



New Head for girls school



GLADYS BERRY, the new Head of Highbury Fields School, talks about her vision for the school and its place in the community.

Why Highbury Fields School?

Ms Berry chose to work at Highbury Fields School because she wanted to head an ethnically mixed inner city school, where she and her team would be able to drive up students' expectations - to 'lift the roof off' in her phrase. It is Ms Berry's ambition to bring the school up from 'good' to 'outstanding' - and beyond. She is committed to separate education for girls, partly because she is a science teacher and has seen how well girls do at such subjects without boys around.

Before Highbury Fields School Ms Berry was Deputy Head at Hornsey Girls' school - rated as 'outstanding' - and before that she worked in Edgware School in

BY GILL SHEPHERD

Stanmore, a mixed sex school in a very deprived area.

Preparing students for the workplace of the future

Ms Berry is acutely aware that her students will enter an employment world experiencing ever-increasing rates of change. The jobs today's 11-year-olds will have at 18 or 21 have probably not been invented yet. Employers will be looking for flexibility, for the ability to work collaboratively, and for emotional intelligence, as well as for formal qualifications. Ms Berry sees one of her tasks as explaining this to both students and their parents. The school tries to be a welcome and unthreatening place for parents, so

that a close relationship with them over their daughters' attainments can be built. With an intake of fewer than 800, staff know the girls well.

Tackling students' bad behaviour at Highbury Barn

Ms Berry sees closer links with the local Highbury community as vital.

She particularly wants to eliminate the negative image of the school held by some. She has had meetings with shopkeepers, local councillors and residents. There is now a member of staff on duty every lunchtime at the Barn, as well as a local woman police officer, and Ms Berry herself goes out on the Fields

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LONDON'S GREENER FUTURE Saturday 17 October 11am-4.30pm

Transition Highbury event at Highbury Fields School

There will be a speaker panel from 1.30pm

- George Alagiah, presenter of The Future of Food
- Professor Anne Power of the Sustainable Development Commission
- Jeremy Corbyn MP, and
- Duncan Law of Transition Town Brixton (expert on Peak Oil)

chaired by Robin Nicholson, Highbury architect and deputy chairman of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment.

Beforehand there will be activities for children, stalls and refreshments, with a cookery demonstration by Oliver Rowe, chef and creator of Kings Cross restaurant Konstam - known for sourcing its ingredients within the M25.

Afterwards people will be invited to stay and take part in a discussion about the future we want.

For more details email transitionhighbury@googlemail.com or phone Antony Melville on 7607 1540.



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one lunchtime each week. Persistent bad conduct is met with a warning letter to the girl and then withdrawal of privileges. In school, role-playing and videos are being used to help the girls see how threatening their behaviour seems to outsiders. Eventually Ms Berry aims to keep all students in school during the lunch-hour.

Other community involvement

Ms Berry is eager to consult the local community about the planned refurbishment of Highbury Fields School in 2011 as part of Islington's Building Schools for the Future programme. The building could potentially become much more of a community resource out of school hours.

Highbury Fields School hosted some Transition Highbury events last academic year. The school will continue to be involved this year - see box on Page 1.

The HCA looks forward to developing close and regular links with Ms Berry and the school as these plans unfold.

Monsell Rd one of first 10 DIY streets in UK

BY GRAHAM COULT, LOCAL SUSTRANS VOLUNTEER

Highbury's Monsell Rd is the site of an exciting pilot project, one of only 10 nationwide, where the redesign of a street has been handed to the local community.

The DIY streets scheme is the brainchild of Sustrans, the UK sustainable transport charity that aims to reduce the environmental and resource impacts of transport. It was local councillor, Katie Dawson, who pushed for a Highbury street - specifically Monsell Rd - to be one of the first to receive funding for this community experiment. While Sustrans has paid for the expertise (staff), the Esmee Fairburn Foundation and Islington Council are providing money for construction.

Sustrans emphasizes the importance of involving local people in the DIY streets scheme. 'We've been extremely pleased at the amount Monsell Rd residents have contributed,' says Mo McManus at Sustrans' Bristol HQ. Extensive consultation has taken place over more than a year.

The aim of the new design chosen by Monsell Rd residents is to encourage traffic to slow down. Perhaps surprisingly, therefore, speed bumps are to come out. But other traffic-calming measures are to be introduced. A curved road is to replace the present straight one. The most popular layout with residents was a chicane with pinch points at entrances from all connecting streets. Residents have decided that car parking will be diagonal to the curb rather than parallel to it and they have agreed trees should feature prominently on the build-outs.

