

HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

www.highburycommunity.org

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Sotheby Road in 1901

By Rowan Howard

ONE HUNDRED AND six years ago, when the 1901 census was taken, Sotheby Road was newly built, on what had been open fields. Like many speculative developments of its time, the houses were let on long leases to the builder who had developed the street, with sub-lets to the occupants. No doubt, the developers hoped to attract the growing middle classes to the street – the leases only allowed use of the houses as private dwellings or professional residences. But from the start, there was an enormous mix of occupants, ranging from an impecunious Irish commercial traveler, to comfortably off merchants, with 'live-in' servants.

Take Number 15, now occupied by my family of 5 (and an au pair, today's equivalent of the teenage nurse maid). In 1901, there were two households living here. Robert Dalwood, a 40 year old musician, lived in part of the house with his wife Norah, also 40 and their two teenage children, plus a boarder. Their 15 year old daughter, Norah, was working as a milliner. Their son was another Robert – from the census it can be seen that quite a number of parents named their children after themselves at this time. The second household lived in three rooms and was headed by Sidney Shurlock, a 34 year old clerk. His wife, Lucy, had recently had a baby, and a monthly nurse was living with them. Both Lucy and Norah were born in Dorset (as was the boarder) so perhaps the families had a connection from their earlier lives.

A friendly connection would have been helpful, as when two or more families shared a house at that time, the bathroom and probably also the kitchen, would have been shared too. A number of houses on Sotheby Road were let to multiple occupants under these arrangements until quite recently. An example is No. 17, which has been turned back into a family home only within the last 10 years.

Number 35 was a contrast to the



OLD POSTCARD OF 15 SOTHEBY ROAD.
THANKS TO ELIZABETH KUIHN AND SCRS.

crowded Number 15. A young childless couple lived there, Edward and Kate Russell aged 35 and 22, looked after by their servant, Mary Brown. Edward was an analytical chemist and was clearly doing well for himself.

Highbury was developing fast in 1901, and Sotheby Road was full of young people. 78% of the occupants were aged under 40 with 60% of these aged between 20 and 40. Many of these were servant girls, or adult children living with their parents, but there were also a number of young householders, such as Edward Russell, as well as some boarders.

One of the houses (number 7) was a boarding house, run by a 40 year old spinster, Agnes Birtherwood, with the

help of her widowed sister and a servant girl. Her boarders were all young German men, probably Jewish from their names, who all worked as warehouse clerks in the fabric trade. There were Germans living in 8 other houses on the odd numbered side of the street – quite a substantial minority community.

A small number of other businesses were carried on in the Road. For example, number 117 housed a music college. Two sisters in their 30's (Louisa and Clara Gill) were the principals, whilst their older sister, Florence, taught as a governess from the same address. They were all originally from Blackheath.

The shops on the Broadway provided more of the necessities of life than today. There was a fruiterer and a fancy baker, as well as a milliner's and a lamp shade maker.

A number of women in the Road worked, other than in service, in jobs as varied as dress making to clerking in a solicitor's office. Only a handful of married women worked. Clara Samms-Hudson was manageress of a cycle accessories shop. Kathleen Clery had four children, and an Irish commercial traveler for a husband. She made furnishings and curtains to supplement the family income. Her family was squashed into 4 rooms in number 79, with the Neville family of 3 together with their servant living in the rest of the house. Jeannie Smith, boarding at number 115, was unusual in being the only female boarder in the street. She worked as a telegraphist at the GPO, and was working a long way from home at the tender age of 18, coming originally from Scotland.

All the men aged 18 or over were working or retired. The youngest male in employment was Thomas Sturt, age 14, an apprentice electrical engineer living at number 31, whose father was a schoolmaster at a board school. The oldest in employment was James Shaker, age 68, a bookbinder, the head of the

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

household at number 115, where Jeannie Smith lodged. There was a huge spread of occupations – lots of clerks of various types but also a bullion assayer, iron workers, a surgeon, a butcher, a locksmith, an Italian marble merchant from Carrara, journalists, a pastry cook, and a church minister.

