



HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

FROM THE HIGHBURY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Shop Locally this Christmas

The festive season is upon us and so may I suggest that we are all better off if we shop locally at Christmas; continuing to use those shops we have used throughout the year.

Let's start with the Christmas dinner; whether you have a turkey, or another sort of poultry, or a joint of meat, Frank Godfrey opposite the Highbury Barn will provide it - as his family has been doing for more than a hundred years. His sausages are world-renowned and the shelves in the shop are heaving with relishes to add that final touch.

David of Highbury Butchers at 183 Blackstock Road also offers

a range of meat and poultry to suit all tastes and has earned good reviews for customer service.

For vegetables Mrs Lovell's Greengrocers, will be offering all the fruit and vegetables

anyone can need plus Christmas trees and flowers. They are located just across the recently renovated square from the Highbury Barn itself. White Brothers will be equally able to your needs in their traditional store on Blackstock Road. And if you are looking for flowers, either as a gift or to make your home even more beautiful, try Miss Pem at 223 Blackstock Road, a welcome new addition to our local shops.

Most of us like to finish our Christmas dinner by choosing from a

well-stocked cheese board and Danny Michelson will help you make the right selections at La Fromagerie on Highbury Park.



Danny is also offering jams, chutneys, cakes and biscuits.

A couple of doors away Da Mario is a traditional Italian-style delicatessen with a wide selection of English and continental cheeses. This is another shop renowned for their friendly staff and located at 34 Highbury Park.

I cannot write about food without mentioning Five Boys at 17 Highbury Park. Is it possible to stock more lines within such a small floor area? They describe themselves as "a drugstore and health foods retailer" but they are much more. A lot of the food is organic and the staff know exactly what they have and where it is.

For something to drink before, during or after your meal look no further than Highbury Vintners at 71 Highbury Park. They stock 1,000 wines from around the World, as well as 150 ales and beers. They also stock all the spirits you could need.

For most of us Christmas starts with buying Christmas cards. The last traditional stationer left in the area, Fish & Cook at 3 Blackstock Road has a selection of cards, wrapping paper, as well as calendars and diaries.

Mr and Mrs Patel of Raymonds Newsagents at 5 Highbury Park are

selling Macmillan Cancer Support cards, as well as wrapping paper and gift tags.

For all those last minute gifts why not try To Be Established at 1 Highbury Park has some out of the ordinary gifts as well as cards and wrapping paper. Woodland Hardware, opposite, has small electrical goods, hardware and Christmas lights. Do look in at Louis Farouk, Out of the Attic, Gathering Moss, and Wools and Crafts - you are sure to find something. If you should feel in need of refreshment, there are two branches of Cinnamon Village to provide you with tea, coffee and pastries and perhaps remind you to take some of that excellent coffee home with you. Alternatively, look in at the Clock Cafe, renowned for its friendly service.

And don't forget Farm Direct (www.farm-direct.com). They will be offering poultry, fruit, vegetables and freshly-landed fish this festive season, as well as Christmas trees.



Order online for delivery or collection.

If you think you might eat or drink too much over the festive season, then buy your aspirins in advance at C & H Chemists at 179 Blackstock Road or Highbury Pharmacy at 14 Highbury Park. You may also spot a last-minute present. We need our local stores - use them, don't lose them!

JOHN EAGAN



I shop local!



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.

The Localism Bill and how it may affect London

Periodically the newsletter will chart progress on the implications of the Localism Bill and how it will affect the planning framework for our city and our area.

The Draft National Planning Policy Framework

The Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) attempted to consolidate all 25 previous Government Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Statements into one document. This document draft was circulated for consultation in late July 2011 and closed for comment in October. Newspapers and bodies, including the London Forum - a voluntary association of societies such as Highbury Community Association (HCA), commented on the draft. Local plans need to be in general conformity with the NPPF, but they can differ from it in the detail if there is clear evidence to support local policy variation.

The London Forum's concerns with the draft include the fact that the Framework has:

- Abandoned any emphasis on using brownfield sites which will place considerable pressure on greenfield sites.
- Offered no guidance on where to develop, or whether that development should be for housing or other uses.
- Talked of "sustainable development" without defining this clearly or fully.
- Changed the playing field for planning. Under the previous system, development applications had to be determined in accord with the Local Plan. The NPPF alters this playing field by proposing that where a proposal is contrary to the Local Plan, the Local Authority will have to prove that any "harm" is "significantly and demonstrably" greater than any benefits in order to stop the development.
- Removed the requirement for Local Authorities to negotiate affordable housing contributions with the developers of any scheme of more than 15 homes.

In the Forum's view, the current draft does not show enough understanding of London

There is no reference to London and its special circumstances in already having a Spatial Development Strategy which does offer an evidence-driven basis for planning for growth within the constrained opportunities of the region.

