

Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association

www.mhfga.org

Your Residents' Association working for the local community since 1948

When is a Castle not a Castle?



Bruce Castle painted in 1686, attributed to Wolridge (Courtesy: Bruce Castle Museum & Archive).

Haringey is home to a castle and a palace. In Muswell Hill there is Alexandra Palace, and to the east in Tottenham is Bruce Castle, resplendent in 20 acres of parkland.

Bruce Castle is technically not a castle but a magnificent 16th century former manor house for Tottenham. Grade 1 listed, the house has had continuous occupation for the past five centuries, with aristocratic owners making their own significant and interesting architectural legacies there. In the 16th century, Sir William Compton, one of Henry VIII's closest courtiers, held the manor, building the 'mysterious' castellated Tower in 1514. The name Bruce Castle was bestowed in the 17th century by 2nd Lord Coleraine. He redesigned Bruce Castle to 17th century tastes, adding the clocktower. Interested in local history, he wrote one of the first histories of the area, tracing landownership of the manor to the medieval De Brus family. Coleraine loved the association of his fashionable home with the last family member, the renowned Robert the Bruce of Scotland.

Subsequent owners have equally fascinating and nationally important histories. The most famous resident was Sir Rowland Hill, creator of the Penny Post. The Hill family ran Bruce Castle School from 1827, before Sir Rowland moved on to the Postal system. As a school, the house survived Victorian redevelopment with philanthropist Joshua Pedley buying the estate, before it was purchased by the Tottenham Local Board. The grounds became Tottenham's first public park in 1892, whilst the house waited until 1906 to become a museum.

Now, 115 years on, it is Haringey's own museum, housing local history collections, community stories, fine art collections and Haringey's official archive. Whether you wish to visit to enjoy a cultural experience, an exhibition, find out about the history of your house or research other histories – there's lots to uncover and explore at Bruce Castle. Around 3,500 school children visit yearly for workshops and, along with our exhibitions showcasing local history and artists' work, there are monthly talks, a Reminiscence Café, weekly Family Arts & Craft Activities, and events - the Haringey Local History Fair, Open House, vintage fairs, guided walks and tours of the building.

May/June 2021

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But all that of course was our offer until a year ago when lockdown #1 began...

In March 2020 we closed the museum and worked from home. We wrote Our Local History Posts six days a week to our mailing list, covering different topics about the area using collections and discovering more of the borough with readers. Our mailing list grew, reaching 3,000 people each daily post. The building has had to be adapted to be Covid-secure, which allowed phased returns to the Archive Search Room last September, followed by small groups visiting our exhibitions. Sadly, all stopped again by Christmas 2020.

We continue with Our Local History Posts twice a week. We research remote enquiries. We deliver monthly evening and lunchtime talks virtually, loan exhibitions to schools around the borough, support Food Banks with craft packs for children and install local artists' work in our windows with our new OPEN OUT Gallery alongside work of schoolchildren in our Little OPEN OUT Gallery.

So, you can still enjoy what Bruce Castle has to offer - until we can reopen again. Look at Bruce Castle's webpages to follow links and updates for information: www.haringey.gov.uk/brucecastlemuseum. Or email us to receive Our Local History Posts and hear of online events and news, or to make an enquiry: museum.services@haringey.gov.uk.

See back page for further resources relating to Bruce Castle .

Members' Meetings

Yet again we will not be holding an AGM this year. Reports from Committee members will be collated by our Chairman and sent out to all members in May.

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.

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.



Our thanks to Zoe Norfolk who organised the renovation of our noticeboard opposite St James's Church.

Photo by Steve Dawson

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.

Useful online information service

Haringey has an online directory for adults who need care and support, where you can search local organisations to find the right services.

<https://haricare.haringey.gov.uk>

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.

Oliver Tambo

Those of you who follow our Facebook page will have seen an item about the renaming of the Albert Road Recreation Ground to 'O. R. Tambo Recreation Ground'.

This is In memory of Oliver Reginald Tambo, the late South African activist and long-time president of the African National Congress. He was close friends with Nelson Mandela and lived in Haringey in exile for over two decades, settling with his family in Muswell Hill, and frequently visiting the Rec with his family.

