

# HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

www.highburycommunity.org

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## Fields of the future?

By Tony Miller

YOU MIGHT HAVE seen a marquee on Highbury Fields in the middle of September.

You might have thought it housed some evangelical campaign, trying to inspire the faithful and convert the disbelievers. In a way, you would have been right.

For inside were laid out the fruits of many months' labour by the team charged with developing a 'Vision for Highbury Fields'. Graphically displayed on large boards were the ideas, proposals and suggestions for improvements to the Fields, which are intended to ensure that they survive for the next 50 years. There were ancient photographs of how the Fields used to look and artists' impressions of how the Fields may look in the not-too-distant future.

Anyone who passed by or who had been intrigued by the large banners hanging from the trees was welcome to tour the exhibition, make comments, affix post-it notes and fill in questionnaires. This was part of an extended consultation exercise.

The proposals were distilled down into three options which might be described as 'Do very little', 'Do a modest amount' and 'Do quite a lot'. So option one involved very few changes to the Fields as they are currently laid out but sought to tidy them up and put them into better shape. Option three suggested a fairly comprehensive redesign.

Among the more radical proposals were: amalgamating the One O'clock Club, the Oasis Café, the public toilets, the tennis court booking shed and other sundry facilities into a new building; concentrating all the sports facilities, tennis courts and a new hard-surface pitch into the north-east corner above Baalbec Road; replacing the present football pitch and tennis courts adjacent to Highbury Hill with a large turf playing field; removing and replanting trees to a greater or lesser degree; surrounding the whole area with a running or jogging track.

The exhibition did brisk business. At times you would be hard put to find a clipboard and pen upon which to fill up a questionnaire and post-it notes were flying around like confetti.



VISION OF THE FUTURE: HOW HIGHBURY FIELDS COULD LOOK WITH JOGGING TRACK AND REPLANTED TREES



PERFECT AS IT IS? RESIDENTS ARE INVITED TO SAY WHAT CHANGES, IF ANY, THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE

After the marquee came down and the circus left town, there was a Structured Discussion Event held at the Baptist Church on September 21st. Structured isn't the word. Those who had the temerity to voice their opinions were left in no doubt by the 'facilitator' that their contributions had to be short, sharp and to the point, otherwise they'd better shut up. But at least there was a chance to express doubts and concerns and to get some idea of what the planning team had in mind.

Although the results of all this latest consultation had not been digested,

there was an acknowledgement that the 'Do very little' school of thought was in the majority.

The consultation process on the 'Vision' started in the spring, continued through the summer and now, here we are in November [at time of writing] and it's still not over. Why, you might wonder, was it necessary to have such an exhaustive and exhausting consultation? Well, consider that this 'Vision' document is merely an instrument. It's bait. It's a sprat to catch a mackerel of funding. With this glossy brochure the Council can go shopping.

*(continued on page 2)*

(continued from page 1)

They can approach funding bodies and say, 'Here's what we want to do. And it's what people want!' And then they can produce the research evidence to prove it. '87.3% of the users of the Fields want a three-tiered marble ornamental fountain adorned with bronze statuary of flying pigs. Now isn't that irresistible! Please, cough up.'"

So, widespread and demonstrable support for the Vision is essential if money is to be raised. But what happens if the message that comes through from the public is, 'Do very little? That wouldn't have much appeal for potential funders who tend to be more attracted to flying pig fountains. Some slight anxiety lingers that a grandiose scheme may yet appear.'

The timetable for this whole business has slipped and slipped again. Originally the final 'Vision' was to have been produced at the end of June. This was a 'fixed and non negotiable' schedule. Somehow those words have been redefined.

The timetable now appears to be:

In early December the Vision Document will appear on the LBI website. There will be a month for people to respond. The document will also be at the Central Library for this period.

The report to the Council will be finalised by 16th February 2007.

The report will be presented to the East Area Committee in April 2007.

So there is still time to find out what's going on and contribute one's twopennyworth.

The consultants, J&L Gibbons, can be contacted at [info@jlg-london.com](mailto:info@jlg-london.com).

