



November 1988

ISLINGTON ALERT!

East London Assessment Study on Traffic

As you may know "Islington Alert" held a well supported public meeting on Wednesday 19th. October in the Town Hall to explain the 12 options which may lead to firm proposals for changing the traffic situation through from Highgate to East London.

These options include major roads provision and improved underground services and a new underground from Hackney to Wimbledon. We must be on our guard against major road schemes which would merely bring more traffic to Islington.

We need to support better public transport in buses and tube, trains and the reduction of commuter cars through Islington.

"Islington Alert" will be organising a petition in favour of public transport but it is more important that we should be aware to the possibilities in 1989 of alterations at Highbury Corner and along Holloway Road, St. Pauls Road and just south of Finsbury Park.

Do you want roads above the North London line with flyover over Highbury Corner and junction roads joining them?

Bay Hodgson

WALTZING UNDER THE STARS!

If you're worried in a well-meaning, Islington way about the fast-melting North Pole and the ozone layer, and wondering what you can do as a local resident, the answer could be - a yearly summer barbecue and dance on Highbury Fields. Puzzled? Let me explain.

The trouble with our current so-called "fun" events is that they're not much fun. The deserted fairground, the vegetarian circus, the Fabian Society stall. Teams of early-morning cyclists grimly pedaling off to Southend. Think I'll just curl up with a good book, thanks.

French villages have a better idea. In exchange for a modest entrance fee, you get a dance band, a few singers and plenty to eat and drink. That's what I'd call fun - an Irish ceilidh band, say, and waltzing under the stars.

Do I hear you murmur something about the climate. That's where the greenhouse effect comes in. The Met Office - flushed with confidence after autumn's hurricane - are predicting that in fifty years' time, Nice and St. Tropez will be desert towns and we'll have their present climate. At least we will in Highbury - in Westminster they'll be under water. Fifty years? I can't wait that long.

Richard O'Keefe

ANYONE FOR TENNIS?

On Saturday, June 18th, the HFA held its first ever Tennis Tournament. Twenty four (almost) fearless competitors took part and, even those who were slightly coy about their talents, agreed that it was definitely an event to be repeated next year.

During the afternoon, a splendid English tea with cucumber sandwiches and strawberries and cream was served around the courts, the sun shone and those who had just come to watch enjoyed themselves too as there was an opportunity to get to know other HFA members.

Organising non-stop playing on two courts was not

without its headaches as, around lunchtime, those who should have been on court had sloped off for a beer and a sandwich and were nowhere to be found. Obviously, when we repeat the tournament next year, no competitors will be allowed to escape and lunch will be provided very firmly on court!

At 6:30pm, with the sun still shining, everyone adjourned to Jeanie Burnett's beautiful garden where our Chairman, John Hardiman looking his usual dapper self, presented prizes to the winners. James Aykroyd beat Patrick Milmo in the final of the Men's singles. Martin Jones and James Aykroyd won the Men's Doubles and Chris Milne and Jan Andrews won the Mixed Doubles.

Next year there will be an HFA trophy and many more competitors so read your Minutes carefully as the date will be announced a few months in advance.

Jennifer Aykroyd

AGM

The annual general meeting will be held on Tuesday 15th November at Highbury Roundhouse (Main Building) at 7:30pm.



FIRST STEPS IN A PLANNING COMPROMISE: 1-7 CORSICA STREET

One sunny day in August 1987, the telephone rang in the house in which we were holidaying in Norfolk. A neighbour had been to the planning department with his letter of notification and discovered that "they" were applying for permission to build a terrace of 3-storey houses, 8 feet from our garden walls as well as so many thousand square feet of office/workshops on 4 floors on Corsica St. itself.

Together we all protested and there began nearly a year of low-key combat: not that we opposed the principle of the redevelopment of the row of exhausted garages on lower Corsica Street, however romantic their presence from our side was: quite the opposite.

The current rules of the game appear quite odd - no aesthetic assessments even in a conservation area: loss of security or privacy have no force unless there is real over-looking: more sadly there seems to be little chance of urban patterns and grains having any effect. The one rule is that "they" can replace the existing area of space with new space and the existing includes casually inserted mezzanines and plant rooms, loading bays and even sometimes half the road in front or they'll appeal.

