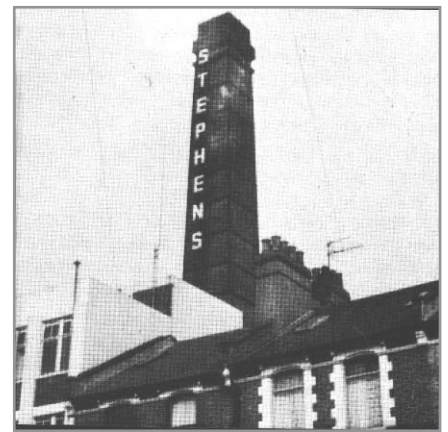


Stephens Ink: a Highbury factory with its own railway line

By Roy Hidson



ABOVE:

DRAYTON PARK FACTORY IN 1984 WHEN ALREADY OWNED BY DRG SOVEREIGN

Courtesy of the Finchley Society who set up the Stephens Ink Collection

LEFT:

A STEPHENS INK ADVERT, OF WHICH MANY ARE STILL TO BE SEEN AROUND THE COUNTRY.

*This one is in Beamish.
Courtesy of Terry Pinnegar.*

Roy Hidson has lived in the same house in St Thomas's Road since 1941 (after being bombed out in Southgate). He remembers in the late 1940s when trains shunted too hard and trucks from the Stephens Ink train track would overshoot and fall into his back garden. They had to be lifted out by crane. Below he tells the Stephens Ink tale.

FOR MANY YEARS an imposing building stood at the corner of Gillespie and St Thomas's Roads. Modelled on a Venetian Palace, all that remains today are some walls at the entrance to Gillespie Park. This was the ink factory of Henry Stephens, which even had its own railway line. Known locally as

"Stephens' Ink," today the site is covered by the Quill Estate. It provided employment for many local people.

The founder, Henry Stephens [1796 – 1864] was born in Holborn but moved to Redbourn near St Albans where his father ran the Bull Inn, a successful coaching inn. Henry expressed a wish to become a doctor, and as was the custom was apprenticed to Dr Wingfield, a local surgeon. It was here he began to learn the use of chemicals. He moved to London to study at the hospitals and lodged with four other medical students, one of whom was John Keats, the poet. Henry was fond of

poetry and on one of his walks with Keats he helped him compose the line "A thing of beauty is a joy forever." Henry returned to Redbourn where he became a successful doctor but soon returned to practice in London.

It was here he began his experiments in the invention of writing fluids. He perfected his blue-black permanent ink which revolutionised ink manufacture. He began producing and bottling his ink in his own house and its fame grew as it was exported across the world. But his friends and family were horrified at his going into

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

trade and feared it would harm him both socially and professionally.

However, Henry persevered and the business grew and he was able to purchase Avenue House, Finchley, where he set up his own chemical laboratory. Stephens also produced wood stains such as oak, mahogany and walnut. They were used to coat the doors and woodwork at the Great Exhibition of 1851. Henry had a wide circle of friends including Robert Owen the social reformer and Michael Faraday, the scientist. Sadly Henry died suddenly on Marylebone Station and the firm was taken over

by his son Henry Charles, "Inky" Stephens [1841-1918].

The firm continued to expand and in 1872 moved its offices to 275^{1/2} Holloway Road close to the present tube station. In 1892 the Gillespie Road factory was built to designs by Henry's son, Michael. A dominant feature of the building was a large factory chimney. This chimney together with the rest of the Gillespie Road factory was demolished in the mid 1960s when work was transferred to an old dairy factory at 100 Drayton Park. That factory also had a chimney to which the Stephens name was added (see photo). While in Drayton Park the Stephens

company was taken over by DRG Royal Sovereign. In the mid 1990s the Drayton Park building was converted into flats.