20% of occupants in the odd numbered houses had been born in Islington, and somewhat surprisingly for a city that had expanded so rapidly, 60% had been born in London. A further 25% were born in England, but outside London, with under 5% born in other parts of the British Isles. Of the 10% born overseas, the majority were Germans, but others had been born in the Empire (India, Suez, Jamaica and Malta all featuring) as well as France and Italy. Sotheby Road was cosmopolitan, even in 1901.

Would Sotheby Road have had such a different feel in 1901 from 2007? There are a wide range of people living here today, with a mixture of owner occupied houses and flats, and social housing. You would expect to see a wider range of nationalities now and a very different spread of occupations. Then, as now, Highbury with its village feel and tree lined streets was a desirable place to live – but somewhat more affordable: the price of a long lease on a house in 1896 was £537 and 10 shillings. The price index in 1896 was 8.5 compared to 757.3 in 2005: the equivalent cost of that long lease in today's money would be about £48,000! ■

● *Note: This article is derived from a talk given by Rowan Howard to the Sotheby Road Conservation Society in 2006. If you are interested in joining the Sotheby Road Conservation Society (which covers the roads in the Sotheby Road Conservation Area, and holds regular talks on the architecture and history of the area, as well as helping Islington ensure that the conservation goals of the Area are complied with) then please contact Dot Harrison on dorothy.harrison@btconnect.com*

HCA party and AGM

Date: Saturday 21 April 2007

Time: 7.15pm

Place: Christ Church,
Highbury Grove

Speaker: To be decided

Party, food, wine – bring a friend!
Members will receive invites.

Goodbye HCA...?

By Alison Carmichael

10 YEARS AGO this summer, the Highbury Community Association was founded. I have returned to Edit this, the 50th Issue, and remember the urgency and need to produce Issue 1, available on the HCA website. As you know, the founding impetus in 1997 was that AFC wanted to expand Highbury Stadium, involving Compulsory Purchase Orders to forcibly buy 29 houses, occupied by about 100 people. The inaugural HCA committee decided it should be an Association covering all aspects of living and working in Highbury, Lower Holloway and Finsbury Park, and not a single-issue group. So HCA has been involved in many small and large issues, usually in co-operation with other community groups and organisations, often responding to GLA consultations, and voicing views on many subjects to the London and national press. The HC News reports on Council and planning issues but also focuses on local history, profiles local authors and other personalities and is a staunch supporter of our local shops.

The Committee this year is losing its Secretary and Webmaster, Susanne Gustavsson, [joined 2002], who has had a second child and now lives in Stoke Newington, and also Arjan van der Waal, the Treasurer, who joined in 2003. His wife, Dionne Verbeet, co-ordinated the HC News deliverers for several years, now being managed by Beth Moir. Arjan was also the person who collects the adverts for the HC News and has done much to encourage the spirit of HCA, being central to the organising and running of the AGM each year, for example. I asked him why he joined the Committee and was interested in his reply. "I think it important that neighbours should have contact with each other. I like it that HCA tries to maintain a good quality of life here. Dionne and I needed to meet people on our arrival from abroad too! A strong

reason was that I know that these voluntary Associations do not run on their own, so I wanted to dedicate a small part of my time to keep it going. We are very sorry to say Goodbye to HCA and our friends here."

Sadly, several other Committee members, with similar views, are also either leaving Highbury completely or will spend more time elsewhere. Right now the Committee needs urgent help to get it off to a good start for its 10th Anniversary year. I know that a local crisis, like the threat to the Highbury Hill houses in 1997, and the belief that coping with a bigger AFC was going to impact adversely on the neighbourhood, causes communities to join forces.



DIONNE AND ARJAN LEAVE FOR KAMPALA THIS SUMMER.

