

The Amwell Society. Campaigning on behalf of the locality for 51 years

Message from our Chairman

Peadar Sionoid writes...

Welcome to this late summer edition of our newsletter.

We have spent quite some time on planning issues over the past months - one of the core roles of the Society. Working with our neighbour organisations, we have input – to the very best of our ability – into the planning process for the former Children's Society building at the bottom end of Margery Street. The first application was turned down by LBI on the grounds that the proposal was out-of-scale with the locality, in particular, causing significant loss of daylight to the neighbouring apartments. The refreshed proposal, while one storey smaller, appears to suffer from the same defect sadly and the society will be highlighting this to the planners.

Also, halfway up Margery Street, is William Martin Court which is also subject of planning applications. This former old people's home and more recently a St Mungo's Hostel is a low-rise, unremarkable building. The proposal is to make the building into a respite care centre for Maltese people being treated at London Hospitals. As I write, we are in discussions with the new owners, developers and other stakeholders in the hope of securing a planning application that can achieve the most support in the community.

These cases highlight the Society's approach of engaging with owners and developers as early as possible in the design and planning process, with a view to achieving the best result for all stakeholders ... and crucially the whole of the Amwell area.

Our most recent event was the sale of Jean Elrington's watercolours held at the Tripp Gallery in Amwell Street in late April. I hope you can agree that exhibition earlier was a great success. After expenses the exhibition raised just over £3,250. Our plan is to donate a special tree or other feature in the new garden being planned by the Quentin Black Centre at the New River Head and to keep a little back for Society activities. We are immensely grateful to Judy and Giles Elrington for donating Jean's pictures to the Society. I was heartened to see so many members at the opening evening of the exhibition and welcome a number of new members during the following week.

We have made some progress on our tree project – with some seven trees are scheduled be planted in Great Percy Street and Percy Circus in the coming planting season. We are hoping that some trees will also be planted in and around Chadwell Street. If members have suggestions for new tree locations, please let us know info@amwell.org.uk

Please put the date of the AGM in your diary. AGM's are thought of as rather dull events, on the whole, but ours are always sociable, meet-your-friends-and-neighbours events.

Update from our wonderful new neighbours, the Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration at the New River Head.

Lindsey Glen writes...

If you haven't yet visited New River Head then there's another opportunity to do so on Saturday 16 September during the London Open House festival. More details will be available shortly at www.qbcentre.org.uk where you can also sign up to our newsletter.

Over the summer we became the leaseholder of the Viewing Platform in Myddelton Passage. It is surprising how many people follow the route of the New River and want to conclude their walks with by pivoting the platform. It's something akin to a pilgrimage.

We have installed planters on the platform as well as a wooden bench kindly donated by Myddleton Square Association along with measures to deter litter and anti-social behaviour. We remain immensely grateful to members of the Amwell Society for their continued support in unlocking and locking the platform.

At the start of September we'll be putting up smart new panels telling the story of New River Head. Thank you to those who shared their knowledge and ideas for the panels.

Thanks also go to local residents who attended the Garden Ideas Share event in June, helping us to develop suggestions for the outdoor spaces at the Centre. This was one of a series of consultation sessions and pilot projects that have helped shape our plans. Most recently, illustrators have been working in partnership with the Peel Institute, St Luke's Community Centre, Islington Mind, Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants and All Change Arts, supporting people to express themselves and explore local heritage through illustration.

Finally, I am delighted to tell you that the London Borough of Islington [LBI], with the support of our local Ward Councillors, have confirmed a £200,000 grant from the Community Infrastructure Levy [CIL]. A CIL is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new developments in their area. It is an invaluable way to help LBI create new infrastructure to support community and local development in the borough.

We'll soon be submitting our final National Lottery Heritage Fund application, with an outcome expected in spring 2024, enabling us to begin work onsite and open the Centre in 2025.

This is the most exciting development in the Amwell area for many years. The QBC will highlight the importance of illustration in our lives, and the New River Head will be open to all in perpetuity. Editor.