The tragedy is that every inch of light industrial space in London, however inadequate for that use, is being turned into offices - not because this is desirable but because it is immensely profitable.

The very rationale of town-planning, the best use of available resources, and development control for the greater good are unable to restrain the rampant profiteering of our present period. Investment is desperately needed in all types of work-places but investment for those working there rather than the bank, insurance society or some B.E.S. firework.

Three schemes later, the first public round in the town hall took place in June this year. I am always impressed by Islington's planning committee in the courteous yet firm hands of its chair, Peter Broadbent. Objectors are welcomed and those items brought forward: hearings are, in my experience, full and fair, even when the result goes against one.

That scheme was sent back for more detailed work but now we were in danger of upsetting the officers from the planning department with the minutiae of our complaints. The architect agreed to meet those of us most affected some 10 months after the first outrageous scheme was submitted.

The architect listened, and three drawings later, there existed the basis of an agreement. The second public round with one less floor on offer saw absolute height limits and absolute area limits imposed as conditions to a permission, that we were able to support..

Now the old buildings are demolished and we hear that it will all be redesigned. It is hard work being negative all the time, when a basic outline of good building and less greed would enable us all to benefit. In the present climate that may seem utopian but it must surely be a pre-requisite for the long-term care of our cities.

Robin Nicholson

EXOTIC CHANGES

In May this year the last surviving shop who's use had remained the same since 1910 closed in Calabria Road. This was of course the off licence. I think everybody misses Jim McCoughlin who ran it, and realises what a loss to the community he and his shop is.

Recently I came across a postcard (shown here) of Calabria Road in 1906 showing a thriving row of shops, and with the help of Kelly's directory for 1914, I was able to fill in the mystery of what all those shops were. Mrs. Lane, a long time resident of Corsica Street also had some memories of several of them:-



Calabria Road

- 1 Laundry
- 3 Dairy - churns of milk and tubs of yellow butter
- 5 Butcher
- 7 Fruiterer
- 9 Bootmakers
- 11 Oilman - who also sold groceries - including paper cones

of biscuit crumbs at 1/2d. a cone.

- 13 Newsagent - There was also a private library at the back of this shop.
- 15 Tailors shop - The tailor used to sit cross legged in the window whilst stitching suits.
- 17 Fancy Draper
- 19 Wine merchant

Corsica Street

- 17 General Store
- 15 Boot repairer

Of course new and exotic shops have opened recently:

An Art gallery in the beautifully restored dairy at No. 3, North African rugs at No. 7, Anti-

quarian books at No. 15 and "Urban Roots", a landscape design business at No. 15 Corsica Street.

Let's hope that No. 19 will again be restored to its original use as a wine merchant and recently, general store.

Jenny Blanchard

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I have been rather an absentee Chairman these days, enjoying the sunshine in Uganda. But this has been possible due to so much good work being done by our capable Committee. Maryse Jones, Jean Burnett and Jennifer Aykroyd have been especially supportive in doing the essential administrative work in connection with the planning applications and in assisting the Recreation Department in some of their work.

Robin Mabey has the traffic and parking problems well in hand and we are expecting some improvement will be made on the Highbury Corner traffic crossing. We are also hoping for a revised and extended parking space layout in the Place and the Crescent. Pete Broadbent has kindly kept us informed of their problems.

The field drainage engineers report has now been presented to the Director of Recreation, together with costs. But the question of the availability of funds for next year will be difficult, but not impossible.

We have this year a considerable improvement in reducing the frequency and noise of the Fair and other rather noisy entertainments and in this respect, our thanks are due to Pat Haynes, the Chairman of the Recreation Committee and Peter Bonsall, the Chief Parks Officer.