Maybe we do not need such a group here now? Highbury Fields Association constantly battles over the preservation of the Fields and the environs, and has a good number of people willing to spend time to help. I think there are people in Highbury, Lower Holloway and Finsbury Park wanting to keep this part of North London a good place to be. I wait to see what transpires over the next few weeks. ■

Your community needs you! ...do you need your community...?

CAN YOU OFFER some of your time, not necessarily by joining the Committee, and also not on a weekly basis but as and when needed a few times a year? Speak to Editor, HC News about what these jobs involve and what you can offer. Ring 020 7359 5731

Committee members needed – meets 5 times/year

- Treasurer
- Minute Taker/Secretary
- General Committee members

No need to be on Committee:

- Managing, recruiting shops/advertisers to fund HC News
- Folding, stuffing HC News 6 times/year.
- Be an HC News Deliverer
- Be on hand to do practical jobs to help organise AGM this year
- Collect gifts and prizes for AGM Charity Auction
- Managing the HCA Website

Look forward to hearing from you!

Rosen Method Bodywork

By Annabelle Apasion

WHEN I HAD my first experience of Rosen I was prepared for the worst. It was a workshop called 'Touching the body, contacting feelings, freeing the Spirit.' What a load of mumbo jumbo I scoffed. However, ready for adventure and possible laughs, I went along anyway. I was surprised by the down to earth teacher, a former biochemist, who had discovered Rosen herself when she was researching techniques that might enhance the quality of life of her husband, who was terminally ill.

Rosen Method Bodywork is the result of 93 year-old, Marion Rosen's, extraordinary and long working life. She is still practicing as I write. It is a blend of many different skills developed over a lifetime of working with people's bodies and emotions. Marion developed her method while working as a physiotherapist in the USA, where she arrived from war-torn Europe in the mid 1940s. She noticed that some patients' injuries improved markedly when she asked them about their lives and what was going on when the injury occurred. If it was an injury that was recurring or wasn't healing, what was happening in their life right now?

The results Marion achieved affected not only clients' bodies. As clients got better physically, there was a simultaneous and remarkable change in their personal well-being, which led to changes in the very way they experienced life.

So a Rosen Session is a way of working with the mind as body, and body as mind, using touch and dialogue amongst other skills. The aim is to enable us all, whether clients or Rosen students, to unlock the secrets buried beneath layers of tension, to unearth hidden treasures – the forgotten parts of oneself we have gradually lost touch with. In Rosen, nothing surfaces unless one is ready and it is safe to do so.

Marion Rosen discovered that by opening to the inherent wisdom of our bodies, we can improve our health becoming more creatively engaged in life and specifically in our own lives, as well as developing a continuing delight in the lives of others. Students of Rosen, who all give and receive Sessions with other students, comment that they seem to have more 'time', that activities once fraught and difficult, become easier and



ROSEN SESSION

less demanding. People also sleep better, have more energy, get inspired. Sometimes dreams are particularly vivid and insightful, unexplained aches and pains disappear, there is improved mobility in the joints, life gets juicier.

Why might any of us benefit from a Rosen Session? Over time, in response to external pressures, we often make minute adjustments to 'fit in' or survive. We literally reshape ourselves to adapt to circumstances and our environment by layering over our 'original' or 'authentic' self. This serves us very well initially, as it enables us to cut off from difficult feelings, which may be too overwhelming for us to handle. However, feelings then get stuffed down and literally stuck.

We then unconsciously react to life from this forgotten place of defence, rather than from where we really are in the present. The side effect of shutting off from feelings, is that we can lose touch

with the parts of ourselves that are most precious. For example, some people react to betrayal by defensively hunching their shoulders almost as if expecting somebody to jump out at them. Maybe it was dangerous once to be open and unprotected, but as the years pass and life moves on, it might now be safe to drop this posture. Try hunching your shoulders for a while and notice how you feel. This is an exaggeration of what many of us do unconsciously. Or try exaggerating your main posture, and just notice again, how this makes you feel.

