

HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

www.highburycommunity.org

No 47 June 2006

Gridlock and mayhem?



EMIRATES STADIUM – DESTINED TO CREATE TRANSPORT HAVOC?

By Alison Carmichael

VERY SHORTLY, unless elected councillors can propose mitigating solutions at an important East Area Committee meeting on Tuesday 27th June, North London will be asked to cope with the transport and pedestrian influx of 60,000 fans converging on Arsenal's Emirates Stadium.

Despite years of 'discussions between officers and AFC consultants' since 2001 and hundreds of thousands of pounds spent by Arsenal on Transport Consultants, the plans proposed for road closures do not seem to 'help local residents and businesses by opening roads during events' – a puzzling claim by Arsenal Stadium Manager, John Beattie.

Crucially, the Council has failed to publicise which pedestrian routes police wish fans to take while walking to and from the Stadium before and after matches.

On 25th May 2006 council officers failed to get East Area Committee councillors to pass the proposed before/during/after road closure 'Travel Plan' and this is now out to consultation. This means you!

Go to the link below giving you more details of which roads are proposed to be closed for how long, before, during and after each and every weekday and weekend match for the foreseeable future.

http://www.islington.gov.uk/DownloadableDocuments/TransportandStreets/Pdf/new_traffic_arrangements.pdf

See below for details of who to write to. Aim to come to the Council meeting at 7.30pm on 27th June in the Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Road.

Safety to all is paramount, of course, but cutting off major routes to and from the North and West for residents and those passing through this part of North London, not once a year, but every other week during the season, for several hours each time, must have some adverse safety consequences.

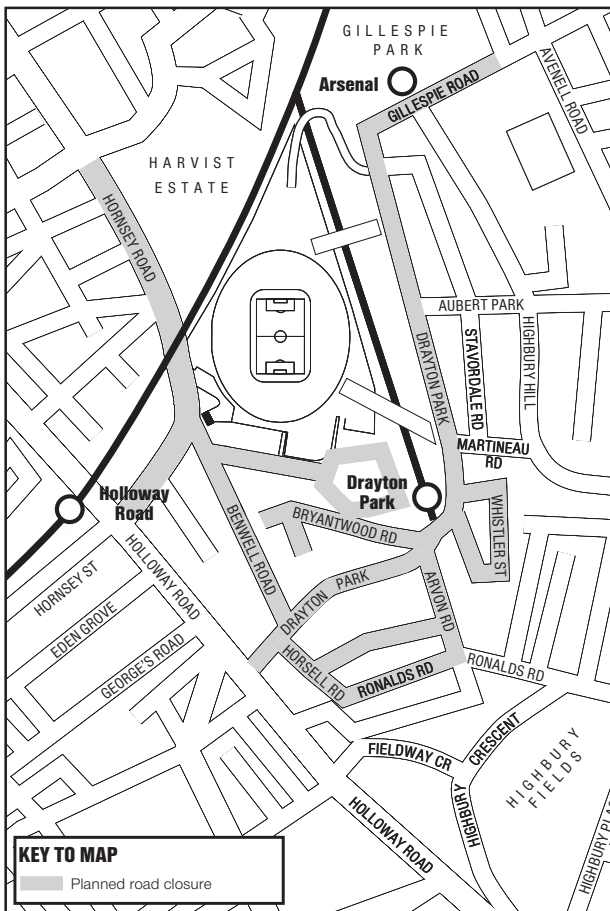
It also appears that the adverse effects to others' lives and livelihoods seem to be secondary to the financial interests of a large international football company.

Maybe a useful solution would be to limit the numbers to 40,000 until Arsenal pays for opening Holloway Road Station during matches? Another station in use would reduce the congestion at the others, thereby presumably increasing the safety margin. Should police work out, for consultation, safe routes for pedestrians to and from the Stadium?

The problem is not just the numbers, although the numbers make it exponentially worse. It is also to do with the precise location of the Stadium in relation to the currently nearest useable Underground and rail stations.

Holloway Road is also the A1 and a major route for domestic and trade traffic passing in and out of central London. Apart from fans in the 600 cars parking under the stadium, who will enter the area on designated routes via the closed roads, or arriving by coach, fans have to walk to the Stadium. Apparently no plan exists for directing them safely, without disrupting other pedestrians or road traffic on the A1. No crossing point has been designated. No stewarding arrangements have been made.