Construction work will take place this October and November, then the trees and plants will be put in. There will be a ribbon-cutting ceremony and celebration to mark the completion of the project early in 2010. Watch out for updates in future issues of *HC News* and for photos of the transformed street.

Don't be left out: Sustrans wants to offer DIY Streets to even more people but needs information. To help, complete this short survey at

www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=t3rcRPCToVHUGLjVOGLA3A_3d_3d

Highbury man on 4th Plinth

BY TIM BUSHE

Tim Bushe has worked in Highbury in his own architecture practice for 12 years and has lived here for 16 years. Below he describes his experience of being chosen for the 4th Plinth...

On 16 July, at precisely 4pm, I was airlifted onto the 4th Plinth in Trafalgar Square to take my place as a 'plinker' in sculptor Anthony Gormley's 'One and Other' living monument on a space normally reserved for statues of Kings and Generals.

I applied for a place unthinkingly, clicking on a link someone in the office sent me and never gave it a



Martha was there on the day to cheer her brother on from the base of the plinth.

second thought until I received a text on my phone. I then spent the next few weeks trying desperately to think of something to do.

My natural desire to show off was soon overtaken by the realisation that it represented a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to raise

awareness for the charity that supports my youngest sister Martha and others with learning disabilities - Home Farm Trust.

I chose to spend my hour drawing a panoramic view of London - to be auctioned on Ebay. The challenge was to design the largest structure that could be sensibly carried onto the plinth and would allow the drawing process to be clearly seen. What I hadn't bargained for was the temperature that sunny July day inside the drum....

See Tim in action

...in a webstream of his time on the plinth: www.oneandother.co.uk/participants/Bushewacker

Donate to Home Farm Trust

...from the Home Farm Trust web fundraising pages (www.hft.org.uk) follow links to Tim Bushe's Justgiving site and Ebay auction. There are still some limited edition prints left but not for long...

Highbury health: Alexander Technique

BY JAMES HOOD

James Hood speaks to Highbury residents VICTORIA WALSH and MIKAELA DAVIES about their Alexander Technique practice in Highbury Park and N7 and he tries it out for himself.

What is it?

The Alexander Technique is a method of releasing bodily tension. It is something you learn how to do rather than a treatment. It was devised by an actor, FM Alexander, at the end of the 19th Century. He had lost his voice for reasons that doctors were unable to explain and he decided to investigate for himself. He eventually discovered that his posture and the way he was using his body when he spoke were causing his difficulties. He learned how to use his body differently, and went on to teach others.

How do you learn it?

The teacher observes the pupil making simple movements - standing, sitting, walking, lying on a table. S/he comments, and gently adjusts the pupil's posture. No force is used: the essence of the technique is for the teacher to identify unhelpful habits of movement, and for the pupil to experience the correct alternative.

What was the trial session like?

My trial session was quiet and subtle. Also strange: all I did was stand, sit, and lie on a couch, while Vicky made

minor adjustments with me and checked how relaxed my neck, shoulders, arms and legs were. I certainly felt different at the time, but it was hard to imagine that these 40 minutes would have any lasting effect.

According to Vicky, Medical Research Council research recommends a course of six sessions. I was convinced enough to take this up. Time will tell.

What conditions is it best for?

It is often found to be helpful with back, neck and joint pain; tension and stiffness; respiratory and voice problems and difficulties in coping with stress. Its use is widespread among professionals in the performing arts and sports fields.

Mikaela's and Vicky's backgrounds

Mikaela took up the Alexander Technique because she suffered from depression, and Vicky because she had chronic pain when horse-riding. For both the technique was so successful in overcoming their difficulties that they decided to become teachers. Vicky now specialises in the Technique's application for horse riding. Vicky and Mikaela met while training. Mikaela has lived in Highbury all her life, and when Vicky (who is originally from the USA) said she was looking for somewhere to live, Mikaela recommended Highbury. They both enjoy living and working locally. They each have three years' training behind them.

More info...

The Alexander Technique is not available on the NHS, but Mikaela and Vicky offer concessions for students and the unemployed. For further details see www.alexandertechniquepractice.com, or email them at mail@alexandertechniquepractice.com.

