

# Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association

www.mhfga.org

Your Residents' Association working for the local community since 1948

## Muswell Hill Library campaign successful at last



Muswell Hill Library is likely to get an accessibility upgrade, including a new lift, after a campaign run by the Friends of Muswell Hill Library whose Chair is MHFGA Press and PR Officer, George Danker. Readers will be aware that the library building was under threat of being closed under the 2014-18 administration of Haringey Council. The Council's plan at the time was to close the building and relocate the service to the ground floor of the Pinnacle building at the top of Muswell Hill. The Friends objected to this scheme and ran a popular campaign to leave the service in the current building which is well-used and much loved.

Several years later, the current administration of the Council has been far more receptive to the suggestions of the Friends and has managed to find funding for accessibility works to the upper floor.

A spokesperson for Haringey Council said:

*"As the library is a much-loved Grade II listed building, due consideration has to be given to improving accessibility whilst being sympathetic to the building and complying with the listing requirement. Therefore, in advance of a planning application, there have been positive discussions with the Planning Officer around the location and outline design features for the new external lift enclosure which will provide access from street level to the ground floor and then continue to the first floor. Feedback from these discussions has been incorporated into the detailed designs for planning approval and construction tendering purposes. We anticipate the planning application will have a decision made at the end of December.*

*"During this time, the final detailed design documents will be prepared to enable us to go out to tender for the construction works. Until we receive planning approval it's difficult to be specific about dates except to say that we are keen to progress this much anticipated project. At this stage we aim to start works in Spring 2021 and complete by the end of 2021. This is all dependent on gaining planning approval."*

## January/February 2021

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## Short Story Competition

Thank you to all those who entered our short story competition. The independent judges, Valerie and Trevor Grove, highly regarded in their fields, were impressed by the high standard of the entries, although it was disappointing that no children submitted stories.

Congratulations to John Crompton who was awarded first prize with his entry, printed on page 5. The joint runners-up were John Reid with his story *Alien-nation*, and Martin Burstyn with *Ruin*. These two stories will be published in the March/April issue and all three winners' stories are on our website.



Valerie and Trevor Grove

## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

to all our members. Let's hope that 2021 will prove to be a more positive experience than its predecessor!

## Members' Meetings

We hope to continue with meetings if we can do so in line with government guidance. Please check our website [www.mhfga.org](http://www.mhfga.org) for up-to-date information.

We would welcome suggestions from our members for topics for future meetings or, even better, to offer a talk themselves. Please contact our Chairman, John Hajdu, who would be very happy to hear from you.

Duncan Neil, Chair of the Alexandra Palace Consultative Committee, is delighted to report that a £2.9million grant has been awarded to the Park and Palace from the Government's Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage.

This means that they can deliver their plans to continue operating through to the end of March, essential repair and maintenance can take place and they can continue to develop the programme of events and activities. It is worth noting that the grant recognises that the Park and Palace has been a hugely successful organisation that plays a positive role so many people's lives.

## 110 Years of Muswell Hill

In 2006 Muswell Hill residents celebrated 110 years since the creation of their suburb. In April 1896 the Edmondson firm bought the nearly 30 acres of flat land between Colney Hatch Lane and Fortis Green Road. They then made the crucial decision to line the perimeter of the land with shopping parades, instead of just covering it with terraced villas. In this way they created a vibrant shopping centre and the urban 'village' which we enjoy today and which has served the surrounding avenues so well. Acquisition of three other estates allowed parades to be built each side of the main roads.

Estate building plans were approved by Hornsey Urban District Council by November 1896 and the first houses and shops were nearing completion by May 1897.

2006 also marked exactly 70 years since the first broadcast television programmes to domestic receivers from Alexandra Palace, on 2nd November 1936.



**Zoe Norfolk** is a local professional photographer with some high-profile clients. She is also an active member of the Association's Committee introducing, for example, the popular 'Odd One Out' competition to keep children occupied during the summer holidays.

Zoe has created a large gallery of all her favourite photographs of Muswell Hill which make lovely presents for local residents. Prices start at £5.50 for a 5x7. There are over 70 images in the gallery at <https://zoenorfolk.zenfolio.com/p894107778>. You can also see more on her Instagram account @muswellhill.london.