"Inky" Stephens was a great benefactor to the area where he lived, Finchley. He was MP for Hornsey and Finchley from 1887 to 1900. He became affectionately known as "The uncrowned king of Finchley." ■

To find out more...

visit the Stephens Ink Collection, Avenue House, East End Road, London N3 3QE tel: 020 8346 7812, open 2.00-4.30pm Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Admission free

News in Brief

Double accolade for Highbury Barn shops

TWO OF OUR Highbury Barn shops have been recognised in London-wide awards this summer.

Butcher's shop **Frank Godfrey** has been voted by the public as the Best Local Shop in the Love London Awards organised by Smooth Radio. This comes at the same time as being recognised by the meat industry as Britain's Best Butcher's Shop 2009. Frank Godfrey has been trading for 100 years. The family used to own rights to graze cattle in Clissold Park and would buy livestock weekly from Market Road. The company is now run by fourth-generation butchers Christopher, Jeremy and Philip Godfrey. They are delighted at both Awards but are particularly proud of winning the Love London Awards. Chris says, "It was a public vote. It is a big honour."

To Be Established, trading for thirteen years, reached the London finals of the UK Retas greeting cards awards – one of only five selected. This Highbury Barn card and gift shop is run by Michelle Lovell, Highbury Hill resident. Like Godfreys, To Be Established is a shop unique to Highbury Barn. Michelle believes in looking after her customers – with weekly deliveries of new items and a willingness to try and track down what you want if it is not in the shop.

The Organic Café comes to Islington's Ecology Centre

THE ORGANIC CAFÉ – run by students with learning disabilities from City and Islington College – now has sessions in the Ecology Centre on selected Sundays. The focus is on creating healthy, organic vegetarian food. They also run a café at the College's Finsbury Park branch and at some outside events. The next time you can catch the Organic Cafe at the Ecology Centre is Sunday 30 August 12-4pm.

New exit to Gillespie Park by Finsbury Park tube

ON 10 JUNE a new pathway was opened through Gillespie Park – following the railway line – all the way from the Ecology Centre in Drayton Park to Seven Sisters Road next to Finsbury Park station.

Transition buzz is growing louder

TRANSITION Highbury AND Transition Finsbury Park are part of a burgeoning citizen's movement preparing for the transition from oil dependency to a more self-reliant local economy. The dividing line between the two groups is technically Gillespie Road. But readers are invited to join whichever group they want and help growing food, cutting home energy use, learning useful skills and generally helping neighbours. This should involve a bit of partying; the Transition movement in Highbury is out to show that low-energy living can mean having fun together! ■

A TRANSITION Highbury open day in May at the Ecology Centre attracted 60 people... Nicola Baird led a lively "test your skills" bingo. The day ended with a discussion calling, among other things, for an organic vegetable plot on Highbury Fields, and for a policy of reducing road traffic. ■

Sign up for emails listing socials, film nights and lots more – just contact transitionhighbury@googlegmail.com

TRANSITION FINSBURY PARK held an open evening in June at St Thomas's Church attended by 25 local residents. A 20-minute film, *The Story of Stuff*, was shown illustrating the waste in the production of consumer goods. There followed workshops on food, transport and community facilities. ■

Find out more at <http://transitionfinsburypark.org.uk>

See also: *HCA News 56* "The Transition buzz has started" and *HCA News 58* "Is the credit crunch a green gift?". Downloadable from www.highburycommunity.org.uk ■

Get on your bike

By Jacqueline McEwan

On summer days would you like take to your bike with a cool breeze ruffling through your hair... but you're too nervous of other traffic??
Jacqueline McEwan, a Highbury resident and a recent convert to cycling in London, describes her experience of getting back on her bike...

'Having cycled when I lived in Cambridge in 2000, I was fine with the general handling of a bike, but very conscious that I'd enjoyed the luxury of the near-complete coverage of cycle lanes there, plus there was less traffic than in Highbury and London... So I was underconfident but I wanted to try. A cyclist friend suggested cycle training. I found not only was training available, I was entitled to it – and it was free! And I was pleased to discover it was also 1:1. My training was tailored to my needs and I didn't have the fear of being intimidated by others more adept at it all.

