

HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

www.highburycommunity.org

No 57 July 2008

THE GARDEN IS raising its head towards summer. The swaying blooms of the Apple and Cherry hang high above the Narcissi which cover the lower terraces. Across the railway line the allotment holders watch with interest the work that is taking place in the Olden Garden.

Unlike our last work day when we laboured through hail, howling wind and sleet, the day dawned fair. The air felt soft and slightly humid. Martin has drawn a notice in chalk on the pavement outside the gate requesting people to join us in our endeavours. His enthusiasm is infectious and he is the king of innovative recycling. It is April 26th and it is surely the first hot day of the year.

People are arriving. First stop the club house, a rustic heavy beamed building not much more than a large shed. We have set up tables and seats and the kettle boils on our newly acquired camping stove. At the moment there is no electricity on the site. Jill arrives, her arms full of loaves of bread. Teresa has cooked a beef stew and Mich and Sam have catered for the vegetarians. We are of the opinion that if you ask people to work hard all day the least you can do is provide a good lunch. More and more people arrive, in the end we count thirty in all. Days like this not only help the garden but bring about the most unlikely friendships and associations.

Twenty years ago a group of residents in Whistler Street fought to have the vacant land which lay behind a high Victorian wall running the length of the street, made into a green space. The local area housing office supported them and the residents won their battle. The site was almost two acres in size, with a flat area at street level which sloped steeply down to the railway line below. The garden was developed to include terracing with an orchard, woodland and wildlife meadow. We are forever indebted to those

The Olden Garden: a diary of restoration

By Anna Sullivan, Chair of the management committee of the Garden



THE OLDEN GARDEN

hardworking pioneers whose vision and hard toil created the garden.

However over the years people moved away and it fell to only the original founder and a few others to try to maintain this beautiful but by then overgrown site. Nature is a jealous host and will take back its territory if we do not work with it and sometimes against it.

In 2006 the long wall which hid the garden from passers-by collapsed. It came down like a line of dominoes crushing everything that was planted beneath it. Was this a sign for change? Perhaps so. A constituted committee of ten members was elected at an annual general meeting, and so began the new management of the garden. We very much wanted to make the garden more open and welcoming to a wider community. To

do this meant that the garden had to be restored and we could see that a lot of regeneration had to take place. So far we have raised enough funding to rebuild the large pond, build stepways down the lower terraces, create a school plot for Drayton Park School. We have also raised money to completely replant the long border under the wall, rebuild the club house which will in future be called 'The Garden House' and install electricity and a disabled access toilet. For this we have to thank The Cripplegate Trust, O2, Arsenal football club, the Islington council area east committee and the Big Lottery fund. Our local councillor Terry Stacey has given tremendous support to the garden and has come to many of our extremely hard work

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

days. To render one small piece of earth free of weeds is another small step in its development for you know that you are creating more space for something beautiful.

We have many more projects to complete. If you are already a member please get involved and if you want to join us please contact our secretary Teresa at 3, Whistler Street. It costs only £3 to join, free for senior citizens and unemployed, and £3.50 for a key to the garden. Or you can contact me (0207 226 6821 54). There is a particular debt of gratitude owed to Pat Tawn whose tenacious hard work was the original driving force behind the garden. The garden now is changing and evolving as all things must and we offer a place of beauty, an oasis amid the noise and concrete world around us. Please join us. ■

Recent planning notes

By Roger Wright

Sobell Centre:

Islington Council has been “consulting” on the future of the Sobell Centre. A number of options are proposed by the council. They all involve demolishing the Sports Centre entirely and rebuilding a new centre combined with a variety of housing.

The different options proposed provide different mixes of sports facilities and housing. All the proposals mean that the centre will be closed within 18 months and only reopen about 6-12 months before the Olympics start. This hardly represents wholehearted support from the Council for local competitors!

Queensland Road:

Arsenal Football Club has issued a revised proposal for their redevelopment of Queensland Road. After the exhibition last summer, they have taken little notice of comments by the community – it is as tall and dense as before and still has a cinema and no local sports facility to replace the JVC centre.