## MHFGA Committee

### Chairman

John Hajdu MBE  
chairman@mhfga.org

### Planning/Vice Chairman

Nick Barr  
planning@mhfga.org

### Secretary/CAAC/Alexandra Palace Statutory Advisory Committee

John Crompton  
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### Social Media/Notice Board

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### Treasurer

treasurer@mhfga.org

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### Newsletter Editor

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### Graffiti

Jack Whitehead and Bill Jago  
*If you wish to report graffiti or flyposting, **do not** contact Jack or Bill. Please go to the "Report It" section at [www.haringey.gov.uk](http://www.haringey.gov.uk) and enter the details there.*

### Tree Monitor

*We are still looking for a Tree Monitor to take on the job of being our contact and looking at and commenting on communications received from the Council relating to tree work in our area.*

*If you are interested, please contact our Chairman to discuss taking on this valuable work.*

Visit our website [www.mhfga.org](http://www.mhfga.org) for lots of information about the local area including old photos and John Hajdu's history of the Association. If you have a photo or news item why not share it with our members on Twitter @theMHFGA or visit [www.twitter.com/theMHFGA](http://www.twitter.com/theMHFGA). We tweet regularly on Association and local news, so please follow and spread the word. And don't forget our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/MHFGA](http://www.facebook.com/MHFGA)!

## Member Profile

### Maurice Collins, OBE, MA

"Get the 653 bus to Finsbury Park, then the 212 up to Muswell Hill, walk to Pages Lane and there you will find the print shop that you will be apprenticed to for 6 years". Those were the words of the 'finder of jobs' for young Jewish lads looking for work at the Jewish Board of Guardians, who were a total disaster at school

The so-called factory in Pages Lane was around the size of a large kitchen: two printing machines, some composing of type units, and two ex-servicemen just out of the army running this grand operation, and thus my working life was virtually tied to the composing racks (that is the person who puts together the actual type, the name of my designated job 'compositor' - great for someone who couldn't spell).

Most of that 6 years was spent around Muswell Hill and Crouch End, then into the RAF to do National Service, after which, being a left-wing Zionist, I went off with my wife Doreen to live on a kibbutz in Israel. Upon our return I convinced my wife that there was only one place I wanted to live, and that was, of course, Muswell Hill. We found a tiny 2 bedroom flat above a garage in Colney Hatch Lane, the cost £4,200. The seller actually lent me the deposit so I could get a mortgage, not so easy just above a busy petrol station!

My wonderful daughter Kim was born with severe learning disability followed by my fantastic son Paul, I had meantime started my own printing business, taking on the place in Crouch End. The business grew till eventually I had a factory down in Bermondsey with 20 employees. I moved on in my business life with a variety of different businesses, and creating and organising The Sunday Times Business to Business exhibitions, happily all reasonably successful!

Doreen became a part of the Hornsey Housebound Housewives. I wonder if any readers remember this dynamic group of feisty ladies? They became our social network, which made life tolerable for us with two young children, one of whom was extremely difficult, but the amazing support that community gave us kept us sane.

So, these many years on, I'm still in Muswell Hill. I was Chair of Haringey Mencap for 23 years as well as Chair of London and National Mencap, and co-founded the charity Kith and Kids based in Tottenham and the legal charity Disability Law among a range of other involvements in the charity field. I originated an idea to help new and young businesses entitled 'Prime Thinkers' acting as a brain-storming project on any issue a young start-up might have. Many of those 'thinkers' came from Muswell Hill, including the Association's Chairman, John Hajdu.

I've been an ardent collector of gadgets and contraptions from between 1851 and 1951, which I lend to museums across Europe, all in aid of charity. I also have a large collection of old photos (see *two examples below*). I've had 3 books published on the subject, and more recently a book on the history of marketing and a compilation of business stories so, although I'm well retired, I have kept myself busy and active. You can get more information on my collections by googling [maurice collins gadgets](#).

Muswell Hill is a unique location in London. It is like a village separated from the rest of the metropolis: a young family location, perched overlooking the wonderful view from the top of the hill and the landscape window in Marks and Sparks of London. I wish all new residents a happy life here, the key to which, I believe, is making friends and creating an environment through one's family life.



