

HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

Issue No 32 March 2003

Quality in Queensland Road

"It was 1977 and it was my first full-time job. I had no idea it would be a 'job for life' – I thought I'd move on, find other work, that sort of thing. But I didn't want to leave, because the work was interesting and because the firm has a friendly 'family' approach to its staff. I really liked my work then – and I still do." Tony Burke is now the Production Supervisor at Biorex Laboratories in Queensland Road, N7. Started 53 years ago, and still headed by Lily Baxendale, one of the founding directors, it is one of the last small independent pharmaceutical companies in the UK. Some of the products it makes are labour intensive to produce or package and are not replicated by big international companies such as Glaxo Smith Kline Beecham, Pfizer or Eli Lilly to name a few. Twenty-six people work in the factory in Queensland Road, turning pure chemicals into medical drugs in the form of tablets, ointments, creams and gels for distribution across the United Kingdom.

Every doctor and nurse will instantly recognise the familiar purple packaged tube of the Biorex Lignocaine Gel (a local anaesthetic to reduce pain) and anyone whose child has had eczema will quite likely have used a hydrocortisone cream made in Biorex's factory here in Holloway. Another long-serving employee, Dr Dennis Pike, explains *"We make 'prescription-only' medicines to treat skin conditions such as eczema and our over-the-counter product, Zenoxone, is sold for reducing irritation and inflammation and relief from insect bites or allergic dermatitis. We make a small range of other prescription medicines but the bulk of our work involves making hydrocortisone products."* Barry Middleton, Site Manager, sets that work in context, *"We estimate that this factory manufactures about 90% of all the hydrocortisone creams sold in the UK."*

Such a major contribution to the regular supply of several essential medical products for Britain cannot be halted or interrupted without serious negative consequences. The

Executive Director of the Company, Neville Reuben, explains *"Biorex is one of the companies Arsenal Football Club wants moved out of this industrial site. They want to build flats and other high-value uses, which Islington Council says will help fund the stadium and regenerate the area. One of our objections is that Biorex cannot simply 'move' to new premises taking our equipment with us. We need to be licensed by the Medicines Control Agency. Effectively, a parallel operation would have to be set up, with new equipment, and all manufacturing processes would have to be validated and a manufacturer's licence granted, subject to compliance, before any move could be undertaken."* So far, as the Government Inspector heard from Biorex's legal team at the Public Inquiry last month, Arsenal agents have not found suitable alternative premises for Biorex, nor started the long process necessary for the relocation of the factory. For this reason, among others, Biorex has presented its case to the Secretary of State to request that the CPO should not be confirmed on their site.

In the meantime, creams, ointments and tablets continue to be made, packaged and distributed around the UK. Dr Pike's technical team checks and analyses the purity of the chemicals received using high pressure liquid chromatography equipment and standards laid down by the

British Pharmacopoeia. The systems followed means that every batch of drug produced by Biorex is of the highest

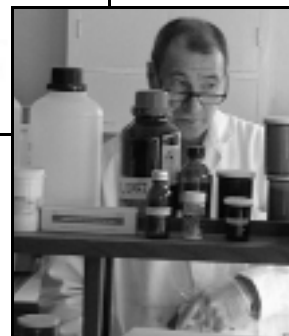
quality and the source chemicals can be instantly traced. Checks are also made of each batch of cream or tablet produced so that a complete history of any product is instantly available. Production lines have the reputation of being repetitive but not this one, as Tony Burke explains, *"One of the reasons people like working here is because we train everyone to do every job in the production process. This means non-stop production, even over lunch-breaks and most important, for a factory environment, we are not bored because we move around, often doing several different jobs during the day."* ■



NICKY TURNBULL (LEFT) PREPARES FINISHED TUBES OF CREAM FOR THE PACKING MACHINE



TONY BURKE (CENTRE) AND ANGUS CARRUTHERS, IN THE LABORATORY



HELP A LONDON CAT

urges Alison Gray

SNIP (Society for Neutering Islington's Pussies) is a small charity, run entirely by volunteers, that works to help the stray and feral (wild) cats of Islington and surrounding areas. Cats are very efficient breeders and, if left unneutered, the population quickly gets out of control. Eventually the cats will get sick and starve to death, or cause a nuisance by scavenging for food, fighting and spraying.