PLANNING UPDATE

Bryantwood Rd residents band together

BY ED ALLEN

Building of social housing by Arsenal on the south side of Queensland Rd is expected to start soon. This building phase has been nicknamed 'the snake' probably because of the long wavy front facade of the new building. Those of us on the north side of Bryantwood Rd whose houses back onto the site have come together to support each other. The developer is lowering the ground level in order to build extra stories for the flats and we are worried about subsidence unless an adequate retaining wall is built.

We have held a public meeting attended by our ward councillors, council officials, a surveyor and over 20 residents. Contact between us and the developer is through the developer's surveyors and those appointed, individually, by each of us - with no single representative for those affected. All costs are being paid by the developer - Ashburton Trading Ltd in association with Newlon Housing Trust. The aim of our residents' group is to spread information and be ready to co-ordinate the responses of our individual surveyors when details of the boundary wall work are available.

Our group wants to ensure

- security and privacy
- that an acceptable new boundary wall is built
- that damage to gardens and houses is rectified and compensated and
- that disruption during demolition and building is kept to a minimum.

When the developer issues details of their plans we will call another meeting. In the meantime we are assembling a photomontage of the length of the existing wall using shots from as many houses as possible. For more information and/or to be involved contact one or other of

Chris Ashby - No 14 - 7609 5093 - chrisashby14@btinternet.com

Emma Jenkins - No 52 - 07801 102756 - jenquinn@btopenworld.com

Ed Allen - No 64 - 7607 4772 - edallen@waitrose.com

Cllr Phil Kelly, Chair of the East Area Planning Committee, who was not part of the Council team
Chris Eisen from SNAG (Stadium Neighbours Action Group),
George Black as a neighbour of the Sobell Centre and
Adam Caplin from Aubert Park

What was said

At the opening all the community spokespeople were shocked to hear the Council team withdraw their objections, saying they had reached an agreed position with the club.

The club had moved their position, offering coach parking in Ashburton Grove, which they had previously resisted. This will be available during and after the reconstruction of Ashburton Grove.

The Metropolitan Police spokesman was adamant that, for security reasons, coaches will not be allowed to park under the stadium as was originally planned. Council officers and Cllr Kelly proposed to investigate whether more advanced screening equipment could be obtained that would make parking under the stadium possible after all.

Community proposals

Most of the hearing was taken up with Arsenal presenting their position and being cross-examined by the community representatives. By the third day it was clear the coach parking scheme would be little different from previous arrangements except for how soon it would be up for renewal.

Representing the HCA, I requested an additional condition that Hornsey St and Drayton Park be used only twice each per season, in order to minimize the impact on residents. And George Black proposed an improved layout and management scheme for the Sobell Centre car park.

The final decision on 13 August included the condition put forward by the HCA. And council officers have been discussing George Black's proposal with him. So the hearing bore some fruit despite its bleak beginning.

Sport or play?

In July Arsenal agreed to increase the hours its sports centre will open to the local community from 40 to 52 hours a week. This is in compensation for Arsenal's planned reduction in outside play space for the club's new residential development.

Coach parking deal done

BY ROGER WRIGHT

Arsenal's appeal against the Council's refusal of its latest coach parking plans was heard 28-31 July by planning inspector Mr William Cunningham. The new scheme - agreed for three years rather than the customary one - is similar to previous arrangements but with two key modifications proposed by community representatives.

Who was there

The Community spokespeople were: myself from the HCA

News in Brief

★ Lexicographers go green

New words in the latest edition of the Collins English Dictionary include 'carborexic' 'a person obsessed with reducing their carbon footprint' and 'cragger' 'a member of a Carbon Rationing Action Group.'

Highbury is on-trend - with John Ackers of Highbury Grove being a founder member of the Islington CRAG. Islington CRAG's current annual upper limit for each member's carbon emissions is set at 3,600 kilos. If any member goes over that they must buy 'spare' units off their fellow craggers. Last year one Islington cragger had to pay £180 after a holiday in South America.

If this seems too deep green for some, Islington cragger Tom Hitchman is running a new scheme called Carbon Conversations that introduces people to reducing their carbon footprint gradually. He has invented a word of his own which describes himself 'carbonista' - someone who is passionate about sharing ideas on reducing their carbon footprint. If you would like to find out more email Tom at tomhitchman@yahoo.com

Or for more details on Islington CRAG see *HC News* No 50; www.carbonrationing.org.uk ; or email info@carbonrationing.org.uk

★ ...and so does Islington council

Islington council is at it too. It is one of the first UK local authorities to sign up to 10:10, which commits it to strive to cut its carbon footprint by 10% during 2010.

