

Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association

**A history of its campaigns
and landmark achievements**

FOREWORD

Our Association was founded in 1948 and this book is its history.

Almost 800 residents of Muswell Hill, Fortis Green and Alexandra Wards rely on MHFGA to represent their interests.

When I took over as Chair of the Association in May 2001, having been on the Committee since 1999, I inherited boxes of archive material, including old Newsletters and Minutes. It took me many months to sift through all the papers and put everything in chronological order. While doing this, it occurred to me that it would be an interesting project one day to write up our history.

A few years later I decided that the time had come to do just that. So, I set to work and tackled the archives, trying to list important dates, and chronicle our activities and achievements through the years. I was amazed to see how subsequent Committees fought on local issues on behalf of our residents.

When I had done as much as I could, the next step was to ask Gerry Saunders, past Editor of our Newsletter (2001-2008) and a journalist by trade, to use his considerable skills and experience to progress the work further; without his input this booklet could not have been published. I also asked Jack Whitehead, a past Committee member with a vast knowledge of local history, to check the contents and make sure that we had accurately covered every important event and had not left anything out.

At this stage I also approached several past Chairs of the Association for their comments and contributions.

Finally, it was the turn of Barbara Erskine, our Newsletter Editor (2008-2013), to take on the task of matching the story and the photos, working on the design and turning the draft into a booklet format. So,

finally, after nine years of work, it was sent to the printer in May 2010 and published two years later.

Since the book was published much has happened, and the updated history takes into account the many and varied projects we have undertaken since 1948, 75 years ago, chronicling the tumultuous campaigns, fights, running battles, protests and determination shown by the Committee.

I hope you will find our story interesting and illuminating and agree that it shows what can be done by a small number of strong-minded and hard-working volunteers who wish to improve their local community.

John Hajdu

May 2023

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

A history of MHFGA in landmarks: 1948 - 1959

The Palace and Park - our biggest landmarks

60th Jubilee campaign to save iconic Langton clock

Personal reminiscences - John Carr

Landmarks: 1965 - 1969

Planning matters - the pun that tells the truth

Personal reminiscences - Sally Vernon

Plaques to remember the Haringey famous - an Association initiative

Landmarks: 1970 - 1979

Our meetings and their venues

Personal reminiscences - Christine Goldschmidt

Keeping members in the information loop

Landmarks: 1980 - 1989

Personal reminiscences - Martin Catchesides

Our own website - a continuing success

CCTV cameras in the Broadway

Personal reminiscences - Bill Tyler

Landmarks: 1990 - 1999

Volunteers, your Association needs you - always!

Personal reminiscences - Eugene Myerson

Landmarks: 2000 – 2019

Landmarks: 2020 -

An Association quiz to test your local knowledge

A HISTORY OF MHFGA IN LANDMARKS 1948 - 1959

THE Fortis Green Residents' Association was formed in May 1948, following an outcry over the parking of commercial vehicles in Annington Road, just behind the Muswell Hill police station in Fortis Green. Its aim was to "foster an interest in local government and other matters of local interest". The Association was to be strictly non-sectarian and non-political. The slogan adopted became "strength through unity". The first annual general meeting (hereinafter referred to as AGMs) was held in May 1949.

The eleven Chairpersons to date (there has been but one lady!), heroic individuals all, often working with committees with high turnovers, have been:

May 1948 to May 1956	T.L. Baughan
May 1956 to May 1976	E.C. Tyler
May 1976 to May 1978	Stanley Burnton
May 1978 to May 1979	John Carr
May 1979 to May 1980	Christine Goldschmidt
May 1980 to May 1981	Gavin Dunnett
May 1981 to Oct. 1982	Martin Catchesides
Oct. 1982 to May 1983	Terry Pope
May 1983 to May 1985	Bill Tyler
May 1985 to May 1988	David Hill
May 1988 to May 2001	Robert Andrewes
May 2001 to May 2023	John Hajdu

The title Chairman seems to have come into use some time after our foundation. Earlier, there were Presidents and Vice-presidents and Secretaries. The founder of our Association and first Honorary Secretary was T.L. Baughan, followed by R.W.A. Smith. We know that E.C. Tyler was Chairman from May 1955 to May 1976, and that he finally stepped down aged 90.

RESIDENTS TO EXTEND ASSOCIATION

Fortis Green Residents' Association in response to requests to extend membership have agreed that the area shall be that covered by the Muswell Hill Ward for municipal elections.

The aim of the Association is to foster an interest in local government and other matters of local interest and the Association is strictly non-political and non-sectarian.

Application is to be made to the Federation of Ratepayers' Associations in Middlesex for affiliation.

Preliminary arrangements have been made for the first annual meeting in May.

The committee discussed the forthcoming quinquennial valuation. It was decided to deal with this more fully at a later meeting with a view to arranging a public meeting, to which a speaker who would be an authority on the subject would be invited to explain the scheme.

The first reference in the Hornsey Journal to the Association, 11th March 1949, found in the Hornsey Historical Society archives.

During his long and honourable tenure of the chair there is little in-depth information on the progress of the Association: few minutes, only a few of the early Newsletters, remarkably few press cuttings.

Clearly, whether reported or not, progress certainly has been made. We have chosen to highlight a series of running "landmarks" to demonstrate the role that we have played, going from strength to strength in our impact on our own locality. Throughout our history, there have been ongoing battles which have lasted over long periods, in some cases decades. We did not win them all, but in most cases, the authorities, the planners, the wrongdoers, the would-be developers, all knew that we were certainly "on the case".

In our attempt to bring you a history of our Association by landmark achievement, we do have some gaps here and there. It seems that when officers of our body stood down or moved out of our neighbourhood, the records were often not passed on and were lost. Some documents may still be lying in lofts all around the borough.

Practical advice to disgusted ratepayer

Sir,—I was interested in the recent letter from H. Shorter in which he stated that as a ratepayer he was disgusted by municipal extravagance.

It is pleasing to note the increasing interest shown by residents in local affairs.

If I may offer our friend advice, as a president for over 40 years, I would say, "Don't let age get you down or rely too much on others taking the initiative."

The Fortis Green Residents' Association was started with an informal talk among nine residents and if Mr. Shorter can invite a few to discuss matters I feel sure they will get a start and soon find that others are thinking on the same lines.

The more resident associations that are formed to cover our borough the more salutary will be the effect on those who are elected to represent the ratepayer as a whole and we may then have less political wrangling in the council chamber and more attention given to the well-being of the citizens.

We are pleased to hear that efforts are being made to resuscitate the Elmington Association and wish them every success.

T. L. BAUGHAN,
Hon. Secretary,
Fortis Green Residents'
Association.

1950

Our Founder Secretary was active at the beginning in getting our name across to the populace and spreading the virtues of residents' associations.

In a letter to the Hornsey Journal of 13th January, Mr Baughan said he had been interested in a recent letter from an H. Shorter, who had said that as a ratepayer he was disgusted by municipal extravagance, which gave our founder the opportunity to say that it was pleasing to note the increasing interest shown by residents in local affairs.

"The Fortis Green Residents' Association was started with an informal talk among nine residents," said Mr Baughan, "and if Mr. Shorter can invite a few to discuss matters I feel sure they will get a start and soon find that others are thinking on the same lines. The more residents' associations that are formed to cover our borough the more salutary will be the effect on those

A letter from Mr Baughan in the Hornsey Journal of 13 January 1950

who are elected to represent the ratepayer as a whole and we may then have less political wrangling in the council chamber and more attention given to the well-being of the citizens."

Watchdogs

It is a pity that there are not more organisations like the Fortis Green Residents' Association to take a keen interest in every aspect of local government. Such bodies are veritable watchdogs for the ratepayers and keep a controlling rein on council representatives and their acts. At all the residents' meetings there is a good attendance of Hornsey Council members — sometimes five or six — and, facing the audience of ratepayers, they resemble sitting birds very much resigned to the flights of darts and arrows — in question form — from those who pay the rates. To their credit they never evade even the most awkward questions and often many complaints thus aired personally are later rectified. This is how democracy should work, with the people and their representatives always in touch, probing, airing complaints, criticising and also — praising.

An extract from the Hornsey Journal of 27th January 1950 praising the Association.

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This letter prompted the Journal's Editor two weeks later to say in a leading article: "It is a pity that there are not more organisations like the Fortis Green Residents' Association to take a keen interest in every aspect of local government.

Such bodies are veritable watchdogs for the ratepayers and keep a controlling rein on council representatives and their acts. At all the residents' meetings there is a good attendance of Hornsey (this preceded Haringey) Council members - sometimes five or six - and, facing the audience of ratepayers, they resemble sitting birds very much resigned to the flights of darts and arrows - in question form - from those who pay the rates. To their credit, they never evade even the most awkward questions and often many complaints thus aired personally are later rectified. This is how democracy should work, with the people and their

Sir, — Following representations made by the Fortis Green Residents' Association to Hornsey Town Council about the untidy state of the verge along the footpath from Lauradale Road to Tollington Girls' School due to the dumping of garden refuse, old iron, etc. the council dealt with this matter last week and the path was left in a tidy condition. But by the week-end it was again being used as a dumping ground for garden refuse.

The other week some person deposited a heap of hedge cuttings on the ground laid out by the council with flowering shrubs at the Lauradale Road entrance to Keynes Close.

Ratepayers' money should not have to be wasted to provide labour to clear up these sites because someone has not the decency to put the rubbish in their dustbins or burn it.

T. L. BAUGHAN,
(Hon. Secretary).
Annington Road, N.2.

A letter from Mr Baughan in the Hornsey Journal of 14 July 1950. The headline was "The Rubbish Dumpers"

In July of the same year, the Hornsey Journal published another letter from Mr. Baughan, this time supporting the local authority against people who wasted ratepayers' money. He wrote:

"Following representations made by the Fortis Green Residents' Association to Hornsey Town Council about the untidy state of the verge along the footpath from Lauradale Road to Tollington Girls' School due to the dumping of garden refuse, old iron etc, the council dealt with this matter last week and the path was left in a tidy condition. But by the weekend it was again being used as a dumping ground for garden refuse. Ratepayers' money should not have to be wasted to provide labour to clear up these sites because someone has not the decency to put the rubbish in their dustbins or burn it."

1952

This was the year that brought the decision to broaden the activities of the Fortis Green Residents' Association to take in "the whole of the Muswell Hill ward in the borough of Hornsey", when at the AGM in May the name was changed by unanimous vote to the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Residents' Association.

Decision to broaden the area of their activities and take in the whole of the Muswell Hill Ward in the Borough of Hornsey was made at the annual meeting last week of the Fortis Green Residents' Association. It was unanimously agreed to change the name to "The Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Residents' Association."

The proposal was moved by Mr. E. A. Curtis, who reminded members that the suggestion, made last year, had been referred to the committee which, having considered it fully, was in agreement with changing the name and broadening the scope of the association. The association would still remain strictly non-political. "We toe no political line at all," he stressed.

Before the proposal was finally approved, however, suggestions that the title should be "Fortis Green and Muswell Hill" or "Fortis Green and District" were debated at length and finally defeated.

LOST IDENTITY

Mr. T. L. Baughan, secretary, pointed out that the committee had gone carefully into the question of the title and had agreed on the one proposed as Fortis Green was only one part of the Muswell Hill ward.

"There may be regrets at losing our identity but we are grown up now. We in Fortis Green, are, after all, part of the larger Muswell Hill area," said Mr. Baughan.

He continued: "I would not altogether like to see Fortis Green take a back seat but if we call it the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Residents' Association we shall not lose our identity and at the same time it will show that we are being magnanimous in giving prece-

dence in the name and genuine in our desire to open the association to the whole of Muswell Hill."

COMPLAINTS

Earlier Mr. Baughan had reported on the year's work of the association, which had been active in taking up a number of matters and complaints with various authorities including Hornsey Council, London Transport Executive and Middlesex County Council.

Concluding his report, Mr. Baughan said, "I trust this summary of the activities of your association has proved not only the necessity for our existence but the need for every electoral resident to ask themselves whether they are giving local government matters the serious consideration they should do. Grumbling among ourselves gets us nowhere, only by collective action will any progress be achieved."

CREDIT BALANCE

The accounts showed a credit balance of £13.

Mr. H. Horsey was re-elected president and Mr. C. S. Bongard vice-president. Other

Extract from the Hornsey Journal entitled "Change of name but policy the same - Residents' Association to take in whole of Muswell Hill."

The Association would still remain strictly non-political. "We toe no political line at all," it was stressed. Said T.L. Baughan, Secretary and Treasurer: "There may be regrets at losing our identity,

but we are grown up now. We in Fortis Green are, after all, part of the larger Muswell Hill area."

Earlier, Mr Baughan had reported on the Association's year, during which it had been active in taking up a number of matters and complaints with various authorities, including Hornsey Council, London Transport and Middlesex County Council. "These activities had proved not only the necessity for our existence but the need for every electoral resident to ask themselves whether they are giving local government matters the serious consideration they should do. "Grumbling among ourselves gets us nowhere," said the Secretary, "only by collective action will any progress be achieved."

The accounts showed a credit balance of £13. The following week, writing in the Comments and Pencillings column of the Hornsey Journal of 28th May, Phoenix congratulated our Association on its decision, and pointed out that in Hornsey generally there was a tremendous amount of work to be done in awakening ratepayers to the benefit of taking a much livelier interest in local affairs. A strong, active ratepayers' body had been a long-felt need in the Muswell Hill area.

1953

A year later, the Journal's columnist on 15th May commented on Mr Baughan's question put at the AGM the week before - "are you satisfied with the present method of the selection of (election) candidates?" He was, said Phoenix, referring to the present system of electing candidates on a party ticket, "a system of which, I gather, he does not entirely approve".

A week later, in a letter to the Journal's Editor, Mr Baughan said it was never intended at the meeting to discuss party politics in local elections and although there were several aldermen and councillors present to answer questions, "we do not allow the party-political angle to be introduced. Ratepayers expect local matters to be discussed free from any party bias".

1954

Another year later, Phoenix commented that the day of the public election meetings seemed to be dying out. At the recent municipal elections in Hornsey, said the columnist, none of the candidates addressed the electors at an indoor meeting except those at Muswell Hill, and even here the meeting was arranged not by them but by the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Residents' Association, who invited them to come along and air their views. This meeting, although made public, said Phoenix, was not well attended - just one more indication that the ratepayers are prepared to accept on trust the candidates put forward by the political parties.

1955

Complaints made to the London Transport Executive about Muswell Hill bus services had not resulted in any improvement, said Chairman E.C. Tyler at the AGM of the Residents' Association in May. All the replies received had been most courteous, but measures taken to improve the services had been unsuccessful.



An extract from the Hornsey Journal of 1st January 1955

Mr Tyler was also "astounded" at the defeatist attitude to the electrification of the Alexandra Palace to Finsbury Park railway branch line. The estimates of £2,000,000 for this scheme were "absolutely absurd". The fact that there was not a station within a mile of Muswell Hill was to be strongly deprecated.

1956

President H.M.R. Horsey paid tribute to T.L. Baughan, Secretary and Treasurer, who was retiring after holding the office since the inception of the Association eight years earlier. He had proved himself to be a born fighter and had been the main spring of the Association.

At a public meeting at the beginning of May called by the Residents' Association (at St. James's Hall) the five candidates for the Muswell Hill ward in the Hornsey Borough Council elections were given the opportunity to state the policies of their respective parties, although in 1953 (see above) it had been stated that "ratepayers expect local matters to be discussed free from any party bias".

**PARTY VIEWS ON RUNNING HORNSEY
RATEPAYERS HEARD WHAT
CANDIDATES HAD TO SAY**

The five candidates for Muswell Hill ward in yesterday's Hornsey Borough Council elections were given a chance of stating the policies of the respective parties at St. James's Hall, on Wednesday last week at a public meeting called by Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Residents' Association. Mr. E. C. Tyler presided

The candidates' views are summarised as follows:

Cllr. C. V. Tipping (Cons.), called for a re-organisation of local government, and said he was sick of the Hornsey council-chamber being used for political brawls. He could not remember any single local government question

crowded and yet the council planned additional accommodation for only 54 families." He advocated comprehensive education and no 11-plus examination. There were a number of elderly people living on the Coldfall estate who suffered with their feet but could not afford treatment.

that Mr

An extract from the Hornsey Journal of 11 May 1956

1957

The Hornsey Journal reported on 17th May that the membership of the "Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association" had increased from 121 to 148. There was a credit balance of £8 5s. 2d, announced the Treasurer. The new Secretary said that more members were needed, especially young householders.

1958

The tenth AGM was held on 1st May. The secretary reported the death of the founder, Mr Baughan. The credit balance was £12 16s. 6d and Tetherdown Hall was secured as the new meeting place. H. M. R. Horsey was re-elected as president, Mr Tyler as chairman and R.D. Adams as treasurer.

1959 - 1965

Despite thorough research, we have no records for this period.



THE PALACE AND PARK

1981-2010

Alexandra Palace and Park figure in only a few of our landmark year mentions for the simple reason that if they were to appear here as often as they had on the agenda, there would be room for little else. Ally Pally has constantly dominated the thoughts and actions of our Association, as it seems to dominate everything else in our area, by no means least the skyline.

Tenacious battles have been fought over the years to preserve the Palace and Park from some of the worst plans of would-be developers, but we have shown too that we are willing to work with those with imaginative ideas for the future of the Palace.

In 1981, the Chairman at the time reported that although there had been major issues affecting the centre of Muswell Hill and Fortis Green in the previous year, "the shadow of Alexandra Palace has hung over us throughout. The light when I took office was clear enough; the major fire has extended and expanded the arguments still further, but it would be wrong to allow that dominant problem to obscure all the work the Association has done in the past year".

The report continued: "We have always had a commitment that no green space should be eroded from the Park; to that we have added a commitment to oppose the use of the Palace for large-scale exhibition or commercial purposes. Many of the committee have spent long and often frustrating hours preparing arguments and considering the ever-changing proposals. Those of us who have attended the APAC (the advisory committee) on behalf of the Association have not found it an inspiring process".

It was even less inspiring when, at the end of 2001, Frank Dick, Haringey's Head of Local Democracy at the time, wrote to our then Chairman to say that the constitution of our Association - despite our prominence in the area - did not qualify us as a "residents' association"

under the Alexandra Park and Palace Act because our membership and aims were not specific enough. A quick emergency meeting of members and a very positive vote to make the minor amendments needed put that right and highlighted to the Council how concerned local people were about the Palace and Park and their future. Only three years later, we were granted two places on the advisory committee instead of one. Needless to say, we are to this day still very active on the committee.



In August 1980, the Newsletter headlined "Ally Pally Park faces Haringey rape threat". In October, it was "The questions Haringey is not asking". In May 1981, we published a 20-page report highlighting "the need for sanity at Alexandra Palace". In October 1981, the Newsletter reported that "Fun Palace parking will be no fun - 20 acres of grass likely to be lost, no room to park near your home". In 1983,

we asked desperately "What ARE Haringey's plans for Alexandra Palace?" Finally, all the official plans of the time came to nought.

David Jones, of whom you can read more elsewhere in this book, spearheaded our massive opposition to plans for Alexandra Palace and Park at the 1982 public enquiry, aided by a powerful team and the ability to call between six or twelve witnesses if need be (including a QC) to oppose the planning authority on the full range of issues including parking, traffic, finance, the environment, the survey which had been done and the structure.

To appreciate the scale of our opposition, one has to visit the borough museum at Bruce Castle to whom David Jones bequeathed his own archive. It includes file after file and box after box of verbatim evidence given on behalf of our Association to the public enquiry by such luminaries as Martin Catchesides, John Adams, D.A.M. Gilbert, R. Lowe, Charles Fraser and the advice given by Stanley Burnton QC (a past Chairman of this Association and later a Judge).

This public enquiry was one of the few occasions where a local residents' association's proposals have been carried through into legislation.

The documents from every area of the enquiry include minutes of meetings, some labelled "private and confidential" at the time, official plans of parts of the Palace, correspondence with MPs and other legal experts, a thick sheaf of press cuttings and even copies of our MHFGA Newsletter which are not in our own files. Included is a whole box of Apple spreadsheets produced by David. It has been said that at the public enquiry he seemed to have more computer power, and the ability to put it to use in presenting our case, than did Haringey.

The David Jones files are available to everybody. There is an archive search room at Bruce Castle and an appointment to view can be made by telephoning the archivist. The room is open on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 1 to 5pm and on Thursdays and Fridays from 9.30am to 5pm.

We have never been the only voice to be heard in the matter of Alexandra Palace. STEPP ("Save the Environment of the Palace and

Park”) also fought hard until it was wound up and the Hornsey Historical Society has always been prominent.

Another era of feverish activity for our committee members involved with Alexandra Palace came when, in 2004, Haringey decided to offer a 125-year lease on the Palace (but not the Park) to external developers. There were several bidders, but Firoka won the lease in 2006. Despite many attempts by our Association and other lobbying bodies objecting strongly to the way the public consultation had been handled, we failed to arrange a meeting with Firoka to put our community point of view.

In May 2007, Firoka moved into the Palace, but in October the



High Court ruled that the lease to Firoka could not go ahead as it had not been available to the public during the consultation. In 2008, discussions were begun again with the developers to try to sort something out but by August they had pulled out and refused further talks. In March 2009, it was reported that Firoka was suing the

Alexandra Palace Charitable Trust for £6 million compensation. Refuting this will involve time and legal fees which will be another financial burden on the Trustees, that is to say Haringey Council.

Now that the Palace is back in the hands of the trustees, planning for the future is taking place. Our involvement and interest in Ally Pally matters continues as before with our representatives on the Advisory and Consultative committees both putting forward our Association views and bringing regular updates to the membership.

Most recently, they have reported that a concerted effort is being made to increase revenue but more so to develop a structure for the future governance of the Trust so that it becomes "fit for purpose" to use the words of the two Walklate Reports commissioned after Firoka pulled out.

To raise revenue, the plan is to capture a gap in the market for pop concerts with audiences of up to 10,000. For this, an additional two fire doors to the Great Hall were needed. These were approved and installed. Unfortunately, the recession affected demand and the target for audience numbers has not yet been achieved.

The Palace's upkeep still outstrips revenue produced although many of its regular daytime events continue to take place. These include exhibitions and, notably, the much publicised and well-attended five-day World Darts Championship. Therefore, new ways of raising revenue are being explored, such as levying charges for parking, but none has yet been formally put forward.

As far as governance is concerned, recent events organised by the Trust have seen the title "stakeholder" applied for the first time to interested parties such as our Association. We now look forward to our views on the future of Ally Pally being taken into consideration. The legal implications of having any voting Trustees on the board who are not Haringey councillors are being looked into.

The park also deserves a mention since it too is affected by anything relating to funding and governance and our representatives are closely involved in any decisions taken.