The Forum would rather see:

- The choice of brownfield land being used (where possible) before greenfield sites;
- new housing sites which are well-placed to benefit from existing physical and social infrastructure;
- a preference for town centre sites for retail, leisure and offices in development plans;
- an attempt to retain urban open spaces.

Next steps

The Forum has drafted a submission on all these points and submitted it to the Department for Communities and Local Government.

What will the NPPF mean for the London Plan and for Borough Core Strategies? Both of these will need to be assessed for compliance with the new NPPF.

The HCA will be busy working on how to get the best out of Localism and the new planning framework. If you would like to write to your MP about the NPPF and require further detail about these issues, please see the HCA website: www.highburycommunity.org

If you have expertise in this area, or would like to be involved, please do get in touch hcanews@hotmail.com or write to PO Box 43396, N5 9AD.

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Safer crossing - campaign success!

Dangers still exist for pedestrians and cyclists wishing to cross Holloway Road; by the end of the month, the present road works at Madras Place and Fieldway Crescent will be complete. Members of Islington Living Streets, Islington Cyclists Action Group and local residents have campaigned successfully to press Transport for London (TfL) to improve the crossing before anyone else is injured or worse at the crossing. Working together, we formed a common understanding between pedestrians and cyclists of the dangers and design flaws at this crossing. This meant we could establish two new pedestrian crossings at the junction with Holloway Road together with an improved crossing for cyclists. While Lisa Pontecorvo, who tragically lost her life near Madras Place, is usually described as a cyclist, at the time of her death she was on foot, wheeling her bike across Holloway Road along the pedestrian desire line to Fieldway Crescent. The smoothing out of the "dog-leg" layout of the cycle path - that was confusing to drivers - will mean in future cyclists will be much more visible to drivers. It has been educational, watching the work day-by-day, to see why the costs of what seems a simple and straightforward change are so high, and that it has taken a person's life to concentrate minds. This close collaboration between pedestrians and cyclists should be a model for future working. That the new crossing also benefits drivers by providing a clearer, more legible street-scape demonstrates that when they design 'streets for people', TfL can do the right thing. The improvements at the Madras Place location couldn't come soon enough.

CHRIS ASHBY, ROBIN HULL, CAROLINE RUSSELL AND PAUL STANDEVEN

Breast cancer research fundraising effort raises £1800 and counting!

The Highbury Barn shopping area was in the pink on October 8th - all in aid of breast cancer research and support. £1800 was raised on the day, and more money is still coming in to donation boxes! The teams at Mrs Lovell's Greengrocers and To Be Established, along with family and friends, joined forces to bake cakes and buns, collect raffle prizes and gather other items together for the fundraising activities. Two tables were set up outside each shop in the Highbury Barn shopping area, and produce and raffle tickets were sold in support of breast cancer charities. October each year is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and this is the fourth year that Michelle Lovell (herself a breast cancer survivor) has organised a fundraising event to support breast cancer charities. "The first year's activity was relatively small scale - selling strawberry sticks and some sweets - but it raised over £200," said Michelle, "and we realised that there was greater fundraising potential given the kind response from the people of Highbury." Beneficiaries of the money raised will be Breast Cancer Research, Breast Cancer Campaign, and the Pink Ribbon Foundation. The star prize, a large soft toy donkey with a very fetching look, was won by James Percival, of Stoke Newington. James said: "I was both surprised and delighted to win the Breast Cancer raffle - it will make a fantastic present for my sister."

GRAHAM COULT



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Charles Dickens at home

A BOOK REVIEW BY GRAHAM COULT



In her successful book about Agatha Christie local author Hilary Macaskill looked at the author's attributes as an astute businesswoman who made very shrewd property investments.

In her latest book, the second in a series which looks at famous writers "at home", Hilary Macaskill looks at Charles Dickens. She presents us with fascinating facts, which many people are not likely to know, however familiar they might be with David Copperfield, Oliver Twist or Ebenezer Scrooge. Charles

Dickens was a homebody at heart, but his home was enshrined in many buildings over the years. He liked to travel, he sought frequent changes of surroundings, and so being a homebody, home was a moveable feast.

Feasting was something about which Charles Dickens was also very enthusiastic the reader discovers and he was a great entertainer, both in the sense of being a public performer, but also in offering sumptuous meals to family and friends.

A further discovery from Hilary's beautifully laid out and written book is that Charles Dickens' early life was tough. His father became insolvent a number of times and was imprisoned for debt more than once. This caused fairly frequent changes of home and Charles had to earn a living from a comparatively young age in work, which may have been unexpected for somebody with his social background. These experiences and his incisive observations of people were worked into his stories, a technique which he used extensively throughout his professional life.

