

# HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

Issue No 29 September 2002

## Highbury's Place in Movie History By Mark Mason

Most people associate film making in north London with Gainsborough Pictures' famous Islington Studio, but Highbury also has its place in film history. The Highbury Studios were located at 65A Highbury New Park. This was originally the site of the Highbury Athenaeum, a music conservatoire (built in 1890), which from 1926 was used as a recording studio by the Piccadilly record label.

Its use as a film studio dates from 1933. Productions during this period include the musical *Everything in Life* (1936) by Tudor Films, and the thriller *Midnight at Madame Tussauds* (1936) produced by Premier Sound Film Productions and starring James Carew, William Hartnell and Lucille Lisle. In 1937 film producer Maurice J Wilson rebuilt the Highbury Studios and leased it to independent production companies. Notable films include the comedy *Sam Small Leaves Town* (1937) made by the British Screen Service and starring June Clyde and Stanley Holloway; and the crime thriller *Law and Disorder* (British Consolidated, 1940) starring Alastair Sim and Diana Churchill).

After the Second World War the Rank Organisation acquired the studios and in 1947 Frank Sherwin Green was appointed Production Manager. The following year they made the film *To the Public Danger*, a moralising tale of drink driving based on the play by Patrick Hamilton, which was directed by Terence Fisher and starred Patricia Hayes, Sam Kydd, Roy Plomley and Susan Shaw. A string of 'B' movies followed, including *Colonel Bogey*, *Song for Tomorrow*, *Penny and the Pownall Case* (which starred Christopher Lee and Diana Dors), *Fly Away Peter*, and the comedy *Trouble in the Air* directed by Charles Saunders and starring Freddi Frinton, Jimmy Edwards, Jon Pertwee, Sam Costa, Harry Fowler, Sam Kidd and Bill Owen.

By 1950, the Rank Organisation was in financial difficulties

and decided to concentrate film production at Pinewood Studios. That year Highbury Studios was sold to High Definition Films, owned by Norman Collins - one of the leading lobbyists for the introduction of commercial television. In addition to film work (Orson Wells was there for a week recording extracts from Shakespearian drama) the studios were used for the development of television cameras, and for making mock television commercials - used to lobby Members of Parliament that commercial television was not such a bad thing!



HUGHIE GREEN OFFERS TO 'DOUBLE YOUR MONEY' AT  
HIGHBURY STUDIOS

In 1955, following the awarding of the first commercial television contracts, Highbury Studios were sold to Associated Rediffusion (ATV) for use as TV studios. The popular quiz show *Double Your Money*, compered by Hughie Green, was recorded there, as were TV dramas including *Emergency Ward Ten*. In the late 1950s, ATV developed its own purpose-built TV studios at Borehamwood and Highbury Studios were again redundant and were demolished in 1960. The Athenaeum Court flats now occupy the site. ▣

**HIGHBURY FIELDS ASSOCIATION AND HIGHBURY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION ARE SPONSORING A MEETING ON:**

### **THE MAYOR'S DRAFT LONDON PLAN**

**Christ Church, Highbury Grove, on Wednesday 4th September at 7.00 pm**

- Ken Livingstone has asked for opinions on his plan
- Hear the views of expert speakers from GLA, HACAN and independent planning consultants
- Learn the Mayor's proposals for London as a World City - housing - traffic congestion - waste - health - conservation
- Have your say - help formulate a community response to these important plans - deadline for comments is 30.09.02
- FREE GLASS OF WINE

Further info: email [robinhull@macunlimited.net](mailto:robinhull@macunlimited.net) or tel: 7359 5731

# The Coming Aircraft Menace

By Robin Hull

Since the article on aircraft noise published in the last issue, there have been a number of developments.