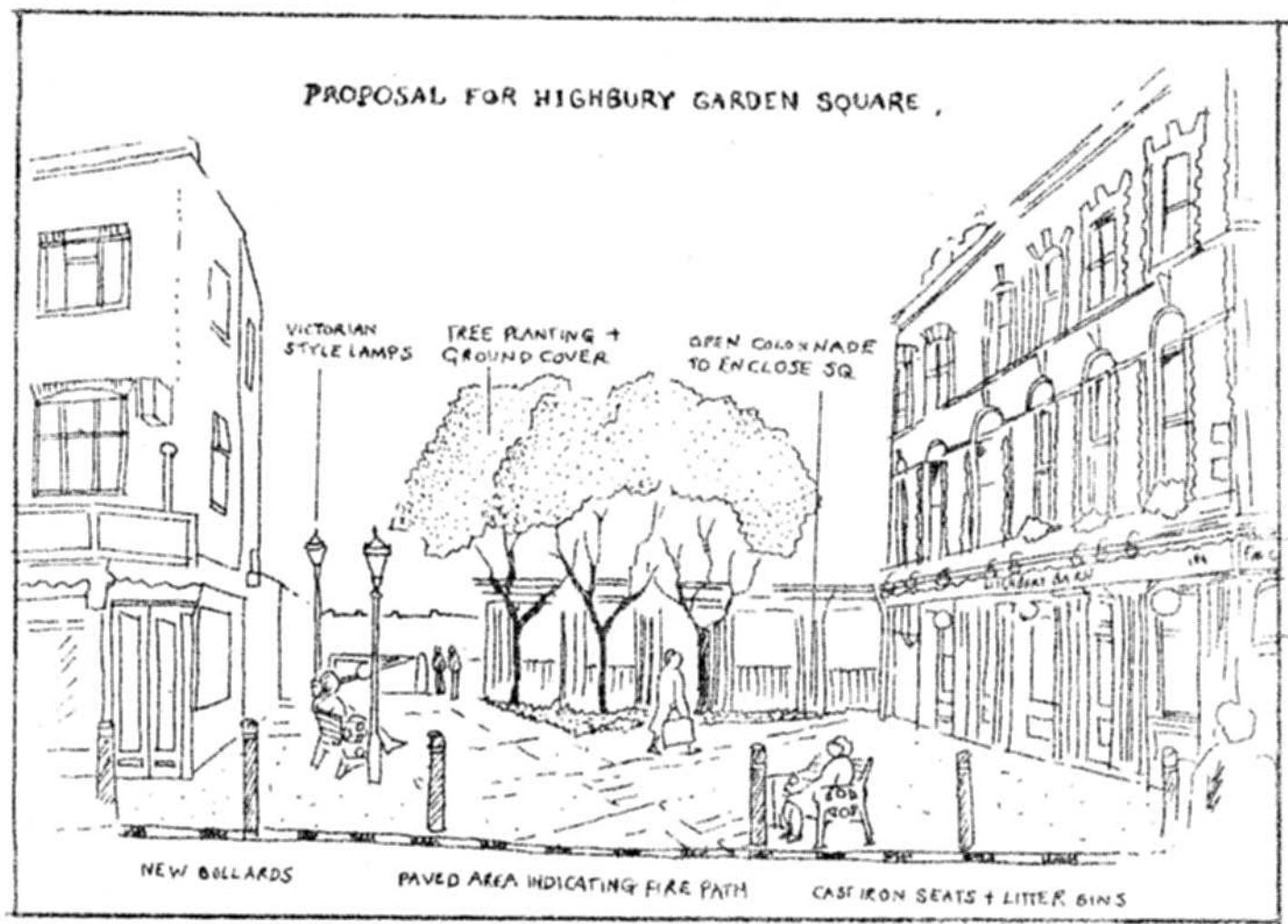
Murphy's the owners of the present derelict site at No. 21-22 Highbury Crescent known as Robins Garden have submitted a housing development proposal to the Council for consideration. It is important to us that the elevations of the two proposed buildings facing the Fields receive sympathetic treatment in relation to the existing early 19th century locally listed Highbury Crescent. John Melvin and Harry Brack have kindly agreed to monitor these important negotiations.

