



HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

FROM THE HIGHBURY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

P.O. reneges on new Highbury Corner office

Thousands of pounds of council tax payer money potentially wasted

What is the best way to deal with an almost permanent queue at the local post office? Close the building for good, seems to be the answer in the case of the post office at Highbury Corner!

Lengthy preparations and high hopes, supported by local groups, with a couple of million pounds of taxpayers' money promised by Islington Council, has been the investment in the construction of a new post office. It was to be purpose-built to exacting standards, on the vacant site just across the road on the corner of Highbury Place and St. Paul's Road, next to the Marie Curie charity shop. The plans have all been dashed - by the Post Office!

As well as a new building, to be leased to Post Office Ltd, a very welcome new public square outside the station at Highbury and Islington would have been created.

The management of Post Office Limited have pulled the plug on the whole idea and scheduled the present building for closure, so wasting time, effort, tens of thousands of taxpayers' money in the planning and, quite possibly, a deal of goodwill from the general public towards the post office as a business.

If this affects you, consider supporting the Council's campaign to save the facility at Highbury Corner; there will have to be public consultation on the change proposed by Post Office Ltd. It is understood that the company has its sights on closing the current post

office opposite St. Mary's Church on Upper Street, too, and merging the two post offices into one, likely to be in the former Council offices almost opposite the Town Hall at 159-166 Upper Street.

ROBIN HULL

Tasty treats raise £1,000 for breast cancer charities!

Mouthwatering cakes and sweets, as well as flowers, raffles and badges were on offer at two stalls in the Highbury Barn shopping area on Saturday 30th October. The stalls were run by the To Be Established and Highbury Greengrocer teams and families in aid of breast cancer charities.

As of the Saturday evening, the To Be Established stall had raised an impressive £563.27. The stall at the greengrocer's had taken £429.80. The gifts to the donations boxes will not be known until the benefitting charities have opened them - sales were continuing in the greengrocer's the next day. Chrissy Watson won the cactus raffle, while the vegetable raffle was won by Charlie Hatcher.

Afternoon of medieval history

John of Gaunt, his third wife Katherine (subject of the eponymous novel by Anya Seton), St Paul's Cathedral and medieval food will be the subject of a St Katherine's Day Symposium from 2.30pm - 5pm at Christ Church Highbury. Tickets are £6.00, £4.50 for concessions. Email grahamcoult@yahoo.com for tickets, or for further information see <http://www.katherineswynfordsociety.org.uk> or <http://www.iahs.org.uk/content/view/116/9/>



See our guide to stress-free Christmas shopping on pages 4 & 5.



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 or write to PO Box 43396, N5 9AD.

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

Pilates Classes

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"Against Mussolini: Art and the Fall of a Dictator"

The exhibition at the Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art, 39a, Canonbury Square, N1. Review by DEREK WHITEHEAD

The Fascist State in Italy from 1925, which was personified by Mussolini, was almost universally supported in Italy until the fall of Mussolini in 1943. Outside Italy, particularly in the USA, it was generally approved of until his pact with Hitler and the introduction of Race Laws. During the Fascist Regime up to the Second World War this general acclamation gave little scope for art as criticism of the Regime; and the State had the power to curb any critics. Of course the Regime was supported by almost all the population and the Catholic Church.

Because Mussolini was such a phenomenon in Italy during this period it is perhaps difficult for us in the UK to imagine how this leader, so praised and flattered in his heyday (not only by Italians) is now generally regarded here as a buffoon, as portrayed in the cartoons in the exhibition (mostly by British artists, including David Low's "Sad Tale of a Punctured Chin").

The exhibits date from the thirties but the bulk were produced during the Second World War and include oil paintings, watercolours, pen and ink drawings, charcoal drawings, postcards, cartoons and sculptures. My own favourite is an ink drawing "Fallen Partisan 1944". The exhibition is well worth a visit. There is an excellent (expensive) catalogue and much information on display about the exhibits.

There is also a film which gives background and details of the Fascist Regime from 1925 to 1945. I think it essential to see the film in order to understand the period.

Planning

In May this year Bay Media applied for planning permission to display advertising banners on 49 lampposts in Benwell Road and Drayton Park. The association objected to the application, as did many individual members, citing the adverse effect on the street scene and the undesirability of the intrusion of advertising into residential areas. Some of us were also worried that if this application was successful, further applications in respect of other through roads might be hard to resist.

On 21st October, planning permission was refused, which suggests that local objections do carry some weight with the planning committee.

NEW:

11+ Classes in Highbury, N5

Saturday morning & after-school, 11+ classes in (1) English, (2) Maths and (3) Verbal & Non-Verbal Reasoning, starting September 2010. Max class size: 6. All 11+ topics covered. Choose from 1-3 classes on either day. 12 week courses, one a term. Run by local, prep school teacher with 17 years' tutoring experience.

