



HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

FROM THE HIGHBURY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Welcome - Park Theatre



Park theatre's mission is 'to be a welcoming, vibrant home for the local community and beyond, providing world class entertainment that challenges perceptions and enables people to build a new tradition of theatre' (www.parktheatre.co.uk/about-us). The theatre will be divided into two theatre spaces - Park 200 'a stunning 200 seat auditorium with a stalls and circle' and Park 90 'a flexible 80 to 100 seat studio' as well as a fully licensed bar. The bars are on two levels, connected by our atrium, and the upper bar boasts an impressive bay window floating over the pavement beneath. Once complete, Park Theatre will be able accommodate a variety of events including seminars, conferences, meetings, book launches, exhibitions, rehearsals, workshops and more. Jez Bond is the Artistic director of Park Theatre and the man behind the venture. His previous directing includes; *Oliver!* (starring Rowan Atkinson, Oxford), *Big Boys* (Croydon Warehouse – Time Out Critic's Choice), *Shot of Genius* (Leicester Square), and *Risk Everything* (Old Red Lion). As Artistic Director of Stages International he worked

with the Old Vic producing *A Season in South Africa* with actors including Anthony Sher, Janet Suzman, Samantha Bond and John Kani. Jez spoke to Hannah Bristow, explaining how the project got started and the contribution it will make to the local area. 'For me, this project has been a long time coming. My wife, Melli, and I had been looking to create a new theatre space. We wanted to create an entirely new space rather than take over an existing theatre. In late 2009, a 1960s office building in Clifton terrace, next to Finsbury Park station became available. We were keen to work in an area where the theatre could make a difference to the disadvantaged in the community but where it would also be a success with a theatre savvy population to support the venture. Upon finding the building we set up a charity, formed a board and took our



proposal to Islington council who have been very supportive. The money for Park Theatre has been raised in a variety of ways. We've renovated the top of the building into three flats, the sales of which contributed a significant amount to the project for the building work. For the

educational space we have major donors, including Garfield Weston and the local Morris Charitable trust. The final fundraising push for the building happened late last year with Ian McKellen hosting a Christmas Gala evening at the Globe Theatre – there is a video of the evening on our website <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=viyf0u97cxc>. In order to raise awareness and continue to build support we were proactive in encouraging ambassadors such as Celia Imrie and local residents Roger Lloyd Pack and Tamzin Outhwaite, to use their influence and talk about the project. The most effective way of achieving this was to invite people to site. The reality and the scale of the project really comes alive when you're on site. The building goes back 35 metres from the street and it is an immense space! Once ambassadors visited site, were given a tour and saw the passion behind what we're doing, they were happy to be involved. Park Theatre will be valuable to the renovation scheme the council is implementing around Finsbury Park. In addition to having a theatre in the area, physically it will help too. The Wells terrace exit of the station is a dark passage way and the building has a vibrant frontage illuminating this dark passage, with the bay window being a beacon of light to those walking this possibly dubious route in the dark from the station. The theatre will have a cafe that will be open

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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.

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

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

all day serving coffees and in the evening wine. The cafe is to be dog friendly and to be accessible to all. The money from the cafe will go back into the theatre to support it and its educational work. I was fortunate, my introduction to theatre happened at school. But I am very aware that the same opportunities are not available to young people today who may want to get involved in all aspects of theatre, not just performing on stage. The education aspect of Park Theatre will be a chance to give back. It will provide young people with opportunity to take responsibility within the theatre and become 'hands on' with the inner-workings of a theatre environment. We are keen to nurture new talent and share the resources amongst both future theatre goers and makers. So far we have had a fantastic response from local



residents and businesses, but this exciting Park Theatre cannot happen without continued support and there are a number of ways to show your support including, signing our wall, becoming a 'friend' (as an individual or a company) and buying a seat (a unique gift idea!). Don't underestimate the value of a small donation to a project like this. The little bits make all the difference and we would urge

anyone to give what they can. Park Theatre is a charity and so all donations are eligible for gift aid, enabling us to receive 25% more on top of each donation. Park Theatre will open in the next few months and a programme of the forthcoming shows will be released shortly. The team and I would be delighted to hear from people interested to learn more about the theatre or curious to become involved.'