Rosen is different from massage, and uses deep, gentle sometimes incredibly delicate touch, to unlock areas of physical and emotional tension. The link between muscle tension and the unconscious is fascinating.

We are not looking to treat symptoms, or solve problems. By meeting someone's habits of tension with firm but gentle touch, Rosen Practitioners allow ourselves to really BE with that person, in their place of limitation, restriction or pain. We

witness how their breath shows in the body as they lie on the couch. We feel the quality of their skin and muscle tension. We look at the shapes they make with their body and at their facial expressions. We listen, we say what we see, we talk with our clients. We go on a journey together. Each Session is different – we work with what is showing up in THIS MOMENT, not 2 weeks ago. We learn to show up, pay attention, speak our truth, and not be attached to the outcome. From this simple practice, using touch and words, remarkable shifts occur.

Ingrid-Maria Nordgren, another Rosen Practitioner, and I, as well as giving clients Rosen Sessions in Islington and Hampstead, run workshops in North London and elsewhere, to pass these skills to others. The Workshops can be used purely for personal self-development, or to complement existing methodologies and expertise. Do what I did and come and judge for yourself! ■

Rosen Method Workshop

Sunday, April 22nd,

Old Street, N1.

For details or to book a Rosen Session

Ring: 0207 060 0683

www.rosenmethod.co.uk

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Gillespie CPZ Shorter Hours actioned

OVER A YEAR after residents voted to shorten the hours controlled by Residents Permits, the signs finally

went up on 1st February 2007. Controlled hours are now 10am – 2pm Mondays to Fridays, and parking is free on Saturdays. Match Day Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays are controlled from 12 noon – 4.30pm and weekday Match Days are controlled from 10am – 8.30pm. Different controls operate next to the Highbury Barn shops, so be aware and check the signs. ■

Pedestrian Issues

IN DECEMBER A resident reported the dangers of some extensive pavement works in Highbury Grange. All pedestrians had to walk in the road, for some time. The obstructions have now been removed and the pavement repaired.

Should you notice a dangerous junction, crossing point or pavement you think needs urgent attention, Christine Mabey, Chair of the Islington Branch of Living Streets advises:

- Ring Islington Council on 7527 2000. Say there is an urgent safety issue needing attention.
- Note the reference number of the incident you report.
- Ring the Road Safety Team – 7527 2612
- Contact your Ward Councillor.
- If an issue is longer term Living Streets may be able to help and advise. Contact Christine – 7359 0609 or email cmabey@blueyonder.co.uk.

Children's Safety in Corsica Street

MARTIN JONES, CHAIR of Highbury Fields Association, reports that Canonbury School mothers, HFA and Living Streets have been battling to get a safer pavement area for children walking from Highbury to Canonbury, via the Corsica Street exit onto St Paul's Road. "There is, or was, some dispute between cyclists and pedestrians. A cyclist opposed the decision to make the pavement wider without adding a cycle route. Thankfully, LBI have gone along with the children and the pavement is being widened, without a cycle lane." Martin Jones said that the Council discussed putting a Loading Bay there too. HFA says it would be very dangerous for children negotiating round loading and unloading vans and lorries. ■

Highbury Barn Tavern

By Robin Jarossi

LOOK IN THE 'Good Beer Guide 2007' and you'll find that Highbury's pubs rate about as highly as a pint of flat lager – that is, not at all.

The reason is that our locals are known mainly for their industrial-scale boozing on Arsenal matchdays and little else. Islington has some very good pubs – the Compton Arms, the Duke of Cambridge – but none of them are in Highbury, where landlords specialise in squirting out as many pints of lager as possible before and after home games.

The Highbury Barn Tavern's latest makeover, completed just before Christmas, looks like a serious bid to break with this tradition. True, on match days it is still mobbed with Gunners fans, watched over by bouncers, but the pub's owners are trying hard to offer something new on days when Arsenal are not playing – namely good food and wine and a pleasant atmosphere.