My trainer, Will, assumed nothing and was wonderfully clear and patient. He showed me two basic things that have made all the difference: clear signalling and – even more important for me – lane position.

I now have the confidence, having been shown by someone in the know, that being safe isn't about hugging the kerb to keep out of motorists' way, it's about being seen and making it clear where you're heading. I now have the assertiveness all the cycling websites tell me I need. I pedal along knowing I have every right to be there, that I'm doing right by drivers and keeping up the good name of London's sensible cyclists. This leaves me free to enjoy my cycling and I really do... all thanks to 90 minutes of training! ■

- **To find out more about free cycle training contact:**

– For adults:

Islington Cyclists' Action Group

Alison Dines at

alisondines@clara.co.uk;

or 020 7226 7012;

www.icag.org.uk

ICAG now have six cycle

instructors fully trained by Cycle

Training UK to national

standards.

– For adults and children:

Islington Council Road

Safety Unit at

road.safety@islington.gov.uk;

or 020 7527 2242

- **For a free cycling map covering Highbury**

pick up Cycle Map 7 from the

leaflet rack inside the barriers

at the H&J tube or go to

www.tfl.gov.uk

- **For further inspiration**

go to Finsbury Park library

(26 Blackstock Road) which has

a display of cycling books



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Help stop match day misery for whole area

By Chris Eisen

Chris Eisen is co-ordinator of the Stadium Neighbours' Action Group (SNAG). She writes:

THERE IS STILL time to stop Arsenal turning our streets into a coach park.

The Council recently refused Arsenal's planning application to make current temporary arrangements for coach parking permanent from the beginning of the new season. The Council has also refused three more applications, which would further offload Arsenal's responsibilities onto the community if approved.

Arsenal is appealing against all four decisions and a public enquiry is scheduled for 28 July.

What's being proposed and what does it mean?

Current temporary arrangements allow Arsenal to park up to 40 coaches in Queensland Road, at the Sobell, in Hornsey Street, in Drayton Park, and in Finsbury Park – in that order. This was agreed pending an expected return of all coach parking to the stadium site at Queensland Road.

Arsenal's new proposals for the 2009/10 season onwards either remove or reduce coach parking at Queensland Road. Future coach parking is seen as predominantly street-based, with Market Road and Holloway Road being added to existing on-street sites and potentially many more coaches parked in Hornsey Street, Drayton Park, the Sobell and Finsbury Park.

If Arsenal wins the appeals it will mean no coach parking

at all on Arsenal's own Queensland Road site. The effects for residents and visitors would be widespread, including anyone who uses Holloway Road and fan-routed streets like Mackenzie Road, Palmer Place, Caledonian Road and adjacent streets. Highbury, already affected by road closure and access issues in Drayton Park, could have up to 22 coachloads of supporters crossing Holloway Road at the Drayton Park junction. There would be even more disruption, congestion, noise, disturbance, reduced access and road closures, emission pollution and antisocial behaviour.

SNAG's experience has shown that the Council is influenced by a combination of residents' objections and legal representation. In 2006 and 2009 SNAG used expert planning solicitors to ensure residents' rights and interests were protected. This has proved necessary and effective in the face of a wealthy and influential business with its army of consultants, lawyers and even football-club-funded planners in the Council's planning department. In the past SNAG has relied on unsolicited donations. We now need to raise funds fast, and are asking for help. If everyone gives a bit we can raise enough. ■

If you would like to make a donation please send a cheque (made payable to Stadium Neighbours' Action Group) to: SNAG c/o 41 Drayton Park N5 1NT.

To sign up for email alerts from SNAG and/or to find out how you can make objections to the Council write to chris@eisen.demon.co.uk

Planning update By Roger P Wright

Sobell Centre

ALTHOUGH ISLINGTON COUNCIL had stated it was not going to proceed with the proposed replacement of the Sobell Centre due to the current economic climate, it has recently written to all users of the Centre to let them know that it does still intend to proceed with the plan as soon as finances allow.

