

Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association

www.mhfga.org

Your Residents' Association working for the local community since 1948

Trees in Muswell Hill and Fortis Green



We are fortunate to live in one of London's verdant suburbs, surrounded by trees in our gardens, parks, woods and streets. It makes our district desirable and attractive. And mature trees are great absorbers of carbon dioxide, which is why, at a national level, planting or new forests will be an important component of achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

Unfortunately, our local trees are under serious threat. It's not just the threat from chainsaws as developers and the Council seek to get more and more homes onto our green spaces. Home insurers blame trees for existing and future subsidence. They demand felling of trees instead of spending the money needed to repair and secure properties. Spending to protect and manage trees in our area, both on our streets and in our parks, is not regarded as a high priority by the Council. Trees which need to be felled are not replaced. And I'm afraid some of our community sacrifice trees for crossovers and extensions.

I will be doing all I can to keep track of developments which threaten our trees as well as monitoring proposal to work on street trees and trees with Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). In addition to trying to protect the existing tree stock, I'll also be looking at ways to promote the planting of new trees. But I can't do all of this on my own. I need your help.

First, if there is an attractive mature tree in your area, in a neighbour's garden for example, check to see if there's a TPO on it on the Council website - <https://www.haringey.gov.uk/map-tree-preservation-orders-tpos-haringey> - and if there isn't I'll help you apply for a TPO. A TPO means that no work can be undertaken on the tree without specific Council approval. TPOs only apply to trees on private land.

Second, if a street tree on your street needs to be felled, you can club together with other residents to fund the planting of a new tree, as the Council will rarely replace felled street trees in our part of the Borough. See *panel to the right*.

Third, if you come across a development which threatens trees, we can object to the Council. If necessary, we can start a social media campaign with a petition. In this event, we'll be looking for people to set up and promote such a campaign. There is already quite a network in the area (The Community Tree Protectors) which can help.

Fourth, as well as planting more trees in your gardens, you can help by identifying spaces on both private and public land where new trees could be planted, and I will then try to raise the issue with the owners of the land.

September/October 2021



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And finally, if you have some time to spare, you could get involved with one of the existing local groups such as the Friends of Queen's Wood, the Friends of the Parkland Walk or the Friends of Alexandra Palace.

Let's work together to protect and enhance trees in Muswell Hill and Fortis Green.

Jonathan Popper, MHFGA Tree Officer

Trees for Streets

Haringey has partnered with Trees for Streets to launch a new scheme to make it easier for residents to fund tree planting in streets and parks across the borough.

Both the Haringey Street Tree Sponsorship Scheme and Celebration Tree Scheme offer you a fantastic opportunity to play your part in making your borough a greener environment.

This is just one of the ways we are using to plant more trees in local streets, parks and green spaces - to help reduce air pollution, absorb carbon, improve mental and physical wellbeing for residents and generally make Haringey a healthier place to live.

You can choose to sponsor a street tree where you live or sponsor a celebration tree in one of our beautiful parks or recreation grounds. For more information on the new scheme please click on the button below.

Our tree planting programme runs from November to April each year.

Check this link for further information:
<https://sponsor.treesforstreets.org/provider/haringey-council>

Members' Meetings

We will continue with our programme of meetings via Zoom. **Please contact events@mhfga.org to book your place and receive the link to enter the meeting**, and check our website www.mhfga.org for up-to-date information.

23 September, 7.00pm - Peter Webb.

Following on from his February talk, *From Michelangelo to Picasso via Rembrandt: my collection of prints*, Peter will present part two, concentrating on Oriental and European prints of a later period.

28 October, 7.00pm - Birth of the Film Studio - in Muswell Hill

A talk by Ian Christie, a film historian whose *Robert Paul and the Origins of British Cinema* was published by Chicago University Press in 2019.

When Robert and Ellen Paul moved from central London to Sydney Road in 1898, they were setting a trend that would be followed around the world. Film studios were essentially a suburban development, soon to be found on the outskirts of cities around the world. But how much do we know about the Animatograph Works on Sydney Road and its ten-year history?