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Double vision. Retro-fitting listed buildings to make them fit for the future

The London Borough of Islington has more Listed houses than any other London borough. With fuel conservation and climate change on everyone's mind it looks as if significant and sensible progress is being made in Islington concerning the conundrum of protecting beautiful Georgian and Victorian buildings while keeping residents warm and draught free.

Sally Hull writes...

Those of us in the Amwell area who live in a Listed house with draughty sash-windows often find themselves on a tightrope between complex Grade II Listed building planning requirements and ensuring the house keeps warm. Although it is possible to get planning consent for double glazing, this is dealt with case by case and takes time and much effort to get permission.

Islington residents Leyla Boulton and Anne-Marie Huby at www.greenconservation.org have taken matters into their own hands. Their well organised petition has raised the 2,000 signatures needed to trigger an LBI debate at the Town Hall on the need to update planning rules in response to the current climate and energy crisis.

They have made excellent progress. Early in July Islington Council held a consultation about a new '*Net Zero Supplementary Planning Document*' to help residents gain approval for high quality double glazing, solar panels - if they are not visible from the street and external insulation to the rear of houses. There was also demand for an approved list of suppliers and advisory organisations meeting conservation standards set by the Council.

On 13 July the LBI held a short and positive debate on the topic. Members of the Amwell Society committee were at the meeting in support of these important recommendations.

We look forward to commenting on and contributing to the draft supplementary planning document when it is available for review this coming autumn.

In the meantime, Amwell Society members anxious to fit double-glazing in their Listed houses may want to look at the '*Climate Emergency Conservation Area Toolkit*' by Chris Procter. It was published by the Architects Climate Action Network earlier this year. It looks in detail at the Cross Street Conservation Area in Islington, comments on the historic environment and the changes needed to meet net zero recommendations. www.architectscan.org

If you're planning to attend the AGM, please bring a friend or neighbour who'd like to join the Society. They will be welcome and hear first hand the issues that we manage on behalf of the area where we live.

AGM information

Last October the following committee members were elected

- o Keith Baker, Treasurer. Amwell Street. Standing again for 2023 - 2024.
- o Sally Hull. Myddelton Square. Standing again for 2023 - 2024
- o Peter Kornicki. Granville Square. Standing again for 2023 - 2024.
- o Katrina Fialko. Great Percy Street. Standing again for 2023 - 2024
- o Tony Relph. Amwell Street. Standing again for 2023 - 2024
- o Peadar Sionoid, Chair. Bartholomew Close. Standing again for 2023 - 2024
- o David Sulkin, Newsletter editor. Wharton Street. Standing again for 2023 - 2024
- o Paul Thornton, Lloyd Square. Standing again for 2023 - 2024
- o Joanna Ward. Secretary. Great Percy Street. Standing again for 2023 - 2024
- o Martin Worthington. Percy Circus. Standing again for 2023 - 2024
- o Rowena Smith, Tyson Street, Standing again for 2023 - 2024

Helping us

If you would like to stand for election to the committee and actively support the work of the Society, please contact the Chair, Peadar Sionoid by e-mailing info@amwell.org.uk well in advance of the AGM. We are especially looking for help with membership matters, website development and event organisation.

Subscriptions and standing orders

The committee needs your help. We would like to structure subscriptions more simply by asking everyone to pay their subscription every New Year's Day. That will ease the burden on our excellent Treasurer who has to keep an eye, every month on whose subscription has lapsed and send out request for renewal. We are asking all members to set up a standing order with their bank for their annual subscription to be paid on 1st January each year. Of course, a standing order can be cancelled at any time. We will have this proposal for approval on the agenda for the AGM. We hope that members will support us in this move.

Subscriptions

We have always kept our annual subscription low. Our outgoings are all focussed on enhancing our area, on planning matters and social events. We keep a small fighting fund in hand, should a local crisis demand financial commitment. From 1 January 2024 the local rate will be £10.00 a year [£0.84 a month]. For those out-of-area members whose newsletters must be posted the rate will be £15.00 a year [£1.25 a month].

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

President, Jane Wainwright. Chairman, Peadar Sionoid. Secretary, Joanna Ward. Treasurer, Keith Baker. Newsletter editor, David Sulkin.

