

HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

highburycommunity.org | [@HighburyCA](https://twitter.com/HighburyCA) | facebook.com/highburycommunity

Andrea Levy: novelist and chronicler of the British Caribbean experience

By GILL SHEPHERD

Andrea was born and grew up in Islington and lived with her family at 105 Twyford House, Elwood Street from 1956 until 1974 when she left to go to college. Several of her novels drew on her life in Islington including her first published novel "Every Light in the House Burnin' ". Andrea's most famous book is Small Island which won several awards including the Orange Prize for Fiction and The Whitbread Book of the Year, and was turned into an extremely successful play at the National Theatre in 2019.

Andrea was one of the first writers to record British Caribbean lives and experiences in mainstream literature.



HCA Annual General Meeting - and PARTY!!

Saturday 28 March 2020 - from 7PM - Christ Church N5

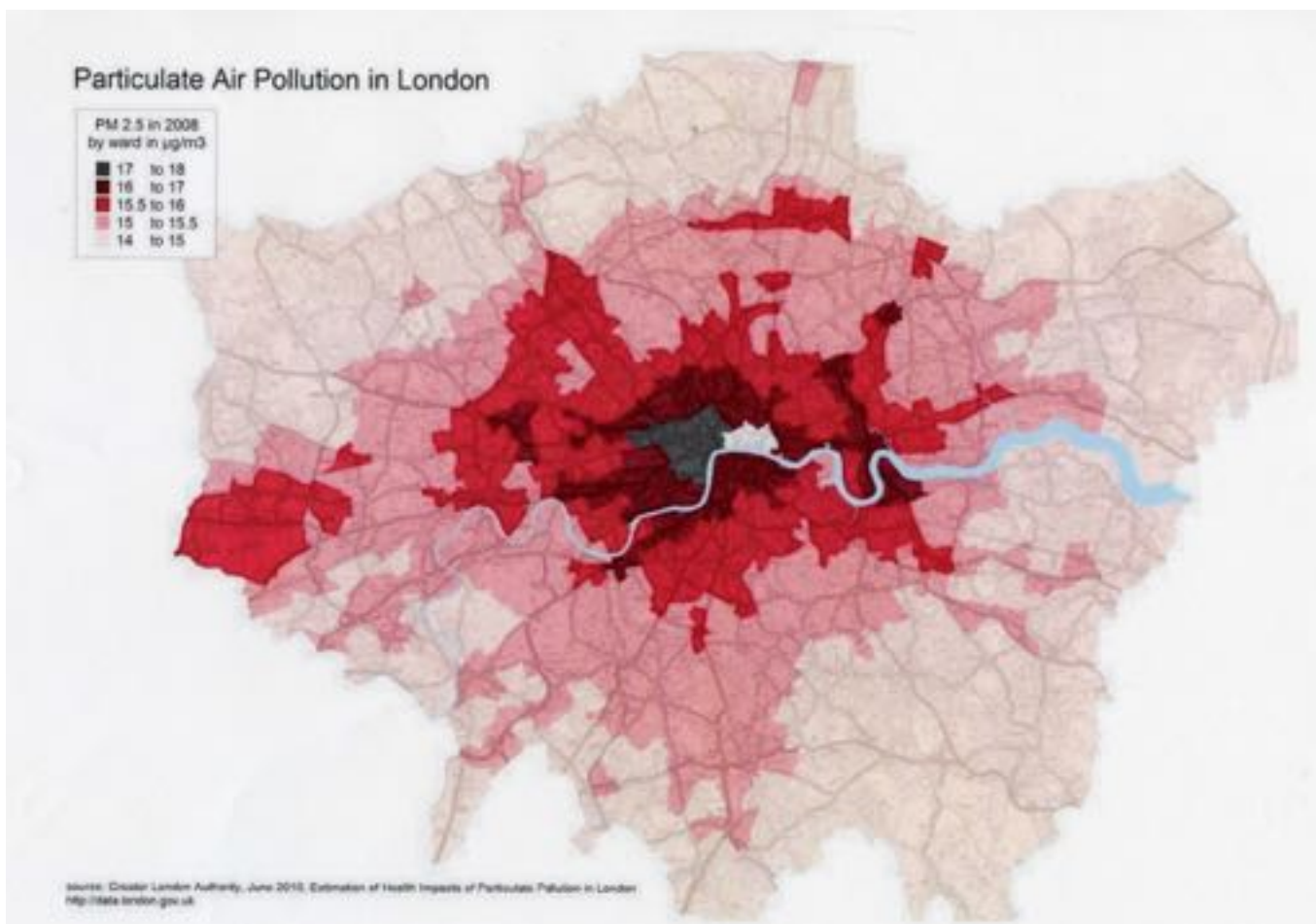
You are invited to enjoy food and drink - and hear what's been going on in our community!