In order to offer the Council an inducement to approve it, they have increased the level of social housing to 50%, which is appropriate, but it is still 50% of far too much!

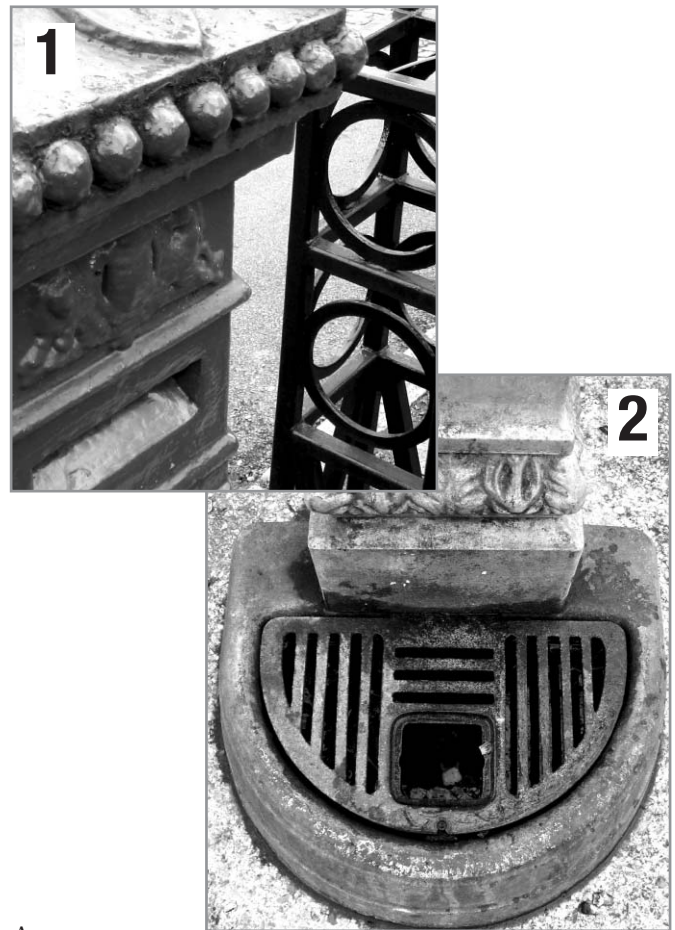
National Children’s Home, Highbury Park:

The Council is consulting on plans to redevelop this site. The Council has indicated this should be for residential development, arguably further reducing employment opportunities in the area.

The development would be focussed on family homes with three or more bedrooms and be required to meet the new code for sustainable development and be car-free. The façade onto Highbury Park would be retained and that building might remain in commercial use or as a restaurant, with the housing behind. All the mature trees would be required to be preserved.

Hidden Highbury – guess the location!

Photographs by Christine Kaltoft and James Hood.



Answers:

1) Entrance to Aberdeen Park; 2) Water pump, Highbury Fields

Hackney Day Limmud!

Sunday 14th September 2008

The Petchey Academy, Shacklewell Lane,
Hackney E8 2EY

LIMMUD IS A big, beautiful festival of Jewish culture and learning. It is a charitable organization without a denominational or political agenda.

Come and spend the day with us on September 14 at the stunning new Petchey Academy in the heart of this London borough with an illustrious Jewish past – and a vibrant and dynamic Jewish present. This will be a Limmud with a difference, with all the Limmud regulars but a strong local flavour.

You can attend a session, or simply relax over a coffee and chat to other participants, visit the art and photography exhibitions, or the Limmud market stalls for a wide selection of Judaica, music and books.

Details and booking via

www.limmud.org/day/hackney/hackney/

How Islington got its libraries: remembering Andrew Torrance

By Roy Hidson

ANDREW TORRANCE, WHO lived at 16 Highbury Quadrant, became Mayor of Islington in 1904. Since 1855 attempts had been made to establish public libraries in Islington but these efforts had been unsuccessful because a ballot of ratepayers was required and the result was always rejection. A revision of the law then abolished the ballot in favour of a simple resolution of the Council. Also helping the cause was Torrance's friendship with Andrew Carnegie, the millionaire Scottish philanthropist who had made his fortune in the United States and who was now devoting much of this fortune to the establishment of public libraries.