Jenifer Baker at Greenspace, who have commissioned the 'Vision' can be contacted at [jenifer.baker@islington.gov.uk](mailto:jenifer.baker@islington.gov.uk). And if previous exercises are anything to go by, the website will attract an avalanche of comment.

As far as I know there are, at the present time, no proposals for a flying pig fountain. But expect the unexpected. ■

# Remembering the old war memorial

By Alex King

ALTHOUGH IT WAS not an imposing monument, the old war memorial, which stood until this year on Islington Green, was uniquely interesting. It was the sole survivor of a campaign of rallies in the last few months of the First World War, which combined remembrance of the dead with an attempt to keep up enthusiasm for the war effort.

The founding rally of this campaign was held in Hyde Park on 4 August 1918, the anniversary of the outbreak of war. At its centre was a temporary 'shrine' commemorating the dead, consisting of a 24-foot high obelisk made of wood and cloth, standing on a cross-shaped base on which flowers were piled. A union jack flew from a flagpole on its summit, with allied flags on its sides.

The Islington memorial was a miniature version of this Hyde Park shrine: an obelisk with a flagpole, and hollow channels in the cross-shaped base in which people could place flowers (later filled with earth, and planted). It was made largely of cement render over chicken wire, and it is remarkable that it was kept standing so long.

The shrine in Hyde Park remained in place after the rally, and people came from all over London bringing wreaths and flowers in memory of the dead. Within ten days about 200,000 people visited it, and it continued to stand, increasingly weather-beaten and bedraggled, until September 1919. By then a new Cenotaph, far grander, had been erected in Whitehall, and the attention of the whole country became fixed on that.

The success of this temporary shrine prompted a movement to create similar shrines in the centres of other large cities. One of its leaders was the advertising entrepreneur Charles Higham, who wrote to the Mayor of Islington to request 'that I may have the privilege of presenting a shrine to South Islington' – not Islington as a whole. (The memorial for the whole borough, an extension to the Royal Northern Hospital, with the names of the dead inscribed in the gateway, was chosen a year later.)

It was South Islington because Higham had a political interest in the area: two months later, in October 1918, he was adopted as the Conservative candidate for Finsbury and Islington South for the next general election.

A week after his offer of the shrine was announced, he began a campaign for it in the local newspaper, promoting himself as 'the best-known advertising man in Europe'. He described how he had started his business from nothing, and recently worked for the government in the recruiting and war-savings campaigns.

He did not mention his political ambitions at this stage. The offer was accepted by Islington Council in September, in spite of doubts expressed by one member about the disinterestedness of Higham and of the predominantly Conservative committee which had recommended acceptance. The completed memorial was unveiled in October 1918, and although it was dedicated to 'the fallen' in an inscription on one side, the only individual referred to by name on it (on the other side) was Charles Higham, as the donor.

The intentions behind the memorial were thoroughly ambiguous. It might be about the dead, but it was also about political ambition and about fighting the war to the bitter end. One Conservative alderman declared that it 'would also serve as a stimulus to the people not to be a party to an inconclusive peace which might mean a repetition of this terrible slaughter in the course of the next generation'. In this it was hardly different from the 4th August remembrance ceremonies, which mixed mourning and reverence for the dead with wartime propaganda.

But the response of ordinary people to the shrine in Hyde Park also shows that they could impose their own meaning on such things, and make them into loved and revered tributes to those they had lost, no matter what the original intention had been.

● Alex King is the author of *Memorials of the Great War in Britain*

## Free computer course By Beth Moir

THE ARSENAL RED Zone is a community learning centre open to all.

It is a joint project between Arsenal Football Club and Islington Council. All courses are free. They include a range of learning opportunities, from an introduction to computers, spreadsheets and dyslexia support, to literacy, numeracy and multimedia courses, such

as digital photography and Photoshop.

Some are specifically geared to older learners. Many of the courses lead to a qualification.

I can highly recommend the courses, having done several of them myself. There is open access three times a week when anyone from Islington can use the computers, surf the net, send emails and

get help and advice.

