

## A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR MEMBERS



Membership of the Amwell Society makes a good Christmas gift for a friend. Subscription is still £15.00 for three years.

In 2021 we will have a membership drive as we prepare for the 50th anniversary in 2022.

Our small area of London looks and feels as it does today because of the action of the visionary people who founded the Society in 1972.

We are now looking for ideas-people who will help arrange events and contribute to the celebrations in 2022. Please e-mail [info@amwell.org.uk](mailto:info@amwell.org.uk) if you can get involved.

Here's wishing members a happy and healthy 2021

[www.amwell.org.uk](http://www.amwell.org.uk)

## People Friendly Streets [PFSs]

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic crisis we have been exercising more, walking in the fresh air, which has become cleaner and fresher due to reduced road traffic. The London Borough of Islington [LBI] took action in the autumn to reduce through traffic on the west side of Amwell Street. The scheme was prepared and then fully implemented on 23 November.

**PFSs is a trial which will run for 18 months with LBI conducting a public consultation after 12 months. During the first six months LBI will monitor feedback and may make small amendments, if necessary.**

At the AGM on 20 October there was a wide-ranging discussion about PFSs. However, not everyone was able to attend the AGM and we want as many people as possible to have the opportunity to tell us what they think.

### Complete the survey

In order to collect views, opinions and suggestions for recommendation or modifications to the scheme, the Amwell Society has devised a survey for the membership and other tenants and residents who live in the wider Amwell area. We think it essential to gather information so that feedback to LBI can be accurately supported by both facts and opinions.

The survey will only take a few minutes to complete. There is also free space at the end to express views not directly addressed in the survey or for suggestions of amendments to People Friendly Streets that you may have.

The survey will be open until **Monday 4 January** so plenty of time to fill it in over the holiday.

To complete the survey go to our website  
**[www.amwell.org.uk](http://www.amwell.org.uk)**

Click the link on the home page

**We will deliver a paper copy of the survey to valued members who don't have a computer.**

**Please encourage friends to complete the survey too.**

## **Message from our Chairman, Peadar Sionoid.**

The Covid-19 pandemic has most probably been the defining issue for all of us this year. We have seen the benefit of strong communities and local action at every level. This trend has been reflected in government with a stated ambition to devolve some aspects of planning to local communities. The Amwell Society and our sister societies through the London Forum are monitoring developments here closely to see whether actions match the rhetoric and in particular to see how this develops in practice for societies such as ours.

In other ways, the pandemic can be seen to have accelerated trends that were already in place. I am thinking of the various transport initiatives across London. These were introduced very rapidly to a government deadline and took us by surprise as they did many members. We recognise the strong feelings changes such as these provoke. With this in mind and in order to best represent our members, we will be asking you to complete a survey you over the next weeks for your views on the changes in our area. We will approach you again in a few months after all the measures have been in place for some time to see if your opinions have changed.

Covid-19 aside, we have seen some positive developments in the area with which the Amwell Society has been associated. For example, after many years of meetings and discussions it now seems that the future of the New River Head site is secure as the new home of the House of Illustration - there is a further update in this newsletter. I'm sure we all agree that it will be great to have a cultural institution in the heart of our area. On the other hand, a number of questionable, large planning applications have been refused - most notably the plans for the old Children's Society building on Margery Street although the developer plans to appeal. The committee continues to monitor new planning applications closely.

The committee and I regret that we have been unable to meet more members and that we have had to curtail our social programme this year, in particular the popular late-summer party. Nevertheless we managed to hold our first virtual AGM in October which was well attended. This served to highlight the value of communications with members and the committee. With this in mind, we plan to upgrade our website in the coming year to make it more useful to members and to encourage new ones. It would be great to hear from you with regard to the content of the website that you'd like to see.

Finally, it only remains for the committee and I to wish you and your families the best for the holiday season. It has been an arduous year for us all and hopefully we can relax and take stock over this period whilst looking forward to better times in 2021.

## **Children's Society building at 69-85 Margery Street. LBI application P2019/3464/FUL**

In July of this year, the Amwell Society joined forces with the Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum and the Margery Street Tenants & Residents Association to oppose a planning application to replace the former Children's Society building on Margery Street.

The LBI Planning Committee turned the application down, citing the loss of light to neighbouring flats, the overbearing bulk of the proposed building and the applicant's failure to respond to the local context in terms of design and choice of materials.



