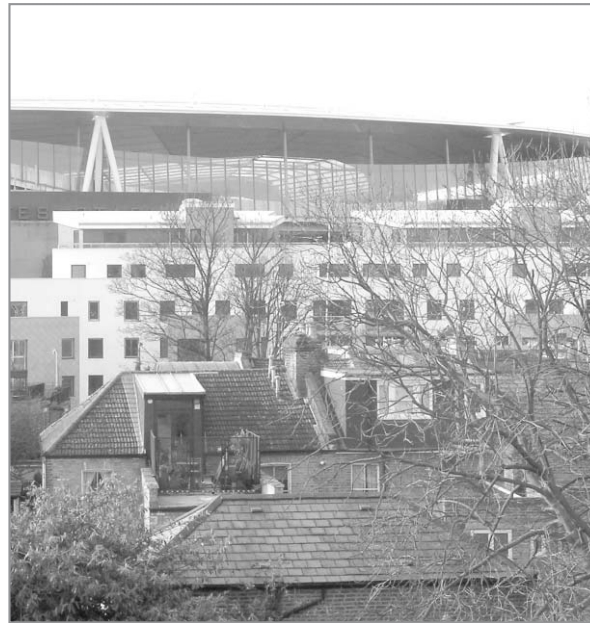
Noise at the stadium By Gill Shepherd

THE COUNCIL'S LICENSING Committee met at a long meeting on 23rd January to discuss and approve Arsenal plc's applications for licences both for the forthcoming Bruce Springsteen concerts in May at the Stadium, and for 'Events on the Podium' [the skirt around the Stadium]. I have focused on the undesirability of the Emirates Stadium as a location for pop/rock concerts. Many HCA Members and others wrote letters of objection to the licence applications.

Under the original terms of the planning conditions set down for Arsenal when its application for the stadium was being considered in 2001, detailed conditions specified no more than an ambient average noise level of 75 decibels over any 15 minute period (75 dB LAeq [15min]. [Planning Conditions AG 17, AG18, AG20, AG21, and AG 27].

The recent 'Vanguardia Consulting' Acoustics Report (December 2007) commissioned by Arsenal plc notes (para 3.5) "a level up to 70 dB...is satisfactory; a level of 80dB or more... causes significant disturbance". We also learned that for every additional 10 decibels, the noise-level is deemed to have doubled. The acoustic team monitored sound levels at 5 points around the stadium, getting averages inside the stadium of as much as 101 to 105.7 dB, and of 64.3-78.5 dB outside.

The lead consultant who produced this report was at the Islington Council Meeting on 23rd January 2008, which considered allowing Arsenal to vary the conditions under which it might hold concerts. Clearly a highly experienced professional,



ROOF/WALL GAP FACING HIGHBURY HILL AND AUTHOR'S HOUSE.

who will be in charge of sound monitoring at the Springsteen concerts, Jim Griffiths explained that so long as he could keep sound within the Stadium to a maximum of 98 dB, he could guarantee an external maximum of 75dB.

Location	Min (dBA)	Max (dBA)
Inside Home	25	45
Inside Office	35	50
Inside Airplane Cabin	75	85
Inside Factory	65	100
Talking @ 3ft	55	65
Shouting @ 3ft	75	85
Clothes Dryer @ 3ft	55	65
Vacuum Cleaner @ 3ft	65	80
Chain Saw @ 3ft	100	120
Clothes Washer @ 3ft	55	75
Car @ 25 ft @ 65mph	70	80
Airplane @ 1000ft	95	110
Traffic @ 300ft	40	60
Rural Background	25	35

WHAT VARIOUS LEVELS OF DECIBELS MEAN TO ORDINARY PEOPLE

However, keeping sound down to this level will not be easy. He explained that it would not be possible without a huge temporary canvas baffle, like a fire curtain in a theatre, which would have to be hauled up to block the gap between the Emirates walls and roof on the north side, facing the Northern Triangle flats.

A member of the public present at the meeting, a sound engineer who had worked for the BBC and indeed for Bruce Springsteen in the past, stated that he did not think the stadium would ever be suitable for rock concerts: since not only the gaps, but the metal roof, as well, encouraged sound to

bounce out in all directions. Jim Griffiths conceded that the stadium was not well suited for such concerts, but that he would try to make it work. The conclusions and recommendations of his December report also suggest some doubt as to the feasibility of meeting the planning conditions.