Guest Speaker - Dorothy Byrne, Head of News & Current Affairs, Channel 4 News and recent guest on BBC Radio 4's 'Desert Island Discs' will give a talk entitled:

"Trust me, I'm not a politician!"

AUCTION AND RAFFLE FOR LOCAL GOOD CAUSES!

Highbury Community News is printed by www.absoluteprint.com, printing for Islington and beyond since 1996



Air pollution levels in Islington

By GILL SHEPHERD

According to a recent report from the British Heart Foundation over 15 million Britons live in areas with dangerously high air pollution. The WHO (World Health Organisation) sets the danger limit for pollution at 10 μg (micrograms) of particulate matter (PM) per cubic metre of air. These tiny particles, measuring less than 2.5 thousandths of a millimetre across, are inhaled, enter our bloodstream, and build up in organs and arteries. They increase our risk of heart attacks and stroke, and are known as PM2.5 for short.

The whole of inner and outer London breaches the 10 μg danger limit. Newham has the highest levels in the country at 13 $\mu\text{g} /\text{m}^3$; inner London boroughs, including Islington, Camden, Hackney, and Haringey have levels ranging from 12 to

12.99 $\mu\text{g} /\text{m}^3$. Boroughs somewhat further out such as Barnet and Enfield, Greenwich, Richmond and Kingston, average levels from 11 to 11.99; and the outermost boroughs of all have levels ranging from just over 10 to 10.99. The worst inner London areas are found north of the river, where a whole range of major transport routes draw close together from the north-east, north and north-west, as they close in on central London.

We could not find a map plotting these latest figures visually for London, but an earlier survey of PM2.5 particulates for 2008 (pictured above) shows a similar spatial picture ward by ward throughout the capital. It shows that air pollution rates have actually come down a long way over the last decade, though they are still far too high for health. The map shows clearly that Islington and adjacent boroughs bear much of the

brunt of the increased concentration of traffic as central London is approached, and in consequence much increased air pollution.

Some relief for residents will come from the extension of the Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) out to the North and South Circular Roads from October 2021, but there is no escaping Islington's position close to London's hub.

Help us keep our membership list up to date. Let us know if you have moved, or would be prepared to receive the newsletter by email

Please contact us at hcanews@hotmail.com

The impact of the Highbury Corner scheme on residential streets

By JON TAYLOR

It would mean turning many a blind eye and deaf ear not to have noticed the significant increase in traffic, day and night on the routes leading into and out of Drayton Park.

Highbury Hill, Martineau Road, Aubert Park, and Gillespie Road have always taken a degree of local traffic but the Highbury Corner scheme has massively added in other traffic which would once have stayed on main roads. Changing a roundabout at Highbury Corner to a series of stop-points was always going to cause flow issues, but poor anticipation and even poorer planning on displaced traffic has allowed it into our neighbourhood streets. (Islington Council was asked to monitor these likely changes in 2016, but deemed it too expensive)

Critically, where once only those with local knowledge knew how to make cuts through residential roads, now anyone who uses intelligent Nav apps like Waze or Google Maps is routed away from the congestion of Highbury Corner and through our back streets. Increased air and noise pollution, speeding, and aggressive driving are now all contributing to a poorer quality of life in Highbury.