A petition was presented to the Council for the establishment of public libraries in the borough, and the motion was passed. There was still opposition and the redoubtable Cllr. George Elliott declared the decision unconstitutional as the question of public libraries had not been included in Torrance's election manifesto. However, the matter was now settled and Carnegie was approached for a grant to provide a central and four branch libraries. A



NORTH LIBRARY, MANOR GARDENS

Libraries Committee was set up under the chairmanship of Thomas F. Bryen, a local builder.

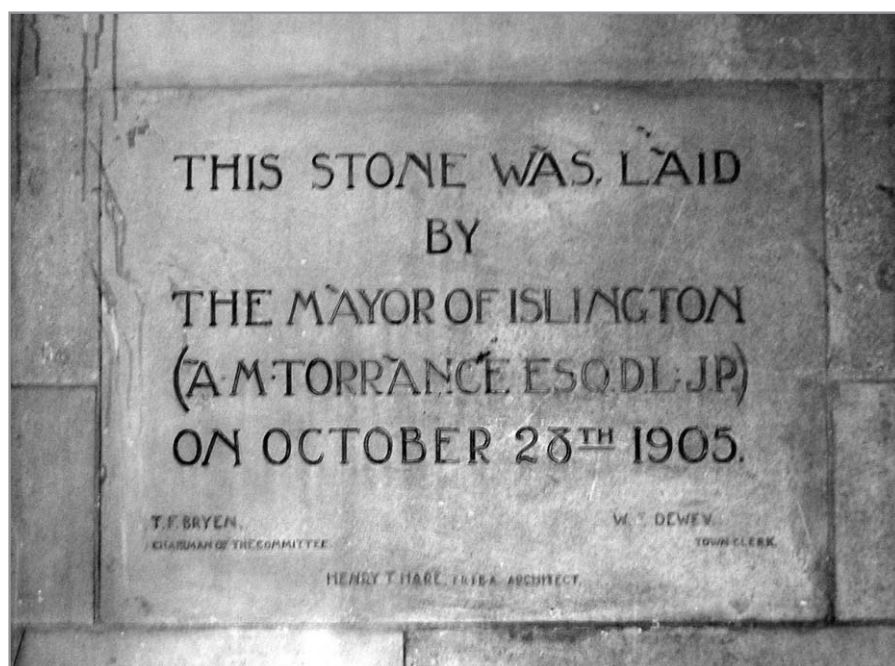
On October 28th 1905, Torrance laid the foundation stone of Islington's first public library, the North Branch in Manor Gardens. In his opening speech, Cllr. Bryen said

that the accent of the new library was on work with young people, and that 'They wished to impress that there was something better in life than attending music halls or football matches.'

Having laid the foundation stone, Torrance made a speech:

"He rejoiced that this great community where he had lived so many years had at last come into the light of reason. He rejoiced too that his great countryman, patriot and philanthropist had contributed so nobly towards the establishment of public libraries in Islington. As an old Scotsman he might perhaps say that in Scotland he believed they valued education more than they did in the south, and he attributed the success of many Scotsmen who left their home and went elsewhere to their education they had received and profited by when children at home |(The Islington Year Book and Almanack, 1893)."

In 1900, Torrance had unsuccessfully stood as Liberal candidate for East Islington. In 1906 he was knighted and elected as M.P. for Central Glasgow. He died in 1909 and is commemorated by a wall monument in Highbury Quadrant Church. ■



FOUNDATION STONE OF NORTH LIBRARY

Cry VICTERI! For Low Carbon living in Victorian homes

By Antony Melville

1/6TH OF BRITAIN'S housing stock was built before 1914 – the highest proportion of old housing in the world, and it's draughty and hard to heat. With the gas price doubling and likely to go on up rather than come down, a house that uses less energy is a valuable proposition.

A few individuals around the country have led the way in doing eco-renovations of old houses, and shown they can get the bills down by as much as 80%. When I see just one half of a semi-detached house fully insulated and double-glazed, I think "what about the neighbours?" Why not take a community approach?