Ian did an online presentation last year about early studios, including Paul's, which will be the basis of this talk, with some extra material of interest to locals. For more background information before the talk, Ian's comic book version is available online at <https://simplebooklet.com/YqicBIR7tUKyUpquZBJS9S#page=1> (see also Jack Whiteheads's article on page 4).

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.

If you need help with a specific local issue, please check at <https://mhfga.org/useful-links/> where you will find contacts for reporting your concerns.

MHFGA Community Fund

The Association is delighted to announce the inaugural Community Fund, with up to £500 available to fund local projects for the benefit of the community.

The last 18 months have been a very difficult time for everyone, but your residents' association is here to help. We would like to support local organisations who are making a real positive impact on the area, so we came up with the idea of investing in local projects.

The application form and scheme conditions will be available on our website throughout September and October, and the deadline for applications will be 31st October 2021. All local organisations and community groups are encouraged to apply, and applications will be judged on the basis of community impact.

In particular, we would like to encourage you, our members, to think about organisations or projects that you are involved in which benefit the area. We will be reaching out to as many organisations as we can to let them know of our fund, but we need your help too!

You can find out more by going to www.mhfga.org/fund.

George Danker

Graffiti

If you wish to report graffiti or flyposting, please go to the "Report It" section at www.haringey.gov.uk and enter the details there.

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www.facebook.com/MHFGA
(over 1,800 followers)



[@theMHFGA](https://twitter.com/theMHFGA)
(over 1,000 followers)



[@mhfga](https://www.instagram.com/mhfga)
(400 followers)

Visit our website www.mhfga.org for lots of information about the local area including old photos, early films 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](https://twitter.com/theMHFGA) or visit 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!

Member Profile

Laura Bugden

I have been a member of the Association for some years, but I suspect, like a number of us, I was an inactive member. So when I saw a note in the newsletter asking for help with preparing the minutes for Committee meetings, I jumped at the chance to get a bit more involved.

I have lived in Muswell Hill for over 20 years; I moved here from Islington when I wanted a bit more space for my growing family. My oldest three children went to St. James' Primary School and then on to Fortismere and the youngest two went to Muswell Hill Primary School and one went to Highgate and the other followed in his siblings' footsteps. One of the great things about having children in Muswell Hill is that the community spirit has always made me feel comfortable about the children walking to visit friends and meeting up in Highgate Woods or Coldfall Woods. I have loved helping out at school events and the beauty of a truly local school is that I always meet fellow parents when walking along the Broadway for a good chat.

I now have three dogs, a 12-year old Labrador, a 4-year old Labrador and a 1-year old Cocker Spaniel puppy. Yes, it is our lockdown puppy and we find ourselves in great company with other puppy owners in the fantastic green spaces within walking distance. I never tire of Alexandra Palace Park, Highgate Wood, Coldfall Wood or Queen's Wood and our green environment is a delight.

I am a Chartered Governance Professional and have worked as a Company Secretary and Risk Manager for all of my working life. My work has always been in the marine field and I worked for a shipowner for many years and then for a shipbroking company. I now work for myself as a freelance Governance Consultant and as a result can manage the workload a bit more which has given me the space to do other things like helping the MHFGA Committee with minute taking.

It has also given me the space to learn bridge, a card game that I knew little of. I have enjoyed the learning process which I have done at 10CC Bridge Club here in Muswell Hill and their classes have been, I can't say 100% enjoyable, but they have been a real challenge. I am determined to keep the grey matter active!

My husband is Scottish and we are lucky enough to have homes in England and Scotland. So far, all of our lovely grandchildren are in Scotland and I therefore spend a lot of time going up and down. We are regularly to be seen on the concourse at Euston station with dogs in tow waiting for the train to Glasgow.



Planning Matters



Artist's impression of the hub

Some good news to start with. The Council did not approve the felling of the horse chestnut tree at the tennis court in the Rookfield Estate which is subject to a Tree Preservation Order. Instead works have been approved to reduce the tree canopy.