The Met Police admit this is new territory. Never in Europe has such a large



(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

capacity Stadium been operated in such a densely populated and traffic congested area in modern times. We had a foretaste of what happens in Highbury in 2004 when just Benwell and Bryantwood Roads were closed to traffic. The resulting disruption to motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists over a wide area, caused over 2000 Highbury residents to sign KICC's petition to re-open the roads.

During this period, in August 2004, Council Senior Engineer, Owen Davies, Traffic and Safety team wrote: 'The geography of the area south of the East Coast Mainline (ECM) for the Highbury area shows that there are only three main roads north, these being Holloway Road, Hornsey Road and Blackstock Road, with Benwell Road and St Thomas's Road as subsidiary roads north. Drayton Park and Gillespie Road are roads which are conducive to travelling east/west. This (sic) adds to the number of people using these roads as quick and convenient routes both around and through the borough.'

So – if closing so many roads for a few hours more than 26 times a year, giving some people passes to access their homes, and others in adjacent roads no passes, is NOT what you want your Councillors to vote for, then send your comments to the Officer or write to the Councillors on the East Area Committee.

•**Mark Bland:**

Street.management@islington.gov.uk
PO Box 3333, 222 Upper Street, N1 1XR.

•**Councillors:**

See www.highburycommunity.org or
www.islington.gov.uk for email addresses and names of East Area Committee. ■

32 mobile phone aerials for the new Stadium?

By Roger Wright

ALL FIVE mobile phone network operators have joined together and submitted an application to the Council to erect 32 mobile phone aerials on the new Arsenal Stadium. There would be groups of four aerials on each of the eight 'stair towers', making 32 in all. There are about 10 aerials on the existing Highbury Stadium and these will be removed as the old stadium is redeveloped.

Originally, the Council only distributed information about the application at the end of March in the streets immediately around the new stadium. After a lot of complaints from HCA, SNAG (Stadium Neighbours Action Group) and various councillors, Council officers decided they had better 'consult' across a much wider area, sent out many more letters on 24th May and extended the period for comment.

As far as we can tell, this would be the largest single installation of mobile phone transmitters anywhere in a densely populated area (remember that Islington is one of the most densely populated areas of the entire UK). The Millennium Stadium in Cardiff, Old Trafford and Twickenham do not have even half as many aerials in their vicinity. There is also a separate application in to erect an additional set of aerials at the Holloway Road end of Drayton Park.

Neither the Mobile Phone Operators nor Council officers have followed central government recommendations in this matter as they are supposed to consult local schools in the vicinity before submitting an application. Drayton Park School was not consulted prior to the application being made.

People hold a wide range of views about mobile phone transmissions. Unlike using one yourself, you have no choice about being exposed to the radio waves that come from the transmitters. The official line from the government safety body – NRPB – is that the only harmful effects from these transmitters would be the heating up of your body tissues and that this is insignificant more than 5m from an aerial. There is no 'accepted' evidence of any other biological effects.

On the other hand, some

laboratory studies have shown low levels of DNA damage and other effects. It has taken 50 years for scientists to finally agree that living underneath 'high voltage' power lines does have an effect on health. So, deciding whether you think there is a risk or not from these transmitters has to be a personal choice, given the conflicting evidence and widespread scepticism over various 'official pronouncements' made in the last few years.

The government has ruled that Planning Authorities may not reject an application on health grounds. However, local Planning Authorities are still obliged to ensure the health and welfare of the community. In this case, the number and total power output of the proposed installation goes beyond that of anything existing today and so we believe additional examination of the proposal, and if granted, specific monitoring, should be undertaken at the very least.

It's also worth noting that a number of other aerials – on the buildings of the Harvist estate off Hornsey Road, on Aubert Court and on the street, outside 100 Drayton Park, are on sites leased by the Council to various mobile phone operators. If the application for 32 aerials is granted, we will be lobbying the Council to terminate the leases on these sites as soon as possible, to mitigate any effects of the new aerials, and to refuse the additional application for the end of Drayton Park.