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The Black Mary Project. Calthorpe Garden, Grey's Inn Road. 2024



Mary Woolaston was a woman who presided over a healing well, not far from what is now Kings Cross Road. The area on the banks of the River Fleet were, by the early 18th century, a series of pleasure gardens with a number of natural springs and supposedly healing waters, One of the springs was Black Mary's Hole. Exact details of Mary Woolaston's life-story were not recorded due to the lack of care in recording historic Black British women's lives. However, she is mentioned in Thomas Cromwell's *History and description of the Parish of Clerkenwell* [1820]. Both Black Mary and Black Mary's Hole are extensively highlighted in *The History of Clerkenwell* by William J Pinks [1880]. There are also references to Black Mary in *Old London's Spas, Baths and Wells* by S.P. Sunderland [1915].

Black Mary's Hole is to be recreated on the site of the Calthorpe Community Garden in Gray's Inn Road as an imaginative healing sanctuary, co-created by the global majority community in London. It will include a permanent artwork and a public art festival offering space for respite.

The project will be launched at the spring Equinox 2024 and fully celebrated at the summer Solstice in 2024.

Artistic director, Gaylene Gould is an artist/curator and broadcaster with 30 years experience. She creates large-scale collaborative projects with artists, the public and thinkers that explore how we might better live together. Her work aims to create space for reflective and connecting conversations. She is currently host of the Serpentine Podcast.

Producer, Zainab Bunsie is a producer and counsellor who works closely with Gaylene who to produce a range of creative projects and support community engagement.

Garden Designer, Juliet Rose Sergeant is a British garden designer. In 2016, her anti-slavery project *The Modern Slavery Garden* was the first show garden by a female black gardener to be exhibited at the Chelsea Flower Show where it won an RHS gold medal and was voted the winner in the BBC's People's Choice Award.

Welcome to new members.

It is big welcome a large batch of neighbours and friends as members of the Society

- Diana Aurisch & Keith Catlin, Naoroji Street
- Graham Broadbent, Great Percy Street
- Tim Bullimore, Lloyd Baker Street
- Fiona Ducotterd & Isla Mickael, Cumberland Gardens
- Sarah Fenton & Ron Potter, Great Percy Street
- Douglas Hall & Charlotte Thompson, Cruickshank Street
- Brian Heaps, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire
- Edd and Evie Hermes, Myddelton Square
- Claudius Kirchoff and Cecile de Boissieu, Lloyd Baker Street
- Leroy & Michelle Levy, Great Percy Street
- Friedrich Ludewig, Lloyd Baker Street
- Rosie Neil, Lloyd Baker Street
- Thomas Probert, Great Percy Street
- Jemma Rippin and Lawrence Templeton, Claremont Square
- David Roche, Bromley, Kent
- Rosemary Sutherland, Wharton Street
- Mahala Urra, Swinton Street
- Collete Hiller, Wharton Street

Joining again

- Emily Erlam, Wharton Street

Corporate member

- James Neilson at Neilson and Bauer, Islington estate agent.

Christmas is coming. Time to plan

London will be full of Christmas treats, so it is the time to think about booking tickets.

Sadler's Wells. Matthew Bourne's *Edward Scissorhands*

At our local theatre. Based on the Tim Burton film and featuring the haunting music of Danny Elfman and Terry Davies, Matthew Bourne presents this witty, bittersweet story of an incomplete boy left alone in a strange world.

Royal Opera House. *Hansel and Gretel*.

Humperdinck's luscious score based on the much-loved fairytale is given a magical staging in this mischievous production.

Cadogan Hall. GF Handel. *The Messiah*. Sunday 3 December at 18.00. One performance only.

Sublime arias and uplifting choruses - *Ev'ry valley shall be exalted. Rejoice greatly O daughter of Zion. The trumpet shall sound. For unto us a child is born. Worthy is the Lamb and, of course, the Hallelujah Chorus* with the English Chamber Orchestra and the Voces 8 Scholars

... and don't forget two different pantomimes at the Hackney Empire and the unique Hoxton Hall.

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