For further details and to register for a course phone 020-7704 4500 or visit the centre on the pedestrian level around Emirates stadium, opposite turnstile E in the red and grey building.

● This is one of about 20 Learning Centres in Islington that offer similar courses. For details of all the centres contact the Adult and Community Learning Service 020-7527 5782 or email [acl@islington.gov.uk](mailto:acl@islington.gov.uk)

# Prostate cancer – a personal experience

Men are often reluctant to talk about their health and to ask for help when they have a problem. By talking about his experience of cancer, David Fenton hopes to encourage men to take early action

I AM 67 years old and it comes as a tremendous shock to be told that you have prostate cancer.

You know that it is quite common among much older people but you never expect it to happen to you, particularly when there was little or no obvious evidence to that effect, such as difficulty and frequent passing of urine.

Some five years ago I had a full health check: blood pressure, cholesterol and a PSA (prostate specific antigen) test. The PSA level was 4 but twelve months later it had risen to 4.8 and a biopsy was carried out (not painful and there is no need to worry or feel embarrassed as I found that the staff were helpful and sympathetic) and the result was negative.

Over the next two years my PSA was checked every six months and in June this year it had risen to 6, a significant increase. My consultant urologist at the Whittington suggested a further biopsy. The results confirmed the presence of a prostate cancer.

Further tests were arranged to confirm this – a bone scan, MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) and a CT scan (computerised tomography). I can't say I fully understood what each test was for but they were carried out on the same day at the Whittington and one week later I met my consultant urologist and a doctor who specialised in brachytherapy (a treatment option).

The urologist explained the options – active surveillance, radical radiotherapy, radical prostatectomy and brachytherapy. What certainly registered was that the cancer was at an early stage



DAVID FENTON

and treatment was possible. Also the good thing about all the tests was that my body was in pretty good condition.

I decided almost immediately to have the prostate removed and I had a further meeting within days with my consultant urologist and a consultant from UCLH. They both perform radical prostatectomy – one with keyhole surgery and the other involves an incision in the lower part of the abdomen. I chose keyhole surgery.

I recognised that incontinence and impotence were potential problems but the keyhole surgery was more likely to minimise the risk; and there were treatments for incontinence and impotence if necessary.

I had the standard pre-operative tests. The anaesthetist and surgeon went through the procedure again and answered a number of questions.

I was taken to the operating theatre and remember little else until coming round in the Recovery Unit. The operation takes about four hours.

When I came to, I had two drips in my

hand, a drain in my abdomen, a catheter and various measuring devices attached: e.g. heart, blood pressure. The former were sore rather than painful though painkillers were available if I had needed them. I did feel nauseated at one stage but they gave me an injection to overcome it. After one night I was returned to the main Urology ward, where I was monitored throughout the night. The following day only the catheter remained in situ. I was allowed water on the first day and a log was kept to record the amount of liquid intake and urine outflow.

The catheter was more uncomfortable than painful. This is particularly true at night when an extension is fitted and a second bag is held on a cradle alongside the bed.

I left hospital on the third day with the catheter still in place, though by then I was accomplished at positioning and emptying the bag. I returned to hospital a week later to have the catheter removed. This is not painful and takes no time at all. I was then required to drink water and sit around until I could pee. This was no problem – the problem was to stop peeing!

I saw the surgeon again three weeks after the operation. He was happy with the pathology report and that all the cancer had been removed. I am due to see him again in three weeks and thereafter at regular intervals to check that my PSA level is zero or very low.

I still find it difficult to accept that I have had prostate cancer. I prefer to be positive and think of it as having had a course of preventive surgery.

I have spoken frankly about my condition with family, friends and colleagues. It is surprising how many of them have either had some test or treatment or were thinking of doing so and have chosen to remain silent. Men are now talking more and more about prostate cancer but there is often a reluctance to do anything about it.

I hope that by sharing my experience, it will prompt other men to take early and appropriate action. ■

## Emirates Stadium shortcut

DID YOU KNOW you can use the walkways around the Emirates Stadium as a shortcut from Highbury to the Sobell Centre and the shops on Holloway Road? They are open to the public every day, not just on match days.