The role Oliver Tambo played as the ANC's figurehead in Europe was vital in publicising the plight of black South Africans and canvassing international support for the fight against the white-minority apartheid government.

The renaming is part of the council's work to ensure that the names of Haringey's monuments, buildings, places and streets reflect the values and diversity of borough.



Photo by Zoe Norfolk

This is your Newsletter!

Your Editor welcomes articles, letters and photographs from our members so that we can share local news, memories and pictures from this special area of North London. Please send any contributions to editor@mhfga.org.

The photograph of the Muswell Hill roundabout in the previous issue was printed courtesy of the Bruce Castle Museum.

MHFGA Committee

Chairman

John Hajdu MBE
chairman@mhfga.org

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Urgently required!

Minutes Secretary

At present the various members of the Committee are taking the minutes at meetings, so we are seeking a dedicated minutes secretary to attend our very interesting meetings 6 times a year. This role gives an insight into the many and varied activities of your Association and a volunteer would be welcomed and very much appreciated by the Committee.



www.facebook.com/MHFGA
(over 1,700 followers)



[@theMHFGA](https://twitter.com/theMHFGA)
(over 800 followers)



[@muswellhill.london](https://www.instagram.com/muswellhill.london)
(over 300 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

Hazel and David Orme

Shortly after leaving Leeds University in 1973, Hazel and David found themselves, with no clear sense of London's geography, living in a bedsit in Onslow Gardens, Muswell Hill. The daily commute down the Northern 'Misery' Line became the inevitable rhythm of city life, meeting for a pint in the Woodman at the end of each day. In those days, the Broadway offered two cinemas (Odeon and ABC) and one British/European restaurant, the Side Saddle. Circumstances improved, so the couple – and their cat – were able to buy a flat, with a Haringey Council mortgage, in Rosebery Road, a converted Edwardian terrace, with big French windows and one and a half bedrooms.

Within a couple of years, the cat had been joined by a dog and son number one, so Hazel and David moved round the corner, just 200 yards, into a whole house. A burst mains pipe in the loft just before they moved in, bringing down all the ceilings (during the era of 16% mortgage interest rates), was maybe not the most auspicious time. The sale of the flat had fallen through so at least they had somewhere to go! Their second son arrived a few years later.

After initially training in HR, Hazel found her true metier in the book publishing industry. She started working at J. A. Allen, a publisher of horse books, then went to Faber & Faber, and finally Pan Macmillan. Now, as a freelance editor, she works with many well-known authors. David has been involved in magazine marketing and distribution for most of his working life, and currently works with Hearst and Conde Nast in the US. Their retail business is predicated on being able to send their magazines, such as the *New Yorker*, around the world, to be sold in busy airports, so the pandemic has presented significant problems – and loss of revenues.



Galapagos!) – but lockdown forced them to abandon any such plans last year and this.

Since being sucked into the vortex of Muswell Hill, they have gradually amassed a large collection of memorabilia relating to Alexandra Palace, some unique items from the early days include legal papers relating to the disputed insurance claim following the fire that razed the first palace in 1873, and an 1875 season ticket. The mighty Willis Organ and the horse racing track (nicknamed the frying pan) and, of course, the birthplace of television broadcasting have all provided opportunities to add to the collection. The website is currently down for maintenance, but the Twitter account @AllyPallyMuseum is an ongoing opportunity to view the 'exhibits'.



The larger house enabled them to develop their love of collecting. Hazel points out, "We have two guiding principles: never throw anything away and keep everything!" An early collection of magazines and comics was dispersed over the last few years, but others remain. A range of Goss crested china has remained determinedly on display as its value has declined. An extensive collection of Sylvac pottery figures dominates on a Welsh dresser, a large collection of Victorian and Edwardian tins fills one wall (with at least 25 different Oxo tins). There is, naturally, a great number of books (they haven't counted them!) – their scale is measured in yards, with at least 200 cookery books, several modern first editions, and a long shelf devoted to their travel destinations (including the

Queen's Avenue

For many years Queens Avenue has been a local hotspot for inappropriate waste disposal. Abandoned white goods and sofas are a common sight, building waste is often left in front gardens, and overflowing rubbish bins are the norm for many properties. With the help of our members living on Queens Avenue, the Association has for some time now been working with Haringey Council to tackle these issues with mixed success.