## Members' letters

Double yellow lines have appeared on East Finchley High Road opposite Kitchener Road, where the chemist and a line of shops are. There is an indented bay where people have parked for years: it causes no problems or disruption to traffic flows. The lines appeared overnight, with no consultation.

I asked the Council the reason for this. It will add to the death of the High Street, already badly impacted by the massive traffic scheme at East Finchley station and the junction of the North Circular Road, now reduced to one lane, and causing traffic holdups daily. I asked the Council if there was any consultation before this was done and, if so, what replies were received.

As the Council have not replied, I presented them with a Freedom of Information request, only to be told that due to coronavirus, the time for responses has been extended.

Other comments I have seen in the local Next Door group are that it will also add pressure to parking in the county roads, which will then lead to calls for the CPZ to run for longer hours, leading to the CPZ being rolled out to further roads, which means more parking charges for more people.....etc.

What a pity, I often use that space to pick up things from local shops on the way back from longer journeys. If the Council were trying to kill off use of local shops, they could not have found a better way to do it. But why do this?

Regards  
Barry White

## Proposed Woodlands Conservation Area

I have recently been in touch with the Council's planning department to enquire about the progress of the Muswell Hill Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP).

You may recall that in 2018 our Woodlands area was recommended by the Council's heritage consultants for addition to the existing Muswell Hill CA. The area is situated between the existing Muswell Hill and Highgate Conservation Areas. It adjoins the Parkland Walk and Highgate and Queen's Woods.

Before the CAAMP is adopted there has to be a public consultation approved by the Cabinet, and we were told by Emma Williamson, Assistant Director of Planning, that this would be on the Cabinet's agenda in autumn 2019. This has not happened, and Emma has left the Council.

I received the following reply to my enquiry from Elisabetta Tonazzi, Principal Conservation Officer:  
*The Woodland area is candidate to become part of the Muswell Hill Conservation Area once we finalise and adopt the new Muswell Hill Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP). We will keep you informed as far as things progress.*

Kind regards  
Geoff Hunt  
Coordinator, Woodlands Conservation Area Action Group

## Membership

### New Members

A warm welcome to our new members including Angela Hobsbaum and Katharina Rietzler.

### Corporate Members

The following local businesses and organisations support the Association. You can find the links to their websites on our Corporate page at [www.mhfga.org](http://www.mhfga.org) and click **Useful Links**.

13 Web Street	Gibfit 30	Muswell Hill United Reformed Church	Studio Moe Ltd
Aleion Restaurant	Green's of Highgate	Muswell Hillbilly Brewers	Tatlers Estate Agents
Ambitious About Autism	Harington Scheme	Natural Beauty Urban Retreat	The Hampstead Butcher & Providore
Angela Rose	Hollickwood Primary School	Norfolk House School	The Mossy Well
Baby Sensory	Hopper & Bean	North London Chorus	The Real Greek
Barnet Furniture Centre	House of Books	North London Symphony Orchestra	The Robin Kiashek Osteopathic Clinics
Barron Salon	Internet Express/PhoneRepairs4u	Panoptica - MH Optical Ltd	Toffs
Bob's Café	JHK Estate Agents	Perform Media Ltd	Victory Auto Services
Broadway Pet Stores	Lambert Welch Kitchens	Picture Framing Muswell Hill	W Martyn
Broadway Pharmacy	La'De Kitchen	Planet Organic	Walter Purkis & Sons
Bund Chinese Restaurant	Laytons (Jeraboams)	Point 5 Kitchens	WAVE Café
Capital Gardens	Le Pot de Terre	Rhodes Avenue Primary School	Woodland Tree Surgery
Children's Bookshop	London Institute of Dance	Robert Linsky Optometrist	Yogamatters
Clissold Arms	Men at 107	Roni's Bagel Bakery	Zebra Ceramics
Cosi Homewares	Misk Boutique	Rowan Antiques	
East Finchley Open Artists	Muswell Flyer	S&D Express	
Evelina's Patisserie	Muswell Hill Bowling Club	Sable d'Or Patisserie	
Everyman Muswell Hill	Muswell Hill Creatives	Sally Bourne Interiors	
Fierce Grace Hot Yoga	Muswell Hill Methodist Church	Snappy Snaps	
Firkins Chimney Sweeps	Muswell Hill Methodist Lawn Tennis Club	St James's Muswell Hill	
Freehold Community Association			
Friends of St. James's Square	Muswell Hill Pharmacy		