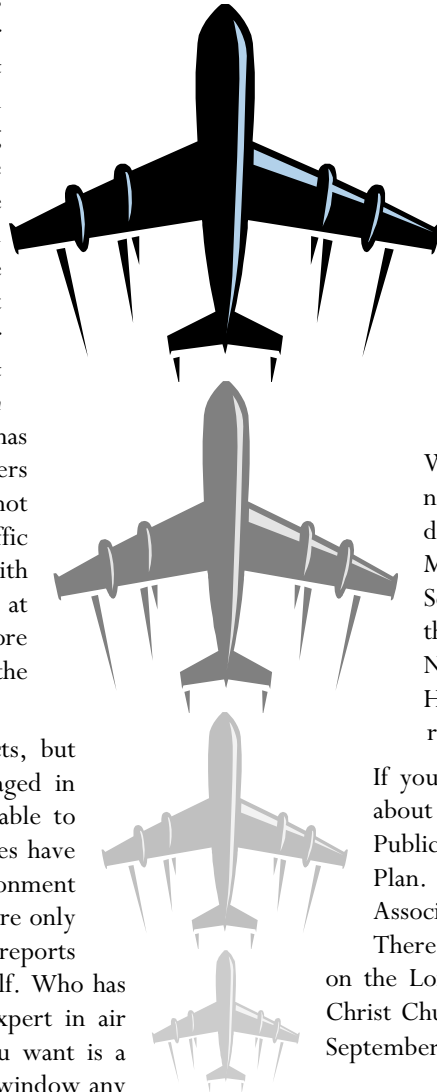
First, the Mayor's *Draft London Plan* was published as a consultation document. This envisages and supports expansion of airports and air traffic. Secondly, the Mayor's *Draft Ambient Noise Strategy* is now available on the GLA website, with much interesting information about all the noises we live with, including air traffic; and also a range of proposed noise policies which seem well intentioned but doomed. Finally the government's consultation document produced by the Department for Transport, entitled '*The Future Development of Air Transport in the United Kingdom: South East*' has appeared. This is the one which has generated daily articles in the newspapers since the beginning of August - not surprisingly as it anticipates air traffic doubling by 2020 and trebling by 2030, with several new airports, additional runways at existing airports such as Heathrow, more roads to service them, and more cars on the roads. Is that really what we want?

It takes time and trouble to get the facts, but there is a growing body of people engaged in doing just that - and making them available to anyone with internet access. New websites have sprung up, notably the Aviation Environment Federation, [www.aef.org.uk](http://www.aef.org.uk), and you are only a few clicks away from masses of views, reports and raw data - which is a problem in itself. Who has the time or inclination to become an expert in air industries and their effects, when all you want is a little peace from all the noise? Open the window any nice weekend or venture into the garden or the park and conversation is interrupted by every low-flying plane. How do you feel about this getting three times as bad?

Technological advance has its limitations. It seems clear that there is no way to reduce to an acceptable level the adverse effects associated with expanding use of aircraft. No technologies exist, nor seem likely to emerge, that can make these problems go away. The only way to deal with it is to limit the number of flights, while at the same time using the best that technology and operating techniques can offer. We must realise that technology and operating techniques in themselves cannot achieve what is needed by way of limitations to noise and pollution, and restoring quality of life for millions of people.

Most recently it is reported that the airlines are considering both compensating around 400 house owners whose

properties would be knocked down for a new runway at Heathrow with 125% of the value of their homes, and also paying for protection from noise for those living near the new runway. But this is a far greater matter than sweetening the pill for those important few. A new runway and more planes would impact dreadfully on the whole population of London and beyond.



The government supports the air industries' assertions that increase in air travel is fundamental to the economy. Opponents point to holes in this argument. A major problem is that there are no independent economic studies. Authoritative studies are needed which will compare the benefits with the costs of a largely untaxed industry which contributes to noise, ill health and global warming, destruction of environmentally sensitive habitat, more roads, more car journeys, and a balance of payments deficit in tourism.

Will our voice be heard? Who knows, but now is the time to express our views. The deadline for written responses to the Mayor's Draft London Plan is 24th September. The deadline for responses to the Department of Transport is 30th November. Let us know what you think and HCA will represent your views in its responses.

If you want to get a broader picture and learn about the implications for Highbury, join us at a Public Meeting on the Mayor's Draft London Plan. HCA has joined the Highbury Fields Association to organise this special meeting. There will be a range of speakers with expertise on the London issues. The meeting will be held at Christ Church, Highbury Grove, on Wednesday 4th September at 7.00 pm. ■

## Sources of information:

The Mayor's Draft London Plan can be downloaded from [www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk), or ordered in hard copy.