This has provoked an angry reaction from the community who felt that the entire consultation was a sham. The Council was completely unwilling to consider the option of refurbishing the current building despite it being a practical option – as shown in plans and costings submitted to the Council.

Queensland Road – deja vu

WE ALL THOUGHT the latest application by Arsenal Football Club to redevelop Queensland Road had been settled on 3 March, with some details left to be tied up. However, Islington Council's legal officers issued the Councillors with a confidential legal report and the application was heard again on 8 June. This time, with a different make-up to the committee, the Councillors decided that the measures to provide access to the open space for the residents' children were inadequate; that all the children should have access to all the open space; and that the hours for community use of the sports centre should be longer than proposed. AFC's representatives indicated they were unhappy with this. We wonder if they will appeal against this decision, as they have against the coach parking decision.

Voss



Harland

Special offer for Highbury charities

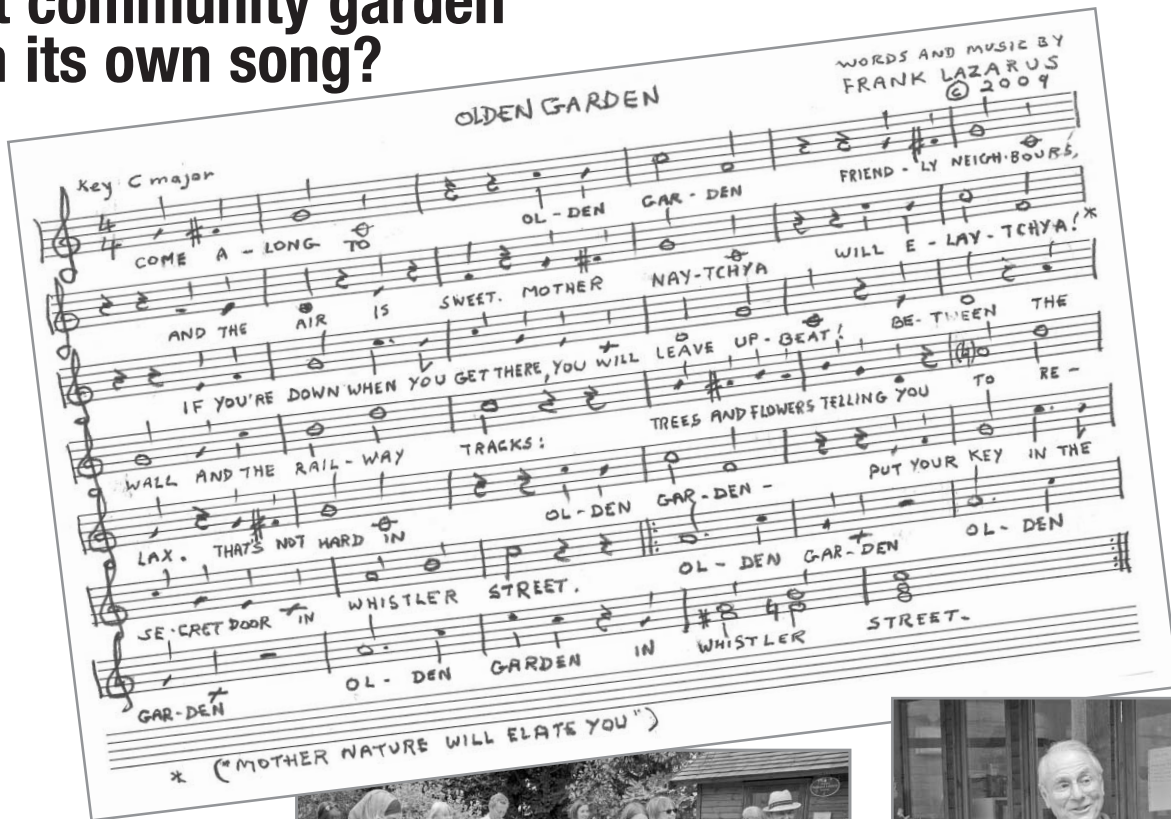
Harland & Voss, serving Highbury since 2003, is one of very few London electricians to belong to both the NICEIC and Guild of Master Craftsmen.