## Short Story Competition

**Winner: John Crompton**

The judges said: *our proposed winner is John Crompton's cameo of a coffee-drinker in times of Covid. It is rueful, humorous and of the moment. The sad fate of the abandoned station buffet sums up in miniature what's going on everywhere: customers gone, businesses putting up the shutters, people losing their jobs. But the reader is gently reminded that the buffets have survived worse threats than coronavirus – two world wars – and the trains are still running, late as always...*

Michael took his Americano from the counter and sat down at a large table. The coffee was in a paper cup which was one of the many changes since March. Before then he usually had to share a table but now he usually had the station buffet to himself. This made it easier to have a look round the rather timeless surroundings of what had originally been called the general refreshment room. It was over 110 years old and judging by the sepia pictures on the wall the shape of the room had not changed since then, but obviously the fittings had been updated as had the refreshments on offer. What, he wondered, would a soldier returning from the trenches in 1918 have made of a flat white or a smoked cheese ciabatta. Would the coffee aroma have been as enticing back then? Probably – providing you could smell it for all the cigarette smoke of course.

As there was seldom anyone to talk to nowadays Michael would often imagine the events which the buffet had witnessed through the years both pleasant and unpleasant and those with an element of both such as lovers bidding each other a tearful farewell until the next time. Somehow it made him feel better when he considered the various adversities which previous customers had endured. There had been two world wars yet life had continued pretty much the same afterwards. So why should it be any different with Covid?

When Michael used the buffet on his way home in the evening there was often a spot of banter between the tables as to what excuse the announcer would come up with next to explain the train delays. His favourite was that the late running was due to earlier late running. He felt sorry for those less seasoned passengers around him who sat with a fixed half smile while keeping one eye on the monitors. 10 minutes late, 14 and then – “We are sorry to announce that the train was withdrawn from service at the previous station.” Different sort of passengers in the evening – barristers going back to London proud of the fact that they had persuaded the jury to make the right decision, actors who had passed their audition and were loudly repeating the good news to all and sundry on their phone and tipsy racegoers dressed up to the nines in search of a final bottle of prosecco to enjoy on the train.

Back to the present morning. It was time for Michael's connecting train and as was usually the case he struggled to find something original to say to the manager on his way out. The man was the only member of staff left now. Michael didn't like to refer to what had happened to the others as he was only too well aware that the same fate probably awaited the manager too. Just as it had to everyone working in the rival buffet on the other side of the station and the pop-up kiosks-which in recent years had appeared to cater for what he called the caffeine fiend in a hurry. The sort of person who had no trouble in striding along the platform talking into the mobile in one hand whilst sipping coffee from the cup in the other.

A few weeks later it was Michael's first day back in the office after a short stint working from home. He was in good spirits and approached the buffet in keen anticipation of his Americano. He didn't spot that the place was in semi darkness and it was only when he got to the door that he saw the notice which announced that the buffet was closed until further notice and thanking patrons for their custom and understanding. At first he thought the closure would only be temporary - perhaps to allow the manager to take a holiday. But then he noticed that the tables and chairs were stacked up as if in preparation for a visit by the administrators and his heart sank further when he spotted a spotlight above the open till to emphasise that it was empty. Ah well, he thought, perhaps the rival buffet will have reopened. He set off towards the footbridge but then peered across the platforms and spotted someone trying in vain to open the café door.

So no coffee today, tomorrow or the next day. What would those soldiers returning from the trenches have made of that?

### **We asked John for his comments on winning the competition**

#### **What attracted you to the competition?**

Writing a short story was on my list of things to do in the first lockdown and this competition provided the necessary spur to finally get cracking.

#### **Do you write a lot of fiction?**

Not at all – it was the first piece of fiction I have written since school days but I always have a few ideas in my mind. For example, I travel by train a lot which provided the inspiration for this story. I was surprised at how easy I found it once I got started – all done in a morning.

#### **Do you have any tips?**

I think there are two – to put a lot of effort into the opening couple of sentences as these can largely determine whether the reader will want to read any further. The second tip is to initially write considerably more words than necessary and then edit down rather than do it the other way round.