The pub has always lived up to its name. It is as big as a farm's outbuilding and unfortunately often used to have as much atmosphere on non-football nights. Not any more. The pub is attracting the thirsty and hungry with an impressive and wide-ranging menu, a well-considered wine list and decent beer, including Bombardier, Leffe and London Pride.

It is the food on offer that is the real surprise, ranging from Irish mussels marinière, Sunday roasts, and wilted spinach and rocket penne, to burgers (with leaves), chips, nachos and cheese boards. I had an antipasti board one evening that was very good.

The wine list has a reasonable selection and a helpful taste guide. There is table service or you can order at the bar. Much of the premises is also non-smoking.

The Spirit Group, the Barn Tavern's owners, has spent a lot to make the place comfortable, even including leather sofas. Thankfully, they also resisted the trend to give the pub a new and stupid name.

This is the second makeover the Barn has had since 2003, when a pizza oven was part of the new regime. That fast-food emphasis has gone and so has the pub's identity as a dedicated football boozier. It is now attempting to be a pub-restaurant that occasionally plays host to Arsenal fans.

It may not win the Campaign for Real Ale's London Pub of the Year award just yet, but it is a pleasant change for anyone wanting to meet friends for a drink or a bite to eat.

Who knows? Before long it may even get into the Good Beer Guide and put Highbury on the map at last. ■

HCA OFFERS CONDOLENCES to Cathy, whose husband, Rocco, of Rocco's Italian Delicatessen on Highbury Park, died in January after a long illness.

The Requiem Mass was at St Joan of Arc's Church, 60 Highbury Park, on Wednesday 31st January at 12pm.



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Happy Birthday Arsenal (Station)

By Roger Wright

THE FIRST TRAIN service ran at Arsenal Station on 15th December 1906. Then called Gillespie Road, it was part of the original Piccadilly Line that ran from Hammersmith to Finsbury Park. The name of the station was changed to Arsenal in 1932 and the entrance was rebuilt by 1934, looking much as it does today. Coinciding with the 100th anniversary of the opening of the station, it is receiving a 'refurbishment' that has been viewed with mixed feelings by people as there have been some extended and other shorter periods of closure as a result.

The original entrance matched that of other Piccadilly line stations like Russell Square, being covered in maroon tiles. If you watch "Eastenders", Walford East tube station has a similar exterior.

Until the current refurbishment started, the platforms and tunnels had been left largely as they were when the station opened in 1906. Various layers of wiring and lighting had built up over the years giving a cluttered impression of the platforms and tunnels. As an estate agent might say, the station retained many 'original features' such as the tiling still saying "Gillespie Road" and the signs saying "To Finsbury Park" and "To Hammersmith" on the platform walls.

When the refurbishment started, people



(REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION – LONDON'S TRANSPORT MUSEUM © TRANSPORT FOR LONDON)

were concerned about what would happen – all the old tiling and other features were stripped out, and no information on the plans for refurbishment were put up in the station – not too much to ask, surely.

As it turns out, a great deal of effort has gone into renovating and rebuilding the station so far. New tiling has been made which reproduces the colours and patterns of the original tiling and the new tiled signs spelling out "Gillespie Road" have now been put up. At present the 'shields' that used to say "Way Out" have not been put up, but as the places where they were have been left blank, they are expected in due course.

We are also promised that the wooden clock in the entrance hallway will be put back.

The main improvements are that the platforms will be less cluttered, with all the tiling and other surfaces renovated and there will be uniform flooring throughout the tunnels and platforms. You can see what the end result might be like by visiting Kennington on the Northern Line where a similar refurbishment of all the floors, walls, tiling etc. has been completed.

One problem remains at present – despite all the hi-tech solutions available today to keep damp out, the water still merrily flows into the foot tunnels as it always has. This is being dealt with through the use of a person with a mop and bucket who mops it up a few times a day.