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Invitation to the Highbury Committee Association AGM

The HCA would like to invite you to the AGM in April. It will be held on Saturday 20 April 2013 at Christ Church, Highbury. As a member of the HCA and recipient of the newsletter we would be delighted to see you there. Make a note of the date in your diary! The evening will start at 7:15pm with the general meeting lasting approximately half an hour. The key note speaker this year will be Jez Bond, Artistic Director of Park Theatre, the new theatre due to open in Spring 2013 on Clifton Terrace, near Finsbury Park station. There will then be plenty of opportunities to ask questions and discuss the latest issues and happenings in the area, as well as to meet the HCA committee members. Following this there will be the party. Further information will be delivered closer to the time, as well as a public notice in Highbury Barn, so keep a look out! If you would like to join the Committee please email HCAnews@hotmail.com. The closing date for nominations will be announced on the HCA website shortly. If you would like to lend a hand on the night all offers of help will be gratefully received - please email HCAnews@hotmail.com and entitle your email 'AGM help'.

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The emergence of the 'Long Black'

My formative years coincided with the height of the popularity of the American sit-com Friends. Before this time, the only hot drinks available in the UK were tea or Nescafe. Thanks to the trend-setting comedy characters, the "coffee shop" was introduced to the UK. Two decades on my taste has matured, and I am pleased to welcome another wave of coffee invaders - from the antipodes. I tasted my first Long Black in Melbourne, and, once I had peeled myself off the ceiling and stopped twitching, decided it was an ideal way to serve coffee. The American style (filter-brewed, weak, and served in large quantities) is only really enjoyable in context; a diner, next to a highway, in the middle of the night. The espresso is a delightful treat but too abrupt to be taken in company. The Long Black is a perfect compromise. Essentially, a double-espresso, added to a small amount of hot water to fill a civilised cup. The additional water ensures the drink keeps an espresso-like consistency, and the double shot ensures a strong, deep flavour. 'Cafe - Australian & New Zealand' is a category of its own in Timeout. Cafes like Kaffeine, Allpress and Flat White are all serving wonderful coffee. The nearest to Highbury is Caravan, King's Cross.

Damage to Hyde Park from pop concerts

It is not just Highbury subject to negative side effects from increasing demand for music concerts, as this short (abridged) article from the London Forum explains. 'Hyde Park has been turned into a 'brownfield' mud-bath after hosting Olympic concerts, Wireless Festival and several pop concerts this Summer. The area will remain covered in wood chip until early 2013, when restoration (funded by concert promoters) will begin. Parks bosses are confident that the 350-acre park will return to its previous state by Spring but experts fear the park will struggle to recover. Next year the number of concerts will be cut from 12 to nine. Richard Morrison, chief music critic of The Times, has written twice about the state of both Hyde Park and Regent's Park after summer activities. He pointed out, 'Central London's largest open space is being hijacked...for huge commercial events thatplace this oasis of calm in a frenetic city out of bounds to tourists and Londoners...for weeks at a time'. 'Hyde Park isn't a rock venue. It's a park. Millions want to enjoy it as such. Their interests shouldn't be swept aside contemptuously in the mad dash for cash'.

Government Proposals for Extending Permitted Development Rights for Homeowners and Businesses - January 2013

A Government consultation on extending development rights closed on 24 December 2012. The aims of the proposals are to make it easier for the estimated 40,000/year planning applications from

households wanting to extend their houses, and to help stimulate the economy. Changes proposed do not affect conservation areas. The London Forum, of which the HCA is a member, responded to this.