Although it was controversial at the time of its planning application, The Little Dinosaurs adventure indoor play space for young children in the Grove is so far proving popular. Other planning applications utilising parkland have recently been made. An outdoor play structure, Adizone, to be sited south of the sports ground was critically received by both the Consultative and Advisory Committees but was nevertheless approved by the Board. The Planning Committee, however, turned it down following a great deal of local opposition. Its decision at the time of writing (May 2010) is now awaited on the subject of an application for a mini-golf course to be built within the site of the pitch and putt course a matter that has moved both committees to express concern.

Although at no time in our history have we succeeded in bringing about a solution to the Ally Pally problems, the time spent by our officers and other volunteers on this cause has sometimes overshadowed our other activities. A just claim is that our Association has always endeavoured to keep a restraining hand on those who would despoil the "Palace of the People".

60TH JUBILEE CAMPAIGN TO SAVE ICONIC CLOCK

Since 1899, a handsome and decorative clock has been part of the Muswell Hill Broadway street furniture and a famous local landmark. It was put up by E.W. Langton, the jeweller, shortly after they established a branch of their watch and clock-making shop at 3 Princes Parade (itself laid out and built in 1899 by the well-known Edmondson family). The mechanism was wound regularly by hand once a week until 1995, when the clock stopped and stayed stopped.

After Mr Langton died in 1980, his wife continued to run the shop for two more years. J.J. Barrett & Sons Ltd, the jewellers owned the shop and the house from 1982 to 1997. The shop closed in that year and Kate Kuba, the shoe chain, began renting the premises. The building is still owned by J.J. Barrett.



Having walked under the clock for many years, the current Chairman of our Association often wondered about the story behind it and why it was not working. He felt that it should be restored and set

about finding out what could be done. And thus, was started another saga typifying the role that our Association nowadays plays in the life of Muswell Hill. The crusade of a new life for the Langton's clock was to be the official 60th Anniversary, Jubilee project of the MHFGA.

When John Hajdu approached the owner of the building in spring 2007, he discovered that the clock was about to be taken down and scrapped. The owner agreed to co-operate in a restoration project spearheaded by the MHFGA. The search was now on for a local clock maker who could do the job. John Kendall, who has a workshop in Fortis Green, already knew all about the clock and immediately agreed to take on the work. The next step was to talk to Haringey Council and get funding. This was achieved by applying through the Making the Difference Fund.



Langton clock being taken down

After months of administrative work and many meetings, everything was agreed, and the funds were in place.

The clock was taken down and taken to the clock maker on Sunday morning, 17th February 2008. It was clear that the cast iron movement could not be used again nor repaired due to advanced rust. A quote was obtained for a new electronic movement consisting of two motors and a radio- controlled master box (which means that the clock does not need

to be adjusted by hand). This was agreed and the parts that were needed ordered.



Extract from the Hornsey Journal, 24 April 1914

The two faces, made of cast iron, were in good condition. They had to be stripped back, cleaned, gilded and painted. The hands were in reasonable condition and were reused, after small restoration work. The biggest problem was the actual drum, made of sheet iron, which was completely rusted on one side and in bad condition on the other. A possible solution was to use a lighter, aluminium sheeting, moulded to fit and painted. It was decided, however, to use sheet iron, similar to the original.

Due to large Council overspend at the time, it was agreed to go ahead with the repair work but to try to get outside funds to make up the difference. John Barrett, the owner of the building where the clock is, pledged £500 towards the funds. This was not taken up, but he agreed to absorb the cost of electricity which has to be supplied from the flat. A structural engineer's report shows that the clock's right-hand bracket was sound, but the left-hand bracket had to be taken down and repaired.

The Heritage Trust awarded £2,000 towards the project in June 2008, but due to various manufacturing problems the clock was not finished until October.

During the winter of 2008, due to further problems, Haringey Council had to bring in an architect and a structural engineer.



Finally, the clock was put in position on 1st May 2009. The electrical connections were finalised. A memorial plaque was put up recording the event and a party held at the patisserie immediately under the clock on 3rd July 2009.

This clock has been a well-known and much-loved feature of Muswell Hill for a long time but still needs regular adjustments which can only be done by gaining access to the flat immediately behind the clock where the mechanism is located.

We are grateful to John Kendall, the clockmaker, who continues to help us. It is the wish and hope of the Association that it will continue in full working order to the benefit and enjoyment of all local shoppers and residents for many years to come as well as being a lasting reminder of our Jubilee celebrations.



Langton clock in 1929 after receiving "special wireless apparatus...for receiving Greenwich Mean Time and other signals."

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

John Carr (Chairman 1978 -79)

For those who lived through them the early seventies were years of growing concern for the built environment, when old habitats were bulldozed away to make room for what were very often mediocre and cheapskate replacements. Property developers and architects (sometimes unfairly) were vilified in the media on a fairly regular basis.

Opposition was sometimes reasoned and sometimes not, sometimes peaceful and sometimes aggressive, but seldom indifferent and usually "community" based.

The inhabitants of Muswell Hill and Fortis Green, newcomers and veterans alike shared these national concerns but could find no vehicle through to which to channel their feelings of impotence into action over local issues. Discussion was widespread, individual letters of objection to planning proposals were posted off in substantial numbers, but it all lacked the coordination so sorely needed.

Given the rate of population change in the area it is no surprise that a key place for quick but telling conversation was outside the gates of Tetherdown Primary School where young parents would meet to pick up children, and it was from contacts made here that the dynamic Christine Goldschmidt assembled a team to plot a take-over of the Residents' Association.

Given to gentle and civilised pursuits, this Association had existed for decades and so had status and a programme of regular meetings often attended by local councillors, and so rather than invent something else it was agreed to attend the forthcoming AGM in sufficient numbers to get Christine successfully elected to the Committee - as Secretary no less!

Rather than trying for constitutional change which would take time, co-options secured new members for specific tasks (but without voting rights to begin with), and it all turned out rather well - a genteel but steely entryism. And this in an area described by a highly reputed journalist in

an early Sunday broadsheet colour supplement of the 1960s as "the petrified suburb"!

Our first successful "action" was to agitate for the survival of an old mansard-roofed building in Fortis Green, now incorporated in the small, sheltered housing development on the north side. The council didn't think much of it as it had to order its workers out of this dangerous structure, but it was saved.

This small event probably marked the rise to prominence of MHFGA as a guardian of appropriate change and the terror of the inappropriate. It steered a path between outright preservation for preservation's sake and cautious environmental management and persuasion. There was plenty of protest when appropriate but no marches with arcane chanting to speak of.

Adopting a responsible attitude rather than one of habitual if guarded hostility, the Association, post-reformation, was perhaps something the Council and its officers could talk to, however cautiously.

An illustration of "long-spoon" politics and how effective this kind of co-operation could be, was the Association's response to the demolition of the ABC cinema atop Muswell Hill and the proposed development. It was clear that redevelopment was unstoppable, but the developers' idea of its replacement would have done immeasurable visual harm to the eastern end of the Hampstead-Highgate-Muswell Hill ridge.

Feelings were running high and open meetings frequently demonstrated how high. The Association and the Conservation Area Advisory Committee approached a number of architects of repute who were members (some of both groups) and invited them to design an alternative in short order. They produced one acceptable to all parties including the developer, and it was built.

There are many illustrations of the success of the Association's interventions in that new decade, but what was surprising at the time was the breadth and depth of the agenda facing it and the number of "volunteers" both expert and inexperienced who offered their services or were dragged into things by well-meaning friends, to undertake arduous but well-intentioned tasks. Many were too great to be undertaken by the

relatively small corps of committee members and co-optees. Public planning inquiries had to be attended and addressed, small-scale changes and developments monitored.

Many working parties were established, some short-lived while others had a more prolonged existence. Mnemonics abounded: ARC, BROACH, SOS to name three, but they all represented causes requiring a response from the Association on behalf of its membership and the wider community.

There were other sub-committees and working parties concerned with a more social range of activities. After all, it was Liz Luxmore who, as a co-opted member, brought into being the wonderful Muswell Hill Festival. No doubt people still wonder how she managed to organise an RAF flypast of some really noisy, bone-shaking war machines: scary but impressive.

So much happened, so many good practices were laid down, and so many lessons were learnt, some painfully, in that first decade of the renewed Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Residents Association, all by its volunteer members.

It was very hard work, but it was also fun!

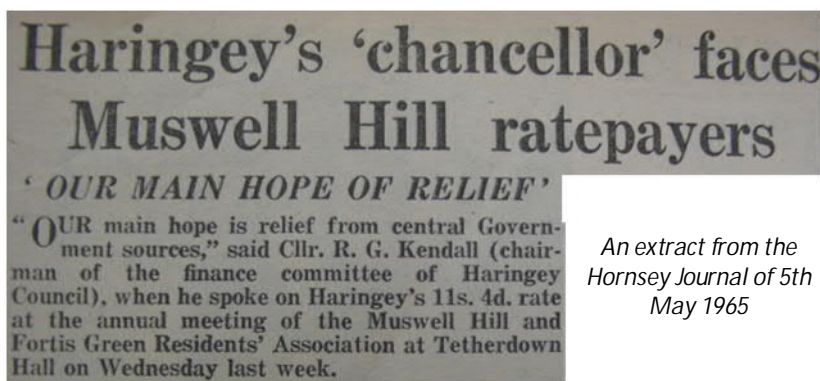


LANDMARKS 1965 -1969

1965

Our first official magazine, *The Fortisman* was published in the autumn. Early problems given publicity dealt with parking of commercial vehicles and abandoned vehicles, uneven paving, the greater use of hazardous skips, a growing tendency to use private houses for business, irresponsible parking in Muswell Hill Broadway, speeding up to 60-70 miles an hour in Fortis Green, the room for improvement in refuse collection - and hooliganism in the vicinity of the Broadway after 10pm!

At the AGM in Tetherdown Hall, Haringey's 11s 4d rate was the big topic. E.C. Tyler, our Chairman, presided and among the 50 people present were Cllr Hugh Rossi (Conservative leader on Haringey Council, parliamentary candidate for Hornsey, and a long-standing member of our Association), Percy Meyer (Liberal candidate for Hornsey) and Frederick W. Clarke (Secretary of the newly formed Haringey Ratepayers' Association).



*An extract from the
Hornsey Journal of 5th
May 1965*

"Our main hope is relief from central Government sources," said Cllr R.G. Kendall (Chairman of the finance committee of Haringey Council). The rate rise of 3s 7d in the Hornsey area of the new borough was described as a "shattering increase".

1966

Membership started to increase early in the year and the growth continued into the spring of the next year,

1966 - 1971

The Ministry of Transport's original proposal in 1966 to widen Fortis Green - "an elegant road with its overhanging trees" - took up a great deal of our officers' time over the next few years. In November 1968, a deputation from our Association met representatives from the Haringey Council's highways panel to lodge our objections and to put forward alternative proposals, such as using Fortis Green and Creighton Avenue for a one-way traffic system.

The plan for Fortis Green - which is a section of the A504, the major east-west secondary road in north London - was part of a bigger scheme which included East End Road on the other side of the junction at the Bald-faced Stag down to the North Circular Road. The scheme involved making 350 yards of Fortis Green into a 33 feet wide, three-lane road, cutting down half the trees in this section of the road, putting 10 feet wide pavements on either side of the new road and taking over a 14 feet wide stretch of land from Chessing Court to Lynton Garage.

There were major fears that the road between Muswell Hill and East Finchley would become a minor motorway, possibly bringing chaos and danger to the Broadway and Muswell Hill itself. We protested that there was no need for it. The road would become "swamped by traffic" and residents should come before traffic. Several old houses would have to be demolished. A petition was signed by 300 people.

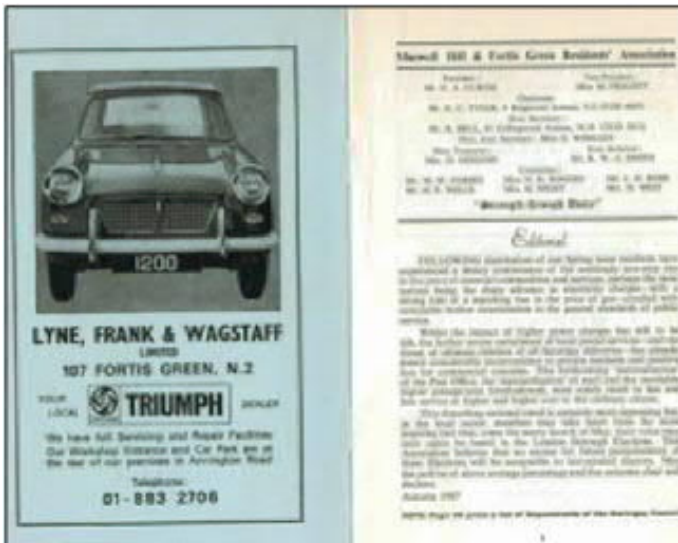
A Public Enquiry was held in October 1970 at which, following modifications of proposals, a compulsory purchase order was made despite 73 objections and a further 92 letters of objection handed in at the enquiry.

In June 1971, however, Haringey Council was told by the Department of the Environment that while it agreed entirely with the Inspector's view that the narrow section of Fortis Green needed widening on traffic grounds it was

not satisfied that a strong enough case had been made to justify the adverse effects of the particular road widening scheme to which the compulsory purchase order related and, in those circumstances, considered it would be wrong to proceed with it. The Secretary of State decided therefore not to confirm Haringey's compulsory purchase order - and the road was saved.

1967

The Fortisman welcomed "the recent formation in the adjoining Ward of Alexandra Residents' Association, a lively body affiliated to this Association and having similar aims and objects. We wish it all success in its activities". We have, of course, worked closely with the ARA ever since.



The inside cover of The Fortisman from the autumn of 1967 before the policy change to avoid advertising

1968

Despite "very strong disapproval" from this Association and others, an "unhappy proposal" was put forward for the partial closure of Hornsey Central Hospital. The authorities were asked to rethink the project. In an open letter to "councillors everywhere", the Association

pointed out that it was "exceptionally well placed" to offer advice and assistance on local matters. Councillors should heed as well as hear.

A polite acknowledgement was not enough, and councillors were told that the people "who put you in power" expect much more.

"Our" Shops

Muswell Hill and Fortis Green provide shops of all kinds to suit the requirements and pockets of nearly everyone and a journey to the West-End is often found to be unnecessary. Especially in this era when one returns empty-handed only to find that the item is on sale "on the Broadway".

It would be tedious to mention any by name in a magazine of this type. Whether you require supermarkets (a horrible description, multiple aisles of the older type with rusty trolleys, or individually owned and serviced shops, from one or your friend). If you require food, furnishings or household goods they are available at a reasonable price, usually coupled with friendly and good service.

The Humber Chamber of Commerce whose Secretary is Mr. C. R. Williams, a late Mayor of the Borough, issues a useful booklet, free of charge, which gives a list of all traders who are members. It is entitled "Your Book & Trade Directory" and is available for the asking.

There is a code of honour prevailing which, if broken, Mr. Williams will take immediate steps to investigate.

E. C. Tylec.

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More advertising in The Fortisman of the autumn of 1968. Les Aldrich remains on Fortis Green Road to this day.

1969

In the summer of this year, the committee's "watchful eye" (a contemporary phrase) was on lorry parking and run-down property. There had been some improvement during the past year, reported the Hon. Sec., part of which had been due to our efforts. Here again, it was said, legislation was long overdue.

30

PLANNING MATTERS - THE PUN THAT TELLS THE TRUTH

ONE of the major tasks undertaken by the Association over the 60 years of its existence has been to gain recognition for Muswell Hill's special status as virtually the last remaining Edwardian suburb that has not suffered critically from property development. Conservation has always been a constant aim. We pushed hard for the establishment of the Conservation Area Advisory Committees which now straddle Haringey.

Right from the beginning, the vital need to keep on top of environmental decision-making on planning and conservation issues, and to feed back the results to local people, has meant that our members have always had a special column in our minutes and Newsletters to keep them updated.

In The Fortisman 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 body 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 and make judgments thereon, study regulations, if necessary advise members on grounds for objections to planning applications, how to make them themselves on the Association's behalf and, of course, provide our members by way of the Newsletter

constant updates of what is happening on the planning and, most crucially, the conservation fronts. Pat Bloomfield, our Planning Officer, is an expert in her field, something that comes across clearly in her Newsletter reports.

Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association

NEWSLETTER  JULY 2009

3 years later – Haringey takes action

Muswell Hill Library's essential repairs begin

OUR Association's three-year campaign for essential repairs to the sadly deteriorating Grade II listed Muswell Hill Library is, at last, borne fruit with work now started on the roof. This follows a series of problems and postponecements by Haringey Council which have resulted in water damage inside the building becoming ever more serious and even threatening the attractive and historic frescoes in the upstairs children's section of the Library.

Voicing our concerns

Prompted by Haringey's Head of Libraries, Diana Edmunds' apparent lack of information at the recent Muswell Hill Assembly as to when the renovations might begin, our Conservation Officer, John Crompton, on behalf of the Association, has written to Councillor Koben, Leader of Haringey Council, to again voice our concerns.

The letter, which Cllr Kober has said she will reply to shortly, begins with an introduction to our Association, the largest in Haringey, and the assurance that we work with many departments of the Council on a range of subjects.

It goes on to express our concern at the Library's state of disrepair and the lack of clarity as to the Council's plans for the future use of the building.

Selling off land for development

Here is the rest of the letter: "It is difficult to see why there should have been any difficulty in getting Listed Building Consent for repairs to a flat roof which cannot be seen from the street. Therefore, can we please be told the exact nature of the problem with obtaining the LBC?"

'Also, can it please be explained why there was not a firm time up to do the works once the consent was received? What has happened to the funding for the other repairs which the Council was due to carry out and when will they be done?'

'As you will be aware, the Council has been exploring ways of finding new facilities at the Library for some time. The



Roof repairs at Muswell Hill Library

Our next event

Wednesday 21 October 2009, 8 – 9.30pm,
North Bank, Pages Lane, N10 1PP

Mark Exton, Manager of Alexander Park and Paul Stephenson, Communications Manager for Alexander Park, Trading Company will talk about the Pleasure and Park and answer questions. Paul will explain how the Trading Company works and relates to the outside world within the park, with the aid of handouts, self-serve tables surrounding the park.

Working for a cleaner, greener, safer environment

A three-year campaign by our Association results in essential repairs at last taking place at the Muswell Hill Library.

intention had been to sell the land to the rear for housing to pay for these new services, but at the Assembly Diana Edmunds announced that this was no longer feasible as the Council had raised the boat because of the decline in land values. This is in itself rather unfortunate as the Council announced its intention to go down this route as far back as the summer of 2006 and the Council had assured the public that all the proceeds would be used to refurbish the Library.

Fit for purpose

"We note that the Council still has ambitions to develop facilities on the Library site and is now looking for alternative funding sources.

"We would not wish to prejudice the types of uses which might be on the table, but we think it is important that the Council should be clear that the primary purpose of the building is, and must remain, the provision of book-based library activities aimed at all sections of the community and at all age groups in a building which is 'fit for purpose.' It is on that basis that this Association and the local community will adjudicate any proposals which come forward."

While we do not always win our case, our success rate is very high. If we think 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 current (May 2010) Treasurer John Crompton is our Conservation Officer too. He is also Chairman of the Muswell Hill Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC).

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

Sally Vernon

**(Committee member from 1974, Secretary 1976 - 77,
Vice Chair 1978 - 79)**

There are moments in the life of institutions when a lot is happening, and other times when life is staid, or even non-existent. There was a time when Muswell Hill was just a quiet suburban area built on the remnants of brick and strawberry fields, old hunting parks and woods, and only recently transformed into terraces of fine Victorian and Edwardian houses filled with well-to-do commuters and churches. By the late 1960s it was very different: the big houses mostly carved into bed-sitters, still quiet, but now distinctly seedy.

We came to Muswell Hill in 1969, to a house in Muswell Hill Road, which we bought for £6,000, buying the freehold a little later for £750. We didn't have much money and it took us 20 years to make our house habitable. During that time the area was going through another transformation. People like us, looking for space for their kids to grow up in, gradually brought the big old houses back into single ownership, and new life into the community.

It was against that background that in 1973 we were faced by the Archway Motorway threat. This was a plan that had been on the books of the LCC ever since the war. Then, car ownership and motorways were seen as the way forward. In 1973, the plan was revived with a vengeance: 12 lanes cutting a swathe through Highgate and severing it from Muswell Hill. But by the 1970s people didn't want their areas to be dominated by roads or bulldozed in the interests of the car, so the Department of Transport had a fight on its hands.

The newly arrived and energetic citizens of Muswell Hill, along with the staid established residents of Highgate, prepared to do battle together: it was a battle that took over all our lives for years.

In 1973, we fought our first Public Enquiry - my husband Tom was the first person thrown out for making a rabble-rousing speech from the floor. Then we fought two more. In the end the motorway idea was abandoned. And we had learned how to get together to fight unpopular plans.

Meanwhile, there was a new and more ecologically minded broom within the Greater London Council. Ken Livingstone - who had been one of those on the lines with us along with Ted Knight and the campaigning lawyer Michael Mansfield - was even going to bring in free public transport for everyone. Gerald Scarfe did a brilliant poster for London called "London belongs to us". But thus, it was that the MHFGA was revived.

Our house was opposite Highgate Wood, run by the City of London. We had never liked the way it was run and there was no public representation of any sort, not even at local council level. For the City of London, it was an extension of empire, and local residents were treated with scorn. The sad old wood was a dying habitat where sweeping fire through in the autumn was the way the keepers dealt with the problem of leaf-fall.

Then one day we woke up to find bulldozers moving into the wood and it emerged that the City was building a new mini-housing estate right in the middle, this on top of an earlier batch they had built near the Cranley Gardens entrance. They said they were for their keepers, but the Act of Parliament which governed the gift to the City had specifically laid down that the wood was to be kept in a natural state, not built upon, for the pleasure of Londoners forever.

We barricaded the gates for some days, but in the end failed to stop them building three of the six houses they had planned. But the publicity had the effect of opening the can of worms that was City of London administration, and with help from our MP Hugh Rossi (Conservative), they were obliged to set up a new committee with local representation.

A colleague from down the road, Dr Joan Morgan, and I became the first representatives on that committee, where sherry was served, and I was not infrequently addressed as "my girl".

It was not overnight that we managed to change the City mindset and policy. They were not used to having their complacency questioned, nor dealing with women, but little by little we wore them down with our expertise. We brought in the Woodland Trust to do a survey which proved conclusively the impoverishment of Highgate Wood in comparison with Queen's Wood.

*Sally Vernon in Highgate
Wood*

Today, when I see how beautiful and healthy Highgate Wood is, how much used and loved by local residents, I feel very proud of the work we did then.