So how do we stop the slide onto acceptance before it's too late? In February Islington Council unveiled their plan for a first Liveable Neighbourhood in the borough focusing broadly on traffic flow through Mildmay, Highbury East. An admirable plan, and similar to ideas that a small group of residents have been exploring for Highbury West. With schemes such as Highbury Corner, the Gillespie Road one-way system, and the upcoming Finsbury Park cycle route, there will always be losers, but unless neighbourhoods look holistically at the problems of vehicle use, at how our areas relate to each other, and how we can influence Islington Council to shape Islington in an integrated way, we are set for uncomfortable neighbourhood struggles.

To keep informed, and share ideas of how to be involved join www.nextdoor.co.uk and scroll through Groups to join the "Low traffic Highbury Group".

Go digital!

The HCA is encouraging our readers who receive a hard copy of the newsletter to switch to email delivery. This reduces our running costs and the use of paper.

To make the switch, please contact us at hcanews@hotmail.com



**HARDWARE FOR THE HOME AND GARDEN
KEYS CUT - LOCKS SUPPLIED
HOUSEWARES - LIGHT BULBS - TOOLS
PLUMBING & ELECTRICAL GOODS
COAL, LOGS & KINDLING
CANDLES AND CLEANING PRODUCTS**

20 Highbury Park N5 2AB

Tel: 020 7354 5029

Email: hwoodla@aol.com

www.woodlandhardware.com

THE Highbury BARN

A gastro pub & restaurant with a theatre kitchen & fully stocked bar

The HB Baby Club held every Tuesday morning from 3 March, between 9:30am and 11:00am. Music, toys and games for the little ones, whilst parents relax and make some new friends. Entrance fee £5 includes a coffee and a croissant

Great a la carte menu to choose from for lunch and dinner, along with fine ales, beer and wine

Quiz night every Monday at 7:30pm

Twitter: [@highburybarnpub](https://twitter.com/highburybarnpub) - Facebook / The Highbury Barn Pub
www.thehighburybarnpub.co.uk - Tel: 020 7226 2383



Clybourne Park

by **Bruce Norris**
Directed by **Oliver Kaderbhai**
Featuring **Michael Fox, Imogen Stubbs and Eric Underwood**

25 Mar – 02 May 2020

PARK

Tickets: ParkTheatre.co.uk
Phone: 020 7870 6876
Finsbury Park

WINNER Best Play Olivier Award
WINNER Best Play Tony Award
WINNER Pulitzer Prize for Drama

Alex Turner Productions and Fish Whiskey Productions
In association with Park Theatre present the 10th Anniversary Production

No booking fee either. Telephone booking fee applies.

Advertise in HCA News

The HCA relies on advertising income to enable us to print 5 editions a year.

The HCA charges a very reasonable £50 per advert for three issues, and £20 per advert for a single issue. We will include one charity advert per edition free of charge.

Email hcanews@hotmail.com for details



CLAY
TIME

Clay Time Pottery Place C.I.C.

Drop into the community pottery studio in Finsbury Park

Hand build from wet clay – throw on our wheels
Paint one of our ceramic items – join one of our courses
Available for parties

Adults and children welcome!

Tue–Fri 12–6pm, Sat–Sun 10am–6pm (& evening courses)

168 Blackstock Road N5 1HA – 020 3441 8787

info@claytime.london – [facebook.com/claytimelondon](https://www.facebook.com/claytimelondon)
www.claytime.london

Seasons and Blossoms

We are a health food shop in Highbury selling a large range of fresh local and organic fruit and vegetables and health foods

Seasonal produce from local farms,
organic dairy & delicatessen, artisan bread,
eco-friendly cleaning products
and organic pet food

Deliveries available

92 Highbury Park N5 2XE - 020 7159 4867



17 Highbury Park N5 1QJ

020 7359 3623

www.5boyshealthfood.com

8:30am to 8pm Monday to Saturday

Organic & Non-Organic - Food - Baby Products
Toiletries - Household Products - Lottery Tickets
Aromatherapy - Homeopathy
Herbal Remedies - Eco Friendly Products
Organic Fresh Fruit and Vegetables
Body Building Products

Sharing the traffic around

By DIANE BURRIDGE

Other than residents on Gillespie Road, who is benefiting from this Road's 'trial' Point No-entry Scheme put in last February?