Finally, on the Saturday after the meeting on the 23rd, Daniel O' Sullivan measured noise levels in our garden during the match against Newcastle United. The monitoring equipment showed levels of up to 65 dB before the match, during announcements and while a female singer performed, and during three goals in the second half. He explained that noise should not be more than 5dB above background noise, which he estimated in Highbury Hill would be about 45dB. While the average for the whole match period was only 55dB that is still 5dB too high, with

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

peaks of 20dB too high. He said he was surprised at the volume of sound, which was higher than he had expected, and attributed it to the big roof/wall gap, which is opposite our house, and is shown in the photograph.

The importance of complaining while a concert is underway if noise is loud was apparent. It was clear from both Council statements and from comments from Jim Griffiths about other stadia where he had worked, that impact on the local community is measured, in part by numbers of complaints received during the concert or other event. There is a legal requirement to provide a hotline

which the public can ring during a concert, and which is widely advertised beforehand. We need to be sure that we know what this number is, to share it, and to use it.

Several people, including Councillor George Allen, queried the appropriateness of a level of 75dB, in the context of the Emirates stadium's location in a densely inhabited area. Jim Griffiths replied that there had been no complaints at these sound levels at Twickenham, Old Trafford, etc. However the point was made by more than one person that Islington is very much more densely inhabited than these places. (It is the second most densely populated local authority in the whole country).

So that we have better data with

which to argue another time, I generated the following table (below).

This table makes it crystal clear that in our case, the number of people living, say, within half a km of the stadium, and heavily impacted by a concert, are four times more numerous than those living near Twickenham and over six times more numerous than those living near Old Trafford. Numbers rise exponentially at the 1km and 1.5 km mark.

So we have a very strong case for arguing that the potential nuisance caused by noise from the stadium could be massive, and is not comparable to that from which generalisations have been made elsewhere. ■

Local Authority	Population by local authority (2006 estimates)			
	population density / ha	living within 0.5km radius	living within 1km radius	living within 1.5km radius
Islington (Emirates)	125	19,625	39,275	88,375
Haringey (Spurs)	76	11,932	23,864	53,732
Richmond (Twickenham)	31	4,867	9,734	21,917
Newcastle	24	3,768	7,536	16,968
Manchester (Old Trafford)	19	2,983	5,966	13,433

Within a 0.5km radius of a location there are 1.571 km² = 157 ha
 Within a 1 km radius of a location there are 3.142 km² = 314 ha
 Within a 1.5 km radius of a location there are 7.070 km² = 707 ha

Il Cavaliere: Italian cooking worth waiting for

By James Hood

ALL OVER LONDON Italian restaurants offer a range of pastas and pizzas coupled with a few additional mains, minestrone, tiramisu and the like. It takes something extra to stand out.

There is nothing special about the location of Il Cavaliere. In the middle of an unremarkable row of shops opposite Ambler School in Blackstock Road, it is easy to miss. It may indeed be that few have noticed it: on a winter Friday night it was less than a third full. Having got there, we found the décor bright, clean, stylish and welcoming without being in any way slick or pretentious. It felt



like a proper city restaurant, but without the noise and bustle: great for quiet conversation.

Service was friendly and personal: jugs of iced water were provided and there was no early pressure to order drinks. The menu brought a familiar selection of Italian options, supplemented by a small range of blackboard specials (though our vegetarian was disappointed with the choice). We skipped the starters, and ordered the special pasta (spaghetti with radicchio, squid and scallops); poussin with rosemary and wine sauce, a mushroom risotto and side vegetables.

For a quiet restaurant it took a long time for the food to come, perhaps because it was being cooked almost from scratch. The pasta, when it finally did arrive, was superb: al

dente, with freshly cooked seafood spiced to perfection with garlic and chilli. One of us thought it the best pasta she had ever eaten. The poussin was a little less successful, reported as very tasty but slightly over-salted. Vegetables (spinach and sautéed potatoes) were beautifully cooked, and the risotto got the thumbs up.

For dessert we had tiramasu, crème caramel, and panne cotta with a berry coulis. All made in the restaurant that day, and all excellent.