BT propose to install a smart hub near the Everyman Cinema (*artist's impression, left*). There have been over 180 objections to what is effectively just a large advertising hoarding taking up precious pavement space. The Council has refused applications to place a hub at other sites so let us hope that this one is refused too.

There is a recent application to redevelop the whole of the car wash site at 109 Fortis Green. The scheme is for 6 flats and some commercial space at the front of the site, 4-three storey houses at the rear and some basement parking. It is a variation on something similar which was granted permission in 2015 but which did not proceed.

John Crompton

The Forgotten Factory of Muswell Hill

Jack Whitehall has sent in this very interesting article about Robert Paul. Coincidentally, Ian Christie will be giving a talk on Paul on 28th October (see page 2), so this item concentrates on his manufacture of scientific instruments.

None of the histories of Muswell Hill that I have read mentions a factory owned by a famous manufacturer of scientific instruments. The factory seems to have been forgotten, and there is apparently no trace of it at its former site. This is its brief history.

Robert Paul was born in 1869. He trained as an electrical engineer and set up in business in Hatton Garden in 1891. He manufactured various instruments, the most famous being one of his own design, the Unipivot Galvanometer. A galvanometer was an instrument for detecting very small electric currents. It had a scale with its zero in the centre, not on the left-hand side, which is usual for electrical meters. If the current went through the galvanometer in one direction the needle deflected to the right, and if the current went in the opposite direction the deflection was to the left. Its purpose was to detect a situation in which no current flowed through the instrument. This was needed, for example, for Wheatstone bridge circuits, which were important in telegraphy and the telephone system, as well as in science research laboratories. Paul's unipivot design used only one pivot for the rotating coil of the meter, which moved the needle, instead of the usual two. As a consequence, there was less friction, and the galvanometer was more sensitive than rival designs. It was highly successful and was exported all over the world. It was also rugged and could withstand rough treatment. In a publicity stunt to demonstrate this, a group of workers from the factory played a game of football in the car park using a unipivot galvanometer (in its leather case) as the ball. After the game it functioned perfectly.



Paul's instruments were famous internationally. He won gold medals at the St Louis Exposition in 1904 and the Brussels Exhibition in 1910, among others. In World War I, he produced early wireless telegraphy sets, and instruments for submarine warfare.

In 1919 Paul's company was taken over by the Cambridge Scientific Instrument Company and became the Cambridge and Paul Instrument Company Ltd. The name was shortened to the Cambridge Instrument Co Ltd in 1924 when it became a public company.

The Cambridge Instrument Company in 1919 was owned by Horace Darwin (1851 – 1928), the youngest son of Charles Darwin. It had been founded in 1881 by Horace and a friend. It was closely linked to Cambridge University and was known in Cambridge as "Horace Darwin's Shop". The company was responsible for the manufacture of many commercial scientific instruments including, Ewing's Seismograph. Horace Darwin was an engineer and was actively involved with the technical side as well as in running the business. His own inventions were manufactured, including, in 1910, 'Darwin's crack extensometers for St Paul's Cathedral' and "Darwin's Rocker", a type of microtome. Microtomes are used to make very thin slices of materials for use in microscopy. Darwin's Rocker was manufactured continuously between 1887 and the 1970s.

At the time of the takeover, Darwin's company was much larger than Paul's, having nearly 500 employees. Paul's company had a high reputation, but Darwin's was renowned, being probably the premier scientific instrument company in the country, with a worldwide standing. Anyone who has spent time in a science laboratory will probably have used Cambridge instruments, whether voltmeters or ammeters or more specialised pieces of equipment. They were always well designed and made, and a pleasure to use.

The Muswell Hill factory concentrated in electrical instruments, so it is doubtful that the Rocker was made there. Robert Paul continued to work for the company, so he must have got on reasonably well with Horace Darwin who, like his father, seems to have been a very pleasant character. In the early 1930s Robert Paul worked with the Nobel prizewinning physicist Sir William Bragg to develop the Bragg – Paul Pulsator, which would now be called a ventilator. This was manufactured by the company. The pulsator played an important role in the treatment of polio and other conditions, such as diphtheria. They were manufactured until 2008. The Unipivot galvanometer remained in production and was not discontinued until the 1950s.