## November Members' Meeting

On Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> November we were treated to a very interesting and informative talk by Alex Fraser, Tree and Nature Conservation Manager at Haringey Council. This was our first members' meeting on Zoom and proved to be highly popular, attracting an audience of over 50 people. A summary of Alex's talk is given below, and more information can be accessed at [www.haringey.gov.uk/environment-and-waste/nature-and-conservation/trees](http://www.haringey.gov.uk/environment-and-waste/nature-and-conservation/trees).

Alex outlined the Council's new Tree and Woodland Plan 2021-31 which is in draft form at present and will feed into a new overarching Parks and Green Space Strategy. The new plan will contain a range of policies and actions to help Haringey meet the challenges now faced because of the impact of climate change. For example, lower annual rainfall and increased evaporation are likely to lead to longer periods of drought-induced stress on trees. An increase in the occurrence of storms will make trees more vulnerable to wind damage. Warmer summers and a rise in temperatures in general are likely to extend the life cycle and geographical range of certain pests and diseases. Trees under stress are much more susceptible to colonisation by insect pests and decay-causing fungi as they will find it more difficult to defend themselves. In recent years there has been a significant increase in findings of new pests and diseases that affect trees, all were previously evident in Europe and have found their way to the UK. They threaten some of our most commonly found tree species such as oak, ash, horse chestnut and London plane.



Haringey measures almost 2,950 hectares and the GLA maps estimated that the tree canopy cover across the borough is 25.5%, which is higher than the London average of 21%. Muswell Hill has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest canopy cover in Haringey. Fortis Green has the 4<sup>th</sup> highest and Alexandra the 5<sup>th</sup> highest.

There are approximately 11,500 street trees in Haringey, 9,000 in parks and open spaces and 8,000 on housing sites. It is estimated there are at least another 5-6,000 in woodlands, schools and nature conservation sites that are not currently recorded. The most common street tree is cherry, followed by London plane, maple and rowan.

There is a planned inspection and maintenance regime for all street trees and those on housing sites and in parks. Street trees are inspected on a three- or four-yearly cycle, dependent on species and location. Trees managed on a three-year maintenance cycle are predominantly London plane and lime trees that have been managed historically as pollards.

Between 2008–2016, a capital budget was awarded to the department and additional external funding was secured, allowing a planned approach to planting new and replacement street trees. During this period 3,921 new trees were planted in the borough and 1,716 were removed. 226 new trees were planted in the Muswell Hill ward and 115 were removed. In Fortis Green ward 136 were planted and 75 removed. In Alexandra ward 223 were planted and 172 removed. However, for the past 4 years, there has been no budget for replacement tree planting. New street trees have only been planted during footway refurbishment schemes or through public sponsorship.

The department has recently been awarded a capital grant for new tree planting and this will allow the replacement street tree programme to restart.

## Litter in Avenue Mews



These photos of rubbish dumped at the Prince's Avenue end of Avenue Mews were posted on Twitter. Haringey responded that Veolia have been asked to clear the area. However, the more residents who make a complaint to the council, the more likely it is that there will be a concerted attempt to deal with this on-going problem.

## Local Organisations

### ST JAMES'S CHURCH

St James's Church Legal Advice Centre and its sister organisation Coppetts and Colney Legal Advice Centre (in Wilton Community Church) provide free legal advice on all issues, including immigration and the legal requirements of the Coronavirus Act 2020. Their drop-in sessions **[Monday and Saturday mornings at St James and Tuesday morning at Wilton]** are suspended for the duration but they continue to provide a free legal advice service by email 24/7 at [pt.anythinglegal@gmail.com](mailto:pt.anythinglegal@gmail.com) and [coppettslegal@gmail.com](mailto:coppettslegal@gmail.com).

### FRIENDS OF QUEEN'S WOOD

**Wednesday 13 January 2021, 7.30pm.** An illustrated talk on Zoom by David Bevan entitled *Ancient Woodlands of North London*. Please email [meetings@fqw.org.uk](mailto:meetings@fqw.org.uk) to ask for the link. Anyone offering to help Gemma Harris with litter picking should contact her at [harrisgemma67@gmail.com](mailto:harrisgemma67@gmail.com) or 07806 870505.