Contact Denise Byrne on 020 7 226 6753.

E-mail: denisebyrne@english11and13plus.net

About Harry Stopes-Roe

Finsbury Park resident Jonathan Stopes-Roe is the son of the distinguished humanist and secularist Harry Stopes-Roe.

HCA's TOM RUBENS (also a Finsbury Park resident) recently interviewed Jonathan about his father's life and work.

TR: What relation is Harry to Marie Stopes, the pioneer advocate of birth-control?

JSR: He is her son, in fact her only child. Incidentally, Marie's first birth-control clinic was in Marlborough Rd., in upper Holloway.

TR: How old were you when you were first able to understand the extent of Harry's involvement in the secular-humanist movement?

JSR: I was still at school, aged 13-14. As a result of Harry's influence, I had long arguments with my school's Divinity master. Later, in my early 20s, I was active in the Birmingham Humanist Group, of which Harry was (and still is) a member.

TR: What have been the chief lines of Harry's activity in the humanist movement?

JSR: Harry's abiding passion has been to develop a naturalistic-evolutionary basis for ethics, one which dispenses entirely with the idea of God as necessary to morality. His work on systematising arguments for this position is on-going.

TR: What are his main publications?

JSR: Many articles in journals, including the 'Ethical Record,' published by South Place Ethical Society; and chapters in books consisting of contributions by several authors.

TR: Is he active at present?

JSR: Nothing will ever stop Harry from thinking and writing. He recently underwent life-saving heart surgery, so he is not as active as he used to be; his mental powers are weakened, and he has manual difficulty in writing. But still he keeps going.

TR: What else should our readers know about Harry?

JSR: His distinguishing feature is his determination to pursue arguments right through to their logical conclusions. And the conclusions he reaches are usually effective ones.

He was originally a scientist; his first degree was in Astrophysics, from London University. Though he was never a practising physicist, he displayed a great deal of natural practical ability, and in this respect has influenced me a great deal. After completing his first degree, he did a Ph D in Philosophy. From then on, his main concern was the History and Philosophy of Science, a subject in which he lectured for many years in the Extra-Mural Dept. of Birmingham University.

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The Festive Shopping Stress Reduction Plan...

Are you stressing about Christmas? Shopping in Highbury can greatly reduce stress and exhaustion in the run-up to the festivities. You can walk to the shops, find a wide range of gifts, and surprise family and friends with different gifts showing care and imagination has gone into your choices.

We've put together an alternative Christmas Shopping guide, with suggestions which are intended to reduce the hassle for readers while bringing pleasure and surprise to the recipients of the gifts. We also have some tips on the all-important food and drink!

Bird-inspired Jewellery: Handmade in Highbury



CHRISTINE AT HER JEWELLERY BENCH

Looking for a Christmas present for a wildlife lover? How about a piece of Christine Kaltoft's bird-inspired jewellery?...Christine started keeping chickens in her Finsbury Park garden during the long summer holidays of her three-year jewellery BA at London Met University. Christine's hens - Lottie and Lily - are her muses, each with their own personality. Lottie is a real madam while Lily is quiet and peace-loving. Christine says her hens bring out her playful side and you can tell this from the joyful swirls of her jewellery.

She works mostly in sterling silver but also with gems, gold and sometimes wood. Christine first sketches her hens, capturing them strutting, pecking, flapping and preening, and then from these drawings develops her work.

Jewellery is a mid-life career change for Christine. She spent years as a chief executive in the charity sector before choosing in 2004 to

follow her dream of becoming a jeweller. She was rewarded for her leap of faith with first prize from the Goldsmiths Company for her degree show collection in 2007 and has since participated in numerous exhibitions around the country.

Prices for her jewellery start at £35 for silver studs. You can buy from her website or for more choice come to one of her shows - see below. You can also follow Christine on her blog at www.christinekaltoft.co.uk or view a wide sample of her work at www.flickr.com/photos/christinekaltoft



SILVER NEST PENDANT - This is a capsule nest pendant in silver. It's hollow so the wearer can choose whether to thread a silver cable through and wear it short, or alternatively thread a long cord through it and wear it long.

Christmas shows where you can buy Christine Kaltoft's jewellery

Designer Jewellers Group
12 November to 5 January 12-8pm,
Barbican Centre, Level G
32 jewellery-makers including 6 new graduates and a whole shelf of

cufflinks.
No entry fee.
Private view 22 November: 10% discount all day on all work.
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www.designerjewellersgroup.co.uk/news.htm

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(christine@christinekaltoft.co.uk)
www.craftcentral.org.uk/madeinclerkenwell
CEINWEN JONES

Christmas shopping with a healthy walk

Fish and Cook, the stationers and printers, have a good range of artist's materials, as well as cards and stationery at 3 Blackstock Road. At Eighty seven you can find furniture, lighting and also suitcases and travel bags, as well as a range of African masks. Their phone number is 07751 906 739 if you want to find out more.