★ Action on Highbury Fields Vision

The inaugural meeting of the Highbury Fields Management Group, including a number of community representatives, was held in July at Christchurch chaired by Councillor Stacey. The group's role is to move the Highbury Fields Vision forward. This is a long-term strategy for the improvement of the Fields, being Islington's largest open space at 27.5 acres. The total cost of all desired works within the Vision is over £12 million. Only £1million is available as things stand, so the first task of the group is to set priorities.

Diary

Saturday 17 October

London's Greener Future - p1

19-25 October

Energy Savings Week
Enter the Green Living Centre
two-week challenge
Call 0800 953 1221

Tuesday 27 October 7 pm

Talk by Wild' author Jay
Griffin
Ecology Centre, Drayton Park
£2 on the door - Fundraiser
for Friends of Gillespie Park
For more details email
sue_smith8@talk21.com

Tuesday 27 October 7 pm

How to make curtain-linings
(without a sewing machine)
Green Living Centre workshop
To book 020 7527 4462

Saturday 31 October

Halloween fundraiser
Highbury Roundhouse
Disco-dancing; apple-bobbing;
face painting; mask-making;
barbecue plus witches' brew
Call 020 7359 5916

Friday 13 November 7pm

Ecology Centre Quiz Night
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for Friends of Gillespie Park
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The HCA represents over 900 residents and businesses on all aspects of living and working in Highbury, Lower Holloway and Finsbury Park.

To get in touch write to our PO Box or email
hcanews@hotmail.com
We would love to hear from you on anything Highbury-related.

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All change for *HC News*

The *HC News* design is changing slightly. This is partly to allow for the switch from envelopped newsletters to paper-saving address labels stuck straight onto the newsletter (see above). The November issue will be the first one without envelopes. The stylistic changes are also because we have a new designer - welcome to Lorie Karlin.



HCA stall success

The HCA stall raised over £90 through second-hand book sales and £70 through donations. We also signed up several new members bringing us to over 900 members for the first time.

Festival in the park

For the 23rd year running the rain held off on the day of the Gillespie Park Festival - Sunday 13 September. The festival was thronged with local residents and many from further afield - from Hackney to the USA.

Festival bands and food triumph

But the HCA was not the main attraction. As ever the Gillespie Park organisers had assembled an

impressive array of local bands and some wonderful food - both music and food being served on two sites. Those attending the main stage were fed and watered at the St Thomas' tea tent. I am very glad to have sampled a St Thomas' tea tent brownie (which was delicious) since the tea tent of 22 years' standing almost didn't happen due to 'crazy health and safety bureaucracy.' (See *Islington Tribune* 24 July). Help raise money for next year's festival by going to a fundraiser evening - see Diary p5. Editor.

Photo captions

Left: signing up a new HCA member
Middle: Rev Coles in vintage Gillespie frog Tshirt
Right: tea tent delicacies

Reader's letter: What a stink!

Dear HCA

Following your article on Stephens Ink last issue you might be interested to hear the comments of a volunteer gardener I met in the Olden Garden off Whistler St. She and her parents before her have always lived in the same house in Whistler St, and she remembers the stink emitted by the Stephens factory chimney when it was in operation - so they were pleased when it closed down!

Perhaps you know that Quill St was so named by the Gillespie Neighbourhood Forum when we were campaigning to save the land to turn it into Gillespie Park. We chose the name to make a link with Stephens Ink. It was a tough campaign: to make a green community asset out of the acres owned by British Rail which they had formerly used as a coal dump for the

supply of neighbouring houses. Mrs. Thatcher had insisted that the land should not be left unused, so British Rail had to sell it. The campaign had a tough task because we had no money, while the land was said to be worth a million pounds an acre, and was of course sought after by developers. It was a help when a botanist found a particular grass plant growing in what is now Gillespie Park; he said it was unique in England, which justified the site as being one of Special Scientific Interest. To the layman this grass plant looks entirely ordinary and indistinguishable from the rest of the grass!

Our campaign to save the land for the Park was partly successful - we won half the area, while the other half was acquired by developers and had big estates built on it.

Yours,
Angela Sinclair-Loutit
Highbury Hill