Robert Paul worked at Newton Avenue until he died in 1943 at the age of 73. Horace Darwin had died in 1928, the chairmanship of the company being taken over by his nephew, Sir Charles Galton Darwin, who was a grandson of Charles Darwin.

The company continued to prosper, but in the 1960s it began to struggle to make a profit. It was sold in 1968 to the George Kent Group and was divided into four parts. During a complicated series of takeovers and mergers, the Muswell Hill factory was closed in 1975.

Most Cambridge instruments have been superseded by digital versions but are now collectors' items. You will find them on eBay and similar sites, commanding quite high prices. From a recent advert:

"Cambridge instruments thermocouple meter £45. A vintage thermocouple meter, nice talking piece all intact on original feet, would be great as a door stop as it has a nice metal carrying handle." Robert Paul and Horace Darwin must be turning in their graves.

Cherry Tree Wood

Cherry Tree Wood, nestled in the valley of the Mutton Brook, is a 13-acre well-loved, much-used local park and small remnant of ancient woodland. With playgrounds, a café, tennis and basketball courts, a picnic area, woodland walks and an open grassed area this small recreation ground provides a haven for people and wildlife. This has been magnified by Covid with many finding it a place of solace and peace as well as an outlet for more vigorous pursuits.



Its past is both complex and intriguing, living up to one definition of history as “the past is a foreign country - they do things differently there”. Cherry Tree Wood has a documented history that is traceable back over a thousand years. Its history must be seen in the context of its remnant ancient woodland being part of a much larger, managed swathe of woodland, meadow and pasture owned by the Bishop of London, including the nearby Highgate Wood, Queen’s Wood and Coldfall Wood. It is a history of deer parks, changing land management and the pressure for development involving railways, reservoirs, and recreation. A detailed history of the Wood can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3wMbhby>

The Wood lies in the valley of the Mutton Brook which now flows in a culvert below ground, although a glimpse of this brook can be seen where it runs under the Northern line underground tracks which form the south western boundary to the Wood. Mutton Brook continues flowing west joining the Dollis Brook in Hendon then the River Brent which meets the River Thames at Brentford. The Wood has had several different names. It became Cherry Tree Wood when Finchley Urban District Council purchased it in 1915 for a recreation ground. Under the previous ownership of the Bishop of London it had been known during the 19th century as Dirthouse Wood sitting opposite the Dirthouse PH (now the Old White Lion) and Dirthouse Fields north of the pub where London’s “night soil” was deposited. Before that and traceable to the sixteenth century it was named Ryall Fall Wood forming one of many pieces of oak and hornbeam woodland that were coppiced (cut down to ground level and then allowed to regrow). The coppiced hornbeam was used to make charcoal and fuel for London’s growing population.

Today the Wood is managed by Barnet Council and serves a wide area of East Finchley and Muswell Hill. The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood, a registered Charity, was established in the 1990s and has campaigned over that period to protect and enhance the park and woodland.

The Charity has three key objectives:

1. To secure the preservation, protection and improvement of Cherry Tree Wood.
2. To promote high standards of planning and architecture.
3. To educate the public in the geography, history, natural history and architecture of the area of benefit.