At about £18 per head for two courses including wine and service the food was good value for its quality. It was a shame about the wait, and a shame that the restaurant was so empty. Perhaps in a different location it would get the success its cooking deserves. In the meantime it is worth seeking out. ■

**Il Cavaliere 81 Blackstock Road
020 7226 7678**

Doing Our Bit to Protect the Environment By Sally Davis

I HAVETHOUGHT of a lot of things, in no special order, which a lot of us know about but maybe don't all observe! Here we go....

At the very least, everybody living in Highbury could:

Watch what you eat. Consider meat production. Soy beans (Argentina, Brazil) grown with heavy use of pesticides and fertilizers (oil products shipped from the US) air-freighted as chicken/cattle feed (US, Europe). Animals to slaughter house. Meat to depot. Depot to supermarket. Supermarket to consumer. Meat production is heavy on carbon and oil!

I'm sorry to have to say it but: travel less and not by car or air. You all know that by now.

Buy as local as you can so that goods and delivery men travel less. We've got lots of local shops – use them, they're one of the things that make Highbury a nice place to live and they need help from us all if they're to stay in business. Try to avoid supermarkets either in person or by 'you shop we drop'. They're not in Highbury but we've got two farmers' markets very near us – make use of them: every Saturday, 10 until 2 at William Patten School, Stoke Newington Church Street; and Sundays 10 until 2 at William Tyndale School behind the town hall on Upper Street.

Make your home less energy-greedy – there's MONEY AVAILABLE for this at Islington Council: see www.islington.gov.uk/environment for how to apply for it or email louise.quarrell@islington.gov.uk

The Council opened its Green Living Centre at 222 Upper Street last year. It is open Mon-Fri 9-5. Ring 0800 512 012 for advice on getting greener. Buy the most efficient appliances you can: it's easy enough with kettles and washing machines but I've found getting an A++ freezer quite difficult recently. I found some on www.greenandeasy.co.uk

The Council's recycling scheme seems quite good now but with a bit more effort you can recycle two items the Council can't take.

See <http://tetrapakrecycling.co.uk> for where to send your used milk and juice cartons: there's a set of labels to download and then you put a parcel in the post. And Polyprint take some kinds of plastic for recycling – the kind that's used for envelopes: I was told 'if it stretches we can take it' but see www.polyprint.co.uk for details of what to remove from your envelopes, and where to send them.

Try not to throw stuff away: stuff doesn't go 'away' it goes somewhere. Try using www.swapxchangeislington.org or www.freecycle.org

Or put the offending item on your front path or out on the pavement with a notice saying 'help yourself': you may not want this thing any more but someone else might.

Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Recycle.

But, you know, the only real answer to this crisis is: consume less. All this consumption isn't even making us happy (look up Easterlin's Paradox on the web), so why continue with it? Downshift: prioritise time rather than money; don't buy stuff you don't need and try to make sure your children don't either.

If you don't really fancy the 'crash-landing' route to the future, why don't we get together and try to organise something better? Come to the HCA and FOG and ISFOE's showing on 4th April at the Ecology Centre of the film "The End of Suburbia" (78 mins) about peak oil and the USA – much relevant to every car-based economy. Another film "The Power of Community" (53 mins) is about how Cuba has, perforce, become the first low carbon, post peak oil economy. I'm happy to lend them to any individual or group that wants to see them. Contact me on AMandragora@attglobal.net. ■

Highbury Community Association AGM

Saturday 26 April 2008, 7.15pm
Christ Church, Highbury Grove
Open to HCA members & friends

This years AGM's Guest Speaker is Bob Gilbert, who leads the Council's work on sustainability and climate change. Join the party after the AGM and talk. The charitable cause supported by the Raffle this year is to enable a local school run a project on climate change/environment.

Film Screening

"The End of Suburbia"
Friday 4th April, 6.30pm
Islington Ecology Centre,
Gillespie Road
Free admission

Hosted by FOG [Friends of Gillespie Park], HCA and Islington FOE. Tea, Coffee and snacks provided by HCA.

This film launched the transition towns' movement in the UK. It is hard hitting and a 'must see' film if you are interested/concerned about climate change and what the future holds for us and our children. Retire afterwards for discussion to the Auld Triangle, St Thomas' Road.
hcanews@hotmail.com for more information

Help needed to deliver Highbury Community News

Do you have an hour or two to spare at the weekend, or one evening, about five times a year?

HCA needs a few more volunteers to join the pool of people who deliver the HC News and AGM invitations in the Highbury area. People who do this say it is interesting to spend time walking in local roads one might not know already, as well as to get some exercise, and to be part of the HC News Production Team.