Proposed changes to allow development without the need for permission from the council include:

A. Increasing size limits (for a period of three years in non-protected areas such as conservation areas) for:

Single-storey domestic extensions - from 4m to 8m (for detached houses), and from 3m to

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'Quick fire' interview

Gill Shepherd was Senior Research Fellow in Forest Policy and Environment at the Overseas Development Institute for many years. Now formally retired but actively freelance, with a Visiting Fellowship at the London School of Economics. Gill kindly agreed to take part in a 'quick fire' interview for the HC news the only stipulation being that she had to answer the questions in approx 14 characters or less. Gill has lived in Highbury off and on from 1973-1978 and moved back to Highbury Hill in 1983. She's been here 30 years since then. Gill is an anthropologist. She started studying social anthropology in the London School of Economics (LSE) in 1971, did doctoral research in coastal Kenya in 1973 and 1974 and has worked in anthropology (more or less) since then. Initially, Gill held various temporary lectureships, but when Mrs Thatcher froze permanent university recruitments in the early 1980s, she started to specialise in using social science in development. Gill worked initially on reasons for low family planning uptake in Kenya; and then, almost by chance, the conditions for successful management of tropical forests by local people, the ways in which they relied on forest, and conflicts between their needs and commercial and governmental ambitions for forests. For a while Gill was the only social scientist in the UK focussing on these issues. Anthropology is 'the multidisciplinary study and analysis of the origins and characteristics of human beings and their societies, customs and beliefs' (Chambers dictionary online www.chambersharrap.co.uk), but what does an Anthropologist do? Social anthropologists try to identify what is unique to a particular society, and what seem to be human universals despite all the variations.

What are the best things about your job?

The chance to work all over the world in interesting and beautiful places, and to encounter wise, thoughtful rural people.

What are the worst things about your job?

Having been away from my children a lot when they were younger.

What would be a 'bad day at the office' for you?

One where I dealt with a tide of trivia but did not get any real thinking or writing done.

Is there an anthropological discovery you wish you had made and why?

We are less individual, and more part of society than we think. Durkheim discovered for instance that suicide rates went down during times of war.

Which famous anthropologist do you most admire?

I admire anthropologists who have done interesting comparative work. Jack Goody (Cambridge) stands out.

Who would be your ideal dinner party guests?

Alan Bennett, Victoria Coren, Anne Tyler, Jim al-Khalili, Tim Hurford.

If you weren't an anthropologist, what would be your dream job?

I would very much have enjoyed being a GP.

Volunteer required

The HCA needs a print co-ordinator. John Egan wishes to step down from this particular role, so the HCA committee are seeking willing volunteer to replace him. The role involves coordinating the printing of the HC news (the HCA's newsletter). Practically, this means getting the printing done within a timescale set by the committee. S/he will need to agree a printing date with Highbury Roundhouse, where our printer is kept, ensure sufficient paper is available, co-ordinate the work of the team on the day and deliver the printed copies to the delivery co-ordinator. S/he will need to have access to email and some knowledge or experience of simple IT operations but training can be provided. The newsletter usually has five editions a year. The time commitment is low - just one long morning (usually a Friday) five times a year. Typically this is in February, April, June, September, and November. Additionally, there may be a request to assist with printing the Annual General Meeting's (AGM) posters, for the AGM in late April each year and the occasional ad hoc printing of anything else the HCA committee feels is best distributed by hand through letterboxes, rather than by email, to our members. The position is unpaid and there is no obligation to become a member of the HCA committee although membership would be useful. If you are interested please get in touch! Feel free to ask questions about the position to the committee or directly to John. Questions or queries are best emailed to HCAnews@hotmail.com or asked via Twitter at [@HighburyCA](https://twitter.com/HighburyCA).