The Mayor's Draft Ambient Noise Strategy can be downloaded from [www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk).

The Future Development of Air Transport in the United Kingdom: South East, consultation papers, can be downloaded or ordered free in hard copy from [www.aviation.dft.gov.uk](http://www.aviation.dft.gov.uk).

AirportWatch is at [www.airportwatch.org.uk](http://www.airportwatch.org.uk)

Aviation Environment Federation is at [www.aef.org.uk](http://www.aef.org.uk)

GreenSkies is at [www.greenskies.org](http://www.greenskies.org)

HACAN ClearSkies is at [www.hacan.org.uk](http://www.hacan.org.uk)

... and, of course, write to your MP and MEP.

## CPZs - What next?

The Finsbury Park and Bryantwood Road/Benwell Road CPZs have been running for about a year now - and they are meeting with a mixed reaction.

Both had teething troubles with the hours of operation and the availability of visitors' permits. Inevitably it is the Match Day part of the scheme that causes trouble. Joanna Antonia, who lives in the Finsbury Park scheme said, "I specially booked a plumber to come on

*Sunday, as parking is easier normally, but there was a Match, and you can't use visitor permits on Match Days. I had to risk him getting a ticket."*

The remaining area from Highbury Clock Tower down to Gillespie Road and across to Drayton Park station is now an 'island' between surrounding CPZs. Doubtless the Council is hoping this will put pressure on people to accept a full-time CPZ here too. Some people say it has been getting more difficult to park near their homes and businesses; and that there are 'prowling'

commuters every morning, looking for spaces.

Others think this a small price to pay to avoid the expense and inconvenience of having to live with two separate CPZs - the regular one and the Match Day scheme, as Joanna Antonia has to.

The whole area between Gillespie Road and Finsbury Park has been made a 20mph 'Home Zone' as well.

HCA would be interested to hear what you think of the changes, and whether any more are needed. ■

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

*HCA interviews David Harvey, Director of Highbury Branch, Lawsons, Drayton Park, who says "our Branch is arguably one of the best laid out and most user-friendly builders' merchants in London."*

### HCA – Why is this site such a good one for Lawsons?

**Dave** – Having 1¼ acres next to the railway lines means there are few residents overlooking our working yards being disturbed by us loading and reversing lorries and moving heavy goods around. Drayton Park as an access road is also ideal. It's wide and straight with plenty of turning space in front of our gates. Our lorries make one turn off Holloway Road, then drive along Drayton Park without having to weave through narrow residential streets. I need to park 5 or 6 artics outside the gates at 7am to speed up loading, which doesn't bother anyone either. 250 customers arrive daily by van or car and if you add in our delivery lorries, which move about 100 tons of goods each day, this makes about 350 vehicle movements a day, so an accessible site is essential.

### HCA – When did your business start here?

**Dave** – My grandfather started 'Harvey's' as a Coal Depot over 80 years ago on unused railway sidings land leased off the Railways. My father took over in 1968 and I started work here in 1974. There was less demand for coal, especially after the Clean Air Act in the 1950s, so we branched out into selling sand, bricks and heavy building materials. The next milestone was when Harvey's went into partnership with Lawsons Timber Merchants in 1997. Harvey's did not have the timber expertise and customer base that Lawsons has. We now are midway through a major expansion plan since this is a very successful site with no serious competitors for miles around. As companies we are well suited – both are friendly 'family run' firms. We take on

youngsters who have found it hard to settle into work and are pleased to see how well they do here. My view is that if you spend most of your time at work, you should be happy there!