We have a small dedicated team of trappers, who give up many of their evenings to stand around in the cold waiting for a feral to go into a trap, and often their days as well, to take the cats to and from the vet. If they catch a young kitten or a friendly adult, it is passed on to one of our small team of



This cute little chap was found in a builder's skip at only 2 days old, and hand reared by SNIP volunteers. He got extremely sick just after this picture was taken and was given a 1% chance of survival, but thanks to dedicated nursing and an incredible will to live he is now a healthy and much-loved 18 month old.

fosterers to look after in their own home until it can be found a permanent owner (all our potential homes are checked out before adoption).

Every year SNIP neuters and returns over 100 feral cats, provides treatment for many that have already been neutered, and finds good homes for over 100 kittens and tame adult cats. We receive a small fee per animal (which pays less than ¼ of the cost of neutering) from Islington council, otherwise we are funded solely by donations and membership fees. ■

Ways you can help:

SEND A DONATION - every little helps - cheques payable to 'SNIP', to the address below.

SHOP ONLINE at www.buy.at/SNIP - buy books, CDs, clothes, furniture, gifts, even cars all in one place without hassle, and those nice e-shopkeepers will give money back to SNIP.

BECOME A MEMBER or give a SNIP membership for Christmas - a purrfect present.

GIVE US YOUR TIME - we always need help with fostering, trapping, fund-raising, transport or home checking . Anyone wanting to foster, with experience of taming timid cats/ kittens especially welcome.

ADOPT A CAT – we usually have several adult cats and timid older kittens available for adoption.

Call 020 8802 2009.

GET YOUR OWN CAT NEUTERED – it really is better for them, and better for you. Help is available with the cost for those on low incomes.

Society for Neutering Islington's Pussies

Registered Charity No. 299258

33 Portland Rise, London N4 2PT

Email: SNIP@pussy-cat.co.uk

HELP SNIP KEEP SNIPPING

Arsenal CPO Inquiry

The five week Public Inquiry into the Council's proposed Compulsory Purchase Orders for Arsenal's stadium scheme ended on 20th February; but the Inspector does not expect to make a recommendation to the Secretary of State until early July. It may be some months before John Prescott's decision is announced; and this could well be challenged in the Courts.

ISCA was the main objector to the principle of the scheme but was backed

up by those businesses that had barristers in attendance.

Inevitably a number of objectors withdrew shortly before or during the course of the Inquiry, having concluded deals under pressure. Notable among these were Lawsons, which accepted relocation to Blundell Street, and McGoverns and Brewsters waste operations, which seem likely to be extinguished. Oddly, many businesses, rather than taking cash, have granted Arsenal options to acquire them at a future date, up to two years hence;

leaving their fate undecided but preventing them from objecting to the CPOs or the Road Closure Orders.

The Inquiry took a dramatic turn when Arsenal's Planning Consultant, Roger Hephher, giving evidence for the Council, totally changed their case by announcing that the CPOs were not really necessary after all; and the scheme could proceed without them. This cannot make confirmation any more likely.

Details of the case are available on the ISCA website: www.redcard.org.uk ■

Highbury Park Mast

The Local Public Inquiry into the Hutchison 3G masts, (BBM Printers, Riversdale Road) took place on 11th March. Residents represented by *No Highbury Park Mast Action Group*, raised a number of issues including health fears and breaches of policy. The Council opposed it on visual amenity grounds.

You can follow the case on www.nohighburyparkmast.org. ■

Highbury Fields

Highbury Fields has now got a new guardian. Joe Graber is one of the Greenspace Rangers for Islington's open spaces with special responsibility for Highbury Fields. Ten additional rangers have been taken on for the Borough, making a total of 15. Ring him to report problems, discuss ideas, suggest solutions. Joe Graber **07985 218198** ■

Council U-Turn

A determined effort by parents, children, and Barnsbury Housing Association, stopped the Council from under-selling its land and the *Palace for All* disabled kids centre to a property speculator. Local Highbury resident, David Knight, Chair of BHA said "*Palace for All, a vital centre for disabled kids is saved. The kids helped, asking the Leader why he would not accept a higher price from BHA. He changed his mind, so now we have a future again.*" ■

Why Highbury?..... Why? When? What now? What next?

HCA learns from Breda Redmond-Hunt, Sheltered Scheme Manager for Ronalds Road Crown Housing Association why her work is never dull.

HCA – Why do people move to a sheltered housing scheme?

Breda - Most people just need to know that there is someone younger and fitter who is 'there' if needed. Life can get harder as people get older even if they are not in pain or discomfort. But the whole idea is that we promote independence, and no-one here has that taken away from them. Every year the tenants fill out a form saying how often they want me to ring or visit them - daily, once a week or not at all. There's no obligation to accept any contact from me. But everyone knows they can call on me for anything worrying them. I live at the front gate so I'm highly visible! Health problems I hand on to the Health Centre. Often problems with benefit or other matters need attention. Many people don't see me from one week to the next, but I'm available 7 days a week for any emergency.