It is expected that this application will be discussed at the East Area Planning Sub-committee on 11th July at 7:30 in The Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Road (next to Waitrose).

If you want to make an objection (or support the application) you can write to Ben Lusher (re: Planning Application no P060473-P060477, mobile phone masts on the Emirates Stadium) at 222, Upper Street or submit it on the Council's website at www.islington.gov.uk/services and select 'Online Planning'.

● **You can make sure you are kept updated by getting all the latest news on**

www.highburycommunity.org ■

H I G H B U R Y C H A M B E R C H O I R

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TALLIS

Derelinquit impius

Sancte Deus

WEELKES

Alleluia, I heard a voice

Hosanna to the Son of David

O happy he whom Thou protect'st

O Lord arise

When David heard

The 'vision' thing

By Tony Miller

WHAT IS A VISION? Is it a blinding insight brought about by an inspirational moment, fuelled by ecstatic religious fervour or mind-altering medication? Not if you are Islington Council.

For LBI a 'vision' is something more tangible. Something that comes in a glossy cover, properly bound, with many pages of dense text and a bewildering number of diagrams, appropriately keyed. And it comes at a cost of more than £33,000.

Earlier in the year, the Council commissioned a survey of Highbury Fields. The purpose was to determine how the fields could be protected and improved. The historical background and the social significance of the Fields would be considered in determining how they are valued, not just by those of us who live nearby but also those who are regular users.

Then the views of interested parties, local residents and casual users of the Fields would be taken into account in arriving at a set of proposals aimed at conservation of the natural assets and improvement of the facilities.

The object of the exercise is to set a series of priorities which have general public backing. This will be the 'Vision for Highbury Fields'. Armed with this compelling document, the Council will go forth to seek funding from a variety of sources, including the Heritage Lottery Fund. As and when such funding becomes available, so the vision will unfold.

All in all, it seems a laudable attempt to provide some structure, some long term plan that will keep the Fields thriving at the heart of our community for decades to come. And that can't be bad. Too often in the recent past there have been piecemeal renovations, spur-of-the-moment decisions, convenient solutions to unexpected events which have proved very damaging to the fabric and life of the Fields.

For once the Council has not gone its

own way. From the outset they sought the help of the Highbury Fields Association in compiling a brief and appointing a team of consultants who would carry out the task. The job went to J&L Gibbons LLP, a local firm of landscape architects. For a couple of months they have been doing technical studies, mapping the Fields, making a survey of all the trees – something that hasn't been done for years and is vital if you're planning for the future – and consulting community groups and schools.



PART OF THE 'VISION' FOR HIGHBURY FIELDS

On June 7th they held a public meeting at the Baptist Church on Highbury Place. Perhaps publicity for this event was a little too modest, judging from the number of frantic and mystified emails that flew back and forth on the day before. In the event about a hundred people turned up. The consultants showed off their preliminary studies and thoughts, then the audience was pumped and cajoled to state its priorities.

On the whole, so far, the approach seems to be sensible and sensitive.

No-one seems to be seeking immortality with a piece of trophy architecture. The present balance of sweaty sporting activity and casual hanging out seems set to continue. Measures to preserve the natural harmony of the Fields seem to be top of the list.

One contentious matter was raised – for

which there was no answer. What will happen if 20,000 or more AFC fans tramp across the Fields on their way from Highbury and Islington Station to the new stadium?

Well, that would scupper the whole thing. The damage would be incalculable. Unfortunately, no one knows how the fans will behave when the season starts. And there are no plans to constrain their movements.

What happens next? Some more talking to users of the fields, some more consultation, and then at the end of the summer the draft vision will be produced. (Odd, isn't it, that you can have a draft of a vision?)

Following that, the whole deal will be put to a public consultation before the council is asked to adopt it. Then it becomes policy.

And then... and then....

Will this Vision ever become a reality? Call me a cynic, but I have one gnawing doubt – maintenance. Greenspace admit they don't have the money to do a proper job of maintaining the Fields now. They confess that if there are wondrous improvements they still won't get a bigger budget. So will we be better off – or will the vision gradually fade?