Sally Vernon in Highgate Wood

After the fuss about the City, we decided we needed the Association to be revived. We shortened the name and I became Secretary. We had a good group of people with mixed interests, with David Jones (see elsewhere) particularly interested in saving the wonderful consistency of Muswell Hill's architecture heritage, and me in safeguarding the natural aspect.

We got notice of all planning proposals so that we had time to object to or support them, and gradually became respected-and feared-by politicians of all parties.

When Haringey's insurance premiums for subsidence claims were so high they decided, in a terrible plan, to fell all the street trees, we called in Britain's top tree scientist. Dr Biddle persuaded Haringey not only to prune the trees instead, but to have himself employed by the borough in lieu of their insurance policy. We set up a Council tree committee as an adjunct to the planning committee to establish a borough tree policy (which Haringey had never had before). All our streets were gradually to be treed, and all fine existing trees were to be designated and protected with Tree Preservation Orders.

In this way, for instance, we saved all the old plane trees on Hampstead Lane. These trees leaned dangerously over the road and were a hazard to traffic. Instead of felling them we had the pavement widened to protect the trees, and the system lasts to this day. So, trees had won over the interests of the car.

But traffic continued to be a problem. Muswell Hill Road was one of the most dangerous roads with traffic speeding between the woods. Local residents risked their lives taking their children to the woods and in one year alone there were five fatalities. We persuaded the Engineers' Department to install a series of traffic calming measures - possibly the first of this sort ever attempted - a series of islands and crossings along the road. They didn't believe it would work. It did. Other measures were taken elsewhere to stop rat-runs and other traffic nuisance.

There was the Save the Library campaign run by Liz Luxmore and the wonderful Muswell Hill Festival. It was brilliant how so many people, not otherwise obviously local activists, could be drawn into taking responsibility and doing their bit to enhance the area.

When Ally Pally was burned down (once again) it was threatened with being re-built as a hotel and conference centre. David Jones and colleagues proved to the Council that their figures didn't add up, and the building was restored instead.

One of the most fundamental social changes that occurred during the 1970s was that people didn't go to church very much anymore. The Broadway had a surplus of fine churches and the Hornsey Parochial Trust decided to sacrifice a particularly splendid example. Threatened with its demolition, David Jones and the Association brought in the Victorian Society and John Betjeman to pronounce on its architectural value. The church was saved (read about BROACH elsewhere) but what to do with it?

David and I proposed moving the library there. Sadly, this was one of the few projects where we didn't succeed. It's ironic that the church eventually became a pub (the old Hornsey Parochial Trust would be turning in their graves).

Other projects which didn't succeed included turning the Broadway into a pedestrian area, with the fine old Victorian lavatories restored and back in use, and a market there once a week.

Now I live in France, but I come to Muswell Hill from time to time, and I am always thrilled by how well it has done, how pretty it looks and what a lot of life there is there now (some people might say too much!) There are lots of interesting and arty shops, pubs and restaurants galore, and people of every nationality. When we arrived 40 years ago it had several butchers, grocers and greengrocers (shops now supplanted by supermarkets), but they all closed at 5.30pm sharp and were never opened on Sunday.

Our period was particularly interesting because, with the natural turnover of ownership as populations age and die, we happened upon a moment when young, intellectual and progressive people arrived in Muswell Hill at the same time and revitalised an ageing, predominantly lower-middle-class society.

House prices at the time allowed in comparatively ordinary people, so we were pretty mixed and mostly unpretentious. We were not the sort of people who could afford to buy a comfortable bourgeois way of life ready-made, and this gave us energy to try to improve an environment which we came to value more and more as time went on.

PLAQUES TO REMEMBER THE HARINGEY FAMOUS: AN ASSOCIATION INITIATIVE

The major innovation to commemorate famous people who have lived and worked in Haringey with a plaque on their place of abode in the borough, proudly claimed by the local authority as Haringey Council's Green Plaque Scheme, was in fact the brainchild of our own Chairman, John Hajdu. It took him three years of hard, personal lobbying and planning with the Council and local historians before the first plaque was erected in 2007.

John Hajdu's plan arose out of a discussion in 2004 with Professor Alan Mackay, a member. He had been trying to arrange for a plaque to be put up to William Barlow, a crystallographer, mineralogist, and a Fellow of the Royal Society, and asked if our Association could do anything about it. Barlow had lived from 1845 to 1934 and occupied a house on the corner of Muswell Hill Broadway and Hillfield Park.

In line with our Association's growing influence locally - at this time, our membership had grown beyond 600 - the project to erect one plaque could obviously lend itself to a borough-wide campaign to remember all the other important people who had lived in the area and had attained national, in many cases, international significance.

The Chairman decided that such a campaign must have the full support of the local authority and, as a first step, he approached the newly-appointed Design and Conservation Officer at Haringey Council, who was enthusiastic. Their meeting led on to meetings with Keith Fawkes, Chairman of the Hornsey Historical Society, and Deborah Hedgecock, Curator of Bruce Castle Museum, and later Jacob O'Callaghan and Ken Gay from the historical society.

The first plaque to William Barlow went up in October 2007, and several more followed at regular intervals. The plan was to erect a new plaque at regular intervals, with a small gathering of interested parties to witness each unveiling.



The December 2009 unveiling of a plaque to Coventry Patmore. From left: Chair of the Pre-Raphaelite Society Patricia O'Connor, Chairman John Hajdu, Mayor of Haringey Cllr Bernice Venier, homeowner and member Sue Vosper of Fortis Green. Inset: the borough historic buildings plaque.

The plaques were produced by Paul Jones, a local maker, in Haringey green (not to be confused with English Heritage blue!), featured the borough logo and were financed by Haringey Council.

Plaques on a number of buildings commemorated: Oliver Tambo, former president of the African National Congress (Alexandra Park Road, N10); W.J. Collins, architect and developer of estates in Muswell Hill (Cranmore Way, N10); William Heath Robinson, humourist, artist and illustrator (Southwood Avenue, N6); Priscilla Wakefield, philanthropist and founder of the Penny Savings Bank in 1798 (High Road, N15) and William Bernhardt Tegetmeier, Victorian

naturalist, beekeeper and organiser of the first pigeon race, a regular correspondent with Charles Darwin (St. James's Lane, N10); Coventry Patmore, poet and literary critic (Fortis Green, N10); George Shadbolt, pioneering photographer and writer (Crouch Hill, N8); Charlotte Riddell, Gothic novelist and editor of St James' Magazine (St Ann's Hospital); John Alfred Prestwich, inventor and engine designer (Lansdowne Road, N17); W.J. Macqueen-Pope, theatrical manager and historian (Etheldene Avenue, N10); and David Greig the grocer (Hornsey High Street, N8), J.B. Priestley, writer / novelist / broadcaster (Highgate, N6) and John Elliott Howard, scientist (Lordsmead Road, N17).

Further plaques were planned for a number of individuals, including Harry Champion, Cockney music hall comedian (Downhills Way, N17); John Bewick, engraver and water colourist (Crouch End, N8); Thomas Moore, Irish poet (Cranmore Way) and A.J.P. Taylor (historian and TV presenter (Highgate, N6) and others. However, the Council withdrew support and further plaques were erected.

The plaques project was just one of a number of similar local initiatives started during John Hajdu's tenure as MHFGA Chairman (they are reported elsewhere in this history) which coincided with a change in our Association's direction of development leading to a more pro-active stance in local affairs rather than the paramount watchdog role of earlier days.



LANDMARKS 1970 -1979

1970

Local bus services were on the agenda this year and would be receiving further attention. It is intolerable, said the Hon. Sec., especially in view of the isolation of Muswell Hill in respect of tube or rail, that London Transport should continue to reduce services or shorten the journeys.

The prospect of a new car park on the Broadway with entrance in Summerland Gardens and exit to Hillfield Park was welcomed as likely to reduce the conditions of traffic chaos due to parking obstructions and lack of proper parking areas.

1974

Haringey Council proposed to cut down all 3,600 mature street trees - planes, chestnuts and limes - in the western side of the borough in what the Hornsey Journal described as an "almost incomprehensible orgy of destruction". The reason given was that they were too expensive to prune, caused trouble with underground pipes and foundations and shed too many leaves. They were to be replaced with semi-mature maples.

Many people who had recently moved into the area, mainly in their 20s and 30s and had chosen to live in Muswell Hill because it had many trees and green spaces, were outraged and joined the Association. The existing mainly elderly membership was on the whole in favour of cutting down the trees, because sweeping up leaves in the autumn was expensive and put the rates up.

There was a new committee (all in their 20s and 30s) including Charles Fraser, Tony Hughes, David Jones, David O'Connor, Jack Whitehead and Mary Thorn. Sally Vernon was elected Secretary.

The Chairman, Mr Tyler, stayed on but took little further active part. Many of the old members left. From now on the Association had a much greener conservationist and pro-public transport stance. It

campaigned against the tree cutting and the council abandoned the controversial scheme.

The winter members' meeting was unexpectedly poorly attended, "a circumstance attributable undoubtedly to the numerous political meetings in progress on the same evening and the work being undertaken in the constituency in connection with the final stages of the campaign for the previously unanticipated General Election the following week".

1975

In a speech to our members in February, Mr Ambrose Egan, Haringey's Chief Superintendent of Parks, said that he wanted to see no houses built on the Parkland Walk, that he was in favour of linear open space and would like to see a walk from Priory Park to Alexandra Palace continuing along the Parkland Walk and possibly ending in central London.

Proposals for a street market in the Odeon car park were universally rejected at the June committee meeting, partly because of its usefulness as a car park for Sainsbury's.



Article taken from the Hornsey Journal of 6th June 1975

The Hornsey Journal reported that the Chairman of our meeting the week before had, far from keeping an air of "aloof impartiality", listened in "respectful silence" to the Hornsey MP Hugh Rossi but interrupted the opposing speech by Alderman George Simpson no fewer than four times, told the alderman that he was not keeping to the point and finally instructed him to bring his speech to a close.

According to press cuttings later in the year, a public meeting held in September by our Association as part of Haringey's initial Borough Plan Consultation procedure, had "hundreds" filling Tetherdown Hall and overflowing into the corridors. It was attended by planning officers, borough councillors and development officials as well as a splendid turn out from the public. It was, in fact, our first public meeting since 1953.

They talked about Broadway pedestrianisation, the Broadway United Reformed Church, car parking at the Odeon, lorry parking in Fortis Green and schooling.

1975 - 1976

The Association campaigned with local residents for the closure of Grand Avenue at its Muswell Hill Road end to stop through traffic. The road was closed for a six-month experimental period, following which there were no objections to making it permanent.

The Borough Engineering Department wrote at the time "The closure will ensure that in all residential streets directly affected there will be no future increases in through traffic. Consideration was also given to the complaints about the difficulty motorists have in emerging from First Avenue into Fortis Green Road and also to the lack of pedestrian facilities in Fortis Green Road. In an effort to improve matters the council have approved the provision of two pedestrian refuges in Fortis Green Road to be located on either side of First Avenue. The refuges will not only provide facilities for the many pedestrians crossing in this locality, but also discourage parking and assist turning movements at the junction."



1975 – 1979



The United Reformed Church

The former United Reformed Church on Muswell Hill Broadway at the corner of Prince's Avenue was threatened by a proposal for its demolition, so that shops, offices and flats could be built on the site. The Association decided that this was such an important issue that a sub-committee should be formed to deal with it. It became autonomous and was known as BROACH (Broadway Church Action). Nearly all the members were members of the Association, which strongly supported the long campaign

to save the building and place it in trust. This was one of the most important campaigns in our history, and Pat Whitehead, the campaign co-ordinator, said that the loss of this building in the Broadway would be a major blow to Muswell Hill's brand-new conservation area. There was much correspondence in the local press in support of the fight to save the church.

In April 1976, 2,500 signatures were collected for a petition outside the church on one day alone. Many more signed later and the total reached 9,020 signatures. BROACH managed to get the church listed Grade II and then won a public enquiry to ensure its survival. Support was received from Sir John Betjeman, Sir Nicklaus Pevsner, Sir Hugh Casson and Sir John Summerson, who attended the public enquiry and spoke eloquently of the unique qualities of Muswell Hill's important streetscape.

Keep that church in the Broadway!

I AGREE with BROACH that the church in the Broadway should not be demolished. It is an attractive building and fits in well with the general appearance of Muswell Hill. We can be quite sure that whatever goes in its place will be a great deal less attractive and will not fit in with the area as a whole at all.

Anyway, a building like this one could be used for so many good things. For example, we have not got anywhere in this area where

children and adolescents can go and learn various crafts and skills. We could really do with a centre that has facilities of this kind.

Also, some of the local schools are very crowded. At Tetherdown Primary School, for instance, part of the school hall has had to be taken over to be used as a kitchen. Now it looks as though they won't be able to have the school orchestra performing as comfortably as it used to, if at all. A building like the one in

the Broadway could provide a marvellous place for such events as the school concert, as well as for practising.

When the Alexandra Palace was used at Christmas for the massive schools performance, I happen to know that it was difficult to find suitable places for rehearsals. The Broadway church would be ideal and could be used by the whole borough. — **Sheila Lane-Stott, Coniston Road, Muswell Hill, N.10.**

Lots of community potential

I WAS extremely distressed to see a suggestion in your newspaper that the United Reformed Church in Muswell Hill Broadway was going to be knocked down, and that there are plans to build more shops in its place.

Has anyone not walked down the Broadway recently and seen the numbers of empty shops? Or the ones in Fortis Green Road? Surely we don't need to knock down such an excellent building to provide more shops? We haven't got

enough shopkeepers to fill all the premises available at the moment, never mind building some more.

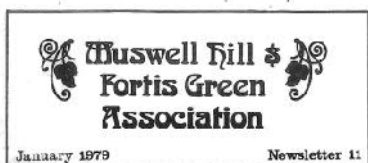
The church is very solidly built from what I can see, and is obviously very large and has lots of potential for the community to use. Surely such a large covered area, with so much attractive decoration and so on, could be used for the community, or adapted without too much difficulty so that the general public could benefit? After all, just what would it cost to build such a place nowadays? A fortune I should think. — **Enid Richemont, Fortismere Avenue, Muswell Hill, N.10.**

May it long be graceful

AS the future of the United Reform Church Building in Muswell Hill Broadway is still under discussion, I seek your goodwill to refer back to my letter in the Journal (May 2, 1975), when I upheld the aesthetic interest of this "imaginative treatment of the Gothic." As a writer on art and kindred subjects for nearly 65 years, I find no cause to vary my opinion on this matter, and trust that the structure concerned may long and usefully grace the Broadway. — **F. Gordon Roe, Vallance Road, Alexandra Park, N.22.**

Part of the readers' letter page from the Hornsey Journal of 9th April 1976

There were various plans for the building, one to become a concert hall and rehearsal centre, another for it to house a library, or an arts or community centre.



BROACH WINS HISTORIC DECISION

The Broadway Church is not to be demolished - by order of the Department of the Environment.

The ruling - the outcome of a week-long public inquiry last May - is a historic decision for Muswell Hill. The detailed conclusions (set out on the back page) also have important implications for the future of the Conservation Area.

The inquiry was the first to concentrate on the historical importance of Muswell Hill as a surviving area of intact Victorianism. The outcome is a crucial precedent from that point of view. But it was also one of the first, if not the first, to bring into the face of a redundant non-conformist church built at the turn of the century - hence its interest nationally.

For BROACH, the group fighting to preserve the building, the decision is a tremendous victory. Our Association, too, must share in the credit since BROACH evolved from one of our working parties. We were also among the many local groups who gave evidence at the inquiry, in company with the Conservation Area Advisory Committee, the Hornsey Historical Society, East Finchley Neighbourhood Association, and numerous others. But it has been primarily BROACH's efforts that managed to focus local - and in some senses, national - attention so sharply on the issues that first the local politicians, then the D.C., and finally the DoE came down heavily in favour of retaining the building.

Back Page ➡

It seems that at the time there was a shortage in London of premises suitable for orchestras to rehearse and record in, and BROACH gave support to this concept, reporting that the church was not only the right size for rehearsals by symphony orchestras but had outstanding acoustics as well. At the enquiry, the inspector was told by the late Felix Aprahamian, music critic and long-time Muswell Hill resident and member, that the hall's acoustic qualities put it in the topflight of London's concert venues.

Eventually, BROACH was successful, and the church was saved. After extensive repairs and internal alterations supervised by English Heritage, it was converted to today's Miller & Carter steakhouse restaurant.



THE RESERVOIR SAGA

1975-1991

A proposal to build dwellings including three-storey flats on the Fortis Green reservoir site (between Fordington Road and Southern Road) was opposed by the Association primarily on the grounds that the density of the development was entirely inappropriate to the nature of the site and the surrounding area. We formed an organisation called HORS (for "Hands Off Reservoir Space" - appropriate as horses grazed on the site) which campaigned successfully for some time.

We urged Haringey at the very least to find a compromise with the Water Authority which would provide a modified development in one part of the land with the remainder being opened up for public use.

Members living near the site discovered that a covenant restricting development of the site dated back to 1854, and this played a part in delaying the planning process. Several schemes, on successively smaller scales, were rejected by Haringey.

In 1993 another planning application was opposed by the Association (see item for that year). We lost and permission was granted, but the final development was smaller than originally planned, with improvements to make the junction with Southern Avenue safer. Compensation was paid to those with properties adjacent to the site.

In the Newsletter of February 1996 it was reported that after five days of strenuous argument in the Lands Tribunal and after 19 years of constant opposition, Thames Water would, after all, be allowed to build on the last remaining remnant of old Fortis Green. The tribunal actually found in our favour on virtually all the points we put forward but still exercised its discretion in favour of development.

While HORS lost and permission was granted, the final development was smaller than originally planned, there were improvements to make the junction with Southern Avenue safer, and compensation was paid to those with adjacent properties.

1976

This very busy year saw the start of yet another enquiry in September about the widening of Archway Road. During the 1970s and 1980s there was a succession of public enquiries into various proposals for the road. The Association was concerned about the effect on traffic through Muswell Hill, presented evidence, and was particularly successful in challenging the Department for Transport's traffic forecasts.

We were also deeply concerned at the beginning of the year about the "massive road works" nearly complete at the junction of Colney Hatch Lane with the North Circular Road and challenged the belief expressed by the Department of the Environment that the Archway and Colney Hatch works would not have an impact on Muswell Hill, which was in direct contradiction to our own belief that Muswell Hill could become "even more of a death trap than it has already".

The Archway Road campaign eventually succeeded: the widened section stopped well short of Muswell Hill Road and the capacity of Archway Road was not increased, as the Department for Transport wished.

When two trees, a poplar and an oak, at the corner of Springfield Avenue were in danger of being felled by the Council, our Association, in conjunction with Friends of the Earth, got a stay of execution. We accepted that if the trees were found to be seriously diseased, then they would have to come down but if this were not the case then the trees would have to be protected.

Tree lovers fight again

By DICK BATES

TWO trees which for years have stood as a well-known landmark on Muswell Hill are in danger of being felled. The axe was due to fall on Monday but a last minute intervention by residents gained a stay of execution for a week.

The owners have agreed to tests being done on the poplar and oak to see if they can be saved, but members of Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Residents' Association arrived too late to prevent a third tree being felled.

The poplar and oak stand outside 36 Muswell Hill at the corner of Springfield Avenue. The oak had a tree preservation order slapped on it three years ago but this was rescinded when Haringey Council gave permission for felling in July 1974. Residents contacted planning officers who obtained the stay of execution from the owner's agents.

The residents association and Haringey Friends of the Earth plan to have independent checks made on the trees.

Association press officer David Jones says they accept that if the trees are found to be seriously diseased then they will have to come down. But he says that if this is not the case then the trees must be protected.

A council planning officer says the workmen have been held off by a gentleman's agreement — the council has no legal right to order the tree's retention. This was surer when felling permission was given and the pre-considerable pressure to act if the trees are found to be fit and well.

*An article from the Hornsey Journal
of 19 March 1972*

At the AGM this year, the Association had £147.92 in the bank, and it was agreed that the minimum subscription should be 25p.



*An article from the Hornsey Journal
of 14 May 1976*

In July, the Association initiated the Muswell Hill Festival, the first one being held in the car park behind what is now Marks & Spencer on the Saturday, followed by afternoon events on the playing field behind Tetherdown School (now the site of the new Treehouse and Tetherdown School buildings) on the Sunday.

There was a procession with dragons and decorated bicycles and other events included side shows, painters, potters and musicians.

Proceeds from this first Festival went to BROACH, the fund to save the United Reformed Church in the Broadway. Liz Luxmore, the Festival Co-ordinator, reported that the success

of the event "convinces us that this Festival should become an annual event".

In those days, to launch a Festival was considered a "ground-breaking" thing for a local Association to do. After some years, the Festival moved to the Fortis Green Road end of Muswell Hill Broadway, with the street on Sunday closed to traffic.

In November, the Association organised two concerts, the proceeds going to the Hornsey Centre for Handicapped Children. In December, we installed a Christmas tree in the Broadway, together with a steam organ playing all day.

1977

The second Muswell Hill Festival at the end of June, despite "sporadic drizzle", was a great success and fulfilled Liz Luxmore's forecast that it could be an annual event.



*Member Liz Luxmore,
Founder of the Muswell
Hill Festival*

Held again and sponsored by the MH and FGRA at Summerland Gardens car park (Saturday) and Woodside Avenue playing fields (Sunday) it was hoped that £200 would go to the Hornsey Centre for Handicapped Children and the Haringey Hamsters Club for Handicapped Children.

Well over 100 local artists, jazz and rock groups, youth clubs, schools, Morris dancing groups and other local organisations took part.

It all started on Saturday morning when the Festival procession arrived at the car park (closed for the day!) after going through Muswell Hill Broadway led by the Creighton School Steel Band. One of the highlights on Sunday was a display of giant kite flying by Albatross Kites of St. Albans.



The Muswell Hill Festival as shown in the Hornsey Journal of 1st July 1977 in the article entitled "Lots of Fun for Muswell Hillbillies".

The organisers were eager to thank various departments of the local authority for support of the growing Festival, with a council grant the first year and a loan to help with expenses in 1977, plus closing the car park on the Saturday.

The committee meeting minutes of 28th March suggested that the subscription level of 25p was too low and should be increased to 75p and 50p for Old Age Pensioners. The original subscription in 1952 was 10p (two old shillings).

The membership had doubled to 420 over the previous year.

1977 - 1978

The Greater London Council (then under Conservative control) put forward a proposal for Alexandra Park to be used for a "super stadium" to be shared by Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur football clubs.

With other groups, our Association set up SOS (Save Our Space) and played an important part in the successful campaign to defeat the plan, described at the time as a "considerable victory" for the Association.

