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The Amwell Society will be holding its

Annual General Meeting

on Tuesday 13th May 2014
at the Clerkenwell Parochial Primary School,
Amwell Street.

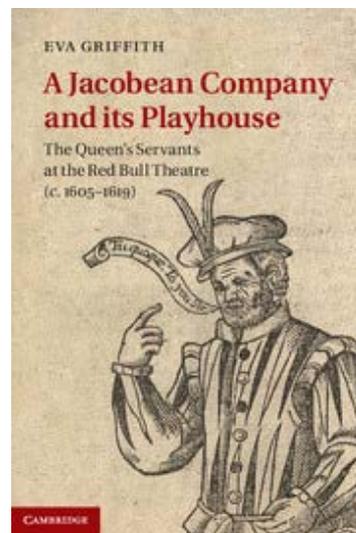
6.30PM: DOORS OPEN AND DRINKS SERVED

7.00PM: THE BUSINESS OF THE AGM.

**7.30PM: A TALK... "THE RED BULL, A
JACOBAN THEATRE AND ITS PLAYERS" BY
EVA GRIFFITH**

We are delighted to welcome the historian, Eva Griffith to our Annual General Meeting in May. Eva is a theatrical historian whose book about the Red Bull Theatre - Clerkenwell's own Globe - has just been published. Eva's talk will centre on The Red Bull, a bustling,

popular and occasionally scandalous playhouse in St John Street that performed the works of Marlowe and Webster in the early 17th century, and its resident troupe, the Queen's Servants.



A Jacobean Theatre Company and its Playhouse, Cambridge University Press

John Braun, Chairman of the Amwell Society, 1980-1986

Former Chairman of the Amwell Society, John Braun, who wrote under the name of John Cromer, died at the age of 97 on 10 March 2014. John lived in Myddelton Square with his wife Patricia. After qualifying as a solicitor in 1939, John was caught up in war service in the Middle East. He was commissioned into the Intelligence Corps in 1941 where he attained the rank of major. While based in Cairo, John co-founded the Salamandar Society, an influential group of poets. John was seconded to the Foreign Office during the setting up of the United Nations in 1946. He worked in advertising during the 1950s and 60s and was the first secretary of the Advertising Standards Authority from 1965-1973. In 1973, he was awarded an OBE for services to advertising. In the same year he was appointed Head of the Consumer Protection Division of the EEC in Brussels and was responsible for writing the first consumer protection and information programme. A volume of his collected poems, *One side of Gemini*, was published to mark his 80th birthday in 1986; he was joint author, with Mursi Saad al Din, of a work on the influence of Egypt over British writers, *Under Egypt's Spell*. As John Cromer, he had a long and fruitful collaboration with the composer, Leonard Salzedo, writing libretti for him and having his own poems set to music.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, SPRING 2014

Darian Mitchell writes:

Two years ago I welcomed five new members onto the committee; this year I will be saying goodbye to five. They are leaving for a whole variety of reasons. Some are moving from the area, others have too many commitments, some simply feel they have served on the committee for long enough. David Sulkin has also been a very longstanding committee member, having served as chair and, more recently, as editor of this newsletter. David has formed the backbone of the Amwell Society, helping to build it up to what it is today. I particularly appreciated his way with words in convincing Thames Water to fund the New River Head Book, and persuading the architect and former president of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Maxwell Hutchinson, to speak at our 40th anniversary AGM, not to mention the literary gifts which he brought to the newsletter.

Lastly, Bruce McDougall, in his role as treasurer has recently revamped our administrative systems and helped create a new website (www.amwell.org.uk). His energy and enthusiasm are of immense value to a society such as this, and I am sad to see him leave.

On the bright side we have a new treasurer, Doug Wadkin, and one of our other committee members, George Smart, has agreed to take on the newsletter. Thank you to them both.

I end my message with a plea to all members: if you wish the Amwell Society to continue then we do need a strong committee and an engaged membership. We need people who know and care about architecture, planning and the environment both locally and in a wider sense. We need people who are

interested in history and heritage. And we need people who are engaged with what's happening in their area. To contribute to the newsletter or to the website, please contact me on dariandelia@btinternet.com or **020 7833 1044**.

NEWS FROM MOUNT PLEASANT

The Mount Pleasant Association will hold a street party in Phoenix Place on 28 June 2014 alongside the Christopher Hatton Primary School Summer Fair. Please contact Edward Denison on mountpleasant@email.com if you have an idea for a stall. As Edward says, 'this could be a magnificent party and send a message to the Royal Mail Group that we are a real neighbourhood and we want to be heard.'