To learn more please contact
Beth Moir on 020 7359 2193 or
Elizabeth.Moir@btinternet.com

The Everyday Activist

By Helen Ash

“Everything you need to know to get off your backside and start to make a difference” by Michael Norton. Don’t be put off by the title: if you open the book and start flicking through it as I did in Borders last Sunday you might find something which strikes you and sets you off wondering whether things really do have to be the way they are.

There’s lots of sensible advice on how to get organised so that what you do does in the end make a difference. Where I found the book extraordinary was how it starts with you, what excites you and what you want to communicate to other people. In a way Michael Norton is saying be like Hector in Alan Bennett’s *‘The History Boys’* and pass it on.

“It” can be anything at all, which is of use or benefit to other people. Oddly enough it was my history mistress who introduced me, as well as the rest of the history sixth, to some of the original essays in Schumacher’s *‘Small is Beautiful’*. In his emphasis on the importance of the individual acting in co-operation with, and for the benefit of, others, Norton is a direct descendant of Schumacher. By gathering together stories of individual visions fulfilled, [and incidentally including a great many websites, especially ecological ones], he has shown me at least how, in the 21st century, the Internet can enhance the ripple effect of good ideas, and swiftly promote direct personal contact and actions.

Go out, buy a copy, then pass it on. ■

“The Everyday Activist: Everything You Need to Know to Get Off Your Backside and Start to Make a Difference.” by Michael Norton ISBN: 978-0752226354

Netball Revisited

By Heidi Rice

IF YOU’RE ANYTHING like me you would have hated playing netball at school. All those rules that you didn’t understand; the silly little gym skirts you had to wear that showed your knickers every time you jumped; and those Amazon sports goddesses who always picked you last for their team and then proceeded to pass the ball over your head and make you look like a ninny.

Well, a good thirty years after I was freed from the indignities of playing a game that I didn’t understand and was utterly rubbish at I have been lured back into the fold — and have discovered, much to my amazement, that netball is actually a fantastic team sport: fast-paced, fitness inducing, competitive and most of all fun — and the rules aren’t nearly as mind-boggling as you might think once you have the help of a good umpire.

I play for The Agents, a team of mums (plus some invaluable ringers) from William Tyndale School on Upper Street. We’re all women of a certain age, mostly with children (who come to the games and play on the sidelines) and we love playing together which, in our view, is more important than winning — although we do like to win too. We play once a week in the All Nations league which runs on Tuesday and Wednesday night at Highbury Grove School and Highbury Fields, and welcomes all comers of all abilities (including guys

who can play in the mixed teams). If you’re interested in entering as a team or as an individual player their website is www.theallnations.com or you can email Steve or Emma at Islington@theallnations.com — although, be warned, there’s quite a waiting list.

Just think, you too could be freezing your butt off on a cold, wet evening in February, your fingers so brittle they feel like icicles, learning the vagaries of the ‘no-contact’ rule and being run off

the ball by a twentysomething Aussie with thighs of steel— and loving every minute of it. Just like I do.

Miss Emmins, my old school gym teacher, would die of shock if she knew. ■

Heidi Rice is an author living in Highbury. Her second Mills and Boon novel, ‘The Mile High Club’ came out in November.

You can contact her on her website www.heidi-rice.com



Podium Events Permission

ARSENAL PLC ASKED for a 365 day a year licence for events on the podium on any day of the week between 10.00 – 22.30. A blanket licence was requested with which it could also subcontract permits to others without needing further permission.

What they got at the Licensing Committee on 23rd January, was permission for a maximum of 12 events a year, each to be individually requested from Islington Council and with no automatic right to subcontract to others. ■

Craniosacral Therapy

By Gabrielle McNaughton RCST

CRANIOSACRAL THERAPY IS an increasingly popular and wonderful treatment that helps you come into a better relationship with the intrinsic health and essence of your being.



I guess that sounds a bit 'new age', but when I first had a treatment I was amazed at how deep the work reached, yet with such a light contact. How can this be possible? It seemed like some sort of alchemy. I was working as a professional dancer at the time and had one of those mysterious injuries that comes and goes. The treatment made a huge difference both physically and emotionally. I knew I'd found my second calling and decided to retrain as soon as possible.