An area of trees about the size of a football pitch was felled in Highgate Wood by its owners, the City of London Corporation, which also proposed to build roadways and buildings in the woods. It was to be allowed to do this under a new Act of Parliament.

The Corporation also wanted to change the nature of the wood from an ancient oak/hornbeam wood to one having a large variety of trees, including conifers.

The Association objected and commissioned a report, which questioned the policy of replanting and asked for control to be moved to Haringey Council.

After a long campaign by the Association and Sir Hugh Rossi, the local MP, Highgate Wood was excluded from the Act of Parliament and the policy of replanting was abandoned.

1978

The word “Residents” was dropped from the name of the Association, which became again the Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association, our present title. In November of this year, all local councillors were informed by the Secretary that the MHFGA was a “non-political amenity society registered with the Civic Trust” with our primary goal enhancement of the local environment, especially protection of Muswell Hill as the “last surviving and most complete Edwardian suburb in England”. Councillors were invited to join us for a yearly fee of 75p, which would entitle them to receive the Newsletter.

Earlier in the year, following a campaign by the Association, a zebra crossing was installed on Muswell Hill Road next to St James’s Church.

Haringey produced a plan to re-organise education provision which involved the closure of Tetherdown School located in Grand Avenue. The Association supported the highly successful campaign against this mounted by parents.



A Festival Programme from 1978

Flushed with success at the popularity of the first two Muswell Hill Festivals, sponsored by this Association of course, the organisers achieved a grant from the Greater London Council to commission a play from John Arden, the well-known English playwright now living in Galway but in Muswell Hill at the time, who wrote the play with his wife Margaretta D'Arcy.

It was called "The Making of Muswell Hill" and was about the Victorian Tetherdown murders. In the end, it was not performed

at the Festival as planned, but the play was passed on to the Tetherdown Players, a local amateur dramatic group. According to John Arden's Wikipedia entry, the play was in fact performed, in 1984.

More local people than ever took part in this third Festival. The Festival Week opened on Saturday, 24th June, with a medieval street show organised by the Haringey Arts Council in Muswell Hill Broadway. During the week, local traders decorated their windows on the theme "Festival" and our Association, as sponsors, with the Hornsey Chamber of Commerce, awarded a plaque to the one judged to be most effective.

From the organisers

Welcome to the third Muswell Hill Festival, the annual show-place for all folk on and around the Hill. We are delighted that more local people than ever are taking part this year.

Festival week opens on Saturday June 24th with a medieval street show organised by the Haringey Arts Council in Muswell Hill Broadway. During the week local traders will be decorating their windows on the theme 'Festival' and the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association, with the Hornsey Chamber of Commerce, are awarding a plaque to the one judged to be the most effective.

On Saturday July 1st a procession of local youngsters, with silver and brass bands, will open the largest-ever craft market to be held in the Summerland carpark. There will be a continuous programme of music, and local clubs and associations will be demonstrating their activities both there and in the adjoining Youth Centre.

On Sunday July 2nd there'll be more music, dancing and fairground fun on the Woodside Avenue Playing Fields. The special attraction will be a demonstration of the new sport of 'parascending'.

An extract from the 1978 Festival programme

On Saturday, 1st July, a procession of local youngsters with silver and brass bands opened the largest-ever craft market to be held in the Summerland car park.

A continuous programme of events went on all day. On the Sunday, there was more music, dancing and fairground fun on the

Woodside Playing Fields. Over both days there were four performances of a children's opera.

1979

The Department of the Environment finally rejected Haringey plans to build houses on the Parkland Walk south of The Woodman pub and it remains still as open space. The decision was described as a "tremendous victory" for local groups, including our own, which over a long period had fought the plans.

1979 - 1980

A planning application was submitted for the redevelopment of the ABC cinema site at the top of Muswell Hill as a "brutalist block" containing a 30,000 square feet Tesco supermarket plus 16,000 square feet of office space, 20 flats and a squash club. This was opposed by the Association and others and the application turned down.

We floated the idea of moving the bus terminus to the ABC site as part of a wider scheme involving either shops, offices or flats, so that the central roundabout at the top of Muswell Hill could be turned into a small piazza. This could be done, we suggested, by abandoning the roundabout traffic layout and extending the pavement in front of Boots.

After a second, smaller scale scheme was rejected by Haringey, a third and final scheme for the present mansard roofed building was approved with few objections from the Association, as many of our suggestions had been incorporated in the final scheme.



OUR MEETINGS AND THEIR VENUES

In our 71 years' existence we have had many meeting places for both committees and the general membership. We are not certain where they all were and here again there are gaps.

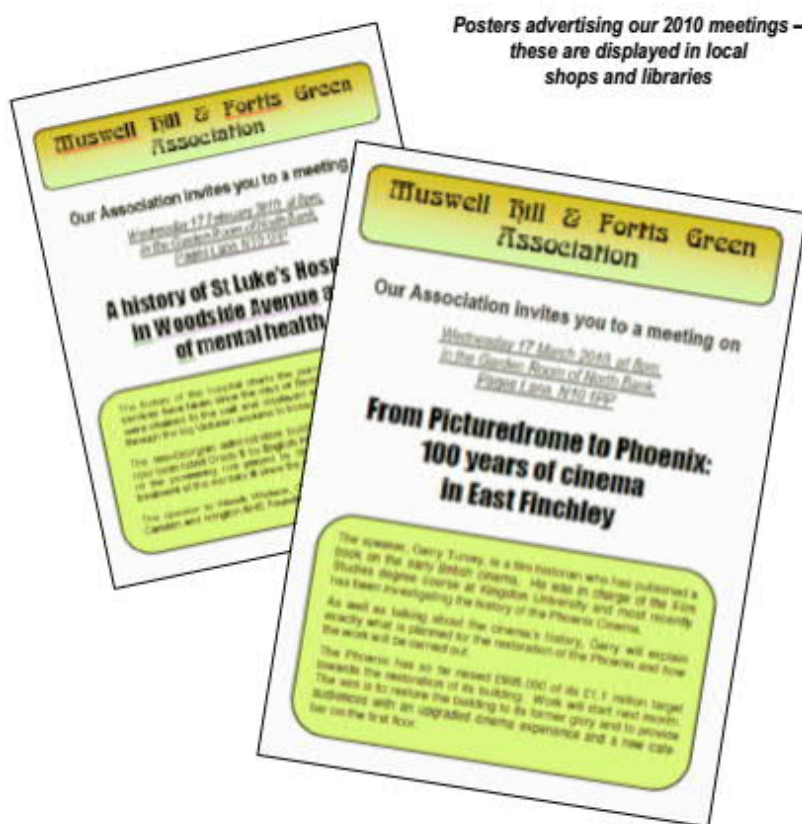
But among those halls with ghostly echoes of our long debates are St. James's Memorial Hall, Tetherdown Hall, the Baptist Church in Dukes Avenue, the Muswell Hill Library, the Friends' Meeting House in Church Crescent, the Muswell Hill Bowling Club in King's Avenue, and currently the North Bank community centre in Pages Lane. Some committee meetings have been in members' homes.

We have held musical evenings for members in churches (in 2003 an audience of 200 attended a musical evening with renowned organist Jennifer Bate), had wine tastings and patisserie sampling in local shops, and gone on conducted walks around Alexandra Park, Highgate Wood and Queen's Wood.



North Bank, Pages Lane

And every year at the Muswell Hill Festival, our well-indicated stall acts as a focal point for members and to attract newcomers to our ranks. The aim of the meetings is always to feature topics of local interest. Notably, in 2008 the meetings included a guided tour around Alexandra Palace's television studios while in the same year our local sustainability initiative started as a result of the well- attended February meeting.



Meetings in 2009 included a talk by local historians David Dell and Albert Pinching entitled Haringey's Hidden Streams Revealed, at which the audience was 65 people strong. Other meetings that year

included Gardeners' Question Time, a guided walk in Queen's Wood, a presentation on Alexandra Palace and Park and a talk dealing with police activities and priorities in our area.

The latter featured a chief inspector, an inspector and three local ward sergeants. It was a first for the Association and a unique opportunity for local people to comment on the way they are policed.

We hold regular meetings five times a year; they include a walk or a visit. Until standing down in May 2023, our Chairman, John Hajdu, organised 125 such meetings.



Fighting for a safer neighbourhood

Anti-social behaviour in Muswell Hill must stop say angry members

SENIOR OFFICERS of the Metropolitan Police joined our ward sergeants, the Harroby housing head officer, local MP and two councillors at our November Association event held in North Bank, to discuss what is being done to make Muswell Hill safer and to discourage anti-social behaviour.

Frank exchanges

Present were Chief Inspector Jon Williams, Inspector Tracy Temperst and our three Ward sergeants, Dave Williams from Fortis Green, Simon Carver from Muswell Hill and Dave Bullock from Alexandra Ward.



From left: Dave Williams, Tracy Temperst, Simon Carver, Jon Williams, Dave Bullock

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

Christine Goldschmidt

(Newsletter Editor 1977 - 78, Secretary 1978 – 79

Chairman 1979 - 80)

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, Martyn'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. I especially remember Ruth Rodgers¹ at the first meeting I ever went to. She smoked and had a portable ashtray in her handbag. She had style. Unsurprisingly, it wasn't long before some of us got ourselves elected to the committee. But of course it wasn't all angst and fist clenching against the powers that be, important as that was.

¹ Jack Whitehead, a committee member at the time, also remembers Mrs Rodgers well. He says, "She was a very strong-minded lady, rather like Margaret Rutherford, who got on really well with the new younger members. We used to have arguments about traffic – we were in favour of restricting car use while she was all for letting cars go everywhere.

Sadly, she was killed by a speeding car. Quite a few of the committee went to her funeral. She was in favour, too, of cutting down all the street trees, unlike the new intake of members."

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 Paul Olins² brought wonderful watermelons. Strange to say I can't remember a vegetarian option.

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's 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

² Paul Olins was a committee member from 1976 to 1981, and an early organiser of the Festival.

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. Non-violent 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.

KEEPING MEMBERS IN THE INFORMATION LOOP

When the Fortis Green Residents' Association was founded in 1948, general meetings were called by a notice in the Hornsey Journal and the Muswell Hill Record, or "otherwise as the committee may direct". Its declared objectives then were to "promote general interest in local government matters, especially where it affects the immediate area of the resident members, by arranging, if necessary, means for discussing same, to call public meetings, make representations to local or other authorities, cooperate with other organisations with similar aims, appoint deputations and in general to further the interests of the ratepayers and residents".

Certainly, our relationship with the local press in our early years was a close one, and thankfully it still is 75 years on. So, it is not surprising that much of the information this history has gleaned of our early activities comes from press cuttings researched at the Hornsey Historical Society and the Hornsey Library. The press coverage itself reflects a very healthy set of activities throughout the fifties.

But it was not until the autumn of 1965 that the Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Residents' Association announced the first issue of its new "official magazine". Called *The Fortisman*, it had a stiff cover, printed blue on green, and carried a wealth of advertising from local sources.

Said the first editorial: "It is with pleasure that we present to you this, the first issue of our new magazine. We hope that this publication, which it is aimed to produce twice a year, will be of interest to you and will serve to keep you informed of local affairs and important topics currently under discussion in your locality. The Association...has been for nearly a generation the only local forum for discussion of matters so closely affecting the residents and ratepayers of Muswell Hill and Fortis Green and...it is now more than ever essential that membership of the Association be increased still further".



The next issue, in the spring of 1966, said it was "gratifying to learn of the widespread interest in the 'The Fortisman' displayed by members and friends of the Association". The interest was strong enough to keep the magazine appearing in its original form until the early 1970s.

Because of the gaps in our files there is no evidence to show that a magazine was published again. However, the files do contain an information document for members of two foolscap sheets which was circulated in May 1976. It had no title, but the Editor was listed as Christine Goldschmidt, who took the Chair in 1979/80.

She said she had "no copies of the newsletters that I edited. I typed them on an electric typewriter (no laptops then) onto Gestetner copy, and then ran them off on the Roneo at my children's nursery in Fortis Green Road. The journalism was occasionally red top in style, but we did have the services of David Jones, who was the Night Editor of the FT, so they were often readable and informative".

In September of 1976, the information sheets were called Newsletters for the first time. They continued in that form until March 1978, when they suddenly blossomed into a four-page document with a display Association heading. It was set over three columns and with line drawings and photographs. Later, David Jones became Editor, and under his leadership the Newsletter



Newsletter Mastheads showing further evolution. From left, July 1979 and 1982



Newsletters in 1976 and 1978

expanded, occasionally running to eight pages and on one momentous occasion a 20-page edition was published at the time of the Alexandra Palace and Park public enquiry.

In January 1981, the Newsletter was back to two sides of a sheet of foolscap and called Information Sheet. It was like that until September. By October, David Jones had returned to producing large issues revolving around the Ally Pally drama.

David continued as Editor for several more editions, but the issues consisted, once again, of one or perhaps two folios, apart from several expansive Ally Pally special editions, and in 1982 and 1983 were called Newsheet or News sheet. The April 1984 issue was being called Newsletter again but appears to have been David's last as Editor, his by-line giving way to Lira Fernandez in May.

By June 1985, Bill Tyler (later to be Chairman and still a member of the committee in 2021) was in the editorial chair and David Jones was our representative on the Alexandra Palace Advisory Committee, where he was to make a huge contribution.

The passing on of information to the members continued in much the same way for several years. There were occasional changes in editorial style, but the front-page masthead remains unchanged to this day. Most of the items were set across the page and the regularly published issues looked much what they were - solidly-based newsletters. Bill Tyler continued as Editor until May 1992 when he was billed on the front page as acting editor. But there was then a long gap before the next issue in February 1993, and Carola Zentner was Editor.

Odd gaps in publication continued to occur, mainly due to pressure of work on the committee and lack of member interest.

The front-page story said: "Our apologies if you thought that the Association had done a disappearing trick, but we are glad to reassure you that it is alive and well. The hiccup in communications has its roots in the sad fact that our last AGM was so poorly attended that it did not reach the minimum number necessary to constitute a valid meeting. It was, therefore, not possible to hold elections for new officers and we were in a state of limbo. However, the existing officers have continued to act in your interests, taking care of all routine matters".

Carola's name appeared as Editor until October 1994 but from then on until well into 2001, the Editor was anonymous. It is widely believed, however, that the Newsletter during that time was edited by Robert Andrewes, the Chairman himself. The Secretary or Chairman had been the Editor in many earlier issues.

In July 2001, a new look Newsletter on distinctive yellow paper was introduced. It had two pages and rapidly increased to four and came out six times a year. The Editor was Gerry Saunders, like David Jones in the 1980s a business journalist before retirement.

The early Millennium years were busy and the MHFGA website was introduced only a year later to complement the familiar Newsletter as a means of communication to our readers as well as the world.

In 2003, the Newsletter was expanded to six and eight pages, and planning and conservation news was reintroduced in a big way. There had been an article on planning in the first Fortisman magazines and it was decided that the Newsletter should once again in the 21st century seriously reflect the fact that the work of the Association had never wavered from the cause of conservation and careful planning of our unique suburb. The planning page is currently written by our Planning Officer, Pat Bloomfield, the expert on the committee.

Another throwback to the "good old days" was the re-introduction in the present format (not before time) of illustrations including black and white photographs.

The March 2008 issue announced Gerry's retirement and the appointment of a new Editor, Barbara Erskine, a born and bred Muswell Hillian who worked in post-compulsory education and had previous experience of editing a network newsletter.

Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2010

Roll up to Invest in your environment

Now you can buy
new therapy plants
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ENERGY Ltd is a local
company. It is based in a
suite of flats in 25 March
at the Muswell Hill Centre.
The company specialises in
energy audits and
will be back by 25 March.

Former MHFA and MHGA members: David Price, Graham Buchanan and
Doreen Smith with their company, the North Park Trust.

The company has been a local
partner of the Muswell Hill
Sustainability Group, having been the
first to offer energy audits to the
residents of the Muswell Hill
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Working for a cleaner, greener, safer environment

to the letter boxes of neighbouring members. Gradually, emailing took over, and today the redesigned and full colour eight-page Newsletter is available only in digital form. A small number of copies are still being printed and made available through libraries and pubs by member Peter Davies, long-standing distribution organiser.

The Association's website, mhfga.org, has an archive of all Newsletters published after 2012 and work is being done to digitise all available issues since the very first Fortisman was published in 1966.

Since 2015, members and the public at large are kept in the information loop through social media and our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts count thousands of followers.

In 2010, the Newsletter acquired a new-look but still familiar masthead based on the art nouveau font that had been such a recognisable part of our printed style on our posters and membership forms. New technology has contributed towards a more dynamic layout and extra sections include members' letters, an association bulletin board, a snippets corner and a greater use of photographs.

That was also the turning point for the Newsletter distribution, until then mainly done through dedicated volunteers delivering the issues to

Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association

Newsletters

March 2010

1. The Ecology

2. The Ecology

3. The Ecology

4. The Ecology

5. The Ecology

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Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association

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LANDMARKS 1980 -1989

1980 - 1982

After Alexandra Palace burned down on 10th July 1980, Haringey Council proposed to rebuild it as an "enormous" exhibition and conference centre with hotel, sports, arts and leisure facilities. This would have had a "devastating" impact on the area and our Association produced a 20-page special report on what was considered to become an "environmental and financial disaster" and compromise the Association's commitment that no green space should be eroded from the Park. If it was successful it would have to attract huge crowds and most of the park would be lost to car parking, and if the car parking were limited it would fail commercially with the losses having to be met from the rates.

The Association and SOS (Save Our Space) opposed the plans and after a long campaign a public enquiry was held in 1982 and lasted five months. Haringey was represented by two barristers (one a QC) while the objectors were splendidly represented by one of our most prominent members, David Jones (pictured left by Tricia Pearl at the 1981 Muswell Hill Festival), assisted occasionally by John Adams,



also of the Association. The objectors lost, but the inspector clipped Haringey's wings. Eventually, the predictions of the failure of the Haringey scheme, made by the Association at the enquiry, were fulfilled.

An interesting sidelight is that the London Regional Examining Board wrote to David Jones asking for permission to reproduce the article in one of our Newsletters concerning the

Haringey Borough Council report on Alexandra Palace and Park. The article was to be used in an English examination be to set in June 1982.

1981 - 1984



Rank Organisation, owners of the 1930s art deco Odeon cinema (Muswell Hill's only cinema since 1974), applied for permission to demolish the building and redevelop the site as a supermarket. The Association immediately mounted a successful campaign to save the building, which was widely supported, and it was finally listed Grade II* in 1984.

Sue Heathcote, a prominent MHFGA member at the time, had researched and written an assessment of the architectural merits of the Odeon for her final Open University year project and her account was used by various parties in the campaign, which led to Rank changing their mind to close the cinema. Indeed, they went on to refurbish the interior and its facilities.

1982

We supported the Muswell Hill Conservation Area Advisory Committee's objection to the proposal to put some "very banal" flats on the site of the Methodist church on the corner of Colney Hatch Lane and Alexandra Park Road. The site, which was a "feature of the Muswell Hill landscape", deserved a more appropriate and distinctive development, though there was little local support for the preservation of the existing building, which had lost its Gothic spire many years before.

1983

A Haringey scheme to build 17 houses on Fortismere (then Creighton) school playing fields was successfully opposed by the Association and local people and was reversed.

We objected strongly to Haringey's move to disband the Alexandra Palace and Park Advisory Committee and the council eventually acknowledged the contribution made by local groups, including our own.

As part of our planning activity, the Association was now taking a keen interest in how shop fronts were being changed and were hoping to preserve as many of the original features and characteristics of the area as possible.



Mr Martyn, owner of Martyn's, one of the oldest shops in Muswell Hill, has carefully preserved both the exterior and the interior attractiveness of his shop.



Muswell Hill shop fronts - the contrast between old and new.

1984

There was discussion at the committee meeting on 9th January about committee members who were elected at the previous AGM who were "never seen again". (Getting committee members has long been a problem; this note only highlights the position in this one year.)

1985

Members of the Association expressed sincere condolences to the family and colleagues of PC Keith Blakelock, our local beat policeman and Muswell Hill resident, at his recent sad death while on duty at Tottenham's Broadwater Farm estate.

The Chairman reported success in having a conservation order placed on a Victorian pillar box in Eastern Road, which was threatened with removal.

1986

Our entry in the competition for design of the wildlife area in the new garden centre in Alexandra Park was awarded a £25 commendation prize.

The Association agreed to support and subscribe to a recruitment drive by CUFOS (community use for the old station) which was campaigning for funds to set up the previous Alexandra Park railway station building as a play group and community centre.



The CUFOS centre now a thriving community base.

1986 - 1987

Together with Friends of the Earth the Association lobbied the Council to improve the Muswell Hill roundabout, by putting in new zebra crossings and generally improving the pedestrian crossing facilities.

The Borough Engineer agreed with the proposals and supported them, but the scheme did not go ahead due to budgetary reasons.

1987

Our Vice-chairman Robert Andrewes was elected first Chairman of the newly formed statutory Alexandra Palace and Park Advisory Committee, ensuring that the interests of Muswell Hill would be looked after on that committee by our two members and the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green councillors.

Because Haringey was not able to cover the cost of replacing the 2,500-odd trees lost in the great storm of 15th/16th October, we set up a separate tree fund and asked for donations to be sent to the Treasurer.

1988

The Council's decision to stop the free supply of refuse sacks was likely to exacerbate problems with keeping the area free of rubbish, it was reported in May, and we would be keeping a more than watchful eye on the situation.

In November, the Chairman planted a tree in memory of the late Edwin Scott in the park at the corner of Eastern Road and Fortis Green.



Muswell Hill Festival 1981: from left, Ed Scott, once membership secretary and active Association campaigner, Jack Whitehead and David Jones (photo by Tricia Pearl)

He had been a member of the committee for many years. His widow, Marianne Scott, arranged for a new seat in his name to be

placed in the garden. More than 50 members attended the ceremony. Marianne died in 1991.

1989

As a result of letters sent by us to local service stations, several agreed to retail unleaded petrol for the first time.

We collected £150 for Haringey's Hurricane Appeal and trees were planted in Alexandra Park, Albert Road Recreation Ground and Muswell Hill Playing Fields.

We challenged the Council for their refusal to allow Neighbourhood Watch plates to be fixed to lamp posts in the five areas covered by local schemes.

A recruitment drive organised by committee member Monica Myers had been highly successful in gaining several new members. Monica was also organising, together with Friends of the Earth, an ongoing anti-litter campaign.

We expressed concern at the lack of key officers to deal with vital conservation matters in Haringey, including tree and nature conservation and a specific buildings conservation officer.

We congratulated Marks & Spencer in November for "having the perspicacity to take over Budgen's vacated store and bring an entirely new range of foods to the Broadway". The arrival of such a shopping draw would undoubtedly improve the business of other local shops, with a ripple effect in trade right round the Broadway and Fortis Green Road, we said.



PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

Martin Catchesides (Chairman 1980 - 82)

My wife Jane and I first joined the Association in about 1973 when we lived in St James's Lane, and MHFGRA was a relatively small group of like-minded people, determined to preserve all that was good about Muswell Hill.

Soon after that Liz Luxmore started the Muswell Hill Festival, for the first few years held in the car park behind what was then Budgens supermarket on the Broadway. These days, there are festivals everywhere, for any excuse, but at that time it was quite a ground-breaking thing to do. Liz's enthusiasm encouraged us to believe that it might just work - and she was proved right.

In 1978 the GLC, which was then in charge at Ally Pally, came up with the idea of a huge football stadium in the Park to house both Arsenal and Spurs. Imagine what Saturday afternoons would be like if that had come to fruition! Fortunately, the impracticality of the idea sank it fairly quickly, but it was the first of many battles over the Palace and Park.

Planning applications for the ABC Cinema site and the Reservoir site were both threatening. The future of the Broadway church was still undecided. Haringey had taken over running Alexandra Palace from the GLC and no-one could really second guess the full implications of that. What made things worse was that the Association had a severe shortage of officers and difficulty in finding locations for meetings.

Haringey's initial proposals for the future of the Palace and Park before the fire hinted at what was to come, and the Association organised public meetings on the future of Alexandra Palace early in 1980. David Jones produced the first of many superb leaflets.

I became Chairman in 1980 while Ed Scott took on the role of newsletter distributor, a job he would continue for the rest of the time he was with us at Muswell Hill.

Almost immediately we faced twin threats, first from plans to close the Odeon Cinema and then in mid-summer the fire at the Palace. Local people gave strong backing to our Odeon campaign and we won an important victory that was to give us the encouragement to fight the bigger battles that were to come.

Haringey's plans after the fire for a very large exhibition venue drawing enormous crowds posed a huge threat for the area. We organised a number of very well attended public meetings - Save Our Space (SOS) had already been set up with other local groups to fight the stadium plans.

There was a lot of interest from local papers. A Public Enquiry was finally announced after pressure from many influential people including our local MP Sir Hugh Rossi. MHFGRA was to play a significant role in opposing Haringey's plans to build the exhibition centre on the site. But the omens were not good. The Council announced that it was hiring a top QC at vast expense to lead its application.

1982 saw the start of the Public Enquiry into the future development of Alexandra Palace and the Association rose to the challenge. Several members of the group gave evidence and were cross-examined by the Haringey QC. The Association team stood up well to the experience that was understandably daunting to those of us who had not experienced a public enquiry. A memory that will forever stay in my mind was of John Adams, our Transport Officer, completely outwitting the cross-examining QC.

The Enquiry finally lasted an exhausting five months. Our team was led by David Jones, who somehow managed to work all night at the FT, attend the enquiry for most of the day, and rewrite our briefs and submissions in between. His energy and enthusiasm were boundless and he was an inspiration to us all.

The experience showed to us all the power of community action - a united group of people can achieve great things. Shortly after the Enquiry I had to stand down, the demands of a new job finally proving too much on top of the demands of being Chairman and having a young family.

We left Muswell Hill for the wilds of north-west Essex early in 1984, and have continued to be involved in local politics ever since. Life may be a bit quieter in the country, but the threats are just as challenging. We still talk about those days and have fond memories of energy and enthusiasm of the Association that took on and beat some formidable opposition to make Muswell Hill the fine place it is today.

(One lasting contribution Jane Catchesides made to the Association was the design of the letterhead which was used for the Newsletter. In those far off days, all the posters and artwork were done with Letraset! Martin and Jane now live in Suffolk. They are life members of the Association.)



OUR OWN WEBSITE - A CONTINUING SUCCESS

In 2002, like many long-established organisations used to communicating with its members, indeed the world, by what was becoming known as "snail mail", our Association launched its own website. Denise Feeney, who was our first Webmaster, presented her designs to the committee in January. No time was wasted: the website was launched in February and had early success.



The 2002 home page header and menu of www.mhfga.1to1.org

After only a month, more than a thousand visitors logged onto the site. The monthly average was 400, although October had 1,417 hits, and by the end of the first year we counted 7,073 hits. During this time, technical changes were made, and the site continually expanded with new pages. It was kept simple to be accessible to every web browser.

In 2003 - our first full year online - we had 14,700 visitors. The most popular day was 9th October when 390 hits were recorded.

In January 2004 the site was extended to include a summary of past Newsletters. Denise made more technical changes and the number of visits increased to 3,385 in May, a record breaking 4,299 in June, and a total for the year of 33,943, including more than 1,000 overseas visitors.

The Environmental Hotspots page was the most popular. The site

had 12 pages and included free events, local news and contacts for Council services like street lighting and graffiti reporting, and links to other websites.



*The path, before
& after*

Photographs of the revamped Muswell Hill path were added in April 2005 and had an instant impact, making it the most popular month with 800 hits a week, illustrating how pictures of gardens and green sites attract visitors.

Traffic diversified in that year, and we gained UK visitors from government and business sites like the Isle of Wight, Ilford Council and London First. Foreign interest was strong from North America with visits from government sites such as Jersey City and Newark. Other visitors came from Canada, Brazil, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Russia. Middle Eastern interest came from Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Israel. Far Eastern visitors were from Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore, and exotic places such as the Ivory Coast and an Internet cafe in Togo in the south Pacific.

In 2006, our website hits total was 33,151. Visitor numbers averaged 630 a week. Much work went into re-building the site. Extracts from our Newsletters were put onto a new page. The council services contacts were removed from the Notices page and were given their own page named Haringey Services. The Notices and Links pages were made available from every page of the site.

As a result, visitor figures shot up dramatically with some weeks in March getting more than 1,000 hits. Our site now served members and the wider community.

In July and August, Denise made more radical changes. The home page was given modern photographs of our area and a cleaner layout. She also worked with the Chairman to improve the overall colour vibrancy and site navigation with new menu bars in yellow, an



Picture: Odeon shops - Muswell Hill



Picture: Muswell Hill Broadway



Picture: Pocket Park opposite Logie Baird pub

First photos on the website

improved links page and other design changes to help navigation. The most popular page was Hotspots and Green Spaces.

Australia was top of the overseas visitor list. Visitors searched for local news items, pictures of the area, local history - citing specific search words like Fortis Green, Muswell Hill, Alexandra Park, environmental hotspots and traffic. So, our site was serving a purpose and providing information for the community and our members.

2007 was a good year and we received a high number of hits at 49,047. High viewing figures in March at 3,084 may have resulted from the Newsletter article about our webmaster! There was a referral from Haringey Council's website, a first visitor from

Croatia, the return of the Goan Voice and a Japanese visitor from Tokyo who hit the site 49 times.

On 21st April a whole new page showcased Muswell Hill Broadway's shop fronts and architectural features. The shop front survey photographs are extremely high-quality pictures. In September they were added to and improved again. This project was funded by two of our generous members and the pictures by courtesy of John Crompton, our Treasurer and Conservation Officer. These pictures were then used as a reference guide to changes to our Broadway and surrounding shopping parades. May had 4,834 hits, many people viewing the shop front photographs, a continuing popular feature.



Webmaster Denise Feeney

The summer months, traditionally a quiet time for visitors to our website, showed steady figures. Some of the highest viewing days in the history of our website were the 14th, 15th and 16th September when we received more than a thousand hits.

One visitor from Brazil hit the site 90 times in one day and another from Japan clicked 100 times! The top five visiting countries in 2007 were

Australia, USA (mainly universities), Canada, Japan and Brazil. Visitors in large numbers also came from UK universities, UK councils and business groups.

In 2008 our website visitors increased to 56,062, including one from Niue, a place not heard before, but discovered to be in the South Pacific Ocean.

We were approached to allow an online property guide to add a link to our site under their Muswell Hill page, giving us free publicity, an article page about our Association written by our Chairman, and a real chance of acquiring new members. We were not asked to provide advertising in return.

Visitor numbers grew in 2009 to a total of 66,206, a significant rise from the previous year. There was an increased amount of activity by overseas visitors with the highest number coming from Germany followed by Italy. New countries coming into our site included Colombia, Fiji, Israel, Ivory Coast, Latvia, Luxembourg, Philippines, Romania, Ruanda, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Ukraine and the United Arab Emirates. In fact, foreign visitors were so high that the Chairman

asked Denise to add a message to our home page asking visitors to send us an email explaining why they find our website so interesting.

When the website of the Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association was launched in 2002, there were less than 40 million websites online. Today, there are almost 2 billion to choose from, all competing with Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok and a huge raft of other social media platforms for the attention of the public.

The MHFGA website has changed and grown over the period, publishing local news, expanding its unique photo and video archives, and offering maybe the most comprehensive guide to local emergency and non-emergency services.



www.mhfga.org in 2023

To date, its 60+ pages and 150 posts are seen by a still very respectable average of 4,000 visitors per year, almost all local. Recently, the website has added video recording of its public talks and AGM and plans to publish the Association's whole collection of Newsletters going back to 1965.

CCTV CAMERAS IN THE BROADWAY

A long-running series of meetings about the lack of proper CCTV coverage in Muswell Hill Broadway and Fortis Green - which had worried our committee for some time - started in February 2005.

The series opened with a walkabout with the Chairman and his Vice-chair around the shopping centre with two executives from Haringey Council. For the first time, they learned that only one camera could be in use at any one time and noted that some cameras were in the wrong position. Various other problems were identified, and our team asked for changes to be made to the position of the cameras and whether a better system could be put in operation.

Haringey's Assistant Director of Street Scene received our concerns and in addition, as a member of the Community and Police Consultative Group, John Hajdu raised the subject at the group's November 2005 meeting and asked Borough Commander Simon O'Brian and Cllr Nilgun Canver to look into the matter. Then began what seemed to be a never-ending series of meetings at which we continued to raise our concerns and seek answers to our questions.

In December we were told: "The system is not working properly and the Council is in discussion with the installer. Each of the cameras is capable of being monitored and recorded, but only one at a time, owing to technical difficulties. There are plans to rectify this and we are actively seeking funding to make all the cameras record simultaneously."

On 30th January 2006, Cllr Canver responded to questions as follows: "The Council is looking to upgrade the system, enabling more than one camera to be monitored and recorded at any one time. However, to achieve this will require external financial support and the police are currently leading on seeking this."

On 7th February, Cllr Canver agreed with our Chairman that "it would be a good idea to meet", a date was set for 10th March, and this Association prepared a document with 19 questions to be discussed. On

the morning of 10th March, the meeting was cancelled. On 3rd April, answers to the 19 questions were received. Although this was a step forward, the last and probably the most important question (who is to provide the budget?), was answered by: "the parking service does not



A CCTV camera blends in the background of ST James's Church

have a budget for any new cameras". The question about the working relationship between the police and the Council was not answered at all.

On 24th May, we pointed out the increased level of crime and asked for the upgrading of the CCTV system and an additional three cameras. We again asked for a meeting.

On 18th June, the Chairman sent a further letter to Cllr Canver, pointing out that if they were to conduct meetings and discussions surely our input must be of use to her, especially as we live in the area, know the shopkeepers and are in constant touch with the police. We knew where the cameras should be placed and we asked again that our Association should be involved. The response was that there was going to be a CCTV review in the borough, but terms of reference and a timetable for this review had not yet been set.

On 1st August, an undeterred John Hajdu told Cllr Canver that our Association was getting more and more worried about the situation and was

looking for progress. As a result, he was asked to give evidence to the Scrutiny Committee on 30th October, followed by a Focus Group meeting, again arranged by him, and a one-to-one meeting with Cllr Canver in February 2007.

Finally, at this meeting it was agreed that two new cameras would be installed, one at the large roundabout and one at the smaller roundabout next to St James's Church, that the Transport for London cameras would be switched to community safety use after the rush hour, and finally that there would be better communication in future between the councillor and the Association. In addition, there are two cameras in Muswell Hill, one near the post office and one near the junction of Colney Hatch Lane and Alexandra Park Road. These deal mainly with traffic but at night they monitor crime.

Due to several delays, the first camera which should have been installed in October was eventually installed in February 2008. We pointed out that the warning signs were too small and too high up on the lamp post and suggested that the signs should be similar to those used in Barnet.

As a result, new signs were purchased and put up. Finally, the second camera was installed in March 2008, but due to operational problems did not start working for another month.

To date, there are 17 CCTV council cameras in the N10 area to help prevent and detect crime, antisocial behaviour and disorder and to help enforce traffic and parking regulations. The latest, a HGV enforcement camera on Dukes Avenue was installed after residents complained that many HGV drivers ignored traffic restrictions and used residential roads as cut-throughs.



PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

Bill Tyler

**(Committee member 1977 - 83, Chairman 1983 - 85,
Newsletter Editor 1986 - 93)**

When Diana and I moved to Fortis Green in 1975 our eyes looked west to Finchley where we were both involved with the Finchley Society and the then East Finchley Neighbourhood Association. It was on behalf of both organisations that I took up the fight against the widening of Archway Road, the A1 and A1000 in line for the onslaught of traffic that would have been generated by the widening and its connection to the proposed motorway box round inner London. As an architect, I had been involved in a number of sedate planning appeals on behalf of clients but the Archway Road Public Enquiry - actually there were two - was anything but!

I quickly became enmeshed with the protesters who staged a sit-down on Archway Road by Highgate Station, one being the then relatively unknown Ken Livingstone, and it was the first time I had been "moved on", to put it mildly, by the police. The Enquiry opened at Hornsey Town Hall and was a short-lived riotous affair that the inspector was unable to control, so a second Enquiry was ordered to be held in the less friendly atmosphere of the Methodist Hall opposite Archway Station. By then protestors' phone lines had been tapped and our tactics were ambushed by the Department of Transport.

The protest groups met at various houses and among others there would be Sally Vernon, John Adams and the late David Jones from MHFGA and George Stern and Nina Tuckman, the real firebrands from the Archway Road Residents Association. Frequently the police were called to remove protesters from the Enquiry and, from time to time, the hall was cleared and proceedings continued via loudspeaker link to "lock-out" rooms.

That Enquiry morphed into a second stage at Jackson's Lane Community Centre before final abandonment on the trumped-up grounds

of constant interruption, though the inspector is on record as saying something very different!

As I was becoming more firmly entrenched in the "Muswell Hill Mafia" I somehow got elected to the Association's committee in 1977 and a happy, and I hope useful, association it has been for over forty fast-moving years. There were the famous campaigns over the sell-off of Ally Pally, development of part of the Thames Water Reservoir land in Fortis Green, redevelopment of the ABC Cinema on Muswell Hill and the fight to set up the redundant Broadway Church as a community arts centre - that was lost, but not the building. The conservation and care of Queen's Wood and Highgate Wood was often on the committee's agenda, as well as routine planning applications and the not so routine appeals, such as that for the massive home for the elderly in Church Crescent that now towers over St James's Lane.

Prior to and during my Chairmanship from 1983 to 1985 our members' meetings were held in the rather grim Tetherdown Hall complex and it was some relief when we were able to move to the more pleasant first floor of the library in July 1986. I know it was in July because for the next seven years I edited the Newsletter (produced via an ingenious hand-held "Microwriter" word processor). It is fascinating looking back at the remarkable range of activities the Association was engaged upon, just as it is today.

As well as the committee of twenty-five years ago (David Hill, Robert Andrewes, Eric Stables, Nina Wedell, Charles Fraser, Roger Searle, John Adams, Jill and the late Ralph Bamber, David Jones and Sally Vernon) all working assiduously for a better area, one other member stood out for his devotion to the Association: Ed Scott. Ed was the newsletter distributor for Fortis Green and if ever a membership subscription was in arrears there would be Ed's knock at the door and only by paying up would he move on.

From that committee just Sandra Howell and I are still at the oars and what good crews they and others have been to have rowed alongside over the years!

LANDMARKS 1990 - 1999

1990

In January, we said: "the arrival of the M & S foods store has not been universally welcomed. The range of foods is too upmarket for a lot of people and certain items that were stocked by Budgen's (previously on this site) are not available anywhere else in Muswell Hill. The conflict is between a range of products rather than the entire loss of a competitive type".

The Association played its part in the better management of Queens Wood and Coldfall Wood and in the conservation of the remaining playing fields and other open spaces.

A letter to MP Sir Hugh Rossi expressing our concern about the provisions in the Environment Bill for the collection of commercial refuse resulted in the Association being mentioned in Hansard. A Code of Practice would cover this aspect.

1990 - 1991



The TreeHouse Special School

The Association played an important role in fighting with many others the planned development of the Woodside Avenue playing field site and to save the field for educational use. This had first raised its

head in 1986 but it was in 1990 that the planning application submitted for 38 houses was refused by the Council, and the appeal set for July 1991 was dismissed in September.

Nothing was built on the field at that time but the main benefit for the community can be seen now in the form of the Tetherdown and Treehouse Schools which could have been lost to a housing estate.

1991

Haringey's draft Unitary Development Plan (of more than 300 A4 pages) was finally available for public consultation late in June, with response to be made by mid-December. We set up a sub-committee to look at the document in detail and planned joint meetings with others as part of the public consultation process. Because of staff cutbacks, the next stage of the UDP process was delayed.

In October, Haringey Council resolved to ask Parliament to allow charging for car parking at Alexandra Palace, something to which we had objected when it was first mooted in 1980 and at the subsequent public enquiry. Following further protests from us the trustees of the Palace asked for the proposal to be dropped.

1992

In May, we wished Sir Hugh Rossi well on his retirement as Hornsey and Wood Green's long-serving MP. He had given considerable help to our Association on numerous issues over the years, not least when he actively supported our campaign during the passage of the Alexandra Park and Palace Bill through Parliament.

1992 - 1993

The Rio world conference in 1992 recognised that the world could not go on using up its natural resources at the present rate, apart from the mounting evidence of global warming, and our Association played close attention to the implementation within Haringey of Agenda 21 and to the urgent need to ensure that all development should respect the concept of sustainability.

1993

We objected to an electronic information board to be installed at the Muswell Hill roundabout and the Council then proposed an alternative site near the Odeon, which we believed still to be unacceptable in a Conservation Area.



Muswell Hill Roundabout

The April Newsletter told our members about our strong objections to the proposal to develop part of the Fortis Green reservoir site for housing. It would be a serious loss of open space, the proposed density was excessive and would damage the character of the area. Extra traffic would add to already dangerous road junctions. We pointed out that both the UDP and existing District Plan sought to preserve open spaces and "green chains" and we advocated that no further loss should be permitted since the site was designated as ecologically valuable.

We were also concerned that surface water drainage was deficient, and that flooding had already occurred in Fordington Road during heavy rain. The committee urged members to add their voices to the 50-plus objections already lodged with the Council.

The revised UDP was published early in the year and we registered an objection that suddenly and without notice the Council had introduced changes to the Plan which would have the effect of

removing some of the protection that its designation as Metropolitan Open Land gave to Alexandra Park.

In keeping with the Association's long-held principles on protecting the environment, there was increasing concern at the proliferation of new and varying bits of street furniture within our area and it was felt that Haringey should pay more attention to preserving the character and period aspect of our streets. The design of street furniture should not be arbitrary, we said, should be in keeping with an essentially Victorian or Edwardian townscape and should stick to an acceptable style. Members were asked if they agreed to let the committee know or write to their councillor.



1994

A "great deal of time and effort" was expended by the Association and other local groups in preparing our case to the public reply on Alexandra Palace and the UDP during March. We believed that our arguments had secured the sympathy of the Inspector and his report would be published later in the year. Our efforts generally, the committee told the members, had persuaded the Council that the problems of the Palace were greater than they could manage and at long last a bi-partisan approach was being made to the government, for help in resolving the Palace's financial problems.

In November, parking was an issue which divided opinion even

within our own committee. On the initiative of a group of local shopkeepers, businesspeople and the police, proposals went to the Council with a view to bringing about changes to existing restrictions. The aim was to benefit both shoppers and shopkeepers without encouraging more parking in the streets. It was hoped that Council approval would be given for a more uniform approach.

1995

The inspector in charge of the Unitary Development Plan accepted many of the Association's detailed objections, in particular relating to Metropolitan Open Land and Alexandra Park, where we claimed "major success". The inspector said there should be a "clear statement that Alexandra Park is designated as MOL and that only development in accordance with MOL policy will be permitted in the Park".

The Chairman wrote to Regent Inns expressing concern at the change of name of the Clissold Arms in Fortis Green. The proposal was dropped.

1996

At our October meeting there was a "lively discussion" about Fortismere School, with the Association fully supporting the school's efforts to build a new science block. We were impressed at the vigour



and success with which additional funds for the scheme had been raised by the school. The problem arose with the siting of the building on open space supposedly protected from threat of development. We planned to make objections.

1997



A talk on how current planning trends affect Muswell Hill was given in March by David Frith, who was Haringey's Chief Planning Officer for many years and at the time was a Planning Inspector with the Department of the Environment.

When with Haringey he was largely instrumental in putting into place many conservation policies which had enabled us to retain the character of our locality. David had agreed to review current planning trends and give us advice on how we might manage further threats to our best advantage.

The latest details of the current "major crowd-pulling" development proposals for Alexandra Palace and Park showed that there were issues which "must be faced and resolved", particularly the "increasingly desperate attempts" to recover some of the money overspent on the Palace so far (October Newsletter).

Members were told that when the crisis comes at the Palace to remember that the Council only has itself to blame - no blame at all can be laid at the doors of those, like us, who have consistently warned the Council of the perilous course they were following.

1998

Sparks flew at the members' meeting on 25th March, when Stuart Foster, Assistant Borough Engineer (Highways and Safety) came to talk about the Council's programme for traffic calming schemes in our area, proposed changes to parking restrictions in the Broadway and extensions to bus lanes. Members were angry that the proposals appeared to have arrived fully fledged without consultation.

Although people in Muswell Hill Road had been sent notices, it was felt that wider consultation should have been undertaken and that the Association should have been formally consulted. The meeting resolved to set up a working party to consider traffic and parking issues throughout our area and Nick Chitty was asked to lead it.

The Association celebrated its 50th anniversary in May with an excellent turnout for the AGM.

Our new Chairman, John Hajdu, joined the committee this year and was immediately put in charge of events, meetings and speakers.

1999

The Association objected to the application for a very large new Sainsbury supermarket and car park to be built as part of the development of the waterworks site off Hornsey High Street, at an enquiry held at Hornsey Town Hall in March. It was feared, among other problems, that shoppers would bypass Muswell Hill as a place to do their food shopping and that this could lead to the closure of the speciality shops which are "such an attractive and valued part of our town centre".



VOLUNTEERS, YOUR ASSOCIATION NEEDS YOU - ALWAYS!