Finally, I would like to thank Martin Jones, our Vice-chairman for his support and in chairing the A.G.M. next month. Also to Jenny Blanchard for the hard work in her contribution as Editor of the Newsletter.

With best wishes,

John HARDIMAN

Chairman



HIGHBURY BARN/KELVIN ROAD 'GARDEN SQUARE'

This scheme was given wide local support at a public meeting last year. The committee of local residents and the two Neighbourhood Officers are seeking D.O.E. approval for the funding.

The proposed scheme will "pedestrianise" the road and will

comprise paving over the entire surface in attractive paving stones, the provision of seats and bollards, an ornamental colonnade instead of the existing fence adjacent to Gardner Court, and a bed with low shrubs and three small trees.

As and when it finally is due to open, we will organise a walk to celebrate the new "pedestrianised" garden area!

Maryse Jones

HIGHBURY FIELDS AND TENNIS COURTS

We should be very grateful to Mr. Bonsall and his staff for all their hard work in keeping the Fields in such good order.

The tennis courts are once again heavily used and provide much pleasure and the playground continues to be extremely well supported and enjoyed.

PELICAN CROSSING Highbury CORNER

I remain concerned that this crossing, which seems to me to be dangerous for pedestrians. I have asked the Borough Planning Officer to increase the green man crossing time, to install a pedestrian refuge, to take steps to stop traffic blocking the crossing, and to improve the lighting. If you agree that the crossing is unsatisfactory please write to the Planning Officer at the Town Hall, Upper Street.

Robin Mabey

HIGHBURY FIELDS POOL

I sometimes feel that people criticise local amenities without either knowing the problem they face, or reflecting on the extent to which they have been generally successful. In the case of our swimming-pool, there have been moans about occasional unexpected closures and also about the ventilation.

Let us first look on the positive side. The pool has been open now since March 1984 and in that time the annual attendance has moved up fairly steadily from 219,908 in the first 12 months, to 308,063 in the period up to March 1988. Considering the understandable initial rush of enthusiasm, when it first opened, it is remarkable that Bob Holmes (the Borough Bath Manager) and his local manager have managed to cope with such an increase despite the problems they have faced:

The ventilation machinery has had a history of breakdowns and remains the subject of dispute between the Council and the Contractors. People do not perhaps appreciate the difficulty of attracting and retaining suitable staff. Bob Holmes explains that the conditions of work, the shifts, the noise, occasional aggression from the public and the need for constant vigilance leads to high sickness levels and job turnover.

Added to this, there is a new "Safety in Swimming Pools" code of practice to which staff have to adhere.

Over the 4 1/2 years, there has been a steady improvement in the facilities and the variety of activities provided, and I hope we all continue to take advantage of them.

Martin Jones

AND THE CARAVAN ...

For those who are wondering what that ugly caravan is doing outside the 2 O'Clock Club, it is a "temporary" store for the equipment of Canonbury Playgroup, an entirely separate group formerly based in the Union Chapel and forced to move out by building works there, who now use the Bandstand building in the mornings. When an extension to the Bandstand housing additional children's toilets and storage for toys and equipment is built the caravan will disappear.



RESTORED 18th Century Houses in Highbury Place.

CALLING ALL PARENTS OF UNDER 5'S

Do you know about the 2 O'Clock Club?

This is a toddler group for children accompanied by their parent or minder in the Bandstand on Highbury Fields, just off Church Path, behind Baalbec Road.

Don't be put off by the title "club"; you don't have to belong, you just pop in for a cup of tea, or stay the whole two hour session (2-4) any day or every day (Monday to Friday; 20p per visit).

A play leader organises activities, - painting, clay, finger painting, vegetable printing, (the messy things you don't like them doing at home!) and there's a wide range of toys, - construction sets, puzzles, cars, home corner with miniature kitchen, ironing board, etc., as well as sand and water play. Outside in good weather, the children can play, in idyllic surroundings, with wheeled toys and rocking boats, climbing frames, slides, sandpit, but inside in winter it can be cosy and inviting, a haven for a harassed mum.