On Drayton Park either go up the steps near the entrance to Gillespie Park or walk over the bridge near Drayton Park Station (the one with the huge ARSENAL letters). If you're on a bike there's a ramp on the Hornsey Road side so you can easily ride across. ■

## *Healing Experience?*

*Trainee Healer on 2 year Accredited Course needs people who would like to experience one or more Free 1 Hour sessions. No need to be 'ill'.*

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# Dreaming of a Green Christmas

by **Susanne Gustavsson**

Five ways to a greener holiday season:

## 1) Switch to sustainable energy

Switch your energy supply to EcoTricity and don't feel guilty about all those Christmas lights – it takes only minutes to switch, they'll match the prices of your current supplier, and they're Deep Green, investing in wind, sun and water power:

[www.ecotricity.co.uk](http://www.ecotricity.co.uk)  
T: 08000 326 100

## 2) Get an eco-friendly Christmas tree

'Growing Concerns', a plant nursery by Victoria Park in Hackney, sells eco-friendly trees from November with prices ranging from £25-£40, they deliver the tree to your door for £4 (or free on Wednesdays!), and you can buy tea, coffee and cake in their shop to enjoy while selecting your plants!

[www.growingconcerns.org](http://www.growingconcerns.org)  
T: 020 8985 3222

The council will pick up your Christmas tree for free after Christmas – see the council website for details.

The Household Reuse and Recycling Centre, Hornsey Street, also accepts green waste and Christmas trees all year round.

Artificial trees are not environmentally friendly (unless you can find one that's made of recyclable materials), so trees from managed tree-farms are a better choice.

## 3) Christmas cards

For minimal waste, use the Internet to send electronic greetings, alternatively buy recycled, and recycle after Christmas.

Make your own electronic cards:  
[www.zefrank.com/lotsofwires/index.php](http://www.zefrank.com/lotsofwires/index.php)

Lovely recycled cards:  
[www.allthingsgreen.net](http://www.allthingsgreen.net)

Click on the red square with the Santa, or go to  
<http://shorterlink.co.uk/6219>

## 4) Presents

To cut down on waste, give gifts that can be experienced, like theatre tickets or a dinner, a day at a gym or spa, a subscription, or buy vouchers to make sure the recipient only gets things they really need or want. Food gifts should be locally produced, try the organic Saturday markets in Freightliners Farm or in Stoke Newington, or the Islington Farmers' market on Sundays for delicious food and drink gifts.

[www.freightlinersfarm.org.uk/market.htm](http://www.freightlinersfarm.org.uk/market.htm)  
[www.btinternet.com/~grow.communities/farmers-market.htm](http://www.btinternet.com/~grow.communities/farmers-market.htm)  
[www.lfm.org.uk/isling.asp](http://www.lfm.org.uk/isling.asp)

Or get fabulous recycled or environmentally friendly presents:

[www.recyclenow.com](http://www.recyclenow.com)  
[www.ecodesignfair.co.uk](http://www.ecodesignfair.co.uk)  
[www.greenyule.com/intro](http://www.greenyule.com/intro)  
[www.recycledproducts.org.uk/view/?b\\_cache=27799](http://www.recycledproducts.org.uk/view/?b_cache=27799)  
[www.gogreen.celande.co.uk](http://www.gogreen.celande.co.uk)  
[www.whatyoucando.co.uk](http://www.whatyoucando.co.uk)  
[www.charitygifttokens.org/](http://www.charitygifttokens.org/)  
Alternatively get all your presents second hand on Ebay:  
[www.ebay.co.uk](http://www.ebay.co.uk)

## 5) Decorations

Buy recycled or recyclable decorations or use edible or compostable decorations (dried fruit, popcorn, cranberry strings, lovely foliage, twigs etc).