As Councillor Theresa Debono stated at a Highbury West Ward Partnership meeting in January 2020: 'It is only fair that we share the burden of the traffic that used to use Gillespie Road.' Residents present from Avenell Road, Plimsoll Road, Highbury Hill, Martineau Road and Aubert Park did not agree: surely the priority is to reduce traffic, rather than merely displacing it?

Two post-implementation monitoring traffic counts have taken place – in June and November 2019. To no-one's surprise, from 8am to 9am, there is now more traffic using Avenell Road than Gillespie Road – a narrower road than Gillespie Road. Traffic has increased by 74% (and by 62% from 6pm to 7pm). Aubert Park has witnessed an increase in traffic of 74% in the morning and 81% in the evening. These two roads have received the most displaced traffic.

The meeting was informed that, overall, traffic has decreased slightly in the whole area. Traffic counts in November did not take place on roads, such as Plimsoll and the northern section of Avenell/Ambler Roads, where residents continue to report a noticeable increase in traffic. Other impacts reported by residents included more traffic speeding down Highbury Hill to turn into Gillespie Road as there is now less traffic on this road; more traffic along Martineau Road (which includes traffic avoiding Highbury Corner); and increased danger for people crossing Martineau Road at the junction with Highbury Hill, and when crossing Aubert Park from the top of Avenell Road.

Residents were promised more monitoring between February and March. We asked that when this '18-month trial' is completed in August 2020, residents are consulted on the future of this scheme. What seemed very dispiriting to many is the apparent reluctance to listen to people, and to address a reduction in overall traffic volumes in this area, not just along Gillespie Road.

Help us to support local bars and restaurants

Have you recently been to a new local restaurant? Know of a great pub or bar?

Would you like to write a review for a future edition of HCA News? Email hcanews@hotmail.com to let us know!

Where does the traffic come from? We need to know



By GILL SHEPHERD

As the Air Pollution map in this edition of the newsletter shows, the density of particulates - and thus of the vehicles which generate them - becomes greater, the closer to central London we come. Vehicles from widely separated and less polluted Outer London boroughs make for the centre, clustering closer and closer together as they come. The result is traffic bottle-necks such as Highbury Corner where local traffic and long-distance traffic mingle.

Claire Tunley (who used to work for Islington Council) has begged the Council to invest in discovering how much traffic is really ‘through’ traffic from further away, and how much is local and could be switched onto other forms of transport. Islington Council have been reluctant to spend the money on such a survey, but they have unspent \$106 million which would be perfect for the purpose. Claire (a Gillespie Road resident) would agree that, for instance, just diverting Gillespie Road traffic onto Avenell Road and Aubert Park has been no solution at all. Though some local residents assume that traffic will dissipate over time as people abandon their cars and take to bicycles, she points out that if a good proportion of vehicles are coming from much further away, that is simply not going to happen. Instead, without this knowledge, the Council will continue to muddle along, accidentally or deliberately moving traffic around from one local street to another.

Such a survey is not hard to do, though there are

practical difficulties - such as the split between the local roads managed by Islington and the bigger network of main roads managed by Transport for London. Cameras can be set up to read number plates automatically on a series of roads all over a much larger area. The results are matched with those on vehicles going through selected roads in Highbury and through Highbury Corner. With the knowledge to hand of which vehicles have come from where, and in what volumes, traffic planning over a much wider area becomes possible, and so does diverting some traffic much earlier before it reaches Highbury.

MAC McCABER

Handyman and window-cleaner
mobile: 07960 037485

mac.buildingdecorating@gmail.com

Hard-working and trustworthy, living locally
Recommended by several HCA members -
references on request

I do painting, decorating, small electrical and plumbing jobs and gardening at £120 a day pro rata
I also clean windows inside and out - £80-90 for a 3-storey Victorian house

Changing the planning system - and improving the quality of what is built

By SARAH POTTER

A recent general meeting on 14th January at the London Forum, the umbrella organisation for amenity and civic societies in London, was dedicated to the subject of public participation in planning.