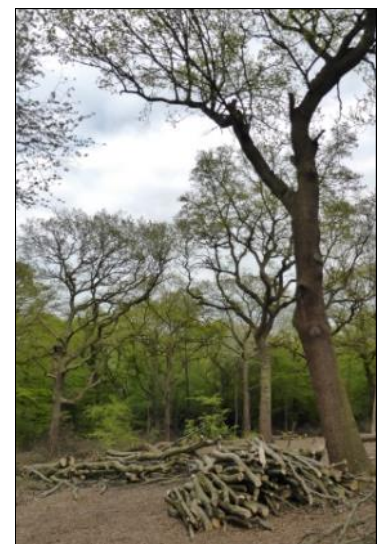
The Friends have become more active in recent times holding regular litter picks, campaigning with other groups and succeeding in getting Barnet to refurbish the tennis and basketball courts. We obtained a grant of £20k from the Council to undertake a range of improvements. We have an active gardeners’ group working to improve the flower beds and bog garden and tending to our community orchard of apple, pear and plumcot trees. The Wood lies on one of Buglife’s national B-lines that run north-south across London as a main pollinator route, so we are trying to increase the number of pollinator plants to help link bees and insects across the country (see <https://www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/b-lines/>). There is a lot to do and the more supporters we have the better. The Friends do not charge a membership fee. Just drop us an email to friendsofcherrytreewood@gmail.com and ask to be put on our mailing list. We look forward to you joining us.

*Roger Chapman
Chair of Friends of Cherry Tree Wood*

Haringey Council’s proposed flood management scheme in Queen’s Wood

The flooding of a number of homes in Wood Vale in the storm of 12 July reminded us sharply that flood risk downstream of Queen’s Wood is a reality, not just a theoretical possibility. The Friends of Queen’s Wood recognize this risk but consider that the proposed scheme in its current form is unacceptable. We have been analysing what actually happened on 12 July and what lessons can be learned from this. Questions arise about the state of the current drainage systems in the Wood and along Wood Vale and, in particular, to what extent the flooding could be attributed to poor maintenance of those systems. We have asked the Council for a discussion with them as well as about their proposed scheme. In the meantime, with a few scars from that event remaining on its slopes and paths, the Wood is displaying its full summer glory, with mercifully a little less trampling than at time of the Covid restrictions last year. At least drought has not been a problem to date!

Alison Watson



Letters

Dear Christine Morris

I noticed in the July/August 2021 MHFGA newsletter the item under the Muswell Hill Ward Panel Update (p.4) which referred to residents having been kept awake at night by helicopters.

This is nothing new. I recall many years ago going to bed at 11.30pm and being disturbed shortly thereafter by the sound of a helicopter engine droning on and on. After 25 minutes I got up and phoned New Scotland Yard. I told the officer who answered the phone: "Look, a helicopter has been circling above Muswell Hill for nearly half an hour. Is it one of yours?" Answer: "Yes, Sir." "What is it doing up there?" "Catching criminals, Sir." I thought for a moment and then said: "Do you mind asking the pilot to catch them quite soon? I cannot go to sleep with that infernal racket above my head."

Since then my wife and I have often heard hovering helicopters in our area, and I wonder whether (a) we are on a designated helicopter route; and (b) whether Muswell Hill has more than its fair share of criminals, especially those who operate between 11.30pm and midnight?

Eugene Myerson.
Retired Committee Member of the MHFGA.

Dear Editor

I happened to notice reference(s) to the old Durnsford Road swimming pool on your website. I thought that you might like to know that there is a 'Friends of Durnsford Road Swimming Pool' Facebook group (of which I am the lead administrator) for all people with the appropriate memories. If you would like to disseminate that to your members, any such folk would be warmly welcomed.
Thanks and regards,

Geoff Lee
geoff.lee2010@gmail.com).

Membership

New Members

Welcome to our new household members including Natalie and Benjamin Huckle, Nick Franks, Ange de Vena, Rev Matt Lunn and Helen Lunn.

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 and click **Useful Links**.

Ambitious About Autism
Angela Rose
Baby Sensory
Barnet Furniture Centre
Barron Salon
Bob's Café
Broadway Pet Stores
Broadway Pharmacy
Bund Chinese Restaurant
Capital Gardens
Children's Bookshop
Clissold Arms
Cosi Homewares
Dunn's Artisan Bakers Ltd
East Finchley Open Artists
Evelina's Patisserie
Everyman Muswell Hill
Fierce Grace Hot Yoga
Firkins Chimney Sweeps
Freehold Community
Association