A cornucopia of wonders confronts you as you enter **Wools and Crafts**- a shop situated innocuously amongst the takeaways and pubs on Blackstock Road near Mountgrove Road. That's according to HCA committee member Diane Burridge.

Set up over 30 years ago by the Vig family, this shop is a treasure trove of wools, cottons, clothes dyes, tapestry wools, needlecraft kits and embroidery threads...And the list goes on - toy stuffings, beads and sequins, stain removers, stencils, buttons and magnifiers.....

Regular customers come from near and far- including Wood Green, south London and Finchley- some of whom are teachers in **crafts** and **design**. ➤

With the recession and an increasing interest in home made goods, Wools and Crafts is such an asset for Highbury residents. 'More people are going back to **knitting** and people want to create something **different**-including **teenagers** interested in experimenting with **fashion**,' explained Mrs Vig. We need to be so grateful that this type of shop is in our area - so rare nowadays.

Contact details: 169 Blackstock Road, telephone **020 7359 1274**, website www.woolsandcrafts.co.uk

Just after the bend in Blackstock Road there is an interesting little cluster of shops. **Gathering Moss** at number 193 specialises in **handcrafted furniture** made from **reclaimed wood**, but also stocks **chandeliers, crockery, plant holders, bags and cards** - contact details can be found at:

<http://www.gatheringmoss.co.uk/>. Out of the Attic at number 195 is a (tasteful and elegant) Aladdin's cave of **antiques,**

English, Swedish and American furniture, occasional 'must have' piece of artwork of **local artists, original paintings, prints, glassware, pottery and art studio pieces,**

and they say you can find some items for as little as **£5.00**. Further details: <http://www.outoftheatticantiques.com/>. Then there is the **charity book shop** with its wide range of books in two premises on either side of the road (telephone **020 7359 0294**).

Local resident Liz Murray recommends **Louis Farouk** at 113 Highbury Park - it's full of unusual **jewellery, scarves** etc at very reasonable prices.

Up the Hill at **Highbury Vintners Wine shop** you can obtain **corporate gifts** for your customers and clients,

as well as personal gifts and refreshments for your entertaining. The team can make up **Christmas boxes** of single or multiple bottles (for example **wines, ports, champagnes or single malts**) which can be collected in person or **couriered around the UK**.

Highbury Vintners **gift vouchers** are very popular, and can solve any problems with choosing appropriate gifts, the vouchers are available in multiples of **£10.00**.

Parties are catered for, and for those customers who buy a **case** (12 bottles of wine which can be mixed) or more not only get **free delivery** and a **10% discount**, but can also **hire glasses, ice buckets** etc.

Every bottle of wine sold at Highbury Vintners comes from smaller producers and is not available through mass market outlets such as supermarkets. Grower **champagnes** are also a speciality - champagne makers grow their **own grapes** rather than buying them in, and the quality is often better than the **big names**, as well as usually being somewhat cheaper. There are over 200 **specialist spirits** to choose from, and also a good range of **specialist beers and artisan ciders**.

Wine tastings are held every **Friday**, are free-of-charge up to Christmas, and often include winemakers educating you about their particular wine. If you want to learn more about wine, you can join the **wine club**. Every wine features notes on the shelf in the shop written in an accessible style, and people come in to read about the wines, treating the store as a **wine library**.

A new **ecommerce facility** is soon to be launched on the Highbury Vintners web site: www.highburyvintners.co.uk, and you can also ring them on **020 7226 1347** to get

advice and discuss your requirements.

Further along Highbury Park **Five Boys** have their usual wide range of wares, **mince pies, Christmas puddings** (including gluten-free varieties), **food giftboxes, chestnuts, chocolate, biscuits, dried fruit and cake ingredients, cake decorations, nuts, the vegetarian ranges,** as well as **candles, essential oils, hair and beauty care, and mulled wine ingredients**.

Da Mario's have the **cheeses, charcuterie** and other **delicatessen** offerings, and their speciality **Italian produce**. There are also the rarified **cheeses** at the **Fromagerie**.

The **Greengrocers**, which is under new management, are offering **stress free flower arranging** with their **as if by magic** service. Katie is a **trained arranger**, you can bring in your dirty vase, have it **cleaned and fresh flowers** put in. Drop off Monday to Thursday for collection Friday - you pay for the flowers, the vase cleaning is free.