HCA – When did you get involved in this sort of work?

Breda – I shall have been here seven years this August. My first job involved looking after handicapped adults. Another was as companion to a young journalist who had had a stroke. I've been a child minder too. I suppose the starting point for me is that I love working with people and couldn't be happy in an office. I was brought up in a big family in Ireland; my mother had 10 children and never stopped helping others! When this job came up, my own children were eleven and eight years old and I didn't want to carry on child-minding. I wasn't sure if I'd be accepted as I didn't have the paper qualifications quoted in the advert. But I was, my experience was good enough. I was amazed and very honoured three years into the job to be awarded the 1999 'Sheltered Scheme Manager of the Year Award'! They said it was because I'd

managed to provide lots of popular social activities, despite not having a communal room.

HCA – What sort of activities do you organise for the tenants?

Breda - Holidays, meals out, trips out, anything really. A group went to Torquay one year on holiday and my husband and I joined in for the first few days. I think we have tried nearly every type of food possible in Islington: Mexican, Chinese, Italian, Bistros. Iznik's Turkish Restaurant at Highbury Barn was a great way to end a fantastic day out on the London Eye last year. And we do day trips out of London, leaving at 9am and returning late. Usually about 10-15 people join in, depending on what is on offer. I used Dial-a-Ride a lot in the past to get us around, but it has changed ownership recently and is less flexible. In the summer people sit in the garden making their own entertainment as they are all quite good friends. People bring wine and sometimes persuade me to go and fetch fish and chips for them! No-one is persuaded to join in with any of the activities as it is not a 'managed' place. Freedom of choice is my motto!

HCA – What's the next step?

Breda – People are always asking me that! I love my job and I think it is good for my children to grow up with elderly folk. From either side of the age divide it seems to work well. I'm always learning something. The test was when my son was born four years ago! We do live very much in the open but I want to do this job for quite a few years more. Maybe one day I'd like to do some work supervising or training other Sheltered Scheme Managers, but not yet. After all I've just been given this new office! ■

The scheme Breda Redmond-Hunt works for is the Crown Housing Association for retired Civil Servants or Public Sector workers. Tel: 020 8642 2212 for inquiries.



BREDA IN HER NEW OFFICE

Help keep the show on the road! It's coming up to AGM time again; and HCA is looking for four or five volunteers to strengthen the committee and develop the association. Plans for the year ahead include setting up an interactive web-site. What else should we be doing? If you have ideas, become a committee member and make sure they are actioned! We are also looking for a Secretary and a Treasurer!

Phone 7359 5731 or email hcanews@hotmail.com to find out what's involved.

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HIGHBURY CHAMBER CHOIR

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Domine secundum multitudinem
Mass for 5 voices,
than Bach
- Motet: Jesu, meine Freude*

*A concert at St Thomas' Church, St Thomas' Road, London N4
on Saturday March 22nd, at 8.00 pm*

Admission £5 Concessions £3 Refreshments available

Champissage

Champissage originated from India and has been used in this country mainly as on-site massage for desk-based workers - to help with stress and stress related conditions.

Champissage is a massage of the upper body, shoulders, arms, neck, head/face, and the massage is done while the client sits in an ordinary chair; so it is ideal to have it done in the comfort of your own home. Therapeutic oils are sometimes used. It is a very relaxing experience but is particularly beneficial for tension, head aches and insomnia. People have described feeling tranquil and peaceful immediately after the massage and getting a good night's sleep. So they feel more energetic the next day.

I am a qualified complementary therapist who can do home visits by appointment (after an initial assessment) - if you would like more information please phone: **020 7690 7490** or **07950 804 734**

ANDREWS

DRY CLEANERS

6 Highbury Park

020 7226 2105

THE BAD NEWS...Almost all of us will suffer from some form of pain or discomfort at some point in our lives!

THE GOOD NEWS...Osteopaths help over 50,000 people per week with these aches and pains - and there is an Osteopath in Finsbury Park!

Please call if you would like to know more.

JOHN FUDGE D.O.

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Highbury Community Association

The HCA represents 740 residents and businesses, on all aspects of living and working in Highbury, Lower Holloway and Finsbury Park. Run by volunteers, it relies on donations. Send cheques to HCA Treasurer, 75 Highbury Hill, N5 1SX made out to "Highbury Community Association".

Send letters or articles for next issue to: HC News, 83 Highbury Hill N5 1SX or email hcanews@hotmail.com

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