



HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

FROM THE HIGHBURY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Drayton Park Sidings - biodiversity massacre!



stretches from the Parkland Walk, through Gillespie Park, along the railway embankment to the Drayton Park sidings and from there to the allotments and the Olden Garden opposite, and finally over to Highbury Fields. Its value to wildlife is immeasurable.

The site, which is adjacent to the northbound platform, had seven years growth of trees and scrub including Silver Birch, Willow, Rowan and Ash along with Buddleja davidii beloved by butterflies.

What is most upsetting is that this action took place during the bird breeding season - some species will have had their nests destroyed in the devastation and it's quite likely their second and third brood nestlings will have been killed. It is an offence against The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built. It is however difficult to prove especially as NR assured us that their contractors Railscape had surveyed the site before starting work. We have taken advice from the RSPB and the Metropolitan Police Service - Wildlife Crime Unit.

The excuse from Network Rail for this devastation was that the trees were cut back for safety reasons. All very reasonable you would imagine but instead they have turned the so called evacuation area

into an obstacle course with the redundant inspection pits covered in vegetation and stumps of cut down trees which will hinder fleeing passengers in the event of an emergency.

The Council's Principle Parks Manager contacted NR and was told that they were not aware the site had SINC status. He was concerned that the schedule of works did not tally with that of the Council and we understand that he has asked for a copy of the schedule and also of Railscape's survey. There's also the possibility of a meeting between interested parties to discuss the future management of the site.

In the meantime NR have again entered the site and started to clear the inspection pits, however, instead of removing the arisings from the site they are shredding the wood and then spreading the chippings over sections of the site suppressing all growth beneath. The mulch, used in this way, will take at least two or three years to break down, only the trees and shrubs will break through with no understory.

It is not just wildlife that is affected. Passengers on the station platform will no longer see the trees or hear the sound of bird song; instead there is just rubbish and graffiti to look at whilst waiting for the train.

PAT TUSON

On a Saturday morning in late July, just as we were having breakfast, a neighbour rushed round to tell us that the former Drayton Park Station Sidings, a designated site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) in Islington, was being raised to the ground by Network Rail contractors.

We tried desperately to contact Islington Council, not just the Greenspace team but anybody, only to find that the Council had closed down for the weekend.

The sidings (the tracks were taken up quite some time ago) are part of an ecological corridor that



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.

New community noticeboard at Highbury Barn



A community noticeboard was planned for the newly upgraded Highbury Barn square at the side of the pub. It has now been installed, and very impressive it is too (see picture). Danny Michelson of La Fromagerie has been appointed to look after it on behalf of the Highbury Barn traders, and holds the key.

Anyone interested in posting notices on it, should get in touch with Danny to arrange things: La Fromagerie, 30 Highbury Park London N5 2AA
Tel: 020 7359 7440
Email: info@lafromagerie.co.uk

New online neighbourhood noticeboard

A new online neighbourhood noticeboard for Islington has been launched by James Sweetman and his brother.

Members of the Community can use it to post information about their group, news and events all for free. It just takes two seconds to set up a profile, according to James.

If you have any questions about the service give James a call on 07876 065 206, or email him at: james.sweetman@stickyboard.co.uk

Web: www.stickyboard.co.uk

Blog: www.teamsticky.blogspot.com

together organisations from right across Islington to celebrate the Earth and our place in it.

At the Highbury Earth Festival, models of the planet made by Highbury Fields School art students will be carried in procession, there will be music, food and speeches - from Polly Higgins, local politicians and from many members of the local community - all will be invited to say why they love their place on the planet: Highbury. Activities planned so far include:

- Planting a River of Flowers to provide highways for pollinating insects;
- Bike doctor's clinics;
- Thrifty Chic: new clothes from cast-offs;
- Making a 'tapestry' of local suggestions and ideas about Highbury;
- Mapping local 'unowned' fruit trees;
- What to Do With 'Waste' Food;
- Bike-powered smoothie-making and paint-splattering;
- Nature walking in the Fields: listen to the trees;
- Many stalls with information about local Transition-related activities.

The organisers would like as many local groups as possible to take part - even if you only want to occupy part of a stall to share information about what you do. Please get in touch with Lindy Sharpe with your ideas: lindysharpe@blueyonder.co.uk

For more information on the Transition Network, see:

www.transitionnetwork.org/

For information on global events planned for 24 September, see www.moving-planet.org

Ecology Centre activities

There are a couple of new dance classes starting at the Ecology Centre in Gillespie Park, Superfly and zumba, and there are also Tai chi and yoga classes.