The photographs in this new volume which, like the Agatha Christie title, is a visually compelling coffee table book are mostly the work of Graham Salter. He has a gift for composition, as well as obvious technical skill and his pictures complement the text and add significantly to the pleasure of looking at this work. A foreword by Dr Florian Schweizer, Director of the Charles Dickens Museum (on Doughty Street, WC1) adds further authority and authenticity to the book.

Charles Dickens at Home would make a wonderful Christmas present. It is a worthwhile investment and an enjoyable and fascinating read. Its recommended price is £25.00. The two "at home" titles are published by Frances Lincoln <http://www.franceslincoln.co.uk>

Highbury's cultural history

Highbury boasts a rich and varied cultural past, with famous writers being its main, but by no means only, luminaries.

From the literary standpoint, Canonbury stands out as a chief locale. In the house attached to Canonbury Tower (just off Canonbury Square, and dating from the early 1500s), Francis Bacon, philosopher and statesman, lived from 1617-1624. Among his works was The Advancement of Learning. In the next century, from 1762-1764, part of the house was occupied by the playwright Oliver Goldsmith. His most famous play is She Stoops To Conquer. Also, given the previous mention of Canonbury Square, many people probably know that George Orwell lived there for one year, 1945. He is perhaps most famous for the novels Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four.

And we are not done with Canonbury yet! Canonbury Square was home, in the 19th Century, to George Grossmith, co-author of The Diary of a Nobody, and, in the 20th Century, to Evelyn Waugh, of Brideshead Revisited fame.

Now, leaving Canonbury and authors, let's consider some other locations and figures. Highbury Place, the site of Highbury's first housing development in 1774, was the childhood home of the 19th Century politician and industrialist Joseph Chamberlain (incidentally, he also attended a school in Canonbury Square).

Another resident of Highbury Place, was the artist Walter Sickert from 1927-1934, who ran an art school there. Sickert was one of the leading artistic figures of his day, an associate of J.M. Whistler and a life-long friend of Edgar Degas.

So, for those of our readers to whom the above information is new: next time you are in any of the areas named, pause and breathe in the heritage.

TOM RUBENS



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Safety in Highbury - Safer Neighbourhood Team message

Harassment

The Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) in Highbury has been made aware of increased harassment in Blackstock Road/Finsbury Park, with men gathering outside cafes taunting and hassling women on their way home from work. If you have been a victim of this type of harassment, please contact the SNT by phone or email (Highburywest.snt@met.police.uk ; Office: 020 7161 8270; Mob: 07879 661 405). Any communication will be in the strictest confidence.

Scam phone calls

Criminals are calling people attempting to get hold of their personal details. In one case they called claiming that a large amount of cash had been left to the victim in a will and that they needed personal bank details to transfer the money. Do not give out personal details over the phone; always verify the authenticity of the caller. You can do this by asking for the company details and a contact number and then making follow up checks on the internet.

Bicycle theft

Bike theft in Islington has always been higher than in some other parts of London. Higher value bikes have been targeted in the larger blocks of flats and some stolen from the lockers in people's front gardens. The SNT told us: "To counter this we are trying to get as many bikes as possible to be property marked and logged on the 'Immobilise' web site, so we have a chance of returning bikes to owners and arresting the thieves. You can do it yourself online on www.immobilise.com or call our office and we will arrange a visit."

Recent planning issues around the Emirates



Islington Council Officers have been busy recently trying to sort out a number of applications from Ashburton Trading (one of Arsenal Football Club's property companies) and Newlon, the club's chosen Social Housing provider.

Ashburton Trading applied to build a 25 storey accommodation block for 450 students at the junction of Hornsey Street and Benwell Road. Such a tall building is completely out of scale for the surroundings and would tower over the Emirates stadium. The application was rejected by Islington Council Officers in August 2011 and supported by the Greater London Authority Planning Decisions unit. Up to mid-October, Ashburton Trading had not appealed, although they do have six months in which to lodge an appeal. Along Drayton Park, outside the Arsenal sports shop, the Club had applied for permission to erect an illuminated advertising panel similar to those seen on petrol station forecourts. Council Officers rejected the application on the grounds of harm to the character, appearance, and visual cluttering of the street scene and the sign being a pedestrian safety hazard during busy times. Islington Council Officers have rejected an application by Newlon to change the external appearance of the social and affordable housing development in Queensland Road. Council Officers said that the changes proposed needed to be submitted as amendments to the existing scheme and could not be considered as 'design clarifications'. ROGER WRIGHT



Proposed lorry ban for Gillespie Road

A proposal has been put forward to introduce a width restriction on Drayton Park in the Whistler Street/Bryantswood Road section which would be monitored by CCTV. The scheme is referred to as the 'Drayton Park/Gillespie Road area - Lorry Ban Enforcement Programme' and the main purpose of the programme is to stop lorries cutting across from Blackstock Road to Holloway Road. The proposal is not yet formally approved. The programme will be funded by Islington Council and the scheme is a local priority. It is hoped the programme will reduce the through-traffic currently seen on Gillespie Road and the surrounding streets.