The applicant has appealed and the Amwell Society will be supporting LBI in its opposition to the scheme though not to the principle of redeveloping the site for commercial use.

## **House of Illustration at the New River Head**

Amwell Society members and local tenants and residents have had opportunities to view the emerging plans for the New River Head online.

The next stage in the process will be the submission of a formal planning application by the House of Illustration to LBI. This exciting and visionary submission will happen quite soon and certainly before the next issue of our newsletter.

Members will be alerted by e-mail when the application goes live on the LBI planning applications website so that observations and comments about the House of Illustration's proposals can be commented on. A sub-group of the committee has been set up to review the application and to respond on behalf of the Society. Members can make their views known to the sub-group by e-mailing comments to [info@amwell.co.uk](mailto:info@amwell.co.uk) After 30 years of delay we hope that the planning proposal will be welcomed by all.

## The Amwell Society. Campaigning on behalf of the locality for 48 years

### Clerkenwell Parochial School [CPS]

Members will probably have seen articles in the Islington Gazette and Islington Tribune concerning the proposed closing of Clerkenwell Parochial School [CPS] which stands at the heart of our community on Amwell Street.

CPS is part of the London Diocesan Board for Schools [LDBS] Academies Trust [LAT] which was created in 2012 with five schools spread across the London Borough of Haringey. The mission was and is to establish, maintain, manage and develop Church of England Schools across the Diocese of London with the aim that every child should have the opportunity to flourish and develop into a rounded adult who can live life to the full. Since then, the LAT has grown to ten schools spread across the London Boroughs of Barnet, Brent, Enfield, Haringey and Islington.

CPS joined the LAT in 2016 following a harsh OfSTED report concerning the school's safeguarding procedures - not academic achievements. Some parents lost trust in CPS and moved their children to other schools. The prediction of demographic change in Islington and the need for new school places has not materialised and, this year, several parents have left in London to live further afield. All this means that CPS has seen a drop in pupil numbers meaning that income at the school - based on each registered pupil - cannot sustain the costs of running the school as it is.

As many people know, the school is 320 years old and was visited by HM The Queen in 2000. It was originally housed near St James' Clerkenwell and settled in Amwell Street in the 1830. The school was designed by the architect William Chadwell Mylne who designed houses for the New River Company and St Mark's Church. The school is Grade II Listed and a key part of our community and townscape.

The buildings are also 'reserved'. That means that there is an obligation to find an educational use for them if the school closes.. To achieve this the Society must work closely with all key players; LDBS, LBI, Our Most Holy Redeemer, Exmouth Market and St Mark's Myddelton Square to help find an educational use for the buildings in future. To ensure this the Society is planning to apply for the school buildings to be designated a Protected Community Asset.

### Help urgently needed with the Amwell Society website

The Amwell Society website is due for a significant upgrade. At the same time we are looking for a volunteer to join our committee who would like to act as the webmaster [m/f]. You'd have support with preparing and providing material for the website and also have a hand in the new design. You would also take part in shaping the Society for the future. Please get in touch if you have the skills to help. [info@amwell.org.uk](mailto:info@amwell.org.uk)

### Influenza 1919

Have you been thinking about the 'flu pandemic of 1919? No internet. No radio. No television. High levels of impoverishment and overcrowding, especially in Finsbury. With little financial relief from government and even worse, many men suffering from PTSD [unrecognised at the time] and awful injuries brought home from the Great War, the country was at a very low point. In those days there was a lack of information about how to treat people who'd caught the 'flu virus, little national strategic action, a low level of awareness of how to avoid the virus and no NHS. Just like Ring-a-ring of roses and the 1665 plague... children skipped to:

**I had a little bird  
Its name was Enza  
I opened the window,  
And in-flu-enza.**

By the time the 'flu epidemic was over, 228,000 people in the UK had died. Some people were well in the morning and dead by the evening. More died of influenza in a single year than in the four years of the Black Death Bubonic Plague from 1347 to 1351. This puts our one pandemic into perspective.

Are we counting our blessings? Although under pressure, our beloved NHS and it's committed staff is with us. For those isolating, we have TVs iPads and iPhones and for those less tech savvy, the old-fashioned landline. We have significantly better housing than 100 years ago. So yes, those blessing should be counted.

That said, you may know a neighbour living alone and in need of help. Few people ask for help because we all think that there are people worse off than ourselves, don't we? Calling in and offering a hand with shopping can be a comfort, even if the neighbour has no needs at the time you call, the fact that you have offered help is always reassuring. So don't be shy or in too much of a hurry, observe social distancing, wear a mask and ring that bell.