'Where there is no vision, the people perish' (Proverbs 29:18)

'Where there is a Vision – the people must be patient' Tony Miller 06:06

● Contacts for the "Vision for Highbury Fields"

for Greenspace: Dominique Allen
dominique.allen@islington.gov.uk

for J&L Gibbons LLP:
info@jlg-london.com ■

Quadrant CPZ hours change again

IN OUR March issue, we reported that Councillors had rejected their Council officers' advice for the proposed hours for the Quadrant CPZ and voted for Quadrant to have a CPZ that would run from 10am to 2pm Monday to Friday only. They also voted to change the Gillespie scheme to match this.

The decision about Quadrant was 'called in' by the Council's 'Scrutiny Committee', who ruled

this was not acceptable and that the East Area Committee must vote on this again.

At the first meeting of this committee after the election, it was proposed that the restrictions for Quadrant should be Monday to Friday, 8:30 to 6:30 and this was accepted after a vote. There will be no restrictions on Saturday. The decision to change the Gillespie scheme to the shorter hours still stands. In both cases, the additional matchday parking restrictions will continue unchanged.

● Quadrant: Short term pay-and-display bays will be introduced for shoppers. Implementation is expected in August. ■

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July Exhibition in Aberdeen Park

AN EXCITING art exhibition is coming up in Highbury that local residents are welcome to attend.

The exhibition is being held by the Florence Trust, which each year offers 12 carefully selected artists not only studio space, but various further opportunities to develop and succeed as artists.

They hold two exhibitions a year, an 'Open Studio' event in winter and then the curated End of Year show in July, where works of art are for sale – and judging by the selected works of art shown on the website www.florencetrust.org, the artworks are very interesting

and of high quality, so it's a great opportunity to acquire a piece of art from a possible Future Master!

The exhibition is held in the Grade 1 listed Victorian church, St Saviour's, in Aberdeen Park.

When: Opening night Friday July 7th, and then on all afternoons until July 16th 2006.

Where: St Saviour's, Aberdeen Park, Highbury N5 2AR.

T: 020 7354 4771

E: info@florencetrust.org

W: www.florencetrust.org

Registered Charity Number 800443

More 20mph zones – good or bad?

THE Highbury Residents' Parking area (CPZ G) and Highbury Fields are surrounded by 20mph zones.

Everywhere to the east of Highbury Grove, Highbury Park and Blackstock Road has a 20mph limit. To the north, the St Thomas's/Finsbury Park (CPZ H) parking zone is all 20mph and to the west, Liverpool Road and Mackenzie Road are all 20mph too. Are you feeling 'left out' or 'hemmed in'? You may think that people drive faster down your road than they used to. Some people think this is to make up the time drivers have lost crossing the 20mph zones all around us.

You may not want an increase in 20mph zones, but the Council has already said that eventually the whole borough will have a 20mph limit, except for main roads, and the Mayor has announced a similar intention for all of London too.

At the moment this area seems to be low down the list to get 20mph zones. The Council used to insist that 20 mph zones were 'self policing' with humps and chicanes everywhere and that made them expensive. However they have just agreed to one in the north of the borough, which will just have speed limit signs.

Whatever you think, please let HCA and your councillors know, whether you want one sooner, later or not at all, and what kind of scheme you might prefer.

If we can establish a community view on this, then we will be able to have more influence with the Council on what is done and when.

Please email or write and tell us what you think:
hcanews@hotmail.com

Party piece

The AGM on 22nd April this year was, as usual, attended by about 70 members and their friends. Issues raised at the AGM were the usual mix – with the 32 Mobile Phone Masts at Ashburton Grove Stadium dominating the discussion. Thanks are due to anthropologist and local resident, Hermione Harris, for a fascinating glimpse into her research into African Churches in North London. Many thanks also

to local shops, and others, whose generously donated gifts raised a very impressive £475 for Child Line. Bruce Tattersall's skill and flair at auctioneering helped make the party a good one, as did all the good food and wine. Don't miss next year's AGM!

● **HCA committee members elected at the AGM: Nina Evans, David Fenton, Susanne Gustavsson, Lorie Karlin, Beth Moir, Francis Radice, Arjan van der Waal, Trevor Wilson, Roger Wright.**

Highbury Pharmacy

One Hour Photo

Digital Media

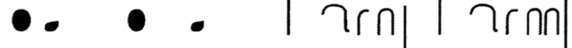
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Highbury Writers:

Local author discovers a Victorian hero

By Nicolette Jones

Once there was a cause that stirred a nation, nearly dislodged a prime minister and has since saved hundreds of thousands of lives.