There are several theories as to where the water comes from – the pond in Gillespie Park is one suggestion. Bazelgette's Northern High Level Sewer runs under Gillespie Road, containing what remains of the Hackney Brook, along with Highgate's and Holloway's sewage. This must be another candidate for the source of the never-ending water.

Will it be worth all the effort? Well, it will look better – but will the water still come in? And of course, how much will it all cost in the end?

You can read more about the history of the Piccadilly line in the leaflet produced by Transport for London to celebrate its 100 years. This is available from stations on the Piccadilly Line. ■



BEFORE (ORIGINAL TILING)



AFTER (BRAND NEW TILING)

STOP PRESS.....

Arsenal Station closes again for 2 weeks

EVERY MONTH TRANSPORT for London produces a map showing the month's station and line closures. The map on display for February at Arsenal tube station shows no closures for Arsenal. On 9th February, the same map was still on display.

However, a very large sign appeared on 9th February at the entrance of the station saying that it will be closed from

18th February to 3rd March! The station staff say they were only told of this on 8th February. This is despite the press statement from TfL when the station reopened after its summer closure, that there would be no more major periods of closure. The closure is apparently necessary because the entrance hall roof must be replaced. You may have noticed that it continues to leak, despite all the work carried out. ■

Carbon Footprints

By John Ackers

CARBON RATIONING sounds like a dreadful idea. Who, on earth, would volunteer to do that? But ten of us have met three times in a warm house near Finsbury Park to do just that. The rather nice Chilean red wine helped but next time it will have to be French!

By the second meeting we had all worked out our carbon footprints. Some of us were in shock. One



ISLINGTON CARBON RATIONING ACTION GROUP 2007

woman had her head in her hands for most of the meeting. She was a professional environmental campaigner. Like many Greens, she enjoys travelling. She flies to Canada once a year to see family and makes several European trips a year. But she hadn't realised that her footprint was over 10,000 Kg of CO₂ per annum, twice the national average. That is just for the things that we decided we could count: gas, electricity, petrol and all travel.

At the third meeting we agreed to cap our emissions at 4050Kg per person. At the end of the year those that go over the 4050Kg would get penalised at 5p per Kg and those that go under would get rewarded at 5p per Kg. We expect to collectively exceed the cap so we reluctantly anticipate buying credits in some kind of offsetting scheme using the surplus penalties. But the group is not about money, it is just a prompt to get us thinking about how we can change to low carbon lifestyles. In just three meetings, we all know far more about carbon dioxide emissions than most cabinet ministers.

The very first carbon rationing

action group (CRAG) was set up in the West Midlands by Andy Ross. He had heard George Monbiot talking about passionately about climate change in 2005 and went back home and set up the first CRAG. There are 5 other CRAGs and several more about to start. There have been articles in the Observer and various magazines.

As city dwellers, we tend to have smaller cars or no cars, use public transport and bikes and live in smaller homes compared to the members of the other CRAG groups. But most of us in Highbury live in homes with single glazed windows and solid walls. No simple cavity wall insulation for us; our only option is to install thick insulation panels on the insides of our walls, a fairly disruptive and expensive process which we will have to contemplate.

There is a political message behind the CRAGs. We want the government to introduce mandatory carbon rationing in the UK and hope the rest of the developed world follows. The current Environment Minister David Miliband, speaks enthusiastically about personal carbon allowances which is just another name for the same thing.

Many politicians still talk about doing our bit for the environment. They have simply not grasped the problem. If we believe that the Indians and the Chinese are entitled to the same carbon emissions as ourselves, we have to cut back our emissions by 90% by 2030 (Monbiot). The UK government's current target of 60% by 2050 is just the beginning. ■

● To know more about the Islington CRAG: www.carbonrationing.org.uk/islington. Or call John Ackers on 020 7690 7263.

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, c/o 83 Highbury Hill, N5 1SX, made out to 'Highbury Community Association'. Send letters or articles for next issue to hcanews@hotmail.com or **HCA News, 83 Highbury Hill, N5 1SX**. Visit www.highburycommunity.org
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