The schedule is:

- **Monday evenings**
Zumba fitness and dance

7 - 8pm
contact Naomi -
07771607486

- **Tuesday evenings**
Superfly fitness and dance 7-8pm and 8.30 - 9.30pm
contact Lillian
07908849921

- **Wednesday evenings**
Tai Chi
7-9pm
contact Miltos
07799773959

- **Thursday evenings**
Yoga - 6-7.30pm and 7.40 - 9.10pm
contact Sarah
07812785237



Transition Highbury Earth Festival

Plans are advancing for Transition Highbury's Highbury Earth Festival, on Highbury Fields on 24 September, noon-3pm - and the organisers are

hoping that still more members of the community will get involved.

On 24th Sept 2011 events will take place all over Britain and the world to show our care for the planet, to call for global carbon targets, to call for the creation of green jobs, and to start building popular pressure for the success of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro,

Brazil, in June 2012.

Highbury resident, international lawyer and environmental campaigner Polly Higgins, a member of Transition Highbury, is booked to address the assembled heads of state in Rio to call for the creation in law of a fifth crime against peace, Ecocide. The Highbury Earth Rally Festival will support her role at the Earth Summit, by bringing

To freeze or not to freeze?

Do your dinner guests ever leave their coat (and woolly hat) on? If so, join the club. Although it is not one I plan to be a member of for much longer. Not now I have employed the services of Highbury's Antony Melville at the Victorian Terrace Energy Reduction Initiative (Victeri).

I have been thinking about green home improvements for a while. Unfortunately rising gas and electricity prices - and my increasingly-frank-as-they-age dinner guests - will not allow me the luxury of putting off 'doing something' about my draughty Victorian abode any longer.

It was with trepidation that I called up Antony to ask for an eco assessment of my dwelling, dreading what extreme refitting of my house he might recommend. To my delight he took a thoroughly practical approach. He listed in order of priority what I might choose to do to green my house with indicative prices for each task. He made clear which jobs would give me most value for money. And he is willing to advise on contractors who can do specific tasks. It turns out for me draught-proofing is the quickest, simplest way of making my home a cosier place, including stopping up the gaps between my floorboards. Victeri themselves offer a draught-proofing service for a couple of hundred pounds of which I am planning to avail myself before the winter sets in.

The potentially powerful impact of easy-to-implement measures was brought home to me during the Eco Open House weekend in June run by Victeri. In a beautifully-remodelled home in Finsbury Park Road green pioneers who have undertaken 20 years of environmentally-friendly renovations told me the one single thing that has made the biggest difference to them was creating a very thick lined curtain to hang over the front door.

However, more elaborate - and expensive - eco measures are something I aspire to. I would like a share of the glee I saw in Eco Open House home-owners' eyes when they talked of watching the electricity meter going backwards as the National Grid took up the excess energy generated by their very own solar panels. But for me right now stopping the draughts before winter arrives is my priority objective. Otherwise I could find my dinner guests making excuses to stay away...

For more information:

info@victeri.co.uk;

tel: 020 8348 2896; mobile: 07732 628 174

www.victeri.co.uk

Article by Ceinwen Jones

HCA at 25th Gillespie Park Festival

This year is the 25th Gillespie Park Festival - it's Silver Jubilee - and the HCA will have a stall at this landmark and popular local event which takes place on 11 September.

On the HCA Stall, open from 1pm to 5pm there will be books and other items for sale, as well as the opportunity to sign up for membership.

If you have books or other items to donate for sale on the stall, or if you have any questions, email the Association on: hcanews@hotmail.com

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£80-90 for a 3-storey Victorian house.

Exercise for better quality of life and health

Your editor uses exercise to manage psoriasis, and psoriatic arthritis, with classes and guidance from the Highbury Pool gym team. Over a period of around 7 years I have had sessions with a personal trainer (Patricia Braz, who we will talk to in the next issue), Andrew Ktorides and Tyrone Ballinger - all of whom are excellent), interspersed with periods of just cycling and swimming.