It is proposed to use cameras and 'pinching' - a width restriction of the road on Drayton Park -near Martineau Street or Whistler Street. There is already a speed camera on the corner of St Thomas' Road and Gillespie Road and it has been suggested that this could be used for enforcement of the ban.

Islington Councillors have recognised the need for a further camera near Gillespie Primary School

to ensure the scheme is effective and have advised Council Officers on this. Councillors also realise that there is need for a contact telephone number for people to report any lorries seen breaking the ban. This is a further requirement that needs to be taken into consideration when designing the programme.

It is thought Network Rail will use Gillespie Park for work they are intending to carry out at Finsbury Park Station; using the access via Drayton Park to get equipment on to the rails. It is thought that vehicles for some of this work will probably use Gillespie Road.

Further information is needed to gain assurances that the lorry ban will be fully effective for the area. For example, what consideration has been given to lorries using Gillespie Road and then Plimsoll Road, Monsell Road, Romilly Road, Ambler Road or Avenell Road as a cut-through from Blackstock Road, to Seven Sisters Road as they do now?

The HCA would be keen to hear from people with any feedback, ideas or concerns on this proposed ban, in addition to the planned consultation from Islington Council. Please do get in touch hcanews@hotmail.com or write to PO Box 43396, N5 9AD. JOHN EGAN, DIANE BURRIDGE AND HANNAH BRISTOW

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The festive tradition of Wassailing



Origins

Wassailing is one of the oldest traditions with a huge number of local variations. Its origins are unknown but it is mentioned in various texts dating as far back as the 13th Century where we find the first reference to the wassail cup. In 1320 we find references to the expression 'wassail' meaning good health (from the Anglo-Saxon *wæs hæil*) and its retort 'drink hail'. In one of these texts, the leader of a group of party goers is described as taking a bowl and raising it to the assembled crowd, shouting "Wassail!" in the same way one might say "Cheers!" today.

There are three main types of wassailing. First is the filling of a common bowl or cup and passing it around to be shared. Second is taking a bowl to individual houses so neighbours can partake. Third is a celebration of the apple harvest and the blessing of the fruit trees.

The wassailing of fruit

trees is first recorded in 1585. The wassail was poured on to the orchards after harvest as an offering to bless the fields for the coming spring and to ward off evil. The wassail bowl was often passed down through the family. These bowls were large and embossed or painted with foliate designs. The bowls would be filled with a brew based on ale, cider or wine together with spices and served hot.

Season

Wassailing often takes place around Twelfth Night (also known as Twelfth-tide) used to mark both the end and the climax of the Christmas



or Yuletide celebrations. The celebration of Twelfth Night included a special cake which would have a bean and a pea set in. The lucky people to find these were declared bean King and pea Queen (the Lord and Lady of misrule).

Wassailing of apple trees

The purpose of wassailing is to awake the apple trees and to scare away evil

spirits to ensure a good harvest of fruit in the Autumn. The old way of doing it involved the young men of the village (plough hands, farm labourers etc.) going from farm to farm to drink to the health of the leading apple tree. In exchange for drink one would sing to the tree, make libations and dip toast into the wassail and arrange it in the branches of the tree to attract 'the good spirits'. From the placing of the toast in the branches of the tree we derive the modern expression 'to raise a toast'.

Would anyone be interested in continuing the tradition of wassailing of the trees in Highbury on Twelfth Night? People could take part in either or both of two ways:

be part of the group of wassailers going from house to house (by invitation) to drink the health of a tree (need not be an apple or even a fruit tree); or host the group by invitation, this might involve brewing some mulled wine/ale/cider and directing us to your tree (if you don't have a tree you could use one in the street).

Please contact me if you would like to join in or take part in any way, perhaps we could set up a meeting
Andrew (25 Corsica Street):
andrewrea51@hotmail.com

An example of a traditional wassail song

Oh apple tree

Oh apple tree, we'll
wassail thee
And hoping thou wilt bear
For the Lord does know
where we may go
To be merry another year

To grow well and to bear
well
And so merrily let us be
Let every man drink up
his glass
And a health to the old
apple tree
Brave boys, and a health
to the old apple tree.

Traditional wassail recipe

10 very small apples
1 large orange stuck with
whole cloves
10 teaspoons brown
sugar
2 bottles dry sherry or
dry Madeira
1/2 teaspoon grated
nutmeg
1 teaspoon ground ginger
3 cloves
3 allspice berries
2 or 3 cinnamon sticks
2 cups sugar
12 to 20 pints of cider
according to the number
of guests
1 cup (or as much as you
like) brandy.