It is a well-known fact to those who have been in the chair or who have served as officers of local community associations that a great deal of the work done is by a very few people at any one time.

Committee members come and go regularly and in our own case, apart from a very few exceptions, the Chairmen have only been in the hot seat for a year or two or three. But it is to the everlasting credit of all those who have accepted election that they have been dedicated to the cause of Muswell Hill.

John Carr, Chairman from May 1978 to May 1979, reported that life had not been easy for the committee over the previous year. There had been a great deal to do and it had been done by a smaller group of committee members than there should have been. Repeated appeals were made in the Newsletter and at meetings for members to come forward - without success.

Christine Goldschmidt, who took over as Chair for the year May 1979 to May 1980, reiterated the problem in a piece of purple prose that is worth recording as one of our historical landmarks. Her report that year said:

"I must admit that there have been times during this past year that I have felt more like a beleaguered general than a Chairman, with constant battles breaking out and not enough fresh troops to put into action. The Association has been battling on with the ABC site, closure of police stations, Ally Pally, Cranley Dene, Haringey's local plan and minor skirmishes. Committee members have literally staggered from meeting to meeting putting forward the Association's views on a multitude of problems - none of which have yet been

resolved. We need far more people to get involved and volunteers are always welcome."

The year before that, the Secretary warned that there would be difficulty over elections and commented that "hope springs eternal that new blood will emerge and join the committee. We need more people willing to work".

Bill Tyler, who stepped down as Chairman at the AGM which took place in May 1985, said: "It was disappointing that no committee nominations had been received from outside the committee itself; the small nucleus of dedicated members who keep the Association running should not be relied on indefinitely and other members must come forward to ensure the Association does not wither."

At the AGM in May 2007, Chairman John Hajdu told the members present: "You have all seen my cry for help in our March Newsletter, when I said that if we did not get extra help we may have to curtail our activities. I said that surely out of 600 members there would be somebody who could offer a little of their time for the good of the Association. I am very sad to say that only two people have come forward."

However, although there has always been a large turnover of committee members, it would be wrong to overlook a wonderful nucleus of people over the years who have spent long periods in office, standing for election time and again. Our first-ever Chairman served for 18 years, Robert Andrewes for 13 years, and our current leader is coming up for seventeen years. Our early Secretaries were stayers, too, the first two serving ten years each.

Four members of our current committee at the moment of writing (May 2010) have served for 21 consecutive years. They are John Crompton, Sandra Howell, Monica Myers and Bill Tyler (Chairman 1983-85).

One man who never became Chairman, but who was a dominating influence in our work to protect Muswell Hill in the 1970s and 80s, and a pioneering and highly active member, was David Jones, of Church Crescent, who died in 2005 after a long illness. He was 59. A Fleet Street

newspaperman who first came to our area in 1970, he was a leading player in many campaigns over two or more decades which are featured as landmarks in this history.



Chairman John Hajdu (second left) toasts the committee members who stood down in 2008. From left Gerry Saunders, Eugene Myerson, Dawn Miles and Robert Andrewes.

They include our exceptionally high-profile opposition to plans for Alexandra Palace after the fire in 1980, the campaign against the Archway motorway proposals, the saving of the church in the Broadway which was to be listed and is now the Miller & Carter Steakhouse Restaurant, the saving of something like 3,600 trees in the western part of the borough in the mid-70s, the campaign to save Highgate Wood from extensive development in the late 70s, our opposition to the ABC cinema at the top of Muswell Hill becoming a supermarket (it is now an office block), the Parkland Walk, Wood Green Shopping City and myriad traffic problems.

He was a major contributor in the setting up of the Muswell Hill Festival, which was later managed by Liz Luxmore (herself still a member and now running the Muswell Hill children's toy library) for many years, and he launched and wrote the original MHFGA Newsletter. He gave up the editorship of the Newsletter at the end of 1979 because of "extreme pressure of work". It was said that "his nose fell into the

grindstone" and he was given six months off "to allow it to heal and his shoulders to straighten".

All his personal records were put into the archives at Bruce Castle in Tottenham, where they are available for research. See details of the archive in the Alexandra Palace and Park section. In the months leading up to his death in 2005, David arranged for four ginkgo trees to be planted on the Sainsbury's roundabout on Muswell Hill Broadway, working with Haringey's arboriculturists on the choice of species and the exact sites.

No consideration of volunteers and our Association can omit mention of the small army of individuals who keep us functioning as a group dedicated to "a cleaner, greener, safer environment". These unsung heroes include the members of our anti-graffiti and fly posting team. They have received much praise for their efforts from every section of the community.

There is a tree monitor, Ann Elliott, who liaises with Haringey's arboricultural service and keeps an eye on those listed trees in our conservation area that are situated in private gardens. Then we have a Highgate Wood representative who makes our views known in its governing body's committee meetings.

Our Alexandra Palace and Park representative, Monica Myers, has an invaluable assistant who attends Advisory Committee meetings and is a key figure influencing her reports. Then there are the volunteers that maintain the notice board next to Ryman's stationery shop and ensure that it is always up to date and that notices are attractively arranged.

Last but not least come the volunteers who form such a large part of the Newsletter team. They are responsible for bundling the Newsletters, stuffing envelopes and affixing labels. Then begins the long trudge across our streets as they deliver the Newsletters to all those members who are not receiving them by email or who have opted to have both versions. Truly they all contribute towards making our Association the success it is.

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

Eugene Myerson
(committee member 1977 - 2008)

I came to live in Fortis Green in 1973 and by 1975 had joined the Association. I was elected to the committee on 5th September 1977. In the 1980s I took on the job of Membership Secretary and newsletter distribution organiser from Sandra Howell. On top of this, I acted as transport spokesman for the Association.

Some of the issues that concerned us in the 1970s and early 1980s included a long-running campaign to keep the western field of the Fortis Green reservoir site as open space by HORS (Hands Off Reservoir Space). It was lost at a public enquiry when Haringey Council conceded the principle of allowing housing there. This was despite apparently being shown as Metropolitan Open Land in the great London Development Plan and my argument that it was a link in the green chain of open spaces from Cherry Tree Wood to Ally Pally via the Parkland Walk.

We waged successful campaigns to get zebra crossings at St James's Church, in Fortis Green at Collingwood Avenue and later, with the Friends of the Earth, at the bus terminus roundabout at Queen's Avenue and the top of Muswell Hill.

The rat run in Grand Avenue was closed thanks to the efforts of the late David Jones, then MHFGA's Press Officer.

When I became Membership Secretary and newsletter distribution organiser, members' names and addresses were held on lists of newsletter rounds under the names of the streets where they lived. The names were not in alphabetical order but in the numerical order in which the newsletter deliverer would deliver the newsletters. Each round was given a number.

I kept a paper copy of these typewritten lists and each time a member paid his or her annual subscription, which came to me, or

if I was informed that the member had moved or died, I would update the lists by hand. I had to remember which area the street was in, then find the member's name in that list and make the necessary changes. If someone sent me a cheque but forgot to include their address, the task was made harder. Cheques were sent to Treasurer, John Crompton, or given to him at a meeting.

When the deadline for the newsletter was about a week away, I would take the lists with hand-written amendments round to Patrick Morreau's house in Church Crescent. He would type in the amendments on his computerised version of the lists, print the whole out as sheets of address labels plus a new paper copy for making amendments next time.

When Patrick had finished, I collected the two copies from him, corrected any errors or omissions or added recent updates manually on both lists, and got ready for newsletter distribution.

A small team consisting of Sandra Howell, Christine Goldschmidt and myself, plus my wife, Dobrochna, as occasional substitute, would meet at my house or organise the lists and newsletters into rounds for distribution. Gerry Saunders would prepare and edit the newsletter each time, get the copies printed and deliver them to me a day before bundling.

The team would prepare the bundles for each round, put them in plastic bags, one for each round and mark up how many were in each bundle. We also had the laborious task of putting address labels and stamps on envelopes for posting newsletters to those people who did not get hand deliveries. I would have to buy the envelopes, stamps and plastic bags in advance.

Sandra and I would post the (100 plus) newsletters and she or I would take the bundles for hand delivery to Robert Andrewes, who would take them by car to each deliverer, apart from those which we took locally to deliverers, or delivered ourselves.

This team activity carried on under Jo and Richard Campbell who took over from me and who computerised all the membership records.

LANDMARKS 2000 - 2009

2000

First reports came that the Council was looking at the possibility of introducing a CPZ in Muswell Hill, and a long-awaited consultation document was finally delivered during the height of the summer holiday season in August, with a short consultation period which raised "considerable ire" amongst local citizens. So much so, the consultation period was extended.

Vigorous campaigning and protests ensured that the Council started to take opposition to the scheme seriously.

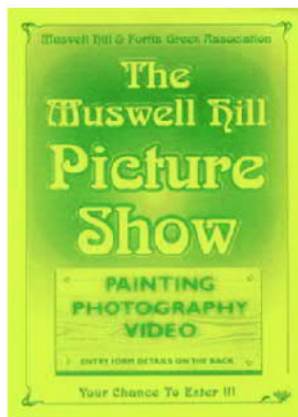
There was also an early warning that a proliferation of mobile phone masts was likely. Members were asked to air their views and pass on any information that came their way.

The Muswell Hill Picture Show (painting, photography and video) competition - an Association Millennium grant-aided project (we received £2,000) - was adjudged a success, with 90 entries received. Entries were displayed during the Muswell Hill Festival at the Birchwood Centre. The idea was Peter Thompson's.

2001

John Hajdu was elected Chairman and John Crompton Treasurer. Peter Thompson and Jill Bamber (noted tree expert) joined the committee. Retiring Chairman Robert Andrewes took on planning issues.

A new look MHFGA Newsletter on distinctive yellow paper was introduced in July, with an initial two pages which rapidly increased to four, then on to six and, later, to eight.





A four-year campaign for a new bus route linking Muswell Hill, Highgate, Hampstead and Swiss Cottage, led by a member of our Association, looked set for success when Transport for London finally agreed to give the 603 bus route "favourable consideration".

We launched a "green" poetry competition for verse dealing with environmental issues such as global warming, pollution, trees, rivers "or even just places you have loved". It attracted a large number of local poets.

In November, our membership topped 600 for the first time.

An anti-litter campaign launched by us with the help of the Neighbourhood Officer of Haringey Council started to gain ground, thanks to members reporting and later monitoring rubbish "hot spots".

2002

The MHFGA website was created in March by Denise Feeney and was an immediate success, with links to many other organisations and an encouraging early "hit rate".

The proposed Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) in Fortis Green was supported by the Association on the basis that it would deter all-day parking by commuters from outside the area and that all profit from the scheme would be ploughed back into measures to improve road safety.

We initiated the planning of the refurbishment of the "pocket park" in Fortis Green Road, opposite the John Baird pub, where major improvement works were carried out by Haringey to brighten the area. Working parties of members also collaborated with Haringey's

Neighbourhood team to clean up shrub and flower beds at the top of Muswell Hill.



*The pocket park in Fortis
Green road*

The Vice-chair Dawn Miles and a photographer took 36 images of litter hotspots and problem areas. They were available on disk and the Council asked for a copy. Some of the images appeared on the website.

Three volunteer members were introduced as tree monitors in the Conservation Area. And the first volunteers to pinpoint and monitor rubbish hotspots in our area came forward.

We supported a petition for keeping open the front counter at Muswell Hill police station. But later in the year it was announced that the front office would not re-open because "insufficient suitable volunteers had come forward". It did eventually open.

2003

The year started with a strong debate among members on the rights and wrongs of paving of front gardens to permit off-road parking of family cars. And our committee were active in seeking feedback from members about the kind of traffic- calming methods they would most welcome to lower speeds in our residential streets.

One of the largest and most successful meetings of the Association was held at St James's Church in February. The world-famous local organist Jennifer Bate gave the audience a "Guide to the King of Instruments" and played the organ in illustration. More than 200 people attended including Barbara Roche, our local MP, and more than £2,000 was raised for the church organ appeal.

The Association's first Front Garden Competition was held as a counter to the new trend of converting front gardens into parking for cars.

The North London Chorus sponsored the May issue of the Newsletter, the first time that advertising of this kind had been accepted for many years.

The Newsletter was expanded to six and eight pages. In November, a page of planning news was re-introduced (there had been a planning page in the old Fortisman magazine) and a local Events column on the back page.

We were consulted by Haringey's Head of Waste Management and Transport on the locations being considered for new litter bins and were able to provide input on spots where we particularly felt bins were needed.

2004

The Muswell Hill Festival was revived following a public meeting called by the Association in September to save it for the future after it had had a fallow year in 1993. The Hornsey Trust for children with cerebral palsy took over the administration. The event, which now incorporated a Donkey Derby, moved to Cherry Tree Wood.

In the week beginning 3rd June, our website received for the first time 1,000 hits in a week. In the second week this rose to 1,788 visits.

Our second Front Garden competition was held, with twice as many entrants as the first year. More than 30 gardens were visited by the judges, and the awards took place at the Alexandra Park Garden Centre. In addition to the four annual meetings for members, a June walk was introduced for the first time. The conducted walk, which was well attended, was in Highgate Wood and we were joined on the occasion by members of the Finchley Society.

It was suggested to Haringey that volunteers could clean up graffiti and fly posting in Muswell Hill Broadway, and the Council agreed to supply the chemicals and other equipment. Since then, there has been a weekly Association anti-graffiti patrol carried out by members Jack Whitehead and Bill Jago and the improvement in the appearance of the area has been marked. Our graffiti team wear bright yellow safety jackets sponsored by the Ham and High Broadway newspaper.



Jack Whitehead and Bill Jago at work removing graffiti.

In our war against fly posting on green boxes, it was reported that one of our volunteers had removed 72 posters from three boxes over a period of ten days. It seemed, too, that we had got the matter of litter along the Parkland Walk under control.

The Association was well represented at Communities First, the first-ever borough- wide conference on planning in September, at which 48 other organisations and groups were represented from all over the borough of Haringey.

2005

The Association suggested that the Muswell Hill Path should be restored under the Haringey's "Making the Difference" scheme. This path, which goes from Grove Lodge on Muswell Hill to almost the bottom of the hill, was originally created in 1945. £5,000 was allocated to the project in January and the work was completed later in the same year.



***The Muswell Hill path
before and after***



Having been deeply concerned with the lack of proper CCTV coverage in our Broadway shopping area for some time, our Chairman and Vice-chair (Dawn Miles) finally arranged in February a tour of the neighbourhood, including Fortis Green, with two Council officials involved in the operation of CCTV cameras.

It took from then until February 2008, during which time a series of meetings (details of which can be seen on other pages in this history), were held before our robust campaign finally succeeded, at least in part, and the first CCTV camera was installed in the Broadway.

The membership list was fully computerised, and all members' fees were up to date for the first time. The subscription was set at £8 and the £3 "over 60s" level was abolished.

Following representation by us, September of this year saw proposals for waiting restrictions on Fortis Green, designed to free this busy road of parked cars, making it safer for pedestrians and cyclists. The plan included double yellow lines on many road junctions plus continuous no waiting lines where appropriate.

This was the year which saw the start of the "Gaudi" shop front saga. A new fascia had been erected by Art for Art's Sake in the Broadway without planning permission, which immediately caused objections, led by our Association. Although the fascia design had its supporters, planning enforcements eventually won the day and it was removed. At the time of writing in July 2009, it had been replaced with a simpler fascia.

The regular meetings for our members were moved to the Muswell Hill Bowling Club in Kings' Avenue.

Members were notified of events by e-mail for the first time and the first suggestion was made by the Chairman that there should be plaques erected to commemorate Haringey's famous residents (see feature article).

2006

This year and the next was an exceptionally busy period. At the Better Haringey Recyclers of the Year awards event in March we received a trophy, a certificate and £400, to acknowledge our efforts both in the Newsletter and on our website to encourage members to recycle, coupled with a close liaison built up between us and Haringey's recycling department.

After more Making the Difference budget applications from us, we received £1,000 for further work done on the Muswell Hill Path (re-pointing, making good retaining walls and installing finger signposts plus other jobs on the Hill pocket park) and refurbishment of the John Baird pocket park was completed. We also submitted an application to the Making the Difference project (£1,500 awarded in the summer) for the refurbishment of three pocket parks (Midhurst, Eastern and Twyford Greens). In addition, available money from the November 2005 budget was used for tree and shrub planting as well as two new benches on Twyford Green.



In the summer, we proposed that, for safety reasons, yellow lines be placed on the corners of roads off Fortis Green. The Council agreed and implemented this.

It was decided, as the Association and Haringey had been so successful in removing fly posting in the Broadway, that consequently



*Our noticeboard, staffed by
volunteers*

local organisations were finding it difficult to get publicity sites for their events. Clearly a community notice board was needed.

We applied to Haringey and, under the Making the Difference project, money was allocated and the board put up in September. It was the first such notice board to be put up in Muswell Hill, and the first in Haringey to be administered by a residents' association. It is still a much-used information focal point outside Rymans the stationers opposite the Odeon (now the Everyman) cinema in the Broadway.

We objected to the new custom advertising banners stuck on lamp posts across the borough.

The May edition of our Newsletter featured illustrations for the first time in many years and was certainly the first to carry photographs in its present format.

2007

A revised Constitution of the Association was agreed and published in March. Covering all our aims and objectives in promoting a spirit of community within our area, it was designed to take us well into the 21st century, even though our range of activities was expected to grow ever wider.

Our committee decided it would be right for the Association to sign up to the Founding Statement on Sustainability as outlined at the Haringey Federation of Resident Associations' conference at the end of March. The statement read: "Our lives, our communities and our

society should be sustainable for generations to come. We agree to support the development of a Sustainable Haringey network".

In July, we received the Better Haringey Best Community Initiative (safer, greener, cleaner) Award. This was based on the overall aims of the Association, better local conditions and environment.



The Better Haringey Award Ceremony for best community initiative in 2007. From left, Cllr Lorna Reith, Chairman John Hajdu and Vice Chair Dawn Miles

An anti-litter poster campaign with Fortismere students was suggested and carried out in the summer. Winners of the competition saw their posters all over Muswell Hill.

During the autumn, planters were put up at Muswell Hill roundabout and improvements to the Parkland Walk were undertaken, including new lighting and new paint in the underpass. The entrance to Muswell Hill playing fields was refurbished in the autumn.

The Association continued the fight to save the Fortis Green Clinic. Though we failed to stop the sale of the Clinic, we did win some important concessions including the fact that any alternative venue to Fortis Green Clinic that was arranged in the short term would be within the same locality, that there were no plans for closing Crouch End Clinic, and we secured a promise that local services such as foot

health, children's services and mother and baby classes would not be transferred down the hill to the new Park Road Health Centre when it was to be opened in 2009.

We were also guaranteed full consultation on all future developments.

The idea of plaques to commemorate famous residents of Haringey, first put to Haringey Council by John Hajdu in late 2004, was finally agreed and after several meetings the Haringey Green Plaque scheme was born and a shortlist of candidates decided.

The first plaque in Haringey, for the crystallographer William Barlow (1845 - 1934) who lived in Hillfield Park, was put in position on 3rd October.

John Crompton, our Treasurer and Chairman of the Muswell Hill Conservation Area Advisory Committee, produced a report on independent shops in Muswell Hill during the year.

Our committee discussed what could be done to ensure their survival and it was agreed that our Association should encourage our members to use local shops. The committee advice was encapsulated in the phrase "Use them or lose them".

Following close monitoring from committee members involved with our ongoing anti-graffiti campaign, a meeting was held in August with local council officials, parks police authorities and fly posting removal contractors to seek ways to curb heavy graffiti activity in the underpass at the top of Muswell Hill between Muswell Hill Primary School and the Parkland Walk.

Action proposed included painting the interior of the tunnel in a light green shade and the exterior a darker shade of green to create an environmentally friendly ambience, regular visits to remove graffiti and tagging on site and the taking of pictures to identify culprits.

We also persuaded the Council to replace the old lighting in the Muswell Hill subway with anti -vandal lighting as well as new lighting at either end for safety and security reasons.

Education in local schools was to be investigated to raise awareness that the tunnel was not a graffiti wall. At the time of writing (May

2010) the situation had continued to improve, reported graffiti removed within 24 hours and there has been almost no vandalism.

The attendance at the Muswell Hill Festival in September was higher than ever before, with £6,000 raised for the Hornsey Trust. MHFGA volunteers, demonstrating our usual commitment to the Festival, manned the gates where programmes were available and sold 900, contributing £900 towards the day's take.



Member David Hamilton and his son Alistair manning the Association's stand at the Muswell Hill Festival



2008

Our first spring meeting in February was devoted to sustainability of the environment as part of our commitment within a borough-wide network devoted to making our lives, our communities and our society sustainable for generations to come.

We sought wholehearted co-operation from members as speakers at that meeting spread the word on how individuals can all help to arrest global warming from carbon emissions by energy conservation, recycling, cutting back on fossil fuel levels, working allotments and even buying fewer imported goods.

The meeting was a spur that led to the founding of the new Muswell Hill Sustainability Group whose aim was to establish a group that would raise the profile of green issues and help individuals to make greener lifestyle decisions. In March 2010, the group launched its share offer.



From left: MHSG and MHFGA members Fritz Fitzke, Gordon Hutchinson, our Chairman John Hajdu with share certificate, Alan Morton and Peter Thompson

After a three-year fight led by our Chairman, two new 24-hour CCTV cameras were installed in the spring at both ends of Muswell Hill Broadway at the two roundabouts.

In February, the pocket park opposite The Hill pub at the top of Muswell Hill was restored, replanted and renamed by our Association as Hill Pocket Park. Also, in February, following a suggestion from the Association, the fencing next to the bus stop at the top of Muswell Hill, and that on the opposite side of the road, was finished with protective lower mesh.

This was successful in preventing litter being blown onto the grass banks above, Muswell Hill Primary School and the entrance to the Parkland Walk.



The Hill Pocket Park

In March, for the first time, Newsletters were sent out by email to those who previously had been posted the Newsletter, saving postage and time every two months. By September, there were more than 100 members getting their Newsletters this way. Gerry Saunders retired from his role as Newsletter Editor and the first edition of the Newsletter under its new Editor, Barbara Erskine, was published in May.

Members who attended the AGM in May celebrated the Association's Diamond Jubilee (marking 60 years of service to the community) with an imposing cake and champagne to toast the occasion.

Haringey Council's plan to vacate their existing Civic Centre in the High Road, Wood Green (a well-designed public building of the 1950s) and move to Woodside House in Woodside Park was put on hold. The financial situation at the time was cited as a reason, but there had been a number of objections to the plan from our Committee because of the poor accessibility of Woodside House from the west of the borough and the lack of parking there.