Friends of St. James's Square
Gibfit 30
Green's of Highgate
Harington Scheme
Hollickwood Primary School
Hopper & Bean
House of Books
JHK Estate Agents
Lambert Welch Kitchens
La'De Kitchen
Laytons (Jeraboams)
Le Pot de Terre
London Institute of Dance
Men at 107
Misk Boutique
Muswell Flyer
Muswell Hill Bowling Club
Muswell Hill Creatives
Muswell Hill Methodist Church
Muswell Hill Methodist Lawn
Tennis Club

Muswell Hill Sustainability Group

Are you looking to make your home more energy efficient this Autumn? Home energy use contributes around 50% of Haringey's total carbon emissions, so acting now can make a real impact, as well as making your home cosier and cheaper to heat.

Muswell Hill Sustainability Group (MHSG) has been running our popular Green Open Home events for 8 years. The idea is to provide inspiration and practical advice for people looking to improve their home. Haringey residents who have undertaken eco-retrofits will open their homes for either in-person or virtual visits during the last two weeks of November.

The tours will be accompanied by a series of talks covering technical aspects of retrofit, whole house retrofit planning, easy energy saving tips and an introduction to MHSG's new retrofit advice service. There will be useful information whatever your budget. And if you are planning building works, you may well want to invite your builder or architect!

To find out more and to book your place at one of our tours or talks, please visit www.mhsgroup.org.



Participants at a green open homes tour organised by Muswell Hill Sustainability Group

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's 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 and coppettslegal@gmail.com.

FRIENDS OF QUEEN'S WOOD

Thursday 19th August at 8.00pm. Cindy Blaney will lead a bat walk in Queen's Wood. Meet at the Lodge Cafe just before 8.00. All welcome. Please register for a place on membership@fqw.org.uk
Friends of Queen's Wood are volunteers who support and care for the wood. Do join the Friends! All information on fqw.org.uk.

NORTH LONDON EPILEPSY ACTION

Contact Barbara Penney 020 8883 0010 or e-mail barbarapenney@yahoo.co.uk

HORNSEY PENSIONERS ACTION GROUP

Contact Ann Anderson (020 8340 8335) or www.hornseypensionersactiongroup.org.uk.

HIGHGATE CHORAL SOCIETY

www.hcschoir.com.

MUSWELL HILL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

www.muswellhillphoto.org.uk or email contact@muswellhillphoto.org.uk.

MUSWELL HILL & DISTRICT HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY Autumn Show **Saturday September 11th, 3-5pm**, at North Bank, Pages Lane, N10 1PP. Displays of flowers, fruit and vegetables. Homemade afternoon tea, plant stall, local honey for sale. Book signing by local authors. Contact: Jenny Kruss on 020 8442 0031 or bloomngn10@outlook.com.

MUSWELL HILL BOWLING CLUB

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

HORNSEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

www.hornseyhistorical.org.uk
Local History Surgery. Phone 020 8348 8429 or email 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 or freehold2003@gmail.com or ring 07935 324578.

ALEXANDRA PALACE AND PARK

The Alexandra Park Visitor Centre near the Grove car park will be open **every Sunday** from now on, between **2 and 4pm**. The Centre will be well-ventilated and we will ask visitors to wear a face covering.

The MHFGA Newsletter Archive

The MHFGA Newsletter digital archive now spans ten years, from the September 2011 issue, which reported on the violent August events in the Broadway, to this September-October issue which is launching the MHFGA Community Fund. Alongside our website contemporary and historical picture and video archives, the Newsletters witness the changes, developments and concerns of our community over time.



The Association started publishing local news in 1965, with the twice-yearly two-page *The Fortisman*, published until the early 70s. Over the years, both title and number of pages changed with the editorial policy. In 1971 the title became *Newsletter*; it was briefly renamed *Information Sheet* in 1981, *Newsheet* and *News sheet* in 1983 and 1984, and finally back to *Newsletter* in 1984. The contents varied between two and eight pages, with a peak of twenty pages at the time of the Alexandra Palace fire and inquest. Unfortunately, no copies have survived and if members still have any, please let me have them and I shall make them available online.