I have recently completed the Steps programme (Support Target Evolve Progress Succeed), as a refresher after a period of not going to the gym because of workload. The gym team understand how the body functions and how to devise plans that are good for us. They also understand how to motivate people in subtle, clever ways - and believe me, it works! I really notice the difference between having expert guidance (and motivation) and exercising without guidance. I see the relatively modest cost as an investment in my long-term health and wellbeing.

Exercise helps you feel better, perform better, cope with daily challenges better and feel less stressed. It also has benefits to wider society - fitter people put less of a strain on the health service, because overall they have fewer health problems. What is involved in a fitness programme and how can it help you?

Expert advice

I currently train with Tyrone (Ballinger). He is very intelligent and professional, and pushes you to do better without being discouraging or sapping your confidence. Expert advice is needed in order to do suitable exercises properly, to maximise benefits and minimise the risk of damage. I talked to Tyrone about his work as a Gym Instructor, and the benefits to those whom the Highbury Pool gym team train.

I asked Tyrone firstly about people's motivations for following a course of exercise. "They have a goal that they want to achieve," he says. "It can be an aesthetic goal, or be performance or health related. That's what brings people in."

I then asked what happens when somebody signs up for a training programme. "When somebody comes in, you try to make them feel comfortable and build up their confidence. Then you design a specific programme which is tailored to their needs and goals."

"Generally, the greatest success stories are not those who are lifting very heavy weights, running very fast, or long distances. Those who achieve most are the ones that have had something catastrophic happen in health terms. You watch them grow in confidence as they deal with the challenges that life has thrown at them. It's huge progress for them and it impacts on their family and friends too. Exercise helps them function and attain a better quality of life. That is the most rewarding aspect," Tyrone concludes.

Exercise for health conditions or better health

I also talked to Elliot Rogers, the Gym Manager, about some of the aims of the customers he works with. "One of my clients had a stroke and lost all feeling down one side. Over the last few years, we have worked on improving her muscle condition. Today she has just walked 10 paces without a walking stick for the first time since her stroke." ➤

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Exercise for better quality of life and health continued from page 4

I asked if there is any special equipment to help those with challenging medical conditions. "Some customers with Multiple Sclerosis choose to use the Power Plate machine as the vibration training sends signals without having to move the muscles. A plate moves and down and from side-to-side, which stimulates the muscle fibres."

"Since 2009 we have run an Exercise On Referral programme in partnership with NHS Islington. Local GPs refer residents who would benefit from becoming more active eg, for weight management or improving long term health conditions..."

The ethos of the training programmes

The fitness training is not just for people with medical problems though is it? I asked Elliot about what else is on offer. "One of the main activities we pride ourselves on is the Steps programme, which includes six one-to-one sessions with a Gym Instructor", said Elliot. "Over the past 12 years, gym membership in the UK has stayed at a steady 12% . The Steps programme helps to educate members about their attitude to exercise."

So how does the team support members? "We set SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely)," said Elliot. "Everyone needs a specific goal, a reason for exercising - it is a question of breaking it down and identifying their motivation. A key

principle is that the member sets their own goals. "

"Our motto is "no failure, only feedback." If you set a goal which isn't realistic and you don't achieve it, you haven't failed, you just have to modify it."

"We encourage our staff to interact with members as much as possible to help people feel comfortable and help them build exercise into their busy lives. We find that the gym team taking an interest makes a big difference - chatting to members and encouraging them to help people get the best out of exercising."

Setting realistic goals

Next, I talked to Andrew Ktorides about setting goals, firstly asking the obvious question: why have goals?

"It is easier to train," Andrew explained. Goals offer a focus and encourage a determination to achieve. If you sign up to a programme, you are looking for continuous improvement."

I asked how you go about setting goals. "You try to break down the goal. Where is the customer now? What is their fitness level and state of health? Where do they want to be in 3 months, 6 months, a year's time?"

How do the staff assess where customers are now? "We do that through having a general assessment, checking muscular strength, assessing posture," Andrew said. Exercise changes the bodyshape."

"Once you have established

somebody's fitness level, you then devise a realistic programme which will suit their needs. Gym Instructors and Personal Trainers can offer expert advice and encouragement. You need to have a balanced programme - it is not just about building muscle."

"I've trained people for half marathons, 5km and 10km runs. If somebody wanted to train for mountain climbing, I could take them to the necessary fitness level. I train people for triathlons and for the London to Brighton Cycle Challenge. I have also trained people to the necessary level for football, rugby, tennis, and golf (including Power Play).