I am pleased to report that the Council have apologised for being unable to resolve the problem thus far, and have come up with a new plan of action. The Enforcement department have promised to identify all the problematic residences and reach out to them, determine whether they require alternative or extra facilities, and take action against repeat offenders. Your Publicity & Events officer will be keeping a very close eye to ensure that these promises are upheld!

George Danker



Photo by Jacqueline Servat

Members' Meeting

The Winklebag Printer of Pages Lane

Many of you will have read the profile of local collector of gadgets, contraptions, posters and ephemera, Maurice Collins, in the January/February 2021 edition of this Newsletter. On Thursday 11th March we were entertained for an hour or so by Zoom access to some of the 3,000 objects that Maurice has acquired over the past 40 years.

The evening was a real treat, full of information and fun from Maurice, whose enthusiasm for his hobby (obsession?!) was palpable. Over 50 people attended the meeting and joined in the quiz questions with some wild and sometimes knowledgeable guesses.

Maurice sketched in the early days of his career in the printing trade, beginning as an apprentice in a 3-man workshop in Pages Lane, and later starting his own business in Crouch End. He has had a varied and interesting career and has published several books.

But the main subject of his presentation was his fascinating collection of items acquired over the years, focussing on the period 1851 (the Great Exhibition year) to 1951 (the Festival of Britain). Maurice has a special interest in ephemera, items that are made for temporary consumption like posters, postcards and letters. He showed us examples of posters from the two World Wars which had to be eye-catching and memorable, both to attract volunteers (specifically in World War I) and to appeal to recruits' sense of patriotism and commitment to the cause. The famous poster of the Blonde Bombshell however was deemed to portray too attractive a young lady and was replaced by a more dour-looking model!



Maurice then moved on to some of the intriguing objects that he has acquired over his long career as a collector which started when he and his son explored a rubbish dump and made some interesting finds. He started by showing us an ingenious clockwork Teasmade from 1902 which sold for 5 guineas at the time. He explained that many items were used as an advertising tool as well as having a practical use, such as a match-striker and black and white pot lids.

We then participated in Maurice's quiz when he presented us with such objects as an industrial apple peeler, a pin dispenser, a union press, a used chewing gum holder and a comb cleaner. One of the most disturbing was a contraption used to restrain a naughty child by fixing the fingers through holes behind the child's back.

All the proceeds from Maurice's books, talks and loans of his collection are donated to the charity Kith and Kids. Maurice was a co-founder of the charity 51 years ago, when his daughter, who has severe learning disability, was 8 years old. It started as a support group for all the families of children with learning disabilities or autism who joined them in Corams Fields in the centre of London, and continues to this day. His latest book is *Minding Our Own Business* which contains the stories of 25 people who have started their own business.

Can you guess what these objects are? Email your answer to mauricecollins@msn.com. Maurice has kindly offered to send a copy of his book *Eccentric Contraptions* to the person who first emails all the correct answers.



Object 1



Object 2



Object 3

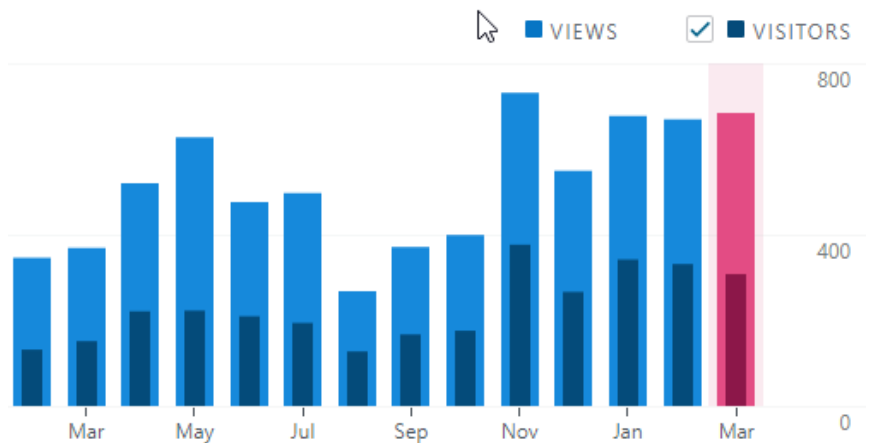


Object 4

MHFGA website

Our website has had a growing flow of visitors over the past year, almost 50 percent more than the year before. Some were quite unexpected: one-offs from Colombia, the Philippines or the United Arab Emirates, looking at our pages by chance or design. Obviously, the great majority were from the UK, but more difficult to explain is why there was so much interest also from the USA, China and South Korea.