Though activities are suitable mainly for toddlers there are toys for babies. The upper age limit is 5 years. But the club is really meant for the benefit of the parent or minder who needs to get out if the house and meet other adults with children. Come and slump over a cup of tea or chat to other parents here while little Johnnie plays happily and creatively, (and someone else will clear up the mess).

Bronwen Taylor

HIGHBURY ROUNDHOUSE YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE, 71 Ronalds Road

During the Summer holidays two playschemes were organised and some 150 children from 5 - 13 years enjoyed many interesting and varied events, many thanks to the workers.

We are shortly starting to raise £50,000 to soundproof our hall - So, we will need your financial support.

At present a noisy event is a great nuisance to our neighbours in Whistler and Battledown roads. We are often being asked by members of the community and organised groups to hire the hall at weekends for wedding receptions, concerts and musical events. At present we have to restrict these to just a few - So do help us financially and come and support our social events.

We are very pleased to see a number of new locals at our successful Glen Miller and Barbecue events.

Highbury Roundhouse has been chosen as the venue for the opening of the Islington Dance Festival, details from the Roundhouse phone 359 5916. The Roundhouse offers classes in many types of dance, samba capoeira and dance exercise for adults.

Tap, ballet and tumbling for children. Ring Rene at the Roundhouse for more information.

We shall be having the following events:

Nov. 5th	Children and sparklers	5-7 pm
Dec. 17th	Pensioners Christmas party.	

and monthly on the first Sunday, a carboot sale from 9.30 - 1.30pm.

Bay Hodgson

AFTER THE STORM

A walk round Highbury Fields one year on, looking at the trees, reveals the area of most conspicuous damage to be Highbury Crescent (where it bisects the upper and lower fields, especially by the public conveniences). This appeared to be devastated at the time of the Hurricane. Although sad to reflect the loss of the two mature trees at that site, it is heartening to see the newly planted sapling oak. Opposite, there are now two badly misshapen flowering cherries.

The cherries will probably have to stay that way for some time, as the Parks Office has been deserted by the arboreal staff. Only the Chief Officer, Mr. Bonsall remains. He is very busy, naturally. I gather, that the replanting programme boroughwide (which was to have taken place this autumn/winter) is now cancelled until new staff are available.

Thankfully, the twin row of sapling oaks which line Queens Walk were re-staked earlier this autumn and no longer list 20° northwards.

It makes one wonder with all these oaks about, if the squirrels will be far behind!

Patricia Hanning

MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION WHO HAVE BEEN ELECTED TO THE COMMITTEE:-

John Hardiman
Chairman
Martin Jones
Vice-chairman
Isobel Boucher
Secretary

Jennifer Aykroyd
Membership
Secretary
Maryse Jones
Treasurer
Jenny Blanchard
Jenny Burnett
Peter Broadbent
Bay Hodgson
Carrick James
Delphine Jelbart
Robin Mabey
Robin Nicholson
Richard O'Keefe
Miles Thompson
Ginny Worsley
Jean Engel
Lesley Orme



THANK YOU TO OUR INESTIMABLE CHAIRMAN

CREDITS

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A FINAL WORD FROM JENNIFER AYKROYD, THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY.

In the past few years, residents will have seen many improvements to Highbury Fields. The new playground has now become one of the best in London; the tennis courts are second to none and the daffodils, grass and trees are a joy to us all.

The Council recognises our status and is willing to discuss all projects with us. It might well be fencing, drainage, traffic flow or the planting of new trees but whatever it is, it is important.

Membership is still only £2.00 per year per household (£1.00 for pensioners and the unemployed). Your household will receive copies of all committee Meeting Minutes. You will have an opportunity to attend these meetings and put forward a special grievance or a suggestion you wish to make. We are always looking for new members to join the Committee. Why not you?

You live or work near Highbury Fields and benefit greatly so don't you think it's time you joined the 102 households who are now members of the Association? Don't just sit there

JOIN NOW!

I/We would like to remain/become members of the Highbury Fields Association.

Name

Address

.....

.....

Telephone

Amount enclosed Date

To:

Mrs. Jennifer Aykroyd,
5 Highbury Terrace,
London N5
(226 9750)