It was taken up by parliamentarians, journalists, businessmen, trade unionists, novelists, playwrights, clergymen, caricaturists and music-hall performers. Its supporters flocked to meetings, where they cheered its advocates, and demonstrated in the streets, condemning its opponents as friends of villainy.

It involved all classes, and men and women alike. Florence Nightingale contributed money, Queen Victoria expressed sympathy and the mother-in-law of one of the monarch's daughters lent her time and the cachet of her title. It gave the poor a platform to speak out in their own defence. It is still commemorated in English idiom, in names of streets and ships, in statues and plaques, in the logo of London Transport and in the gym shoes of British schoolchildren. And yet we hardly remember what it was all about.

This is how I came to find out.

In 1995 I moved to a street of Victorian terraced houses, Plimsoll Road, in Finsbury Park, north London, a few doors down from a pub called the Plimsoll.

Pasted over the middle of the pub sign was a large picture of what looked like a red baseball boot. Around the edges of the sticker it was possible to make out a patch of grey sea, and its horizon. It made you want to see what lay underneath.

I was interested in how the sign demonstrated the way language changes, with the new meaning pasted over the old. I knew that the street and consequently the pub were so named because of the Plimsoll Line, which



NICOLETTE JONES

dictated the limit to which merchant ships could be loaded. But the line, and the man it was called after, had faded from public consciousness over a century or so, and his name conjured, for most people, only a gym shoe.

Few even knew that the shoe was named in his honour, so called because it was rubber below and canvas above, and should be immersed in water only up to a certain point, like a cargo ship. The commonest misspelling of plimsoll is now "plimsole", as though "plim" qualifies a part of the shoe.

People have even started to forget what the shoe looked like: the red trainer in the pub sign had very little to do with a plimsoll as we 1960s English schoolchildren knew it.

Living in a street named after an unfashionable item of footwear with comic associations, I was sorry that the nobler connotations of the word had lost their hold.

Plimsoll was a name for silly or sinister characters in fiction and drama: P. G. Wodehouse's American visitor to Blandings, Tipton Plimsoll; Nurse Plimsoll in *Witness for the Prosecution*.

I acquired a pedantic habit of drawing attention to the original meaning. "Plimsoll, as in the Line," I would say, when I dictated my address, instead of "Plimsoll, as in the shoe." I warmed to the people who knew what I was talking about. Then one day the pub changed hands. And name. The sign disappeared.

I woke in the small hours of the morning a few days later seized with the thought

that the sign might still be around. It took three conversations during the next week – with surprised but not completely obstructive bar staff – before I was shown into the pub's backyard. There the sign stood, with the baseball boot stripped off.

Revealed was an undistinguished bit of artwork: a picture of a ship (circa 1960, as I later discovered) and the plimsoll mark with its then obscure initials. They stood, as I went on to learn, for the different conditions in which the loading levels applied: Tropical Fresh, Fresh, Summer, Winter and, most treacherous of all, Winter North Atlantic. Beneath them was a name, Samuel Plimsoll, and his dates, 1824–1898.

I asked to buy the sign, and after a brief haggle it was mine for £20, though I suspect the proprietor was secretly amazed that anyone wanted it at all. A wiry barfly obligingly loaded it horizontally on to his head and escorted me down the road with my treasure. It now hangs in my back garden, and not everyone is as excited about it as I am. One relation remarked: "What do you want *that* for?"

I wanted it because it illustrated the significance of the name of my street, but also, I think, because I knew it contained a story. I didn't know then how gripping and dramatic that story would turn out to be. Buying an ugly nautical pub sign launched me into research that revealed a tale of villainy and courage, of humour and surprises, of international consequences and contemporary resonance.

It led me to a man who became my hero.

● *The Plimsoll Sensation: The Great Campaign to Save Lives at Sea* by Nicolette Jones, published on 8 June 2006 by Little, Brown will be Radio 4 Book of the Week from 3 July.

