

Our Annual General Meeting

Put the date of the AGM in your diary. **Wednesday 21 May in the Tower Room of St Mark's Myddelton Square. Please arrive between 6.30 and 7.00pm.** Our AGM is always well-attended. It's a way to meet new members, to socialise and to hear a specially invited speaker talk about contemporary issues, history or a local character from the past. This year we have invited Rachel Godden to speak at the AGM. Rachel is the Design and Conservation Officer in the Planning and Development department at London Borough of Islington.

Islington has more Listed buildings than any other London Borough so the role of Design and Conservation officer is very important with a huge range of responsibilities. There are multiple issues connected with contemporary planning applications in the borough coupled with statutory obligations to conserve Listed buildings. Two significant issues at present are retro-fitting of sealed double glazing units into sash windows and fitting solar panels to Grade II Listed houses like the majority of houses in the Amwell area. All Listed properties require a planning application for all modifications. Up until recently the agreed rule was for LBI to turn down all applications for sealed double glazing and solar panels even if the panels were not visible from the street. The situation is now under reconsideration with a more flexible policy being prepared.

Rachel will address a broader issue at the AGM and there will be time to ask her searching questions in relationship to Listed building applications with the matter of retro-fitting coming up front and centre. She wrote to us suggesting a theme:

What makes a good/successful planning heritage application?' Unless Amwell Society members interact with the heritage planning system frequently, it can be an area where there's misinformation about what's needed and what happens. A talk that gives tips and pointers might be helpful and engaging?

Wine and some snacks will be served.

Please note that as the hall at the former Clerkenwell Parochial School is not available, we have selected the Tower Room as a welcoming venue for the AGM. However, the room is not accessible to all, being 25 steps up from ground level. We apologise in advance and hope, in future, to find a properly accessible venue for Society events.

Summer canal boat outing. Saturday 5 July at 1.30pm - 5.00pm

The Society is going to host a summer outing on the afternoon of **Saturday 5 July**, a trip along the Regent's canal on Angel II, a smartly renovated narrow boat.

The canal, which stretches from Paddington to Limehouse, was built between 1812 and 1820, to move heavy goods back and forth between Limehouse on the Thames to Birmingham, joining up along the way with the Grand Union Canal.



Angel II

We will go through the 887 metre Islington Tunnel, pass Granary Square north of Kings Cross, and turn round at Kentish Town lock and return to our starting point.

Tours are managed by the Angel Community Canal Boat Trust - an Islington charity - and will include a guide to tell us all about canal history and the places we will pass on our way. <https://angelboat.org/>

Space on the boat is limited to twelve people, and although the trip is suitable for all ages, people with limited mobility may have difficulty getting on and off the boat.

Saturday 5 July. Meet at 1.30pm at the canal bridge ramp on Danbury Street, N.1 at the junction with Graham Street just next to the City Road Basin. The boat will leave promptly at 14.00. Tickets will cost £25.00 per person and will include tea and cake on board. Check this out at <https://what3words.com/crowned.bugs.booth>

Tickets can be bought by logging onto the Amwell Society website and going to the What's On dropdown menu.

Keep up to date with Society events on our website <https://www.amwell.org.uk/>

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Message from our Chairman

Peadar Sionoid writes...

Welcome to this newsletter - our first of 2025.

First of all, a big thank you to you all for renewing your membership for 2025. Your support adds to our voice in the community. Please spread the word about the Society among your friends and neighbours.

I'm pleased to report that we have hosted a record number of events in the past 12 months. In addition to our popular Christmas dinner in December, there was the very well-attended recital at St Marks, Myddelton Square in January, when over 30 of you heard the Debussy String Quartet and got to know the Turner Quartet. We hope to organise another concert with the Quartet sometime later in the year. A smaller group of members enjoyed a candlelight tour of the Charterhouse in March and, of course, we are continuing with our popular pub meet-ups.

Our next event is the AGM - highlighted on the front page of the newsletter. It will take place on **Wednesday 21 May in the Tower Room at St Marks, Myddelton Square**. As usual a new committee will be elected and we are very keen to hear from members who would like to help us. Please contact me on info@amwell.org.uk We are especially looking for a member - whether on the committee or not - who could provide support for our wonderful website. The commitment wouldn't be that great, but we could achieve so much more with the site with skilled help. Volunteers, please let me know.

To my knowledge, there are no significant planning proposals to report on in our area just now. However, just to the south of us and later this month, work is starting on a project to create the City of London's largest public open space to be called Greyfriars Square. The St Paul's Gyratory project as it's called will transform the area just north of St Paul's tube station into a landscaped pedestrian area. Traffic flow will be significantly rerouted over a two year period but the results - in particular - for pedestrians and cyclists look to be worthwhile. More details are available on the City of London's website at <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/streets/traffic-schemes-and-proposals/st-pauls-gyratory-transformation-project>

June 2026 - it's coming

The Amwell Society is planning a big event to mark 200 years since the building of the Georgian houses hereabouts.