How do we know that? Our website, like every other, keeps tabs on visitors. It's all above board. No Big Brother watching, at least not us, but simply some details of how many people pass through, what pages they look at and so on, to help us improve our website for content and usability.



www.mhfga.org visitors and pages visited from March 2020 to March 2021

Therefore, we know that many come to see our local news, or browse through our photo and video archives, or see how to recycle old appliances. But most of our foreign visitors are just there for the record: many are just spiders, crawlers and bots, different names for what, essentially, are little automated programs. These are typically operated by search engines like Google and Bing to index the content of websites all across the Internet, so that those websites, like ours, can be found in searches.

Mystery solved? Not quite. What is the connection between www.mhfga.org and Wikipedia, and why is a Chinese company referring visitors to us? More in the next Newsletter.

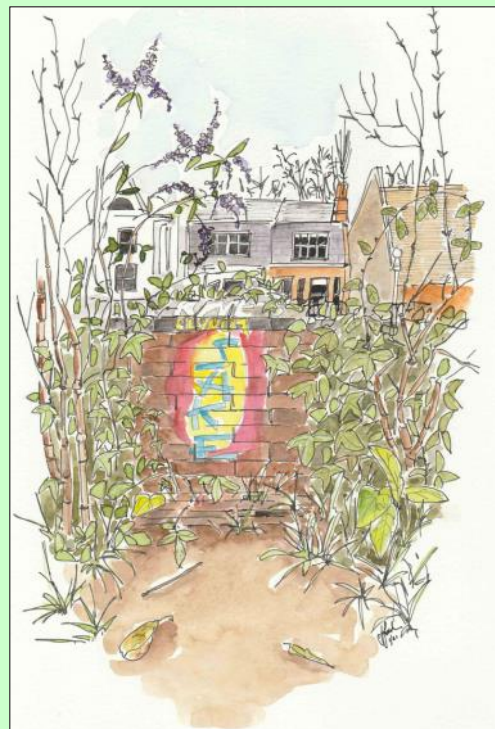
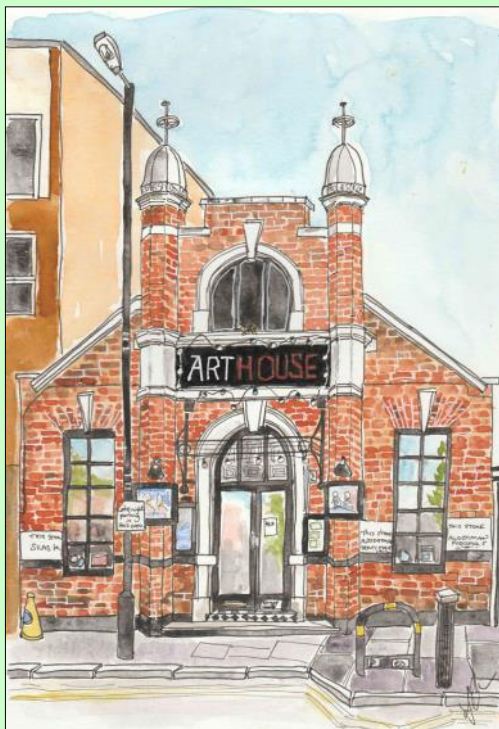
Alex Vincenti, Webmaster

An Artist's View of the Parkland Walk

Alison Gardiner, regular volunteer (regulations permitting) and litter marshal is also a gifted artist who is often inspired by the Parkland Walk. Alison has produced a number of sketches along the southern section brilliantly capturing the essential character of our favourite Local Nature Reserve, the abundance of summer growth and the people who frequent it.

Urban works

Alison is also interested in the urban landscape and developed her art after getting involved with [London Urban Sketchers](#). You will find more of Alison's work on her Instagram feed [@Alison.gardiner.art](#).