## For more green Christmas ideas:

[www.wasteonline.org.uk/resources/InformationSheets/ChristmasRecycling.htm](http://www.wasteonline.org.uk/resources/InformationSheets/ChristmasRecycling.htm)  
[www.ecolocal.com](http://www.ecolocal.com)

## Coughs and colds

If you suffer from coughs and colds that your GP can't help with, you may want to try traditional Chinese medicine. I used to suffer terribly from seasonal coughs but Chinese medicine has cured them speedily every autumn and spring for the last three years, so I highly recommend it.

Ask friends and family to recommend a Chinese medicine clinic, or you could just try your nearest. Prices can seem a bit on the high side, but considering how much one would spend on cough medicine, lozenges and sleepless nights, it evens out. ■

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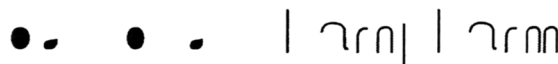
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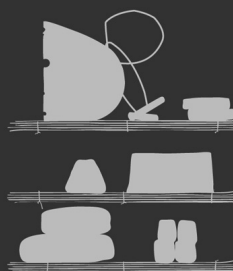
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# Highbury Square Disruption

By Dr Heather Ward

THE PLAN WAS to trade in football crowds and streets covered in rubbish after games, for a quieter, more residential area (and a sizeable profit for Arsenal and Sir Robert McAlpine)... but at what cost to the community in the process?

In August 2006 Sir Robert McAlpine held a meeting at Christ Church to update the Highbury community of their plans for the Highbury Square Project. Not surprisingly they faced much resistance and frustration and discovered that Highbury residents are passionate about the area and protective of the property and lifestyle they have established here. Several concerns were highlighted at this meeting:

- excessive vibration in properties due to large vehicles going over speed bumps at unreasonable speeds
- frequent breaches in the agreed traffic route
- site traffic parking up on surrounding streets at unreasonable times of the morning
- monitoring of air quality, noise and vibration – requests for testing to be carried out within individual properties and for the results to be made available to the public, possibly by way of publication on LBI website
- lack of consultation regarding Saturday working hours (the original plans outlined Mon-Fri working and no resident at the meeting was aware of any consultation that had occurred regarding extension to include Saturday mornings)
- availability of individual schedules of condition

Several actions were agreed upon and it was requested by residents that the

results be fed back by way of a further meeting prior to the beginning of major demolition work. Well, that time has come and gone, Sir Robert McAlpine are storming ahead with demolition, and I am non-the-wiser in terms of the outcome of consultation on the above issues despite frequent contact with our Community Liaison Manager. So much for the agreed 'transparency'!

Speed bump monitoring has occurred and there are apparently plans to replace them with other traffic controlling measures as well as a 20m/hr speed limit. How long this process will take is unknown.

It is still unclear whether monitoring results will be released onto the LBI website or why this responsibility should fall on LBI rather than Sir Robert McAlpine releasing them directly.

Monitoring has occurred within some individual properties, but from personal experience, offers for testing are made at such short notice that you either miss out or have to be prepared to take time off work or rearrange your schedule to be available – rather convenient for Sir Robert McAlpine that the majority of residents would not go to this length. If they do eventually come, the demolition work has usually moved to another area of the site.

Air-quality monitoring is apparently within acceptable limits but any resident on the Gillespie Road end of Avenell Road could tell you that their cars and front gardens do not agree! Two days after cleaning my car I was stopped by police in Westminster and threatened

with a £60 fine if I did not clean my windows in order to improve visibility. My windowsills, path and front garden are no longer black and white but a filthy grey, I have given up cleaning my windows and am horrified at the stream of dust blowing across the road at times.

Residents are reduced to one day a week enjoyment of their properties, children are unable to play in back gardens without parental concerns regarding excessive dust/pollution exposure, we are constantly concerned about potential damage to our properties caused by vibration, and are having to put up with constant noise from demolition, site traffic and generators for overnight lighting.

Sir Robert McAlpine were required by LBI to hold the community meeting in August and are also required to release regular newsletters. Beyond that and the agreed traffic routes and working hours, they appear to be able to continue working without consideration for or consultation with the community. Sir Robert McAlpine's Community Liaison Manager feels there is no demand for a further meeting and also states that he is too busy dealing with individual complaints to organise one.