**The vision. The energy. The money. The profit.
The biggest city in the world. Amwell was part of it.**

Get ready to hear the story and take part in events.

Music. Talks. Walks. A picnic for children.
Events organised by the Quentin Blake Centre for
Illustration.

Drugs in the Amwell area

Following up on our article about drug dealing in the Amwell area we are adding observations made by members. Drug dealing leads to discarded wrappers, small plastic bags, canisters, large and small which contained nitrous oxide, and - worst of all - used syringes. All this is both upsetting and dangerous. There are some courageous members who try to keep the area near them clean and tidy ... which is a great help. Other steps would be to work together as neighbours and help keep our streets and squares clear. If any member is concerned about this matter please let us know, via the website. We can then try and work out how to get help from LBI and how we can help ourselves.

Here are the notes we published recently about the challenges of drug dealing and use ... a reminder ...

1. Drug dealing is fluid. Dealers and purchasers use different locations and when one location becomes risky, they move to another more convenient location.
2. Working with residents' groups to monitor this activity is helpful and it would be useful to have a core group of members in each sub area so that the whole area is covered. WhatsApp group are useful.
3. Ringing police or LBI every time a transaction is taking place is not so useful as neither the police nor LBI can get to any location at op speed ... so keeping a log with dates and times is important so that if a pattern emerges, police can keep an eye out at key times.
4. This makes making a relationship with police, LBI and our Safer Neighbourhood panel crucial. Named officers [not so common these days] or contacts who know of difficulties is vital, so you don't have to keep retelling the story to uninformed and overburdened people.
5. Collecting information - times, dates and types of activity taking place - will help police monitor the situation at critical times. All information that you can gather is relevant. Means of transport. Appearances of people. Types of activity. Numbers of people coming and going. Anything of note
6. Talking to neighbours is helpful.
7. Sharing intelligence across the Amwell area is useful. Use this e-mail address to help the Society co-ordinate action. info@amwell.org.uk

It's very important indeed that no one takes on drug dealers themselves. Personal safety is vital. As mentioned, keeping an information diary containing as much detail as possible and passing the details to members of your group, the Amwell Society and our Safer Neighbourhood colleagues at ... is the best and safest thing to do. If you need to contact the Police urgently ring 101 rather than 999 which should only be used in absolute emergencies.

Clerkenwell Parochial School

There is still no news about the future of the school buildings owned by the London Diocese Board for Schools. The fig tree, which was featured in the last newsletter, was pruned, but the job was only partially completed with a great amount of clippings and cuttings left in the garden.

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, businesses and organisations. For information about becoming a member 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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Dig that

The Friends of Granville Square do wonderful work reviving the garden and improving what was once a much unloved space. The Friends are one of the groups of committed volunteers who also work in Myddelton and Wilmington Square gardens along with Darian and Delia Mitchell who have looked after St. Helena Garden. All these champions have taken on the work of LBI which can no longer afford look after the gardens we love.

The Granville Square Friends are holding two summer picnics on **Sunday 8 June at 2.30pm** and **Sunday 14 September at 2.30pm**. If you plan to attend and all are welcome, not just Granville Square residents. Take food to share and some drinks.

The Wilmington Square Community Gardening group is meeting to dig on **Saturday 12 April** and **Saturday 3 May**. Just show up. Equipment will be provided. Everyone welcome.

The Myddelton Square Gardeners Group is meeting on **Sunday 13 April between 11am and 3.00pm**. Gardening will be followed by tea and cakes.

Clean sweep

Many tenants and residents have made up for irregular pavement and gutter sweeping outside street houses previously provided by LBI which is now much more sporadic than it used to be. If you can spare a few minutes from time to time tidying up, we know that it is much appreciated.

Our notice board. Buy, sell, give, offer

The Society has a community notice board at the top of Great Percy Street on a wall owned by our long-term supporters, Brownings Garage. We plan to devote a section of the board to notices about local professional services, things to buy, sell or give away. It will work rather like an old-fashioned newsagent's window. If you need something, want to sell something, give away something, or have a service to offer, prepare some text - keep it brief - and send it to info@amwell.org.uk and we will print the text and put it on the noticeboard for about a month. You'll be able to extend the notice if you want to.

Welcome to new members

- Karen and Joseph Baglini, Wharton Street.
- Paul Curran.
- Narinder Jhittay, Myddelton Square.
- Theo Jones, London E3.
- Eva Sorensen, Naoroji Street.

Subscriptions

It helps our Hon. treasurer if you can pay by standing order. £10 a year on 1st January. If you are outside the area and want your newsletter posted, the subscription is £15.00. You can cancel at any time. **Amwell Society.**
Co-op Bank. Sort code 08-92-99. Account 65192526.

Shedding a light



We have recently received a letter from a member concerning street lighting. This raises several issues which are not easily solved.

The first concerns the innovation of fitting LED lamps to street lamp posts. They are desirable, of course, since they last many years before they need replacing, are fuel efficient and shine brightly at night. However, our member has noted that a lamp-standard in front of their house shines so brightly it is an intrusion. In this case, LBI has been very accommodating and fitted a shade on one side of the lamp, which has helped. This is the conundrum. Lamps support street safety, lowering the wattage of individual lamps may suit some people but not everyone.