In November, after two years of hard work mainly by our Chairman, who spearheaded this special project, the Langton Clock in Muswell Hill Broadway - a local landmark since 1899, when it was erected by the head of the Langtons jewellery business - had been repaired by a local clock maker in Fortis Green and was put back in working order in May 2009.



Fortis Green Clock maker, John Kendall, in the process of restoring the Langton clock

2009

The most popular feature of our website was the high number of photographs, with the shop front gallery the most visited. January saw nearly 1,000 visitors from across the world downloading images from the shop front and environmental hotspot pages.

Early in the year, we moved our members' meetings from the Bowling Club in King's Avenue to the pleasant North Bank community centre, a refurbished Victorian villa in Pages Lane with parking spaces for those who need them, or within easy walking distance from the Broadway.

More and more members were now receiving the email Newsletter with the advantages of its arrival on screen earlier than the printed version. Some said they prefer to get both versions!

Continuing this Association's long-standing commitment to its role as a planning and environmental watchdog, the May issue of the Newsletter contained a report by Pat Bloomfield, our Planning Officer, on no fewer than eight major planning applications in which we had been closely involved.

Posters advertising the Association's meetings and inviting members of the public to attend were produced and displayed in local shops, libraries and our notice board.

We persuaded the Council to install new, more powerful street lighting in the streets around Fortis Green Road and put other roads in the area on the priority list ahead of the rest of Haringey.

The Association made a successful bid for £2000 of Making the Difference funds. The money was used for improvements to the two roadside verges at the junction of Colney Hatch Lane and Pages Lane.



LANDMARKS 2010 - 2019

2010

Membership stood at 680 and though most still received the Newsletter by hand, almost a third started getting it by email and moved to standing order to pay their membership subscription. Increasing problems were noted at the East Finchley northbound filter particularly at the crossing, as far back as 2006. Although a little out of our area, some importance was attached to this matter as many members use the High Road in East Finchley or travel by bus or tube there. Barnet did not accept our recommendations and despite several further requests nothing was done.

The Association's "Making the Difference" bid for the year 2010/11 resulted in the placing of benches at Midhurst Green.

We successfully campaigned for double yellow lines to stop cars parking on dangerous junctions in Twyford Avenue, Fortis Green Road, Annington Road and other roads.

We took over the replanting and maintenance of the two abandoned flower beds at the corner of Colney Hatch Lane and Pages Lane.

Members' letters are published in the Newsletter as a new feature.

The first history of the Association, written by John Hajdu, was published and all copies were sold out within the year.

The website was updated with more links and new features and the ability to view old Newsletters, encouraging more visitors to our pages.

2011

Following the regular planning application column, the Newsletter introduced two new columns: *Membership* and *Members in Profile*.

We took over the maintenance and upkeep of the flower boxes at the roundabout bus terminus.

Haringey handed the Notice Board in the Broadway back to the Association and members Jack Whitehead and Bill Jago, also known as the Association graffiti clean-up team, ensured that it displayed community notices in an attractive and eye-catching way.

The Notice Board was clearly marked as ours, with contact details and an invitation for new members to join us, along with a description of all the benefits of membership.

2012

First Newsletter with back and front cover in colour and new masthead and logo.

A campaign for better street lighting in Queen's Avenue resulted in the coppicing of the overhanging trees.

Jacqueline Servat was appointed Treasurer and John Crompton Honorary Secretary.

We continued our campaigning against crossovers.

2013

Despite our vigorous campaign, widely reported by the press, we were unsuccessful in stopping the closure of the Muswell Hill police station.

Start of the campaign for safer crossing facilities at the junction of Tetherdown and Fortis Green, used by hundreds of children twice a day.

We had a very successful stall at the last Muswell Hill Festival (in Cherry Tree Wood), with which we were closely involved since its inception (see 1976).

We commented on the proposals for the redevelopment of the St Luke' site, the largest development in Muswell Hill for many years.

MUSWELL HILL & FORTIS GREEN ASSOCIATION
MARCH 2012

Terrorism threat looms
Our meeting spotlights heightened alert

WE ARE AT RISK from terrorist attack in Muswell Hill, much as anywhere in London, this was the message heard by members at our well-attended meeting. We learned that successful counter-terrorism requires depend largely on our vigilance and willingness to report anything suspicious.

Counter-terror drills are called on 'substantiated' and this will occur during the London Olympics. The meeting leaders, Sgt Underwood and Constable Karalunas, were, therefore, keen to give us confidence to trust our instincts and report anything that might cause us to flinch. They stressed the danger of relying on others to act and stressed on that every report is taken seriously. 'Your report could be the saving point of the report and it is the job of counter-terrorism teams to put together the puzzle', said Sgt Underwood. (Continued on page 5)

Meetings to come
Wednesday 14 March 2012
This information about the meeting is on the front cover of the newsletter.
Wednesday 14 May 2012
Association AGM and AGM
Come and spend a pleasant evening with us on our own grounds. We will ask about how we can help and how you can help us. The AGM bus leaves the door and leaves 17.45, 18.15 and 18.45 on Monday.

DIARIES AT THE READY... IT'S OUR MAY AGM
The Annual General Meeting is on Wednesday, 16 May at 7pm in the Garden Room at North Bank, Pages Lane, N10 2PP. The agenda is as follows:
1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the AGM on Wednesday 18 May 2011
3. Chairman's Report
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Election of Officers
6. Election of Committee
7. Election of Independent Examiner
8. Any Other Business, including questions from members.
Nominations for Officers to sit on the Committee should be sent to the Chairman, John Hapth. They can also be put forward at the AGM itself.

It's time to pay your subs!
The first spring meeting with our Association is on Wednesday 14 March. We don't forget to pay your subs! Your subs fund our newsletters, you might like to study our new early means of financing our campaigns and projects. See how to pay your subs on page 2 of the newsletter. Information or just send for your cheque.

Photo left: Sgt Underwood, Constable Karalunas and our own Sgt Williams of the Muswell Hill Safety Neighbourhood team

Nick Barr was appointed our new Planning Officer. Tony Wells took over the photographing and recording of shop fronts in Muswell Hill.

2014

After several years of lobbying by the Association, we were successful and first the W7 and then the 144 buses started their routes from the stop at the Muswell Hill roundabout.

Launch of the new www.mhfga.org website, completely redesigned and expanded.

In addition to the front and back pages, the centre pages of the Newsletter were printed in colour and for the first time, our Newsletter listed our Corporate Members.

To improve Newsletter distribution by email, the Association adopted the MailChimp system, which also allowed us to monitor Newsletter take-up.

Start of regular email updates to remind members of forthcoming events and deadlines.

Organised by members Ruth Schamroth, Pat Lott and Lys de Beaumont, the Association's stall became a regular event on the Broadway.

New Committee appointments: David Orme, Newsletter Editor; Duncan Neill, Representative on the Alexandra Palace Statutory Advisory Committee; Tony Wells, Web Manager; Alex Vincenti, Membership Secretary.

2015

Membership grew to 720, including 28 local businesses.

Our Planning Officer and Vice Chairman, Nick Barr, reviewed over 500 planning applications.

The Newsletter, now published in full colour, had eight pages and was mainly distributed by email - though 195 members still received it delivered by hand to their door. Distribution was significantly increased with promotional copies made available in the two local

Libraries, several cafes and restaurants, and at Waitrose in Muswell Hill.

We launched the Association Twitter account to better share news and information with our members, and also reach the wider public and encourage them to join.



To achieve more visibility, we persuaded the Council to turn our Notice Board by 90 degrees. Pat Lott took over the administration of the notices on display and Ruth Schamroth took over the maintenance of the Board itself.

A new corporate member, Bill's restaurant, paid for the Notice Board to be repainted and given a shiny new look.

We continued the very successful June walks (started in 2004) by revisiting Queen's Wood for a conducted tour. Previous walks covered Alexandra Park, Fortis Green, Highgate Wood, East Finchley and Muswell Hill.

For the first time, we offered the option to pay for the membership online by credit card.

We started a campaign to refurbish benches in the shopping centre.

We took a stall at the Fortismere School Summer Festival and at the new Muswell Hill piazza event.

Our Environment Officer, Brian Livingston, made repeated representations to the Council, to urge road and pavement repairs, and removal of graffiti.

We submitted detailed comments on the draft Haringey Local Plan.

Our Chairman John Hajdu (right) officially opens The Mossy Well - the new J D Wetherspoon pub.



At our November meeting, Graham Parkinson (with amazing slides) talks about his fascinating experience as volunteer among Buddhist communities in northern India.

Among the unique memories, in a nunnery of young girls aged six to 12, he discovered they loved cricket and spent their breaks in their long red robes chasing an old ball round the rocky mountainside at 14,000 feet.



Young Buddhist nuns playing cricket

We launched the Association's second photo competition, theme *My Muswell Hill*. There were thirty entries, the youngest aged just 9.

Judged by professional photographer Zoe Norfolk, Graham Parkinson, president of the Muswell Hill photographic Society and

committee member John Crompton, the first price went to Tom Buckland for his photo of Martyn's shop in the Broadway.



2016

We reviewed an unprecedented 660 planning applications and made 45 objections, with additional representations concerning crossovers and front garden parking.

After 10 years of campaigning, the council finally agreed to replace the patchwork tarmac of the Fortis Green Road pavements with new paving slabs.

We welcomed the introduction of the 20mph limit on most of our local roads and we were involved in the discussions for the introduction of local controlled parking.

We supported the Highgate Neighbourhood Forum for a shuttle bus service linking Muswell Hill, the Whittington and Royal Free hospitals. The campaign by Cross Safe N10 for safer conditions at the

junction of Colney Hatch Lane, Alexandra Park Road and Pages Lane was successful.



We continued to maintain and replant our flower boxes around the roundabout and the trough in Queens Avenue.

NatWest, Barclays, Nationwide, the Library, KFH and Hamptons generously agreed to water the flower boxes outside their premises. Sadly, the flowers in the water trough opposite the Library were often stolen and needed regular replacing.

We planted some extra shrubs in the Colney Hatch Lane beds which look splendid.

We asked the Council – which agreed – to bring back the night collection of rubbish bags from shops.

Our member Eugene Myerson persuaded the Council to provide two new benches in Midhurst Green.

Membership stood at 730, including 32 shops, businesses, organisations and churches.

The Ordinary Membership fee, unchanged since 2005, was increased to £10 and the Corporate Membership became £25.

Christine Morris took over as Editor of the Newsletter from David Orme.

From May, the Newsletter used larger print, was all in colour and also featured the profiles of two corporate members.

Our website had visitors from over 80 Countries, 22% from the USA. Committee member Zoe Norfolk joined the Committee and took over the administration of our Facebook page.

The Association's Twitter, just one year old, had 300 followers.

John Hajdu, Chairman of the Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association, was appointed a *Haringey Hero* for his work for the community.

Regular members' events at a glance

March	Talk. St. James Church: serving the Muswell Hill Community.
April	Talk. <i>Searching for Victor Hember</i> , killed on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, 1 st July 1916, told through his letters.
May	AGM
May	Stall at Midsummer Muswell.
June	Muswell Hill walk via Coldfall Wood, St. Pancras & Islington Cemetery. Led by Committee member Bill Tyler.
October	Presentation by Louise Stewart, Chief Executive and Mark Evison, Park Manager. <i>What's Next for The Alexandra Park & The Palace?</i>
November	Presentation: Italian Organic and Bio-Dynamic Wines
December	Stall at the Very Merry Muswell Christmas event

2017

Membership grew to 748 members, including 45 corporate members.

George Danker joined the Committee and took on the role of Press & PR and helped organising meetings.

Over the year, we reviewed approximately 620 planning applications and made 40 objections.

We launched the '*Odd One Out*' children competition, supported by local shops. Created and specially planned by Zoe Norfolk for children 9-12 on holiday in July/August, the idea was to find one strange object - for example a tin of beans in a toy shop or a spanner in a bookshop - in the windows of 27 participating shops. The thirty winners received ticket as prizes donated by Everyman Cinema.



After complaints about buses on route 234 not stopping at convenient places along Coppetts Road, London Buses installed permanent bus stops in this section.

We continued to make representation about the delays experienced by traffic turning right from East Finchley into Fortis Green.

Committee Member for Environmental Issues and Green Spaces, Brian Livingston, continued working with the Parks Department and with Veolia to ensure that our green spaces were kept clean. We liaised with the Neighbourhood Action Team (unfortunately now disbanded) to deal with rubbish collection, potholes, paving stones, benches, blocked road gullies and damaged waste bins.

We succeeded in two campaigns to make road crossing easier for pedestrians. One was at the junction of Fortis Green and Tetherdown, where there is now a pedestrian phase when all traffic is stopped. The other was in Priory Road at the bottom of Redston Road, where the Council agreed, subject to funding, to install a zebra crossing.

John Hajdu, our Chairman, received the Muswelllife Local Gem Award for his work for the community. (In the picture with actor Nitin Ganatra and local MP Catherine West)

On the social media front, Facebook now had 409 followers; Twitter 450; and the newly launched Instagram 182.

April saw one of the largest audiences ever for one of the Association's talks, *How To Object To Planning Applications*, a question-and-answer session with Emma Williamson, the Assistant Director of Planning at Haringey Council. The December Tombola at the Very Merry Muswell Association Stand raised £461 for the Muswell Hill Soup Kitchen.



SOCIAL MEDIA



The Association first joined the social media in November 2014 with Twitter, managed by committee member Duncan Neill. Then, in September 2016, came Facebook and in 2018 Instagram, both curated by committee member and professional photographer Zoe Norfolk.

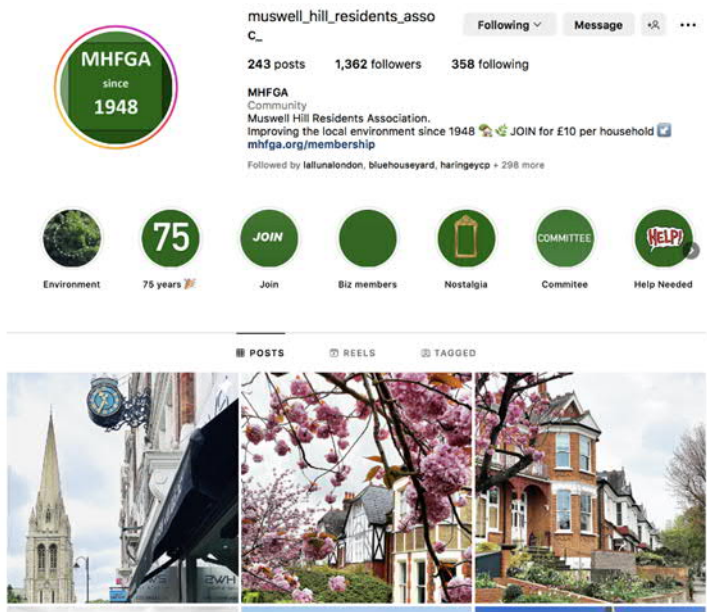
Until then, the Association's connection with members and the local community had been often one-way through the Newsletter, the Noticeboard, the website and stalls at local events. Social media added a two-way channel of instant communication and engagement and has become instrumental in reaching members and new community audiences with photos and topical news for quick action and feedback.



Today, after almost 2,000 tweets about the Alexandra Palace and Park (Duncan is the Association’s representative on Ally Pally’s Consultative Committee), the police, local art scene and shops and businesses, our Twitter account has 1200 followers and monitors more than 400 other local twitters.

Our Facebook, managed by Zoe, has 2,500 followers and 2,100 likes, regularly posts images and updates on what is changing in our area, also featuring and sharing news and photos of local businesses with other social media accounts.

The Association’s Instagram has grown rapidly to 1,350 followers. It has been especially successful in getting responses from businesses and sharing widely our committee vacancy announcements.



MHFGA Instagram

2018



The Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association celebrated its 70th anniversary. The Association now had 775 members, including 74 local businesses and organisations.

Several shops and restaurants opened and closed over the previous twelve month. Rents and business rates were the main concern, but some restaurants closed because of head office decisions, without considering the local situation.

Several large developments were completed: Raglan House, the old police station and the 80 new homes on the Coppetts Wood site were to be the next major project.

Approved was also the application to extend upwards the John Baird pub, to provide 7 flats. Another scheme to which we strongly objected was to extend the former Woolworth building to provide nine flats. The most controversial application was the redevelopment and building of six flats above the single storey shops at 1-9 Fortis Green Road. An active campaign involving our members lead to a large number of objections, but eventually the Council granted permission.

Our planning officer, Nick Barr, reviewed 326 planning applications and made 17 objections. This was fewer than the past year and continued a downward trend, consistent with the downturn of the housing market. We continued our objections to the creation of car

parking at the expense of front gardens and grassed amenities areas, to the applications for the demolition of 76, Woodland Gardens and to the creation of accommodation on the roof of Risborough Close, Muswell Hill Place.



Our efforts to ease traffic congestion in Muswell Hill were successful and we got the Council to remove a redundant disabled bay and four double yellow lines in Fortis Green, near the junction with Fortis Green Road. As a result, buses were no longer blocked by cars parked there, putting an end to the

previous constant traffic jams near the traffic lights. The Council also agreed to extend parking restrictions in Muswell Hill Broadway in the stretch by Muswell Road, to avoid the typical weekend bottlenecks.

Bill Tyler, who has been associated with the Association since 1972 and was chairman for 2 years in 1983, retired.

Out meetings received unprecedented public participation. At the April presentation and Q&A with the Haringey police, more than 60 members of the public came to discuss crime and disorder around nightclubs, theft of and from motor vehicles, muggings by and on teenagers and how to protect children on their way to and from school.

The October talk on the history and development of the Northern Line, with amazing slides, attracted 75 people, one of the largest crowds ever.

The second Odd One Out summer competition was even more successful than the first one,



with 28 shops and 71 children taking part, 36 of them giving the correct answers. The winners received free tickets to the Everyman cinema.

Further changes were made to the Newsletter: the membership form was moved online to the MHFGA website, making more space available for photos and articles.

Three photo albums were now available to show the Muswell Hill shop fronts, regularly updated in print and online by committee member Tony Wells as new shops opened, a fantastic historic record of the shop movement in our area.

A working party of four members started looking after the Colney Hatch beds on a regular basis.

We organised a tombola on our stand at the Very Merry Muswell event, raising £210 for Wave, the local charity for children with learning disabilities.

In celebration of MHFGA's 70th anniversary, the Association launched a photography competition entitled 'Views of Muswell Hill'. The winner, chosen by the public on the base of Facebook 'like', was Maximilian Haslinger-Hutter with 315 likes.



The winning entry by Maximilian Haslinger-Hutter

Regular members' events at a glance

March	Presentation. Flesh and Flour: <i>British charcuterie</i> .
April	Talk. <i>How to object effectively to planning applications</i> .
May	AGM
May	Parkland Walk Nature Reserve. <i>Alexandra Park to Queen's Wood</i> .
June	<i>Highgate to Crouch Hill</i> walk organised by the Friends of Parkland Walk
June	Midsummer Muswell Stall.
October	Special pre-opening tour of Alexandra Palace Theatre.
November	Presentation. Majestic Wines.
November	Special pre-opening tour of Alexandra Palace Theatre.
December	Very Merry Muswell Stall & Tombola.

2019

We were delighted when our bid for funding was successful, and we were awarded £500 for plants for our flower boxes and beds. With the help of our members, we continued to maintain the flower boxes around the roundabout, and local shops helped with watering and keeping an eye on the boxes outside their premises.

The display of daffodils was particularly impressive and so were the flower boxes, again looked after by members, from planting in April throughout summer, to make sure they looked at their best all the time.

Over the summer period, Muswell Hill and surroundings saw a spate of flyposting for funfairs and the circus. Our graffiti team of Jack Whitehead and Bill Jago dealt with them and continued to undertake



weekly inspection and cleaning up graffiti and reporting to the Council anything they could not clean.

Chris Barker, our transport officer, raised the issue of parking on Sundays in Muswell Hill Broadway, which was causing congestion, especially for buses. The Council agreed and painted double yellow lines in parts of the Colney Hatch Lane end of the Broadway.

After five years of chasing the Council by our Environment Officer, Brian Livingston, Haringey finished work on the new tabletop crossover by Sainsbury's. Previously there were broken paving, raised kerbs that trolleys, pushchairs and disabled chairs could not pass, and the area flooded when it rained.

We campaigned against curtailing the 134 bus route, but unfortunately it went ahead.

We asked for better lighting at local zebra crossings and supported a petition for a new crossing near the Clissold Arms. Unfortunately, we were not successful.

Waitrose chose the Association as 'preferred local organisation' and we were awarded £200.

In December, at our stall at the pre-Christmas 'It's a Wonderful Muswell' we decided to run a 'Name the Teddy Bear' competition instead of a tombola, with prizes including vouchers contributed by Planet Organic and Everyman Cinema. Proceeds from the event were donated to the Harington Scheme, a local charity which helps young adults with learning difficulties and disabilities.

In the New Year's Honour List, Our Chairman, John Hajdu, was surprised and delighted to be awarded an MBE for his contribution towards Holocaust awareness and education.





Maureen and John Hajdu

Regular members' events at a glance

March	Visit to Lauderdale House.
April	Talk by Sunshine Garden Center, <i>A Spring in Your Step</i> .
May	AGM
June	Tour of Highgate Cemetery.
October	Talk by Michael Burman on the history and development of the Northern Line, with slides of the stations and contemporary maps.
November	Talk by cinema historian Jeremy Buck on the history of the cinemas in Muswell Hill and in particular the Odeon.

PLANNING MATTERS

76 Woodland Gardens: a story of perseverance, by Nick Barr

I suspect that most members are not aware that Woodland Gardens is an area earmarked by a local group as being suitable for consideration for an extension to the Muswell Hill Conservation Area, and even fewer are aware of the saga that has been played out concerning 76 Woodland Gardens.

In many respects the story encapsulates why the area should be included in an extended Conservation Area. The property is typical of the area, being a double-fronted Edwardian villa with a gabled bay and the architectural detailing that is typical of its type.

In August 2018 an application was submitted for the demolition of the building and its replacement with a bland modernistic rendition that failed to respect the Edwardian spirit of the original. As the house is in a prominent position the site is especially sensitive and the design particularly problematic.



Together with 59 other individuals and organisations, the Association submitted a detailed objection. The application was subsequently withdrawn, and a revised application made in the following December which attracted almost 90 objections, including a further objection by the Association.

This second application was refused on appeal and a third application, made in May 2018, was refused in July as the proposal “would fail to make an acceptable architectural response to the site, and would fail to respect local context and character”.

A fourth application was made in April 2019. Although this was marginally more sympathetic it contained many contentious elements and, after attracting substantial opposition, including a petition of more than 180 signatories, it was refused in the following June on substantially the same grounds as the previous application. A fifth and final application was made in June 2019.

This envisaged the retention of the original road-facing facade with development taking place behind it, including a controversial heavily glazed and modernistic rear. This proved acceptable to Haringey which granted conditional consent in September 2022.