Reader's letter

Maureen Paton writes:

So sad to see shops closing for good. Are you running a list of them, please? Good restaurants now gone include Aleion and Connubio. I'm also worried about Chriskitch, the wonderful cafe in Tetherdown that said it would reopen in January - but no sign of that yet. Any information would be welcome.

John Crompton replies:

The Newsletter goes to press at the same time as many shops and other businesses are re-opening after an enforced period of closure. This is very welcome and we look forward to the return to some sort of normality as more businesses are allowed to fully re-open in the coming weeks.

We are very fortunate in having such an abundance of fantastic shops, restaurants and other businesses in Muswell Hill and Fortis Green. But please remember that these will only be able to continue to trade if we continue to support them. Or to reprise a slogan often used before – use them or lose them.

Easter Treats



Photo by Zoe Norfolk

Just before Easter, volunteers from the Muswell Hill Foodbank, based at Pembroke Road Church, N10, were busy delivering hundreds of Easter eggs to families referred by local schools hoping to put an Easter smile on the faces of the children who receive them.

Membership

Membership renewals

The 1st May brings in the new membership year here at the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association. If you pay us by Standing Order or Direct Debit your membership fees will be processed automatically. If not we'll send you a reminder via email with details of how to make payment.

Direct Debit has low fees for us and is secure and easy - just set up once and forget about it. If you're an existing member and would like to renew using Direct Debit please email membership@mhfga.org and we'll get you moved across.

GoCardless - Direct Debit

Members who have signed up to Direct Debit may see the name 'GoCardless' on their bank statement or in their online banking. GoCardless is the company that securely processes Direct Debit payments on our behalf.

New Members

Welcome to our new household members including Alison & Monte Jacobson, Liz Thomson, Richard & Nicky Rosen and Jo Shaw. Welcome also to The People's Pantry who are launching a new mobile zero waste shop.

Business and organisations

You can learn more about The People's Pantry and our other business and organisation members at mhfga.org/directory - we're revamping what was our corporate membership to be more reflective of the local and more artisan nature of these members. We'll be in touch with those members directly to confirm listing details.

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 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
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 Pharmacy

Muswell Hill United Reformed Church
Muswell Hillbilly Brewers
Natural Beauty Urban Retreat
North London Chorus
North London Symphony Orchestra
Panoptica - MH Optical Ltd
Perform Media Ltd
Picture Framing Muswell Hill
Planet Organic
Point 5 Kitchens
Rhodes Avenue Primary School
Robert Linsky Optometrist
Roni's Bagel Bakery
Rowan Antiques
S&D Express
Sable d'Or Patisserie
Sally Bourne Interiors
Snappy Snaps

St James's Muswell Hill
Studio Moe Ltd
Tatlers Estate Agents
The Hampstead Butcher & Providore
The Mossy Well
The People's Pantry
The Real Greek
The Robin Kiashek
Osteopathic Clinics
Toffs
Victory Auto Services
W Martyn
Walter Purkis & Sons
WAVE Café
Woodland Tree Surgery
Yogamatters
Zebra Ceramics

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 and coppettslegal@gmail.com.

FRIENDS OF QUEEN'S WOOD

26 May at 7.30pm on Zoom, talk on invasive species by Sarah King Ecologist.

16 June at 7.30pm on Zoom, talk on London Wild Flowers by David Bevan, Botanist. All welcome, email meetings@fqw.org.uk for link.

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

Contact: Jenny Kruss on 020 8442 0031 or bloomingn10@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

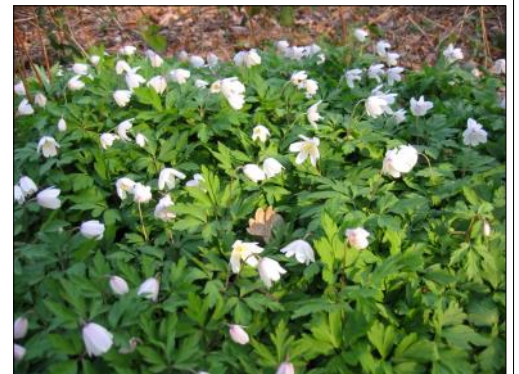
9 Alexandra Road, N10 2EY. Please check at www.familiesonline.co.uk/local/barnet/listing/freehold-community-centre-195857 or freehold2003@gmail.com or ring 07935 324578.