It is developed from osteopathy and works with the tissues and fluids of the body. The practitioner senses the shapes that are contained within the body. If there is tension somewhere, eg in the neck, then the shoulders, head and diaphragm can also be released. So the treatment does not just reach the bones and muscles at the site of pain or injury. Treatments can be deeply restorative bringing a feeling of 'space' to both mind and body. This holistic level of contact can bring about profound changes in the whole being and raised awareness.

Many people come for treatment for headaches, back pain and injuries. However it can be very helpful when feeling anxious, depressed or stuck in a rut, for it can really help calm the system, restore natural balance and get things moving again.

I've been practising for six years now and work with both adults and children. Craniosacral Therapy can be very helpful for children's problems such as dental trauma, glue ear, breathing difficulties, low immunity, sleeping and digestive disorders. It can also help resolve any residual birth trauma that may still be with the child, as well as supporting the huge changes that occur both physically and emotionally as they are growing. I offer a low cost Children and Teenagers' clinic on Saturdays here in Islington.

Some people respond very quickly to the treatment and others may need a series of treatments depending on the nature of the issue. It is different for for each individual. I work at the Healthy Living Centre in Islington, 282 St Paul's Road, near to Highbury and Islington Tube Station, where sessions with me for both adults or children may be booked. ■

HCA Committee

At this time of year we ask you if you, or someone you know, would like to serve on the HCA Committee. We meet in a member's home, five times a year.

To know more about what this might entail please ring: 020 7359 5731 or 020 7359 2193

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Green Fields or Brownfield Site

By Tony Miller

EVER FEEL LIKE sitting down, relaxing and just watching the grass grow ?

Well don't try it on Highbury Fields at the moment. You could have a long wait. There are several bald patches in the turf where there's not a blade of grass to be seen. This is most obvious along the 'line of desire', a track that has been worn away between Highbury Place, near the swimming pool, and the top end of Ronalds Road.

Clearly, this is caused by people taking a shortcut across the Fields and the damage has been made considerably worse by several thousand Arsenal fans tramping their way to the new stadium. But what is actually happening to the fabric of the turf? Well, as one of Kenneth Williams comedy creations used to say, "The answer lies in the soil".

Beware of platy structures. When repeatedly stomped upon, topsoil becomes compacted. If the stomping continues the topsoil's granular structure (a good thing) is replaced by flat platy structures (a very bad thing indeed). Once it is platy, rainwater cannot penetrate into the soil and percolate through.

According to the experts, this results in surface water runoff and soil erosion; aeration is reduced and there is less gaseous exchange; soil conditions become anaerobic. Result: nothing can grow there.

This time of year isn't very helpful. There's a frosty start to the day and then the sun breaks through. The grass looks so fresh, so inviting. But as you stride across the sward consider this. The surface of the soil has thawed and moves. Just below the surface it is still frozen solid and doesn't. The grass is decapitated as the roots are severed. More bald patches.

The future's looking brown. Council officers have been wracking their collective brains on how to deal with the deteriorating condition of the Fields following the regular incursion of fans. They commissioned a couple of reports into the condition of the soil. Some parts of the desire line were so compacted the soil expert couldn't get his trowel in to see what was going on. And he found platy structures.

Highbury Fields Association has been chivvying the Council to take action before it's too late and dustbowl conditions prevail. Now officers say they are going to commission extensive renovation works in the Spring which will restore the turf along the line of desire. And they'll start an annual maintenance programme to make sure it stays healthy.

Sounds good... if it happens. Then maybe, just maybe, if you go down to the Fields in springtime, you will be able to watch the grass grow. ■

APOLOGY...

...if you were one of those who got only a part of Issue 54, which was delivered in December. We couldn't solve the problem in the time available. So if you didn't see the main cover and back pages of Issue 54 [the cover story was St Thomas's Church: The early years and some modern parallels] and only got the A4 inside page, and would like a full copy of Issue 54, please email or ring the Editor and I will send you a complete version.

hcanews@hotmail.com or Tel: 7359 5731



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Highbury Community Association

The HCA represents 750 residents and businesses on all aspects of living and working in Highbury, Lower Holloway and Finsbury Park. Run by volunteers, it relies on donations. Send cheques to HCA Treasurer, c/o 83 Highbury Hill, N5 1SX, made out to 'Highbury Community Association'.

Send letters or articles for next issue to
hcanews@hotmail.com or HCA News, 83 Highbury Hill, N5 1SX. Visit www.highburycommunity.org

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