● Nicolette will be talking about Samuel Plimsoll's history (in someone's living room) at the Plimsoll Road street party on the afternoon of Saturday 15th July, and there will be special discounted copies. Time to be confirmed but will be posted, with the exact location, on www.nicolettejones.com.

Barn News

Not for sale

Readers will be pleased to hear the good news that Mike Long, Pharmacist and owner of Highbury Pharmacy, has decided not to sell the business and leave for a new life in the North. This was the plan up until the end of May; a buyer had been found and the sale was about to progress. Residents and other local shopkeepers value Mike's natural and

friendly outgoing manner. Despite being very busy behind the counter, he always has time for a word or two, if needed. Mike said, 'I realised that I was very unhappy about the thought of leaving Highbury. I have been very happy working here for 15 years and although I don't live in Highbury, this is my "home".'

Thin end of the wedge?

The new glass-fronted shop built on a vacant site at 2 Highbury Park is one of two premises in the Highbury Barn parade of shops to be granted A2 Use

Class. The great majority of the 34 premises are A1 (for retail, such as sale of goods to the public), with a couple of A3 and A5 Class (cafés, restaurants and hot food takeaways) and one A4 Class, the Pub. A2 covers financial services, banks, building societies and professional services such as estate agents and employment agencies and betting shops. The estate agent Hotblack and Desiato is moving in as HC News goes to Press, mid-June. Council officers say that the change of Use Class was allowed because it was a corner plot. ■

Free and easy

“FreeCycle” is an idea that started in 2003 as an easy way to give away things for free that you no longer want or need, rather than throw them away. It works by having local people sign up for an Internet mailing list, where they can then offer their unwanted items, and anyone else on the list can claim it.

Here’s the description from the local Islington FreeCycle:

“The Islington Freecycle™ group is open to all who want to “recycle” that special something rather than throw it away. Whether it’s a chair, a fax machine, piano or an old door, feel free to post it. Or maybe you’re looking to acquire something yourself! Nonprofit groups are also welcome to participate too!

One main rule: everything posted must be free. This group is part of The Freecycle Network, a nonprofit organization and a movement of people interested in keeping good stuff out of landfills. Check out freecycle.org for other cities and info on the movement! E-mail islington-freecycle-owner@yahoo.com for questions or improvement ideas!”

Sign up here and get rid of all your clutter:

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/islington-freecycle/>

And it really is incredible what you can get rid of on FreeCycle, old bricks and tiles and bikes, anything for use in the home, books and magazines. I’ve even seen “a garden full of weeds with pretty flowers” given away once!

SwapXchange

Islington SwapXchange, a simple, innovative idea that encourages the exchange of goods, ideas and information, in your community.

www.swapxchangeislington.org/index.html

Restore Community Projects

Restore Community Projects is a charity which collects reusable donated furniture, cookers, fridges/freezers and other household items from people who no longer need them. These are then passed on to people who do need them – such as clients referred from a partner organisation, or the unemployed, people on tax credits, students and the elderly. All items sold include delivery.

If you would like to donate your unwanted but working appliances (fridges, freezers, cookers, washing machines) and expand its life for the joy of others, phone Restore on 020 8493 0900 to discuss the collection service. Furniture needs to be in good condition, as Restore has no workshop to repair damaged items.

All electrical and gas appliances are refurbished by fully qualified engineers, and guaranteed for six months. An installation service is available for electrical appliances. The brand new electrical appliance showroom is open to everyone, Monday-Friday, 9:30pm-5:30pm at Unit 18, Ashley Road, Tottenham Hale, London N17 9LJ.

To access the furniture warehouse and receive 10% discount on the already low cost electrical appliances you must be able to prove that you’re a student, unemployed, pensioner, claiming benefit/tax credit, or been referred by a Housing Association, Local Authority, Social Worker or recognised partner agency.

<http://www.restorecommunityprojects.org/>

What the Council recycles

<http://www.islington.gov.uk/Environment/RubbishAndRecycling/recycling/HouseholdRecyclingCentre/1553.asp>

Susanne Gustavsson

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Highbury Community Association

The HCA represents 750 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, 79 Highbury Hill, N5 1SX, made out to ‘Highbury Community Association’.

Send letters or articles for next issue to
hcanews@hotmail.com or
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