Also don't forget Amwell Street Fete: Sunday 29th June 2014. See you there.

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.

BUILDINGS NEWS

NEW RIVER HEAD: NEW PLANNING BRIEF
SEPT 2013

In June last year we participated in a consultation about Islington Council's plans for the part of the New River Head site south west of Sadler's Wells. This contains the oldest historic buildings: the Engine House and Windmill Base.

Planning applications by the developer, Turnhold, to convert the Engine House and South Stores into flats and houses have refocused the Council's mind on the area.



NEW RIVER HEAD

The Council acknowledges the historic importance of the New River Head and considers the buildings unsuitable for residential development; partly because the alterations involved would cause too much harm to their fabric; partly because it would prohibit public access. However, non-residential uses may be appropriate.

The Council wants the open setting to be preserved since it illustrates the buildings' past industrial use. It does not want current views obstructed by any future development. The Council wishes to secure the Engine House, Windmill Base and South Stores for heritage and community use. This might involve a museum of water, educational space, offices and meeting rooms - perhaps a

café. This would require public access to the buildings and a route through the site from Amwell Street to Myddelton Passage.

It is difficult to measure how much clout this planning brief has. Although Islington Council may give it weight, the inspector might consider it less important on appeal.

A copy of the 2013 Planning Brief can be found on the Amwell Society website.

MOUNT PLEASANT PLANNING APPLICATION

After agreeing to act as the local planning authority, the Mayor, Boris Johnson, will hear the application at City Hall in public this summer. The Mayor's planning officers have already written a preliminary report concerning the scheme's compliance with the London Plan. This report was broadly positive, but recognised areas which needed more work. They will now have to write something much more detailed and comprehensive in order to inform the Mayor's decision.

Although it now has no authority in this case, the Islington Planning Committee heard the application on March 10th anyway. It rejected the plan mainly on the grounds of the lack of affordable housing. Further problems were that rents would be too high for affordable work spaces; that there was too much residential car parking and all the air conditioning would result in increased levels of CO2 emissions. The committee was also unhappy about the sorting-office entrance creating a problem for pedestrians and the reduction in daylight and sunlight for the residents of Farringdon Road. It was thought that some of the blocks would harm the setting of a number of Georgian terraces in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. It's a pity that Camden Council did not show the same level of concern for Islington residents when it allowed the Holiday Inn to be built.

We now wait for the Mayor's planning meeting during which local residents and the two councils will have a limited opportunity to put their case. DM

CLERKENWELL FIRE STATION



Remember these?

Who would have thought that the handsome brick fire station at the corner of Rosebery Avenue and Farringdon Road would become surplus to requirements? This building, created between 1912 and 17 was the work of the architect who designed the Euston and Hammersmith stations. In January of this year, after a bitter campaign, the station was closed and will be sold.

The Amwell Society has applied for the Fire Station to be added to a list of community assets, joining Myddelton Square Gardens. The Council must make a decision about this by 26 May. As a result, we need to be thinking about who could buy the fire station for community use. The upper floors should appeal to providers of social or affordable housing. Suggestions for uses for the lower floors should be sent to jane.wainwright@blueyonder.co.uk. Those interested in joining a group of Friends should also contact me. JW.

THE SHOPKEEPERS OF AMWELL STREET

There are frequent and welcome new additions to the eclectic and charming parade of shops in Amwell Street and none more so than Charlotte's Fine Foods which opened at

number 37 at Christmas. Charlotte Bowers, 25, is a bright, young entrepreneur with a plan, and if anyone is going to make a go of it in Amwell Street, she will.

This former management consultant had always wanted to run her own business and, as the daughter of a shop owner, she understands retail. And so Charlotte has established her Fine Foods to supply quality groceries to local households using produce sourced mainly from British producers aiming to price her goods on a par with Waitrose.



She has chosen a shop rather than an internet business, because she likes dealing with people face-to-face and wants to offer a personal service to customers she recognises.

We are lucky that Amwell Street, with its relatively affordable commercial rents, allows businesses such as hers, Alice Howard's delightful In With The Old, and the glorious vintage Pennies to survive. As Charlotte found when she was looking for premises, there are few viable high streets in Camden and Islington that are affordable for new businesses. We all know and value our small independent shops, from the beautiful blooms in Flor Unikon to The Hairdresser's experts (I'm sure we all have a favourite), from Dale Barter's caring and expertise at the Amwell Veterinary Practice to the witty designs in Timorous Beasties. But if we care about and appreciate these businesses, we

should also invest in them – and that means actually going in and buying things... regularly.

Why not pay Charlotte and the other independent shop keepers of Amwell Street a visit and see what they have to offer?