The Queen's Speech had announced that a White Paper on planning reform would be published, and a number of interested organisations had responded by calling for more public participation in planning. The national organisation Civic Voice had called for a 'more accessible, balanced and collaborative planning system with communities at the heart' in its own manifesto. A survey of its members had shown that 80% of people felt that developers do not engage effectively with local

communities and 72% felt the same about local authorities. The Town and Country Planning Association has also just issued a report 'London - Planning for a Just City' which analyses London boroughs' Local Plans in terms of their provisions for collaboration with the community in planning and social justice. Although there were examples of good practice, it found that only 12% of plans provided for real collaboration, and 31% failed to address issues of social justice. The background to this pressure for a more collaborative planning system is the urgent need for new housing, to be met by government's target of building at least a million homes over this parliament. However, new developments often cause opposition, and recent research reveals that 75%

of new developments surveyed should not have gone ahead because their design was so mediocre (<https://www.cpre.org.uk/news/housing-design-2020/>).

The government welcomed the final report of its 'Building Better, Building Beautiful' Commission, which calls for housebuilding which safeguards beauty, community, history and landscape, and is popular, democratic and pluralistic. A strong contrast to the present system which generates unpopular, low-quality and unsustainable development by a tiny number of large developers. Civic Voice commented 'If the ambition to deliver more homes is to be achieved, it must be in collaboration with communities ... Do we agree with everything, no, but the overall tone, we support and we will welcome.'



People need homes and trees

By CONOR McHUGH

The Dixon Clark Estate is located to the right of the new Highbury Island, just north of Canonbury Primary School and south of St Paul's Road. The estate is to be augmented with a new block of 27 social and affordable homes, which will in part be paid for by an exclusive private block of 14 apartments. So far so good.

However, the plan is that the private block be located right opposite Highbury Island where seven mature trees have to be felled to accommodate it. (There is other space in the Estate where the block could go). These trees currently form a very valuable screen between the heavy traffic going past the island, and Canonbury Primary School and the Dixon Clark Estate itself, and strenuous efforts have been being made to save them.

They remain under severe threat: the Council's answer, in letters and in meetings, has been to stick to the line that homes come before trees, that other trees will be planted elsewhere and so on.

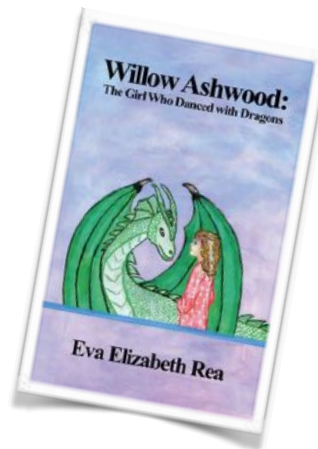
If you would like to get involved in this issue, have a look at the facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/SaveTreesLDN/> and contact Conor on his email address at conor@flintcom.co.uk



Willow Ashwood: the girl who danced with dragons

By GILL SHEPHERD

It is always a pleasure to review a book by a local author. Eva Rea lives close to Highbury Fields and works as a Chartered Psychologist and a CBT Practitioner. She has worked with teenagers for many years and this is a novel for teenagers (and perhaps their parents). That all sounds worthy and not necessarily very readable, but nothing could be further from the truth.



This novel is a real page turner, using magical realism to form the backdrop against which painful family relationships - where busy self-obsessed middle-class parents fail to engage with their unhappy, withdrawn daughter - are worked through. A dog leads Willow to a world where kindly dragons, other animals and other children help Willow to overcome her unhappiness and to build trust and self-confidence with which to face the future. For any reader who is a parent, the book inspires you to do things better and to keep on trying to be a more committed and engaged parent.