### NORTH LONDON EPILEPSY ACTION

Contact Barbara Penney 020 8883 0010 or e-mail [barbarapenney@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:barbarapenney@yahoo.co.uk)

### HORNSEY PENSIONERS ACTION GROUP

Contact Ann Anderson (020 8340 8335) or [www.hornseypensionersactiongroup.org.uk](http://www.hornseypensionersactiongroup.org.uk).

### HIGHGATE CHORAL SOCIETY

[www.hcschoir.com](http://www.hcschoir.com).

### MUSWELL HILL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

[www.muswellhillphoto.org.uk](http://www.muswellhillphoto.org.uk) or email [contact@muswellhillphoto.org.uk](mailto:contact@muswellhillphoto.org.uk).

### MUSWELL HILL & DISTRICT HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Contact: Jenny Kruss on 020 8442 0031 or [jenny\\_starick@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jenny_starick@hotmail.co.uk).

### MUSWELL HILL BOWLING CLUB

King's Avenue N10 1PB (next to No. 36). [www.muswellhillbowlingclub.co.uk](http://www.muswellhillbowlingclub.co.uk) – or call Richard Johnstone on 07986 873312 or e-mail [richardjohnstone@gmail.com](mailto:richardjohnstone@gmail.com).

### HORNSEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

[www.hornseyhistorical.org.uk](http://www.hornseyhistorical.org.uk)  
Local History Surgery. Phone 020 8348 8429 or email [hornseyhistoricalsurgery@gmail.com](mailto:hornseyhistoricalsurgery@gmail.com) with a brief outline of the problem.

### THE FREEHOLD COMMUNITY CENTRE

9 Alexandra Road, N10 2EY. Please check at [www.familiesonline.co.uk/local/barnet/listing/freehold-community-centre-195857](http://www.familiesonline.co.uk/local/barnet/listing/freehold-community-centre-195857)  
[freehold2003@gmail.com](mailto:freehold2003@gmail.com) or ring 07935 324578.

## Cranwood House Planning Application

Your Association's Committee has considered this application in the light of its own views and those of the many residents who have already submitted comments. Whilst a mixed development of mainly social housing and a mix of unit sizes is appropriate on this site and the emphasis given on sustainability and energy-saving features is welcomed, there are several other concerns. The Association has submitted its comments which can be viewed on Haringey's website. Comments had to be in by 13<sup>th</sup> December and there will be a 'virtual' Development Management Forum on 27 January 2021, 7pm-9pm. Local residents and businesses may attend. You can email [DMForum@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:DMForum@haringey.gov.uk) to apply to attend the forum.

The main points of concern are:

1. The site is prominent opposite the junction of Muswell Hill Road and Cranley Gardens. As Cranley Gardens is a hill the impact of the development will be particularly acute for those travelling up the hill to the junction. Such a site calls for a sensitive design.
2. The design of the two buildings which will define the Woodside Avenue / Muswell Hill Road junction is unsympathetic to the location in terms of massing, height and detail. The roofs are out of proportion to the whole, making the buildings look top-heavy and overbearing while the construction of the balconies facing the highways would be bulky and contribute to the visual mass, which is amplified by the ground floor of the buildings being below street level.
3. In the consultation documents Haringey has attempted to show how different elements of the design have been taken from the architecture of the surrounding buildings. In our view, this is stretching credibility.
4. The documents have also attempted to illustrate that the massing of the two buildings fits into the current street scene. In our view, this is not the case for the reasons stated in point 2 above.
5. Little information is provided on the design of the building which would face St James's School and no information on the school-facing facade. Are balconies acceptable here?
6. We have little information on how the development might impact the school and the two low-level residential blocks facing Highgate Woods which will remain. Both would be dominated by the scheme and no doubt suffer reduced light levels. However the consultation documents fail to include a daylight survey and therefore it is not possible to quantify.
7. Little information is provided on the external designs for the block containing the 9 maisonettes intended for private sale. From what can be seen the design is block-like and lacks imagination. We would particularly be interested in seeing what is intended for the west-facing exterior that will face Highgate Woods.
8. Five car parking spaces are proposed for 41 housing units which is a serious misalignment which will no doubt lead to increased parking pressure on the surrounding streets that are already suffering from considerable parking strain.