The main thing residents requested at the meeting was transparency and feedback of monitored results, to help reassure us that we and our properties are not being exposed to unreasonable risk. It is unreasonable to expect residents to chase up these results on an individual basis.

I do not feel Sir Robert McAlpine and Arsenal should be allowed to power ahead with this project at such a high cost to the quality of life of residents.

● *What do you think?*  
*email hcanews@hotmail.com*

## Blue Badge Abuse Escalates

COUNCIL IS AWARE and says over 200 cars displaying Blue Badges, are parked in our streets on Match Days. Numbers are higher than at any Match in previous seasons and easily could be well more than 200. Residents paying for annual permits cannot park, spaces provided under the stadium are not used [fans like to avoid the police controlled closed roads].

This abuse must be stopped for the sake of the genuinely disabled, the residents, the environment and tolerance towards Arsenal FC and its impact on our community.

● **Report suspected abuse to:**  
*John.w.taylor@islington.gov.uk*  
*Tel: 020 7527 6144*



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# Enter the little dragons

Anita Yiannoullou explains why she gets a kick out of Sanjuro martial arts and what kids love about learning it

I HAVE LIVED in the Highbury area most of my life and have read my copy of Highbury Community News for at least the last 6 years. Keeping myself informed of the things happening to my local community has always been important and with Greek Cypriot parents a good way for me to practise my translation skills.

In all the years I have read HCN I never once thought I would be providing content. But life seems to take me on paths I never expected to travel up. As a twentysomething I thought I knew what I wanted but I never dreamed I'd be running my own business or would have seen myself as a doting mum.

For me life changed in my early thirties when I had a good career. I loved what I did and I got paid well for it.

However, I thought I should start to invest in myself physically. So I joined a gym. To my dismay I found that lifting weights, running and bike machines just didn't do it for me. Popular classes were dull and could not keep me interested.

Then one day a new class came along that changed my attitude to fitness. It was Sanjuro martial arts.

I never saw myself learning a martial art – all that macho hitting and throwing people to the ground. Yet six years later I am still a student, a senior instructor and the company director!

Sanjuro makes martial arts accessible to everyone because it's non-contact, it uses music and movement to teach technique and you practise your learning through non-contact combat Sanjuro call 'Play'.

I have seen many people come to Sanjuro and stay. For some it's developed their confidence, whether it's knowing how to take care of themselves or having a fitter, trimmer body. For others it's the camaraderie found in class or the mental strength you can develop.

Each class is filled with students from all walks of life: dancers,

mums, black belts from other martial art styles, actors, lawyers – the list is endless.

Sanjuro works within gyms and with corporate clients offering body conditioning classes, self-defence classes and meditation classes as well as martial art classes.

But as a local girl I wanted to offer a kids' class in the local area and have finally found two great venues: Paradise Walk Women's Gym on Crouch Hill N4 and Park Road Gym in Crouch End N8.

Sanjuro kids' classes have been specially developed for children. They are high-energy classes filled with drills that teach martial art technique and that allow the kids to practise what they have learnt safely.

Our kids' classes encourage the parent to join in. Children love it, they love the reasons behind the moves, they enjoy the 'Play', their fitness and confidence levels increase tenfold and they keep wanting to come back for more – always a sign you are doing something right.

If you have ever wanted to get your child more active and maybe considered martial arts but never known where to start, then please come along. My girls are aged 5 and 2 and my 5 year old trains with me once a week and we have a great time.

My 2 year old already practises in the front room and can't wait until she is old enough to get into class.

Sanjuro martial arts can offer you a lifetime of learning and development. You can practise it all your life and it can keep you mentally and physically strong. For me it's the best investment to ensure that my retirement is a long and healthy one. The earlier one starts the better – so get your kids training and come along too.

To find out more about Sanjuro visit the web site or give me a call to talk about any of the classes we offer.

● *Sanjuro Training Systems*  
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[www.sanjurotrainingsystems.com](http://www.sanjurotrainingsystems.com)



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