In Islington's Victorian terraces, planning an eco-makeover in one house is an opportunity for sharing that planning with the other 15 or 20 houses in the terrace that share the same basic layout and measurements. If a group of houses get together they can take on a wider range of energy-

efficient improvements for better value, and the residents can help each other through the process.

Government bodies and Quangos are scratching their heads about insulating older houses (i.e. the ones which don't have easy-to-insulate cavity walls).

Next year will see the launch of the Green Neighbourhoods initiative run by the Energy Saving Trust. If 50 householders in Highbury come together to apply by November this year, we could qualify for funding of around £100,000, and help lead the way in reducing energy use from Victorian houses. Insulating walls, floors and windows may seem dull but it cuts our bills and makes a good joint project for a street.

So I've started VICTERI, the Victorian Terrace Energy Reduction Initiative, as a vehicle for enabling us to find funds, and get costs down while buying better services from

better builders, so that together we can invest in preparing our houses for the low carbon economy.

We have to reduce our carbon emissions by 80% by 2050, and a quarter of the country's emissions come from domestic heating.

VICTERI will do the calculations to help ensure the improvements we do fit with the reduction target. If we get together with our neighbours and beat that target, so we have low carbon houses ready for the low carbon economy, that will be something to celebrate. ■

If you'd like to be one of the 50 to make a Green Neighbourhood in Highbury, please contact me at antonymelville@dsl.pipex.com or (020) 7607 1540, and I'll come round and talk about what you want to do for your house.

Blackstock Road Charter

By Beth Moir & Christine Kaltoft

HCA IS ONE of the signatories to this Charter which was formally launched on 29th May. Others include local businesses, the Arab Advice Bureau, faith groups, the police and education establishments; it is supported by the London Development Agency. It came about as a result of the police raid in Blackstock Road in March, which was an effort to eradicate crime in the area. The Charter expresses the belief that this is a great place full of character and diversity, a working example of the multicultural atmosphere that London is so proud of. It expresses a commitment to ensuring that all members of the community are treated fairly and equitably, irrespective of their race, faith or any other factor and undertakes to:

- Work in partnership to remove crime and anti-social behaviour from the area
- Promote Blackstock Road as an exciting area to shop and visit
- Promote understanding of and respect for the diverse communities in Blackstock Road
- Ensure that everyone feels safe in Blackstock Road

There are plans to hold a one-day family festival – the 'Blackstock Road Festival of The Senses' – on Sunday 10th August to celebrate the area, and HCA hopes to be represented there. Look out for more details in local shops and the press. ■

Ceramics in the City

Ceramics in the City is a three-day selling fair, exhibiting an exciting range of work by 40 selected ceramicists. The show, now in its seventh year, will take place from Friday 19th to Sunday 21st September at the Geffrye Museum in Shoreditch.

Visitors will have the opportunity to browse and buy, to talk to the ceramicists and to watch free demonstrations; there will also be ceramic magnet making and crockery painting activities for children throughout Saturday and Sunday. ■

For further information phone 020 7739 9893, email info@geffrye-museum.org.uk or visit www.geffrye-museum.org.uk. Admission is free and opening hours are as follows: Friday 19th: 12.00 noon – 8.00pm (the restaurant will also be open), Saturday 20th: 10.00am – 5.00pm, Sunday 21st: 12.00 noon – 5.00pm.

The fair is part of the London Design Festival 2008, which takes place throughout the capital from the 13th to 23rd of September – for more information visit www.londondesignfestival.com.