More on the story of our Newsletter in *Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association: a history of its campaigns and landmark achievements*, freely downloadable from www.mhfga.org/history, to be soon updated with the latest developments of the Association. All the Newsletters are available from www.mhfga.org/newsletters except the most recent three. If you are a member and you have not received them, contact us at membership@mhfga.org and you will get a copy by return.

Alex Vincenti



Sally Stevens' Guided Walk 21 July 2021

Eugene Myerson, a long-time member of MHFGA and previous Committee member, sent in this summary of Sally's walk. Eugene left the walk at 3.30 as he explains, and Sally furnished the rest of the information.

Ray Davies and his brother Dave (who formed The Kinks pop group) grew up with six sisters in a tiny house in Fortis Green, opposite The Clissold Arms pub, where this walk started. At the corner of Fortismere Avenue and Fortis Green is a house called Fairport. The music group who used to rehearse in it when it was a club called themselves **Fairport Convention** whose line-up included **Dave Swarbrick**, a fine folk fiddler, . A fire station used to stand almost opposite Fairport (now a care home) and the houses behind it are still called Firemen's Cottages (built c. 1900).



Photo by Barry White

We walked down Fortismere Avenue admiring the Collins'-built houses, solid large homes designed to attract well-off middle-class families between 1895 and 1910. The same builders were responsible for much of the domestic architecture in Muswell Hill, which is why so many streets in our area have a unified character. We crossed Grand Avenue, into the grounds of a housing estate that replaced St. Luke's Hospital, where **Spike Milligan** was once a mental patient.

We made our way to Cranley Gardens, pausing to hear of the infamous murders committed in a flat there by **Dennis Nilsen** in the early 1980s. Turning into Ellington Road, we were shown the house that **Rod Stewart** bought. Both he and **Long John Baldry** went to Fortismere School. At the crest of Ellington Road there is a fine view of the BBC TV mast at Alexandra Palace. The latest rock star to move to Muswell Hill is **Liam Gallagher** who now lives in Lanchester Road, off Woodside Avenue. At the end of Ellington Road it forms a T-junction with St. James's Lane, and standing opposite us in that lane is The Royal Oak pub. A public house of that name has stood on that site for 400 years. At the top of Muswell Hill, a pub named The Old Green Man has been there for 450 years. By comparison, the previous John Baird pub in Fortis Green Road was only built in the 1950s.

At this point Sally was about to lead our group down St. James's Lane to see some of the older properties that formed the kernel of the settlement in Muswell Hill. It was then 3.30 pm, and I knew that going further downhill meant having to walk back a long way uphill. My ancient bones had had enough, so I apologised to Sally and left the group and the walk. I enjoyed a beer and crisps on the terrace of The Royal Oak, to fortify myself for the return climb up St. James's Lane to the mini-roundabout at St. James's Church, where I rested at the bus stop in front of the Everyman Cinema, before boarding a number 234 bus to take me home.

Sally continues:

St James's village evolved before **Edmondson and Collins** developed the area. I talked about the 'tin pot school', 1912-1968, and the former thriving shopping area tucked away in the corner of St James's Lane. We then moved on to 101 St James's Lane, one of the oldest surviving houses, home of **William Tegetmeier**, naturalist, pioneer pigeon-racer, poultry expert, authority on the construction of beehives and friend of **Charles Darwin**, mentioned in *On the Origin of Species*.

We walked back up St James's Lane, looked at the arches and talked about the railway line to Alexandra Palace, 1873. We walked along Hillfield Park into Marks & Spencer's car park to view the site of The Summerland Theatre and Pleasure Garden, aka The Electric Cinema, built 1912, lit by thousands of fairylights, and demolished in 1936 when The Ritz (later ABC) and The Odeon were built.



Colney Hatch Lane Flowerbeds

Thanks to the sustained efforts of our Environment Officer, Brian Livingston, the beds in Colney Hatch Lane now have two new signs installed which are set in concrete and so, hopefully, vandal-proof. They are a real improvement on the original signs.

Photos by Brian Livingston



Copy date for November/December 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 by 1st October 2021.