The next issue concerns security lamps in the porch areas of some street properties. This is an even more tricky subject to address. Some tenants and residents feel that they are more secure if automatic, movement triggered lighting comes on by their front doors in the hours of darkness, while passers-by feel exposed and 'interrogated' for just walking down the street. It is possible to narrow the range of detected movement and so if members have porch lights, that might be a friendly thing to do. The letter we received notes too that porch lights can be triggered by cats and birds and possibly even foxes.

The points in the letter are well-made especially in respect of security lamps in porches. Overall, we should all be concerned about light pollution and fuel efficiency. That is a far bigger, issue with vast office blocks and shops burning lights unnecessarily. It's worth noting that, as a measure to save money, all the tall lamps on the Westway have been removed with the added bonus of reducing light pollution to the streets of Portobello Road and North Kensington.



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Park and gates to squares. Locked or not locked at night.

You have until 23.59 on 7 April to let London Borough of Islington [LBI] know your views on whether gates to parks and squares in Islington are locked at night or not.

LBI suggest that *'This proposed change will save £140k a year. We plan to reinvest £40K to enhance our Parks Security Budget, allowing us to better address anti-social behaviour (ASB) across all Islington parks (all 122). We have partnered with the Civil Protection Service and Park Guard to improve our response to ASB. We will be introducing additional new evidence-based tasking and a short-term temporary lock process to react to and disrupt ASB if it occurs. This will mean we can be more proactive in preventing anti-social behaviour, and reactive and responsive when it does occur, across all our parks. This does deliver the necessary saving but means we can provide this service in a more flexible way.*

We want to hear from local people how these changes may impact you. It could be that you live alongside a park which is currently not locked, and you would like to see more patrols in that park. Or it could be that you feel worried about a park near you that may not be locked if these proposals are put in place. It may be that local people have ideas and solutions that council officers might not have thought of.

If you'd like your views known, go to <https://www.letstalk.islington.gov.uk/park-gate-locking>.

Remember the deadline is 7 April.

Easter Egg Hunt

LBI is organising a few Easter Egg Hunts and Egg and Spoon Races events in Clerkenwell. One of them will take place in Granville Square on **Tuesday 15 April at 3.00pm**. Posters will go up in the Square ahead of the event. Ideal fun for children and parents as the school holidays begin. Thank you to Jeremy Lindon for this information.



Hot Cross Buns

They seem to be with us, these days, year-round. Chocolate buns, cheesy buns. Cheap and cheerful premium ones. Almost a rhyme! There is no doubt that you could have heard ...

Hot cross buns! Hot cross buns!

*One a penny, two a penny,
Hot cross buns!*

*If you have no daughters,
Give them to your sons.*

*One a penny, two a penny,
Hot cross buns!*



... when the fresh buns emerged from the ovens of Crisps the bakers at 44 Amwell Street which was a bakery from the 1830s until the 1970s. Another fun rhyme was recorded by Allan Jobson in *An Hour-glass on the Run* in 1959.

*One for the poker,
One for the tongs,
Three for the dustpan,
Hot Cross Buns!*



It's worth making your own buns for Easter. They aren't at all like sweet and spongy like commercial buns. They aren't difficult to make but you need time and patience. The key is keep all the ingredients beautifully warm ... but **not** hot.

1lb [450g] strong flour, ½oz [15gm] dried yeast, 2oz [57g] butter, 2oz [57g] moist light brown sugar, 2 large teaspoons mixed spice, 1 egg, 4oz [115g] currants 2oz [57g] candied peel, a pinch of salt and about ½ pint [280ml] warm milk. Use 'strong' bread making flour. Stone-ground organic flour is the best, if you can get it.

Put the flour, sugar, salt and spice into a mixing bowl and stir. Make a well in the centre. Put two tablespoonful of lukewarm water in a small bowl, add a pinch of sugar and sprinkle the yeast on the water. Put the small bowl somewhere warm and watch the yeast begin to bubble up. After 10 minutes, pour the yeasty mixture into the flour well. Beat the egg and add to the yeasty mixture. Add the warm butter. Combine the mixture with your hands to make a nice smooth dough - not sloppy. Add milk to ensure the smoothness. Then add the currants and peel. Keep kneading on a floured surface or board for about ten minutes. This is where patience is needed. Put the dough back in the bowl and cover with a tea towel and place in a warm spot for about 2 hours. When the dough has doubled in size, knock it down [that's what the bakers do], knead again and shape into 12 buns. Put them on a greased baking tray and let them rise again - it's called 'proving' - for 30 minutes. Gently cut crosses in the buns with a knife and bake in a hot oven for about 15 minutes. Take the buns out of the oven and brush with a mix of milk and sugar syrup. They will go all shiny-looking. Serve warm.

This recipe comes from *Home Baked* by George and Cecilia Scurfield. 1956, including a few extra tips from the editor.

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