The perseverance shown by the applicants and those who sought to retain the character of the area resulted in a compromise that could have been achieved earlier had there been constructive dialogue between all parties at the outset of the project without incurring what can only be assumed to be substantial costs.

For those who wish to see full details of all the applications, including supporting drawings and objections, they can be viewed by going to Haringey Public Register website and search for application HGY/2019/1814.

LANDMARKS 2020 - 2023

2020

The start of our membership year (note: our year runs from the 1st of May to the 30th of April) couldn't have been more encouraging. The Association's first talks and events all saw great participation.

In our Events' calendar for the year, we were looking forward to the visit to the Muswell Hillbilly Brewers in March, in April to a talk by the "Chewing gum" man, Ben Wilson, and then in June to a walk in Kenwood.

But that was not to be.

With Covid and lockdown, like so many others we started using Zoom, first for Committee meetings and then for our regular members' talks. Though at a distance, the Association still continued its work covering issues concerning the environment, planning and traffic matters and keeping in touch with other parties such as the police and Alexandra Palace.

For the first time in the history of the Association, the Charman's could not deliver the traditional report in person at the AGM and had to email it to members.

"I was hoping to make my report to you in person"– wrote the Chairman, John Hajdu "but for obvious reasons this meeting could not take place. The money we saved on hire costs and food/wine was rounded up and was donated to the Whittington Hospital." And added: "We hope that our meetings in October and November can take place. We will of course give you further information nearer the time." In fact, it would take two years before we could meet again in public.

Our Committee member and professional photographer Zoe Norfolk documented the eerie deserted Muswell Hill during the period.



Lockdown in Muswell Hill. See more of Zoe's pictures in the series "You Must Stay Home" on www.zoenorfolk.com.

At the AGM, the Association counted 778 members, including 82 corporate accounts, almost 1,500 Facebook and 900 Twitter followers, and 3,500 website visitors.

Further changes in the Committee: Chris Barker, Transport Officer, retired and his role was taken by Tony Wells, previously responsible for keeping the archives of shopfront pictures; and we were joined by Richard Marmalade as Membership Secretary.

285 planning applications were reviewed, and nine objections were made. We continued to object to the creation of vehicle crossovers and front garden parking, working with a number of

interested parties in a co-ordinated response to such applications particularly the Crossover Group.

We made representations to Haringey Council regarding the lighting on the Zebra Crossing on Fortis Green close to the western junction of Twyford Ave. Members had expressed concern about the inadequate level of lighting and the inability of drivers to clearly see pedestrians waiting to cross. However, having examined the accident statistics, Haringey felt unable to install Lit Poles, claiming there were other priorities.

We launched a short story competition, with two categories: under 14 and over 14. The writers and journalists Valerie and Trevor Grove, were impressed by the high standard of the entries. Congratulations to John Crompton who was awarded first prize for his story *The Americano*. The joint runners-up were John Reid with his story *Alien-nation*, and Martin Burstyn with *Ruin*.

Regular members’ events at a glance

March	Tour of Highgate’s Lauderdale House
April	Talk by Sunshine Garden Center, <i>A Spring in Your Step</i>
May	AGM
June	Alexandra Park guided walk
October	History of the Alexandra Palace Theatre talk
November	Highgate Wood Roman Kiln talk
December	It’s A Wonderful Muswell

2021

Again, because of lockdown and Covid restrictions this year’s AGM could not take place in public, and we had to cancel the scheduled conducted tours of Kenwood and Muswell Hill.

Despite the restriction, this was one of the busies years of the Association.

The past 18 months had been very difficult for everyone and we decided we wanted to support local organisations to make a

positive impact on our area and community. So, we launched our first Community Fund, with up to £500 for local projects.

The winners were Friends of the Highgate Roman Kiln, for their educational project to create replica Highgate Wood pots for presentation and exhibition; Muswell Hill Rhythmic Gymnastics, to make rhythmic gymnastics, which can be an expensive and quite exclusive sport, accessible to everyone; and Sense of Locality, for their ‘WELCOME’ project to empower and welcome asylum seekers into the community.



Friends of Highgate Roman Kiln Project

Thanks to Zoom we could resume our members’ talks. The November, February and March Zoom meetings were attended on average by more than 50 members. In November we heard from Alex Fraser the Council’s arboricultural officer; in February, the distinguished art historian Peter Webb talked about his amazing collection; and in March, Maurice Collins gave us an interactive

introduction to his collection of over 3000 posters and everyday gadgets.

During the year, we welcomed 29 new members, taking the total to 773, including 78 businesses and organisations.

Our Facebook followers grew to almost 1,800, 1,000 followed us on Twitter and 365 joined our new Instagram account. 3,500 visitors came to the MHFGA website, which now had an additional page of historical videos and a direct link to the MemberMojo membership system.

321 planning applications were reviewed, and we objected to twelve.

Of concern, was the extension of Permitted Development rights by central Government to – among others - the conversion of high street units for residential purposes, and the upward extension of dwellings and blocks of flats by up to two storeys. Although with limitations, the net effect of Permitted Development took away the power of a local authority to refuse and therefore control, development in its area.

Having failed to meet housing targets imposed by Government, Haringey Council had its planning powers restricted and had now to consider applications with “presumption in favour of sustainable development” possibly making easier for developers to obtain planning consent and win appeals.

In the Conservation Area, the major event were the two applications to add a storey onto the roof of Whitehall Lodge, the much-admired 1930s block in Pages Lane. Objections to the applications were made by the Association, many individual members and local residents. What was notable however was the fact that there were also objections from many other parts of the country and around the world. Some contained an enormous amount of well researched detail about the architectural significance of Whitehall Lodge and how this would be ruined by building on the roof. The applications were refused by the Council.

Whitehall Lodge

Page's Lane
Muswell Hill, N. 10
TUDor 3850



MODERN LUXURY FLATS



We objected, together with other fifty objectors, to the application to build one or two houses in the rear garden of 58 and 60 Tetherdown. The difficulty was that Haringey is not able to have an outright ban on houses being built in back gardens and each application had to be considered on its merits against certain criteria. In our objection we said that the criteria did not appear to be satisfied. The Council took a similar view and refused permission.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions we still managed to keep the flowers and plants in good shape. Members made generous donations towards



*Colney Hatch Lane bed. Photo by
Brian Livingston.*

the cost of the flowers found time between shielding and home working to attend to the plants.

We continued to engage with Haringey Parks Departments and Veolia to maintain and improve green spaces and approached Haringey to get taps by the roundabout and by the Colney Hatch Lane beds for watering. The application is ongoing.

To strengthen the Association's work with the environment and tree preservation, we appointed a new Tree Officer, Jonathan Popper, who was successful in blocking the felling of the Wellingtonia in a garden in Southern Road, on which a Preservation Order is to be placed. He also saved a splendid oak in Windermere Avenue.

Partly because of Covid restrictions, but also because of almost total distribution by email, we stopped hand delivering our Newsletters, which resulted in savings in printing costs. Peter Davies, our long-standing distributor, still supplies hard copies to libraries and other outlets. Also, as our members' and committee meetings were on Zoom, we saved on room hire charges, and we were able to give a donation of £100 to the local Soup Kitchen.

Members' events at a glance

November	Zoom talk by Alex Fraser the Council's arboricultural officer
February	Zoom talk by Peter Webb the distinguished art historian, writer and fine print collector on his collection
March	AGM
March	Zoom talk by Maurice Collins on his collection of over 3000 posters and everyday gadgets

2022

This year's AGM, at last live and in person, was also recorded on video for members who could not attend and made available on the Association's website.



First ever video of the AGM on www.mhfga.org

We welcomed 31 new households and 6 businesses and organisations, taking the total membership to 780, comprising 83 businesses and 697 households.

To make sure all our members are informed of our activities, a small number of Newsletter were still (and shall continue to be) sent by post to those without access to e-mail.

We have been promoting our Business and Organisation members by listing them, giving them space for special offers, as well as offering to feature them in our Newsletters and on social media, and displaying their logos on our website.

Several changes in the Committee: Tony Wells, after nine years as web manager, curator of our archive of pictures of shopfronts, and more recently Traffic Officer, had sadly to resign due to ill health.

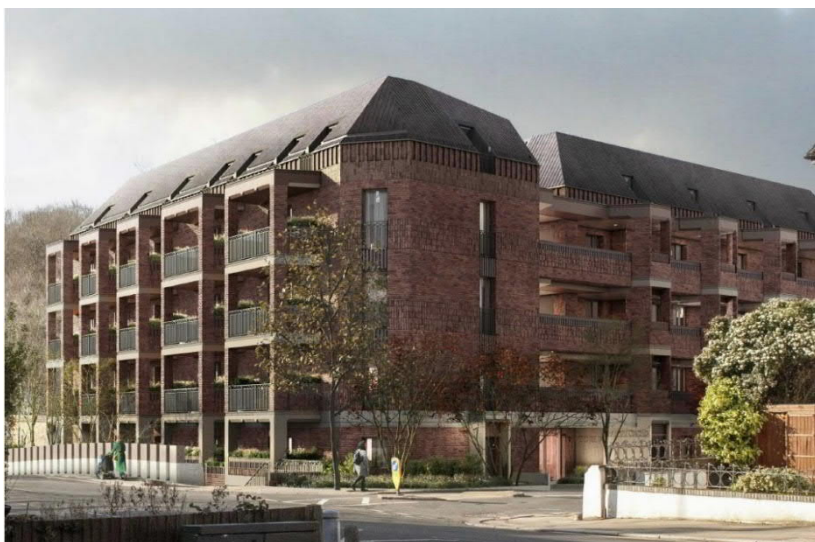
Richard Marmalade, Membership Secretary, who brought his IT skills to the implementation of new membership system and to the development of the website, resigned because he moved out of the area.

We were delighted to welcome Lara Maisy as new Membership Secretary and Chris White as new Transport Officer.

In Tony's last report as Traffic Officer, he highlighted the impact of the cycle lane and the bollards in East Finchley continuing all the way to North Finchley, introduced without consultation. With many others, we made representation to our local council and MP. Changes were then made and some of the restrictions were lifted.

We also agreed to work together with the Highgate Society to review the Haringey Walking and Cycling Plan, where not enough consideration appeared to have been given to the needs of older members of society and the disabled, nor of the hilly nature of Muswell Hill, Highgate and Crouch End.

This year, we reviewed 288 planning applications and objected to 8, especially the former care home Cranwood House in Woodside Avenue and Ramsey Court in Park Road.



Cranwood House Planned Development

While supporting the need for affordable housing, we submitted detailed objections to the proposed major development of Cranwood House on the grounds that the scheme failed to meet the Council's own criteria. The consultation attracted over 240 comments

and the proposal was also subject to a police investigation. Despite the objections, the planned redevelopment was approved by the Council.

The Ramsey Court application was to demolish a row of garages and to replace them with three houses and a three-storey building with six apartments. We objected to this last element on the grounds of loss of mature trees and inappropriate design, but permission was eventually granted.

However, 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 were approved to reduce the tree canopy.

Without the pandemic constraints, we were able to do an enormous amount of work in our green sites and flower beds, supported by volunteers, the Council Park's Department, Veolia, the Sunshine Garden Centre and the Avid Gardener team.

We funded new plants for the flower boxes at the roundabout and the cattle trough and installed two vandal-proof sturdy aluminium plaques on metal stakes in the Colney Hatch beds, replacing the old timber ones.



We continued our fight to keep Queens Avenue clear of rubbish and worked with both the Council and Veolia. This is an uphill task, due to the Haringey Homes properties and the multi occupancy blocks of flats in the street, the state of the bins.

Graffiti and fly posting were an ongoing problem. Our team of Bill Jago and Jack Whitehead continued to do a fantastic job in removing or reporting such items.

For the second year running, we launched our Community Fund to support local projects for the benefit of the community. We increased the award to £750 and shared the amount between Wave

Café, to purchase specially adapted cooking utensils for people with weak grip or limited range of motion; Muswell Hill Welcomes, to provide up to 40 guests from newly arrived communities to take part in a new food growing and community meals project; and Futsal Stars Foundation, to help a local 15-week programme of Girls Futsal/Football and fitness classes.

Zoe Norfolk successfully publicised our activities on Facebook and Instagram. We have over 2000 followers on Facebook and nearly 900 followers on Instagram. Zoe posts a local picture once a week and other images in stories.

The Association's website, www.mhfga.org, had a design refresh and the link pages were completely changed to include the latest contact details of the police, emergency and non-emergency services and Haringey departments. A new page was added, *Catchup*, with videos of past talks and presentations.



LOOKING BACK

John Hajdu Reminiscences **(Committee member from 1999, Chair 2001-2023)**

The Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association was formed in 1948 and it is now impossible to find out what its original purpose was, especially as our archives only date back to 1965. It was a kind of social club where like-minded people with time on their hands got together for a chat. Later local issues were also discussed on an informal basis. The annual subscription was 2 shillings [equivalent to 10 pence in today's money!]. It was only in the late sixties that they formed themselves into a kind of pressure group and started speaking out on behalf of the local residents.

The earliest Newsletter we have talks about possible rate increases, the future of Alexandra Palace and hooliganism. It was planned to appear twice a year with advertising. The Committee which was formed at that time met about two or three times a year and there were no members' meetings.

I joined the Association in the early nineties but did not take an active role until 1999 when I joined the Committee and was asked to be responsible for events and meetings. There were only occasional meetings and with no plans to hold them on a regular basis. I decided to instigate four meetings a year with an annual outing in June. This turned out to be a successful formula and you will be amazed to hear that until this year I had organised 125 meetings and outings, mainly of local interest.

In May 2001 I was persuaded to become Chairman of the Association and who would have thought that after 22 years I became the longest-serving chair!

So what did I find? The Association was considered to be old fashioned, the occasional Newsletters boring, there was no dialogue with members or any of the official bodies or the press. We were not considered relevant locally and certainly not to be a mouthpiece for residents of Muswell Hill and Fortis Green. There were no plans for the future and we desperately needed new younger committee members. We had a manual card index system for membership records and the membership secretary had to post a new card every year on which was written the year and the name of the member. The annual membership fee was £6 and £3 for those over 60. Our Newsletters were distributed by hand by a group of volunteers in hand-written envelopes.

I realised immediately that changes had to be made. My first task was, despite complaints, to recruit a computer-literate Membership Secretary and to put all the membership details on computer. At the same time I decided to put up the membership fee to £8.

My next task was to contact the large number of members who had not paid their membership fee, some for several years. We did this by phone and by going from door to door, and very soon we had recovered most of the outstanding fees.

The next step was to look at the Newsletter. We increased the frequency from the occasional one-page version to four and later to six editions a year, changed the typeface and the colour, and made it more interesting by including local stories and events and more input by Committee members. We started distributing it not just to members but also to the local libraries, cafes and pubs with the help of twenty deliverers. I introduced a regular editorial meeting. As you know, the Newsletter is now eight pages long and in full colour, full of interesting and varied articles and regular profiles of members.

Let me now list some of our outstanding and most memorable projects and events through the years since I took over.

In 2000, to encourage local residents to join our Association and at the same time to publicize our activities, we had to come up with new ideas: so I decided to hold the Muswell Hill Picture Show. We invited members to participate with photos and paintings and the subsequent 90 entries were displayed at the Birchwood Centre. I asked Lynn Featherstone our local Councillor at the time to present the prizes, and the event created good press coverage.

I realised that the time had come to have our own website. I appointed a web manager and we launched it in January 2002. It had seven pages of basic information, but within a year we had already had nearly 15,000 visitors. After many changes, by 2008 we had 56,000 visitors from all over the world. Since then our website has increased in size and contents with 60 pages, archive material, including old Newsletters, photos, videos and many more items.

The next two successful events were the 2003 and 2004 Front Garden competitions. We received 20 entries for the first event and 35 for the second. At the same time I appointed our first tree monitor who working with the Council, checked all new applications for tree work in our area. By then I was able to attract many local speakers to our meetings. By far the largest and most successful meeting I organised was the joint meeting with a local resident, the world-famous organist Jennifer Bate. This event took place in 2003 at St James's church and 200 people attended. We raised £2,000 towards the restoration of the organ.

In 2004 I appointed our two member graffiti team, who patrolled until now our shopping centre, removing small graffiti and reporting major problems to the Council.

In 2005 I had several meetings with the Council to highlight the lack of proper CCTV coverage of our area. As a result several important changes were made to improve the system and two new cameras were installed.

Also in 2005 I discovered the disused and long lost Grove Lodge Garden path, towards the bottom of Muswell Hill, originally created in 1945, and I asked the Council to restore it. This was agreed and we were given a grant of £5,000. The project was completed a year later and included laying a new path, installing finger signposts at both ends and strengthening the retaining walls. We now undertake occasional visits to keep the path clear.

This was also the year when we introduced regular e-mail messages to our members giving information on local events and forthcoming meetings.

In 2006 we persuaded the Council to refurbish the pocket park opposite the John Baird (now the Village Green) pub, and I negotiated for new iron railings to be put up.

At the same time we applied to the Council to erect a Community Notice Board which we agreed to manage and maintain. This was agreed and installed. It was the first community board in Haringey and is available to be used by all local organisations as well as publicizing our events.

It was in 2004 that I started thinking about all the famous people who lived in our borough. After approaching the Council suggesting that we should consider commemorating our famous residents with a green plaque, I organised a sub-committee and we drew up a list of potential candidates, such as Oliver Tambo, W.J. Collins and W. Heath Robinson, among others. This was agreed by the Council and they also agreed to fund the project. We found a

local plaque maker and the first plaque was put in position in Hillfield Park in 2007.

Further plaques were agreed and put up all over Haringey, but after thirteen plaques, the Council stopped funding the project, even though we still had at least fifteen potential candidates to consider.

In 2006 on behalf of the Association I was delighted to receive the award of Recyclers of the Year, and in 2007 we received the Better Haringey Best Community Initiative Award.

In 2008 for the first time the Newsletter was sent out by e-mail to members and we had to say goodbye to the volunteer distributors who had regularly delivered the Newsletters by hand to the homes of our members.

In 2008 the pocket park at the top of Muswell Hill was restored and replanted.

In November 2008 I persuaded the Council to fund the repair of the famous Langton Clock in Muswell Hill Broadway, a local landmark since 1899. It was taken down, lovingly repaired by a local clock maker and after two years was put back in working order. Unfortunately, since that time there have been several problems maintaining the clock, mainly due to the fact that the mechanism is situated in somebody's flat behind the clock. John Kendall, the clockmaker, and I have made several visits and I am still hoping that eventually both clock faces will tell the correct time.

In 2009 we took over the two abandoned beds on the corner of Colney Hatch Lane and Pages Lane. We transformed the grass verges by planting bushes and bulbs and we continue to maintain and replant the beds when needed, creating a welcome green site at the entrance to Muswell Hill.

In 2010 I decided to write a book about the history of our Association. It was published two years later and quickly sold out.

In 2013 after the Council stopped looking after the flower boxes at the roundabout in Muswell Hill Broadway, we took over and have since regularly replanted and maintained each box.

In the next few years we held a photo competition in 2015; had stalls in 2016 and 2017 at Midsummer Muswell and Very Merry Muswell events; and held our “Odd-one-out” competition in 2017 and 2018.

In 2019 we received from Waitrose £200 under their green token scheme for good causes. And also in 2019 we took part in the Wonderful Muswell winter festival.

I want to thank each and every one of the past and present Committee members who have supported me so loyally through the years and who helped to bring about all the changes and improvements we have achieved. My committees without exception were hard working, dedicated, enthusiastic and motivated.

In particular I want to mention the following, some in various jobs:

Eugene Myerson 1977-2008

Bill Tyler 1977-2017

Sandra Howell 1984-2019

Monica Myers 1988-2011

Gerry Saunders 1998-2008, without whose help my book would not have been published.

John Crompton, the only Committee member who has been with me since I became chair all those years ago, first looking after planning, then treasurer and finally as conservation officer as well as Honorary Secretary.

Brian Livingston, who has been a member of the Committee since 2008, looking after matters relating to environment, green spaces and reporting on local police activities as chair of the Fortis Green Safer Neighbourhood panel.

I would also like to express my thanks and gratitude to Jacqueline Servat who joined the Committee in 2011 and became Treasurer in 2012. She has been responsible for huge improvements in the way we look after our money and collect membership fees. Due to her tireless efforts, I never had to worry about money - the Association's, not mine!!

Nick Barr, who took over the planning portfolio in 2013 and kept an eye on all planning applications.

Duncan Neill, who has kept us informed of developments at Alexandra Palace and Park since 2014.

Alex Vincenti, who was our Membership Secretary from 2014 until 2018 and has managed the website since 2020, and recently started videoing our Committee meetings and members' meetings. A very special thank you to Alex for helping and advising various Committee members especially on membership and treasury matters, and for editing and updating my book, and adding many new pages.

Christine Morris, who has been an outstanding editor of our Newsletter for seven years (03/16-05/23).

Zoe Norfolk, (Social Media & Publicity 05/16-) who has used social media to send out information about us, is responsible for our Notice Board and has been involved in many other activities on our behalf.

Thanks are due to the rest of the committee, Agnes Gomori (Membership 12/12-), Nigel Clark (Meetings 12/22-), Laura Bugden (Administrator 07/21-) and Chris White (Transport 07/22-).

Some of you will also remember Saima Williams (Membership 01/10-05/13), Barbara Erskine (Newsletter 05/08-03/14), David Orme (Newsletter 01/14-02/16), Denis Heathcote (Alexandra Palace 01/11-06/14), Peter Thompson (various 10/01-05/12), Dawn Miles,

(Vice Chair & Environment 09/04-05/08), Chris Barker (Transport 01/05-08/19), Pat Bloomfield (Planning 05/04-05/12), Anna Ribeiro Pollock (Membership 03/04-09/04), Jo & Richard Campbell (Membership 11/04-12/09), Denise Feeney (Webmaster & Alexandra Palace 05/02-12/13), Loretta Mitchell (Membership 11/18-08/19), and more recently Tony Wells (Webmaster, Transport, Shop Photos 07/13-06/22), George Danker (Publicity & Events 09/17-11/22), Richard Marmalade (Membership 01/20-03/22) and Lara Maisey (Membership 04/22-09/22).

Looking back, I cannot believe that for 22 years I did not miss one Committee meeting or one members' meeting. What fun we had!

So here we are at the end of a huge chunk of my life.
I am proud of my contribution to the history of the Association.
I am proud of my contribution to life in Muswell Hill.
I am proud of the fantastic teams I worked with.
I am proud of what we achieved through hard work and perseverance.

So after 22 years, it is now time to hand over to my successor.

My hope is that the Association will continue to thrive and go from strength to strength in years to come.

John Hajdu
May 2023



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