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1,600 followers



## From Our Archive

*The following is taken from an article by Christine Goldschmidt, Newsletter Editor 1977-78, Secretary 1978, Chair 1979-80, in Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association: a history of its campaigns and landmark achievements, first published in 2015.*

What to say about Muswell Hill in the 1970s? That it was heaven to be alive: one of those rare combinations of great people in a great place, which it was and probably still is. A fantastic place to bring up children: great schools, lovely houses, wide avenues, Marty'n's, the best coffee shop in England.

Joining a network of like-minded people in the MHFGA stopped life from being self-centred. I can't remember anyone talking about house prices or bonuses, but they did talk about saving the tree-lined avenues, stopping the Archway Road scheme and trying to create a new conservation area. I think people really cared about Muswell Hill, Fortis Green and the surrounding areas. Committee members responded really well to an influx of talkative and active people who wanted to do something positive.

But of course it wasn't all angst and fist clenching against the powers that be, important as that was. We wanted to create a real community, get people and local organisations to share ideas and show their talents - what better than organising a festival, we thought? Great idea, but it had to be achieved without spending any money if at all possible. Everything was to be paid for out of receipts and then profits put aside for the following year. The sale of food would create some income for the Association. How about barbecued sausages and hamburgers? suggested someone. Luckily, our local butcher, David, on Fortis Green came up trumps with free sausages and hamburgers, the local Greek bakers gave us all the rolls and committee member Paul Olins brought wonderful water melons. And so the committee plotted and planned, got permission to use the car park at the back of the Broadway for the Saturday and the field in Fortis Green for the Sunday. Bands were booked, stalls arranged and good old St. John Ambulance put on standby. As luck would have it, 1976 was the hottest summer I can remember and Paul Olins and I went out selling tickets and handing out publicity dressed as Andy Pandy and a clown. My white makeup ran in rivulets down my face and Andy Pandy's face got redder and redder.

Come the day and the sun was still shining and hordes of people crowded into the car park to visit the stalls, listen to music and generally have a great time. That first festival really was brilliant and such fun despite the hard work. It's still one of my fondest memories. And we made a profit to let it all happen again the following year.

We had a Newsletter. There were no home computers at the time, so everything was painfully typed by me and I'm no trained typist either. Luckily, my daughters' nursery in Fortis Green, run by Beatrix Tudor-Hart, had a Gestetner machine and it allowed me to roll off the copies, again by hand, as long as I had the paper. The A4 sheets were then stapled, by hand, for distribution. So the Association had a truly hand-crafted product which contained the best information to be found anywhere. Of course, that was down to the quality of the writing and the contributors and not the quality of the typing! When I compare it to the newsletters produced by the charity that I worked for in the 1990s and 2000s I so wish we had had the technology in the 1970s.

"Woodman, Woodman, spare that axe!" was a 1976 headline from the MHFGA Newsletter, typed by me using Tippex to blot out the myriad typos. David Jones, then Editor of the Newsletter, pooh-poohed my headline deeming it very downmarket. We were, of course, all Guardian and FT readers, but the headline stayed and the committee spent hours planning tactics for the up-and-coming second or third public enquiry into the Archway Road widening scheme as part of the bigger cross-London road scheme. Come the day, crowds assembled outside Hornsey Town Hall, including one tall chap in an elegant grey suit. "Must be an undercover cop" or "Government spy" or "GLC lickspittle" went the whispers. It was, in fact, the playwright, Simon Gray, ready to join battle. He smoked a lot even then.

Inside we were herded like sheep and carefully controlled. Nonviolent tactics being the order of the day, we all sat down, refused to move, let off horns and rattles and generally made sure that things did not proceed according to the inspector's plan. Up in the balcony policemen took photographs of the "protestors" below for their troublemaker files. In the enquiry committee members and supporters gave detailed technical evidence but when the inspector asked what price we would pay, the answer was that no price was too high. Collapse of inspector.



*Muswell Hill roundabout in the '70s*

### Copy date for March/April 2021 edition of this Newsletter

If you would like to submit an article, letter, picture or diary date for our next edition, please send your copy to [editor@mhfga.org](mailto:editor@mhfga.org) by 1st February 2021.