Latest from the Emirates Out-Side Line

It is now about ten years since the redevelopment of the Ashburton Grove/Queensland Road first arose and there are three things that are concerning residents of the surrounding area: First, the impact of the housing developments in Queensland Road, next to the stadium. The first phase (6 storey social housing is almost finished and about to be occupied) to be followed by the market-rent and then the more up-market Barretts towers rising to 15 stories on north side of the road. These will add to congestion and dangerous overcrowding on the pavements, road crossings, in public transport especially at rush-hours and even worse on match days to say nothing of health, education and leisure facilities. No improvements are on the horizon in any of these areas. Second, Arsenal has circulated a proposal to increase the number of non-football events permitted from 3 to 9 from this summer. The matter was outlined in a document distributed to residents of the area which requested feedback, discussed at Highbury West Ward Partnership meetings and to date no Planning Application has been submitted to the Council. Residents of Bryantwood and Benwell Roads and around have canvassed their neighbours and collected about 200 signatures on petitions against any increase to be presented to the Council with the formal consultation for the Planning Application. The few non-signers responded that they were not troubled or in favour of more concerts. Again this will increase disruption and congestion in the few weeks we do not have to plan our lives round the stadium program. More details are awaited with the Planning Application, especially will 9 concerts mean 3 on each of 3 weekends or can there be 9 over 9 weeks - effectively the whole of the non-football season! Again it looks like the club is after even more profit at the expense of neighbouring residents. Thirdly, is to report that the Planning Application for the 25 storey tower of student accommodation on the old goods-yard site opposite the roundabout were Benwell and Hornsey Roads meet was approved by the inspector of the planning appeal. Again no improvements to facilities mentioned above to cater for the increased and transient additional population. The Council has announced it will appeal against this decision - we hope they it succeed. EDWARD ALLEN

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6m (for all other houses). No changes are proposed for extensions of more than one storey.

Extensions to shops, offices and professional/ financial services establishments to 100 square metres, and allowing the building of extensions up to the boundary of the property (except where the boundary is with a residential property).

B. Removing some prior approval requirements for the installation of broadband infrastructure for a period of five years.

C. Exploring whether there is scope to use permitted development to make it easier to carry out garage conversions. The London Forum response said: Since extensions to the front and, where it exists, the side of a house are now mainly excluded from permitted development rights, these proposals affect rear extensions and subterranean developments under the house and/or the rear garden. Such developments are being increasingly seen in London. Questions the Forum would like answered are; are these rear and subterranean extensions seen as separate or additive? Is subterranean permitted development subject to the same additional volume as rear extensions? Are there any limits for permitted subterranean development - if so, where are these stated in the consultation document? However, the London Forum welcomes the clarity that there are no permitted development rights for flats; that there would need to be clearly stated limits to the scale of rear extensions, to ensure the amenity of neighbours is protected; that permitted development rights will not exceed 50% of the curtilage of the house, but considers that this will require very precise definition; that permitted development rights do not cover outbuildings for residential accommodation or for the creation of separate residential units.

There is no indication, in the consultation document, whether other buildings, such as free-standing garages, home-offices, summerhouses or sheds, are disregarded or subtracted when defining the area of the curtilage to which the 50% limit would apply. Questions the Forum would like answered are, what is the 'baseline' for assessing permitted development rights, for example, where much of the existing rights may well have been used up? What is the definition of the un-built curtilage? What are the limits of the width of extensions? Is it proposed that they could extend up to the rear party fence? The London Forum is very concerned about proposals in the consultation document that British Telecom be allowed to install large superfast broadband cabinets without the prior approval process except in protected areas. The principles of where and how to site the new larger cabinets, let alone the re-introduction of telegraph poles and overhead lines, should apply everywhere. Here, the London Forum would prefer the development of a clear code of practice and requirement on all parties to cooperate. In summary, The London Forum does not see the need for many of these proposals and feels that a better evidence base and impact assessment is required for these. One wonders: what has happened to 'Localism' and Neighbourhood Planning - so feted by the Government only last year - when these proposals seem to mitigate against local involvement in the planning process. For the Government consultation document: <http://bit.ly/Wuoz6> For the London Forum: www.londonforum.org.uk; http://twitter.com/London_Forum