North London Waste Plan

By Sally Davis

THE NORTH LONDON Waste Authority (NLWA) is in the process of producing a plan for waste processing, as required by the Mayor of London's strategy for the management of London's waste, and recent EU legislation. This is the schedule NLWA is following:

- **Winter 2007-08:** Consultation with users in all its constituent boroughs
- **Winter 2008-09:** Second consultation
- **September 2009:** Detailed plan assessed by a planning inspector
- **2010:** NLWA appoints a contractor to run the plan; or reappoints its current contractor
- **2010:** Planning inspector supervises a final, workable version of the plan
- **2010-14:** NLWA's chosen contractor makes planning applications for new processing plants on existing and new sites
- **2014:** With planning permission obtained, chosen contractor starts running the plan

At Islington's consultation evening we were asked to come up with recommendations on specific issues. This is what we decided:

- 1) Because of NLWA's huge population and lack of sites for waste processing, the Mayor's strategy allowed NLWA to plan to deal with 69% of the waste generated in its area. We agreed that NLWA's plan should have as its objective dealing with 100% of it.
- 2) NLWA's waste processing plants should all be within its own borders; probably on sites already used by NLWA but with some plants on new sites.
- 3) NLWA shouldn't specify in detail the kind of processing needed until quite late in the schedule; this will allow the plan to take advantage of new technologies.

The plan will run until 2020. More details can be found at www.nlwp.net. ■

North London Waste Authority is the London boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Islington and Waltham Forest.

Editor for HCNews

Do you have journalistic or editing skills? Would you like to take on the Editor's role for the next Issue in September... and maybe for future Issues after that?

Ring Anna Gething 020 7502 3324
or Ali Carmichael 0207 359 5731.
Email: hcanews@hotmail.com

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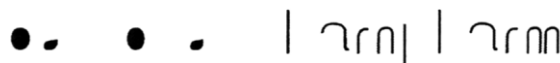


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Blackstock Road

'Festival Of The Senses'

Sunday, Aug. 10th, 08
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Eclectic Food at Reasonable Prices

By Derek Whitehead

THE PIZZADELIQUE (1-3 Chatterton Rd, N4 2EA) is a pizzeria, fully licensed bar and café. It has a friendly rustic ambience and the staff are helpful and welcoming. The menu and daily blackboard offer an eclectic range of dishes, mainly Italian and Mexican in origin, but also Greek. The wine list is quite short and reasonably priced. Carafes of red and white are also available. Our party of six chose a range of dishes and gave the following scores (out of 10) and comments:

Starters

Goat's cheese salad: (6) very substantial.

Whitebait: (6) shared between two and adequate for two as a starter; batter a little heavy and mayonnaise not 'home made'.

Squid: (5) enjoyable.

Aubergine salad: (6) perhaps too much for a starter but very good.

Mexican fish soup: (8) contained white fish, large prawns and mussels; enough for a delicious main course.

Main courses

Kleftico (lamb shank): (6) delicious but enormous!

Sea bass: (7) excellent fish but vegetables a little disappointing.

Salmon fajitas: (6) very enjoyable.

Calzone Vesuvius (rolled up stuffed pizza): (4) overwhelming in size.

Seafood pasta: (6) lots of assorted seafood.

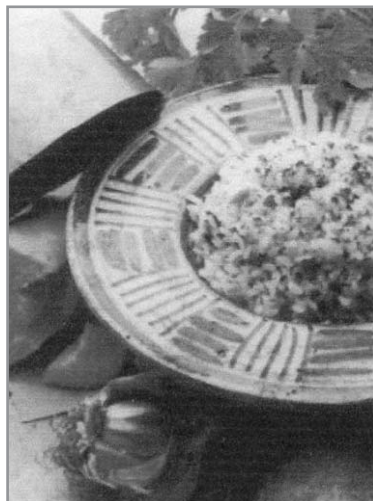
Everyone struggled with the large size of the portions – only one person could eat both starter and main course. Just one course might be adequate and it is good to know that doggy bags are available.

The atmosphere was excellent; the service although friendly and helpful was a little haphazard, possibly there are not enough staff. One disadvantage was that when the doors are opened a considerable amount of smoke comes in from the smokers outside.

Our party arrived at 8pm and left at 10pm: the restaurant was busy during this period and it would appear that it is popular with family parties in the early evening. Consequently the supply of desserts was very limited later on, although no one in our party could have managed a pudding for obvious reasons.

The bill, including a total of 1.5 litres of both red and white wine, came to £22 per person including tips, which is excellent value.

Credit or debit cards are not accepted, only cash or cheques. ■



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Highbury Community Association

The HCA represents 780 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
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