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First community garden with its own song?



OLDEN GARDEN IN Whistler Street now has its own song. It was written by member Frank Lazarus to mark the grand opening of the new community house in June. Frank is a Whistler Street resident, actor and musical theatre writer.



THE CHOIR

Come and help Olden Garden to flourish

Olden Garden has workdays with lunch provided where you can get to know your neighbours. You don't have to be a member or live nearby to join in.

Next workdays: Saturday 25 July; Saturday 29 August, 10am-4pm both days

See also HCA News 57 "The Olden Garden: a diary of restoration" downloadable at www.highburycommunity.org



SONGMASTER FRANK

What can you still plant now?

Mildmay Time Bank broker Peter Roberts is a "Street Rep" for a local group growing food in containers. HCA News asked Peter what you can still plant this late in the season:

'I WOULD REALLY recommend "perpetual" or beet spinach. This can be sown until mid August. Normal spinach has usually bolted by now but this is a tasty alternative. We sowed some in July last year and were eating it from October to late May.

Through to the end of August you could certainly also try Chinese cabbage, lettuce, salad onions or any of the oriental leaves like pak choi. Lettuce is easy to grow but the seed does not germinate well in hot soil so water the container or pot well first, sow in the late afternoon/early evening and then shade for a day or two. ■

Joining a local Grow Your Own scheme

If you join a Grow Your Own scheme like Peter's you will be given a container, compost and seeds and hooked up with a "Street Rep"— someone who has volunteered to support members. In return you pay a £5 joining fee if waged and promise to share ideas/experiences.

To join Mildmay Time Bank's scheme – open to Highbury residents:

contact Peter at mildmaytimebank@btconnect.com; tel: 020 7249 5373; mobile: 07828 593 826

To join the borough-wide scheme supported by the Islington Organic Growers Network go to www.eforests.co.uk/growyourown When registering you get to choose between four types of container: large; medium; window box planter; or pots for the windowsill – to fit whatever space you have available.

HELP SAVE THE PLANET

Sign up for HCA News by email rather than on paper. It will save the planet and time and money for HCA, too.

Just put 'HCA News by email' in the subject line and email hcanews@hotmail.com with your name and address. Thank you.

DIARY

Saturday 25 July, 10am-4pm – Workday at Olden Garden
See p5

Monday 10 August, 11.30am-1.30pm
– **Beginners Organic Gardening Workshop**
For Families at the Ecology Centre.
Booking essential: 020 7527 4462.

Get started growing salads and herbs in containers. All materials provided.

Saturday 29 August, 10am-4pm
– **Workday at Olden Garden**
See p5

Sunday 30 August, 12-4pm
– **Organic Café at the Ecology Centre**
See p2

Saturday 12 September
– **Highbury Barn Plastic Bag Free Day**
Ask now in any Highbury Barn shop for a free Highbury Barn cloth bag (from Islington Council).

Sunday 13 September, 1-5pm
– **Gillespie Festival in Gillespie Park**
Now in its 23rd year, organised by Friends of Gillespie Park, this year there are plans for eight music groups. There will also be stalls run by local organisations, including HCA, and activities for children such as a magician and a storyteller.

Saturday 26 September, 12-4pm – Horticultural show
King Henry's Walk Community Garden
Enter your harvested produce – prizes for the best entries. For a list of show categories email greenliving@islington.gov.uk
Also happening: wildlife gardening and food growing demonstrations; music and refreshments.



HCA 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, HCA, PO Box 43396, N5 9AD, made out to 'Highbury Community Association'.
Send letters or articles for next issue to hcanews@hotmail.com or Highbury Community Association, PO Box 43396, London N5 9AD.
Visit www.highburycommunity.org
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