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View of an Olympics Games Maker

With all the excitement of Christmas and the recent snow fall, the Olympics that took place in July in London last year may seem like a distant memory. You may be unaware however, that HCA committee member, Diane Burrige volunteered to be an Olympics' Games Maker. In this reprint of an article she wrote for the London Forum newsletter, Diane details her experience answering what was it like to have been a Games Maker for the Olympics? Many people presumed that we received free tickets or that we met famous athletes as a matter of course. If only. But despite this lack of perks, it was exhilarating and an honour to have been a Games Maker - one of 70,000 chosen from over 240,000 who applied. Looking back, to me, the main honour was meeting fellow Games Makers who all seemed to possess copious amounts of good will, patience, politeness, enthusiasm and the ability to be constantly friendly - despite having to get to venues by 6am, if on an early shift, and then having to stand for eight hours, either inside or outside venues.

The selection process: Resilience was required just to survive the process of becoming a Games Maker. In

my situation, I applied online in October 2010 and was called in for an interview in November 2011, at LOCOG's head quarters in Canary Wharf. Once accepted, in February 2012, I had to attend three compulsory training days, commit to a minimum of 10 days of volunteering, and then finally pick up the uniform from a large warehouse in East London in June 2012. Perhaps this selection process was intentionally onerous to weed out those applicants who might be fair-weather enthusiasts. One eight hour shift in the rain, and never seen again? In fact the process did work.

Rumour had it that the organisers were expecting a large dropout rate when very few actually did. **What role would I be chosen for?** My excitement grew as the months went by and July was approaching. What would my specific role be (of 26 'functional areas')? I dreamt: would I be chosen as a drummer for the opening ceremony as the wife of a friend of mine was? (Mind you, this did require a promise of 140 hours commitment for the rehearsals.) Would I be chosen to work in one of the venues, helping to welcome teams of athletes - the job given to a neighbour? No. I

was chosen to be a Venue Entry Security Team Leader! Sounds very impressive - if not in practice! I had to support teams of about 10 Games Makers to carry out these functions at gates into the Olympic Park: queue assistants; queue pacers; walk through metal detector (WTMD) pacer assistants; X-ray loaders and soft-ticket checkers. The target was to put through 350 bags per hour, and this was easily met. Due to the fiasco of security staffing just before the Games, the military was called in and the process was then very efficient. It was a pleasure to support the soldiers who were always good-natured, and great fun to work with.

Duties of a team leader

As a team leader I mainly had to ensure that the Games Makers had their breaks - there was a special canteen in the Olympic Park, and that roles were rotated if people got bored or tired; the Stratford Gates were the busiest. Each day I had to register with the LOCOG staff co-ordinating the volunteers, before 'collecting' about ten people to go to an assigned gate, with different teams of people each day. There was an amazing variety of people - doctors, lawyers, students, business people -

with many coming from outside London. One person from Southend got up at 3am each morning to arrive at the Olympic Park by 6am! Some took overnight buses to arrive on time. I felt ashamed of my whingeing at having to get up at 5am to travel all the way from Highbury! Now, looking back, I am so glad that I did volunteer for 'this once in a lifetime experience'. To be in the Olympic Park was such a thrill - some days over 200,000 people came into the Park, and in total 15,000 athletes competed in 46 sports in over 805 events for the Olympics and Paralympics. It is easy to forget that London was so lucky to have hosted the Games - the only city to have done this three times. Come on the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in 2014, I say. It is just so much fun to have the world come to your city to celebrate the human spirit - particularly, for me, by putting on the Paralympics. So now, the 6am starts and being on my feet for 8 hour days are a blur in my memories of the fabulous experience of being a Games Maker in the summer of 2012.

DIANE BURRIDGE