"We have a piece of equipment called a VIPR. This is basically about functional body training. It is like a tube or a piece of underground drainpipe with holes. You use it to do different movement patterns - e.g. shoulder press, squat, etc.

So why not try some exercise therapy? Long-term, it brings you a greater boost and benefits than retail therapy...I hope people will react to reading this article by feeling the benefits of guided exercises themselves.

To find out more visit: www.aquatera.org/highbury-pool-and-fitness-centre or call: 020 7704 2312

Highbury Pool and Fitness Centre is managed by Aquaterra Leisure, a charity which works for community health and wellbeing. The organization manages public leisure facilities in Islington and in Bath & North East Somerset in partnership with the two local authorities.

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Tony Benn unveils Peasant's Revolt plaque in Highbury Barn

As we mentioned in the previous issue, the first Islington People's Plaque commemorates the Peasant's Revolt of 1381, and Tony Benn did the unveiling in June.



Mr Benn emphasised the importance of the power to dissent. "The Peasant's Revolt was about the Poll Tax. One of the perpetrators (Sir Robert Hales, Lord/Grand Prior of the Knights Hospitallers of England - the Order of St John - and Lord High Treasurer of England) lived in a big house in Highbury - the revels burned it down.

He also said that when you read about the history of Islington, you read about the history of the whole country, and mentioned key people and events. These included the Chartists who met here in 1851 (their movement campaigned for an extension of the franchise to include the working classes) and that Mary Wollstonecraft was an Islington resident, of course she wrote the "Vindication of the Rights of Women."

In a personal message to HCA Newsletter readers Mr Benn said: "Most people sweat their guts out creating wealth which is in the hands of a few. The battle is not over. We have

to continue to move towards a world where the wealth is more evenly distributed."

"The interesting thing about local history is that it is our earlier struggles from which we learn what we need to do now. Local history means so much more than national history. The "Peoples' Plaque" is a brilliant idea!" he continued.

Fairness Commission and Minimum Wage

The editor sent a Freedom of Information request to the Council asking, for both temporary and permanent Council Staff and temporary and permanent employees, of organisations which provide services to or on behalf of the Council what percentage is a) above the minimum wage, b) on the minimum wage and c) below the minimum wage, with evidence.

The response we received said that all employees both permanent and temporary are paid above the minimum wage. Islington Council has formally adopted the London Living Wage (LLW) and last year brought the cleaning contract in-house, so all 150 building cleaners now receive the Living Wage at no extra cost to the tax payer. Islington Council says it also applies LLW to agency workers.

We asked for further information on how the policy would be applied to contractors and sub-

contractors. We were told that any organisation entering into a contract with the Council will be expected to pay its staff at least the National Minimum Wage and ensure that its sub contractors do like wise.

Clock Tower - need to raise money for maintenance

Time passes, and it seems that Highbury residents are listening when it comes to the state of the Victoria Jubilee Clock Tower at the top of Highbury Hill.

We have received a letter from local resident Joan Bennette on the Clock Tower. She suggests we should ask for sponsors who are of the same mind as Alfred Hutchinson, to celebrate the Queen's 50th anniversary by giving an annual subscription of, say, £25, with their names to go on the circlet of names, and the fund to be managed by the Council.

HCA committee member John Egan suggests we find 1000 people to raise (or give) £60 each.

HCA is holding various discussions on how the repair and maintenance of this important local landmark might be achieved. If you wish to make a contribution or help with fundraising, please contact HCA on: hcanews@hotmail.com or at the PO Box address.

Editor to stand down

After two years producing Highbury Community News the editor, Graham Coult, has decided to step down. The HCA Committee would like to express their thanks to Graham for all his hard work, particularly for ensuring each issue was filled with interesting articles and photographs about Highbury. We wish Graham well and hope he will continue to contribute articles in the future.

Can you help us edit 'the news'?

The HCA is on the lookout for local people to help produce and edit 'the News'. Highbury Community News is produced five times a year and as you have seen from this issue, contains stories of interest to anyone living in Highbury - news, local history, people profiles, reviews and other articles are all included.

We'd like to hear from anyone in Highbury who could help out - from contributing articles, photographs, ideas and even becoming the editor! For further information, please contact the HCA by writing to PO Box 43396 or emailing hcanews@hotmail.com