### HCA – What is happening now?

**Dave** - The Directors are spending money and time countering Arsenal FC's proposals to build 6 storey flats on our site, one of eleven blocks of housing AFC wants on railway land occupied by Drayton Park businesses. I'm constantly surprised people still think the AFC plans are just about a Stadium in Ashburton Grove. Far from it! AFC wants 6 tower blocks circling the Stadium, as well as the 6 storey housing in Drayton Park. Their idea is that the housing will fund the Stadium, but they need to displace over 60 businesses, which could be difficult. Lawsons is opposing the Compulsory Purchase Order. I really do think that what AFC is trying to do is totally wrong both for them and for us. The plans are impacting badly on so many lives. I'm seriously annoyed with Islington Council and the politicians who ignored the businesses. Why didn't the Council force the Club to admit that there are very few alternative sites for us all? AFC keeps offering the same few sites to every business I talk to. The sites are not suitable and unsurprisingly, we don't want them!

### HCA – What's next?

**Dave** – We've spent £500,000 on improvements here over the last few years and now have a big new shed which helped increase our turnover to nearly £7 million last year. We employ 40 people and aim to increase the workforce over the next few years. Lawsons at Drayton Park will stay here and will develop this site to its capacity. The sales staff plan to increase our turnover to £10 million a year within the next two years. So there is a lot happening next! ■



DAVE HARVEY AT THE TRADE COUNTER

## RECENT EVENTS RE ARSENAL'S PLANS FOR STADIUM, HOUSING, WASTE TRANSFER STATION

- 30 May Islington Council signed Planning Conditions and Section 106 legal agreements with AFC granting the Club planning consent.
- 30 May Richards J gave permission to legally aided Claimants in High Court of Justice to serve Consolidated Claim against Islington Council to Judicially Review the resolution to approve of 10.12.01 and the Grant of Planning Consent of 30.5.02.
- 20 June Islington served Compulsory Purchase Orders on 134 sites, including 60+ businesses in Ashburton Grove, Queensland Road, Benwell Road, Hornsey Road, Drayton Park, Lough Road and Eden Grove.
- 22 July Deadline for objections to Secretary of State re CPO. Residents and Community Groups, including HCA, wrote objections as non-statutory objectors.
- 29 July Secretary of State, Rt Hon John Prescott, ordered a Local Inquiry into the CPOs. Date not yet fixed.
- July Arsenal started clearing some land in Lough Road/Eden Grove.
- 24-26 July 3 day hearing in High Court of Justice before Ouseley J. Case included challenge on the planning process conducted by Islington and on adequacy of AFC's Environmental Studies.
- 31 July Ouseley J found against Claimants.
- August Appeal lodged in Court of Appeal and papers served on Islington Council.

For more information on the community opposition to the plans check [www.RedCard.org.uk](http://www.RedCard.org.uk)

### Do we know your address and email?

HCA is updating its records again. Have we got your name and address right? If not, please let us know.

If you did not receive this newsletter personally, would you like to do so? Send us your details.

Also we want to collect people's email addresses. In the past we have not done this, as we know a great many members have not had one - but things are changing. Would you be interested to receive updates, reminders of meetings or newsletters by email? Please let us know and send us your email address.

HCA is registered under the Data Protection Act and personal details are used only for Association purposes and never revealed to unauthorised third parties.

Please take a minute to email: [robinhull@macunlimited.com](mailto:robinhull@macunlimited.com)

Or write to: **HCA Membership Secretary, 123 Highbury Hill, N5 1TA**

**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.

The Brownswood Practice,  
24 Wilberforce Road, Finsbury Park.

**Tel: 7226 1193 Your local Registered Osteopath**

## ANDREWS

### DRY CLEANERS

**6 Highbury Park**

**020 7226 2105**

## GATHERING MOSS *Interiors*

*193 Blackstock Road, N5*

Tel: 020 7354 3034

*New and unusual Gifts at affordable prices*

*Our furniture makers produce our own tables, mirrors and bookshelves etc. Why not have something made just for you?*

*Open - Friday 10.00am - 4.00pm*

*Saturday 10.00am - 6.00pm*

*Sunday 11.00am - 4.00pm*

*Spend £50 and get £5 voucher towards your next purchase*

### *Highbury Community Association*

The HCA represents 730 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, 10 Stavordale Road N5 1NE or email: [pg\\_lg@hotmail.com](mailto:pg_lg@hotmail.com)

Printed & published by HCA, 83 Highbury Hill N5 1SX