BOURNE'S
FISHMONGERS

Bourne's Fishmongers supply only the finest sustainable seafood and shellfish.
We offer a friendly service and competitive prices.
All enquiries welcome, including any orders.

10% OFF
with this voucher

13 Highbury Park N5 1QJ / 020 7226 7377
shop@bournesfish.com

GATHERING MOSS

Gathering Moss Furniture & Gifts
193 Blackstock Road N5 2LL
Open Saturday and Sunday 11am to 6pm

Makers of lovely affordable unique furniture using Reclaimed Wood
Made to the size of design you want
Lovely Fairtrade gifts
Twitter: @GM_Furniture - Tel: 07762 641 847
www.gatheringmoss.co.uk



HCA News | Issue 114 | March 2020

© HCA 2020 | Editor: Gill Shepherd | Published by the HCA

Review of Simon Jenkins' 'A Short History of London'

Simon Jenkins's latest book, *A Short History of London, The Creation of a World Capital* (Penguin Random House, 2019) attempts to break new historical ground by focusing on London's changing appearance. In doing so, he takes up our current concern for better building. He tackles the post-war period in most depth, and singles out what in his view is its most neglected and destructive quarter century, that between 1950 and 1975, when modernist architects replaced many areas of Victorian London with tower blocks and council estates, and when developers profited greatly from rebuilding many key sites in London, such as Centre Point, the Hyde Park Hilton and the Angel in Islington. The battle to save Covent Garden in 1973 was in his view the turning point against this modernist redevelopment. Since then, between a quarter and a third of central London locations have been designated as conservation areas, including much of Islington.

Jenkins also argues that London today lacks strategic planning for the

height of buildings, population density and social mix, that cities elsewhere are able to exercise. The result has been the building of expensive, unpopular and difficult-to-service office towers, and of luxury flat developments, many of them empty and owned by non-nationals. Mayor Ken Livingstone was an enthusiast for

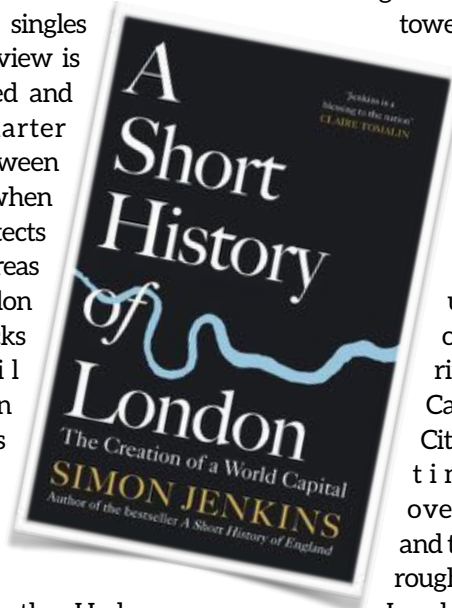
towers, and Boris Johnson even more so

when he was Mayor, doubling their number.

Jenkins describes how clusters of towers have sprung up without co-ordination along the river, at Elephant and Castle and on Islington's City Road. At the same time, the most overcrowded housing and the highest number of rough sleepers occur in London, and Londoners have lower disposable

income after housing costs than the UK average. Child poverty is also high in London.

Jenkins concludes 'A well-ordered city balances the flow of the property market against the needs of poorer and migrant workers and the virtue of neighbourhood continuity and cohesion. It cares for its homeless and incapacitated.'



REQUEST FOR DONATIONS

The HCA relies on donations from members for its survival

Donations are requested, particularly from those who receive a hard copy of the newsletter, as each edition costs over £200 to produce

Cheques should be made payable to 'HCA' and be sent to 68 Elfort Road, London N5 1AZ

ACCOUNTANTS FOR SMALL BUSINESS

We specialise in supporting small businesses and can help with:

- Self Assessment Tax Returns
- Bookkeeping & VAT
- Business Accounts
- Payroll & HR
- Corporation Tax
- Company Formations
- Business Start-ups
- ...and much more

For your free, no obligation meeting call us today on 020 7354 2661 or visit us online at www.taxassist.co.uk/islington-N5