If you would like help and advice about helping an isolated or vulnerable person, don't forget the Peel Centre. The Peel used to be based in Percy Circus and has now moved to Three Corners in Northampton Road by Spa Fields. 020 7837 6082 and [admin@peelinstitute.org.uk](mailto:admin@peelinstitute.org.uk)

**A reminder. Follow all anti-Covid-19 guidelines this Christmas. You can still say hello to neighbours. Call out 'Merry Christmas'...but don't go in!**

The Amwell Society campaigns to protect and promote the area and its architectural heritage and to encourage a sense of community.

The Society serves Pentonville Road, Penton Rise, King's Cross Road, Farringdon Road Rosebery Avenue and St. John Street and all the streets within the area.

The Society is open to all residents. For information about becoming a member, telephone 020 7833 1275 or e-mail [info@amwell.org.uk](mailto:info@amwell.org.uk) Chairman, Peadar Sionoid.

Secretary, Joanna Ward. Treasurer, Peter Kornicki. Newsletter editor, David Sulkin.

The Amwell Society is a constituted group with annual accounts. The Society is a member of the London Forum

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## Committee update

At the AGM committee members were confirmed for the coming year. They are:

- Dale Barter.
- Sally Hull.
- Peter Kornicki, Treasurer.
- Cristine Mackie.
- Andrew Mansfield.
- Theresa Marteau.
- Margaret Rowe.
- Tony Relph.
- Peadar Sionoid, Chairman.
- David Sulkin, Newsletter editor.
- Paul Thornton.
- Joanna Ward. Secretary.
- Jane Wainwright, founder member of the Society.
- Martin Worthington.

## Amwell Society notice board

The Society maintains its own notice board outside Browning's Garage at the top of Great Percy Street. We try hard to keep the noticeboard up-to-date and topical. Thank you to Browning's for hosting the notice board.

## Photos

We would like very much to publish old photos of the Amwell area that you might have tucked away in an album or in a drawer. Pictures of any the streets or shops hereabouts would be very welcome. If you have any photos to share, please let us know and we can arrange to take copies. [info@amwell.org.uk](mailto:info@amwell.org.uk)

## Welcome

We welcome some new members: Joshua Chalkley and Dr Louisa Giblin of Amwell Street and Kim Segal of Charles Rowan House.

## Alternatives to *A Christmas Carol*

Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* is always top of the list for a Christmas read. While this novel is timeless and hugely enjoyable it is not the only book to buoy you up at Christmas time.

### *The Penguin Book of Christmas Stories* [£20.00]

If all you want for Christmas is more time to curl up with a book then this collection of short stories might just be the thing for you. From enchanted forests in Sweden to midnight mass in Rio de Janeiro, this collection takes you around the world – and even to outer space – with tales of ghosts, Santas, trolls and unexpected guests from the greatest short story writers of all time including Shirley Jackson, Dylan Thomas and Anton Chekhov. Ask Santa.

## Good drinks at Christmas

As many of us will be staying to home this Christmas it is an opportunity to try delicious and unusual concoctions as a treat, if you're so inclined. Here are some recipes from *Good Drinks* by Ambrose Heath [1939]. All are perfect after a walk in cold weather. The martinis are all excellent aperitifs.

### Satan's Whiskers.

2 parts gin. 2 parts orange juice. 2 parts French vermouth. 2 parts Italian vermouth. 1 part Grand Marnier. 1 dash orange bitters. Stir and drink.

### Mulled Ale.

Put 570ml of good India Pale Ale into a saucepan and add a half tablespoonful of sugar, a small pinch of ground cloves, a pinch of nutmeg and a large pinch of ground ginger. Bring near to the boil and add wineglassful of good rum or brandy. Enough for two.



### Havelock

150ml of Stone's ginger wine  
75ml of brandy  
Lump of ice.

Just the job on a chilly afternoon. Lovely for two people.

### Martini

A martini can be delicious. You can add a sliver of lemon to the dry, an olive to the medium or a maraschino cherry to the sweet one and a small ice cube...as you wish.



### Dry

2/3 dry gin  
1/3 French vermouth

### Sweet

2/3 dry gin  
1/3 Italian vermouth

### Medium

1/2 dry gin  
1/4 French vermouth  
1/4 Italian vermouth

**Beware,  
Martinis are more-ish!**

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