Friends of Queen's Wood

At the time of writing, the Friends of Queen's Wood (FQW) have just sent in their response to Haringey Council's consultation on its proposal for a flood management scheme in Queen's Wood. Our response has been one of outright opposition. The scheme would run roughshod over the legal protections given to the Wood, it would risk causing serious, and permanent, damage to its ecology and it would detract seriously from what visitors love about the Wood – its ambience of peace and beauty. Our thanks to all in the Association who also voiced their opposition to the scheme. We expect the Council to take decisions around mid-May.

In the meantime the Wood, while looking a bit unkempt and trampled upon as a result of the combination of the wet winter weather and the heavy pandemic-induced footfall, is beginning to put on its usual display of vernal glory. The first greenery on the trees is appearing and the clumps of wood anemones – one of the crowning glories of the Wood which would be threatened by the scheme – are emerging. It is not quite back to 'normal service' from us in the Friends but we are hopeful that before too long we shall be able to resume our guided walks and other usual activities in the Wood.

John Dorken, Chair of FQW



Local photographs



Jacqueline Servat sent in these photos of pansies in the flowerboxes by the roundabout, and a fox spotted in Queen's Avenue.



From Our Archive

John Crompton has updated an article taken from John Hajdu's history of the MHFGA which can be viewed on our website.

One of the major tasks undertaken by the Association over the 72 years of its existence has been to gain recognition for Muswell Hill's special status as an important and virtually intact Edwardian suburb and to protect it from inappropriate development.

Conservation has always been a constant aim and it is gratifying that during the Association's existence much of our area has been awarded Conservation Area status. We pushed hard for the establishment of the Conservation Area Advisory Committees which now straddle Haringey. Right from the beginning, there has been a vital need to keep on top of environmental decision-making on planning and conservation issues, and to feed back the results to local people. Thus there are frequent articles in our Newsletters keeping members updated.



Manor Dairy, corner of Muswell Hill Broadway and Queens Ave, 1907

In *The Fortisman* (the forerunner of this Newsletter) of summer 1969, an anonymous correspondent said: *"The attitude of the Super Planners seems to be - Let them blow off steam to their heart's content, but we will still go ahead. If this is Democracy at work, then Heaven help the people of England in the years ahead"*. So influential has our Association been in planning matters that in the early days the Group Planning Officer of Haringey himself wrote a regular column in our Newsletter reporting recent planning applications. Since then, the job has been done by a succession of volunteers performing one of the most difficult but important duties of our Committee. Over the years, they have attended hundreds of meetings, including Planning Forums and Council meetings; they look at plans and drawings, they study and comment as necessary on various updates of the local Borough plan, They also try to keep abreast of the ever changing national planning regulations so they can, advise members on grounds for objecting to a planning application, how to make them themselves on the Association's behalf and, of course, provide our members with updates of what is happening on the planning and, crucially, the conservation fronts. While we do not always win our case, our success rate is very high. If we think that an application will not be in the best interests of our area or that the planners are wrong, we have a go and argue our case, or that of an aggrieved member, strongly.

Conservation of our environment on behalf of members is, of course, ongoing. Our Planning Officer is Nick Barr and our current Secretary, John Crompton, is our Conservation Officer too. He is also Chairman of the Muswell Hill Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC).

Bruce Castle Resources



Following on from her article on the front page, Deborah Hedgecock writes:

Why not check out our new [Haringey Women's History Maps](#) online and perhaps be inspired to do walks around Haringey? Or explore our Historical Timelines and resources on [Black History Haringey 365](#).

We have had success with major grants supporting new digital engagement using our collections to be developed this coming year. Such resources will fit alongside collections already online – maybe you have seen digitised films like [Beauty in the Borough](#), featuring Muswell Hill (we won a 2020 Lodestar Award from Film London as the most-viewed film of all London Borough archives) or the [Art UK collection of our oil paintings](#), or large-scale maps newly digitised by [Layers of London](#) (including a few maps for the Borough of Hornsey area).

Photo of the Tower in spring sunshine by Deborah Hedgecock

Copy date for July/August 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 June 2021.