Vegetable boxes are also available for delivery. There are **Christmas trees and garlands** of course. **Apples** come from specialist growers in Essex.

The two newsagents, **Lees** at number 22 and **Raymonds** just opposite have **cards, gift wrap, stationery, decorations and confectionary**. At 20 Highbury Park, **Woodland Hardware** stock a wide range of **tools, cookware, crockery and electrical goods** which make excellent gifts. Over the road there is Godfreys of course for high quality **meat, poultry, baked meats and cheeses**. **Greggs** do a great range of **breads, cakes, pastries**, and of course **mince pies!**

To Be Established is a wonderful place to do your present shopping - it is the retail version of the Tardis, they manage to pack so much in to a small space! **Vintage**

lamps and candelabra, toys, games, books, a new range of jewellery, handbags and bags, purses and wallets, slippers and shoes, table decorations, Christmas decorations, balloons, crackers, cards and giftwrap. You should be able to tick off quite a lot of your list from the range!

Wine Rack in Highbury is now owned by Gerry's of Old Compton Street, which means they stock and can order unusual **spirits and liqueurs** which would make great Christmas gifts.

In the run up to Christmas Elaine, Paul and colleagues will be stocking over **500 wines**, many from smaller suppliers, with offers including **2 for £15.00** and **2 for £20.00**. There is also an unusual range of **world beers**, as well as **traditional ales**, from small specialist producers.

There are 40 different **Scottish malts**, also **Irish Whiskies**, unusual **vodkas**, and a range of **ports**.

Free wine tastings, 'try before you buy' and also tastings run by suppliers will all be on offer in the run-up to the festivities. If you want further information or advice you can contact **Paul or Elaine** on **020 7226 2285**, or email them at highburypark@winerack.co.uk. The web site also has further information and you can sign up to be kept informed about offers and tastings: www.winerack.co.uk

So there you have it. All your Christmas shopping done in Highbury during a good healthy walk, with lots of cafes, restaurants and even some pubs where you can catch your breath and have an enjoyable snack or meal. No stressed ill-tempered crowds, no heaving tubes and buses, you will support local traders and your Christmas shopping carbon footprint will be greatly reduced!



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Highbury Roundhouse

Somewhere in the Town Hall, the future of The Highbury Roundhouse is being decided. Ultimately that decision will be made on financial grounds.

After a decade of neglect by the Council, in August, the District Surveyor closed the back building of our community centre, declaring it unsafe. Our own structural engineers disagreed but the DS would only permit total demolition or a partial demolition with repairs.

We depend on the back building, its Hall, Youth Club, Dance Studio and kitchens, not only to accommodate most of the services that the Roundhouse provides, but to contribute a significant part of the income we need to run the organisation. Without it, our operations will have to be drastically reduced.

Currently our activities are scattered over six different temporary sites. But we can't continue on that basis. The Trustees have argued that the cost of repairing the building, albeit with a reduced capacity, would be relatively cheap and would ensure our survival for the foreseeable future.

Of course we're looking at every option that will enable us to continue delivering our services to the Highbury community.

But our simple message to the Council has to be, "Send in the builders - not the bulldozers".

TONY MILLER
Secretary of The Highbury Roundhouse

Letter to Editor

Dear Editor

I'd like to tell you about a happy experience I had recently with The Master Cobbler in Highbury Barn. I had a dilemma - among the things I inherited from my mother was a Delsey suitcase with a combination lock whose number I could not work out. I tried every number I could possibly think of that my mother might have used - birthdays, old addresses and phone numbers and nothing worked. I looked on the internet for clues as to what to do about it. But nothing. Then I remembered Nicolette Jones's recommendation in a previous HC News of The Master Cobbler who had gone the extra mile for her and stitched a facsimile of Samuel Plimsoll's signature onto her plimsolls. So I took the case along to them. They not only solved my problem for me, somehow opening the case and resetting the combination lock to zero but they didn't even charge me for it! It made me feel like I was living in a village not near the centre of London. Thank you Master Cobbler.

Yours,
CEINWEN JONES, off Highbury Corner N5

Draughtproofing tips

With winter almost here, for those in one of Highbury's many well-ventilated Victorian homes, it could be a good time to check out Islington council's free guide to draughtproofing. 18% of a dwelling's heat is lost through windows; yet you don't need double-glazing to cut this right down - there are many cheaper alternatives - see www.islington.gov.uk/draughtproofing

This includes a video showing you how to draughtproof a window and a link to the Better Archway Forum's list of stockists for the materials you need. If you prefer face-to-face instruction there are some free workshops coming up (2 November, 11am-12.30, Hargrave House, Hargrave Road; and 24 November, 6.30-8.30pm Green Living Centre).

For more information contact Lucy Rees, Green Living Officer, on 020 7527 8329.