

## SPRING INTO ACTION!



### From *Love's Labours Lost*. William Shakespeare

When daisies pied and violets blue  
And lady-smocks all silver-white  
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue  
Do paint the meadows with delight,  
The cuckoo then, on every tree,  
Mocks married men; for thus sings he,  
Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo:  
Oh word of fear,  
Unpleasing to a married ear!

When shepherds pipe on oaten straws,  
And merry larks are plowmen's clocks,  
When turtles tread, and rooks, and daws,  
And maidens bleach their summer smocks,  
The cuckoo then, on every tree,  
Mocks married men; for thus sings he,  
Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo:  
Oh word of fear,  
Unpleasing to a married ear!

**This newsletter is packed with dates for your diary. Don't miss out on any of the many community activities being arranged - more than ever before. If you are fixing a garden fête, barbecue, a community talk or celebration let us know via the Society's website. Please give us as much notice as possible.**

### Christian Wolmar to give the talk at the Society's AGM. Tuesday 12 May Clerkenwell Parochial School

Don't forget the AGM. It's a social event and a time to meet friends and neighbours. If you've never been to our AGM before, come along. It's not a stuffy, formal evening. Yes, we focus a little bit on Society business and welcome a speaker, but it's also a chance to have a glass of wine or a soft drink and an old-fashioned chin-wag. It goes like this:

- 6.30. pm - arrive
- 7.00. pm AGM business
- 7.30. pm Christian Wolmar's talk
- 8.15. pm discussion and social time



Christian Wolmar is an award winning writer and broadcaster specialising in transport and is the author of a series of books on railway history. In the autumn of 2012, he announced he is seeking the Labour candidacy for the 2016 London mayoral election and his campaign website is at [www.wolmarforlondon.co.uk](http://www.wolmarforlondon.co.uk)

We are very fortunate that Christian has agreed to talk at our AGM about the impact of the old, new and yet to come transport innovations in our area.

**MATT O'BRIEN, HEAD AT CLERKENWELL PAROCHIAL WILL SAY A FEW WORDS AT THE AGM ABOUT OUR LOCAL PRIMARY SCHOOL AND ITS CONTINUING SUCCESS.**

# The Amwell Society - Campaigning on behalf of the locality for 43 years

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

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## Mount Pleasant update

from Edward Denison, Secretary of the Mount Pleasant Association

By the time this newsletter goes to press, the Royal Mail Group's (RMG) plans for 681 mostly luxury homes at Mount Pleasant will have been given final approval by the London Mayor, Boris Johnson. Against a backdrop of growing discontent in London at how developments of all sizes are not merely failing to address the capital's major problems but seem to be exacerbating them, the Mount Pleasant scheme has come to symbolise all that is wrong with development in London. The lack of meaningful consultation with local residents and stakeholders; the institutional contempt for local interests; the undermining of democratic processes; an impossibly complex and obscure planning system; the precedence given to private capital over public interest. The list goes on.

The Mount Pleasant Association (MPA) has worked hard to raise awareness of the reality of the Royal Mail's scheme and encourage an open debate. It is widely accepted by those involved in this application that the RMG has been a ruthless applicant in the pursuit of a single objective – to realise the market value of their land. The proposal is universally derided within the architectural and planning communities. Ironically, the only person outside the Royal Mail's consortium to have publicly voiced support for the scheme is the one person in the world that should not be expressing an opinion in public: Boris Johnson. If these plans go ahead, the consequences for the communities surrounding the site are bleak.

The MPA continues to fight for a better future for this vitally important site. We are pursuing this on two major fronts: through the Community Right to Build (CRtB) funding we successfully applied for from the Greater London Authority (GLA) and through the development of a Neighbourhood Plan.

Firstly, CRtB is a scheme designed to make it easier for local communities to carrying out developments in their area. In partnership with create Streets, we are in the process of working up in detail an alternative scheme for the site which has come out of years of consultation with and participation of members of the local community and received widespread publicity in the local, national and professional press. Compared with the RMG scheme, it has more housing (which means more social housing), is better connected to the surrounding area, and has better public amenities and open spaces. This work will help build a consortium that can offer the RMG a reasonable price for the site.

We already have support from major companies who not only see the financial sense in making a long term investment, but also wish to be associated with a new model of development that seeks to tackle not deepen London's problems. If successful, the community will be a key member of that consortium, putting our future in our hands.

Secondly, the MPA is developing a Neighbourhood Plan, which will give the community statutory planning powers under the Localism Act. Had such a plan been in place three years ago, it is unlikely the RMG would have got permission for their fortress-like scheme. The first stage of the process is to be formally recognised as a Neighbourhood Forum and to define our Neighbourhood Area. We have consulted extensively on these matters through emails, public meetings and street posters. Our applications are currently in the final stages of assessment by both Camden and Islington Councils.

If you have any questions about any of the issues above, would like to get involved or be kept up to date via our mailing list, please get in touch by any of the means listed below. We are indebted to the community for their support to date and will continue to work for a better future for Mount Pleasant.

Contact Edward Denison...

E: [mountpleasant@email.com](mailto:mountpleasant@email.com)

W: [mountpleasantforum.wordpress.com](http://mountpleasantforum.wordpress.com)

T: @MtPleasantForum

David Sulkin adds...

If you like to review the situation by looking at a BBC video on line published on 3 October 2014 go to [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-29475191](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-29475191)

In the video a City Hall planner claimed that the design of the development at Mount Pleasant reflects London's vernacular

style. You may wonder what she means? The Georgian or Victorian vernacular style or the more contemporary steel and glass? The video concludes with a claim that Royal Mail Group "is now free to regenerate the area"...



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## Major behind-the-scenes changes to the Amwell Society website. A message from our chair, Paul Thornton



The Amwell Society might not [yet] aim to be at the cutting-edge of technology...but we are trying. Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr etc may one day play a part in our communications but for the moment our ambition is to have a website which is clear, easy to use, informative and up to date. It is the

last of these which has proved the greatest challenge – not least because those with their finger on the pulse of local events have not had the technical knowledge to maintain the website content.

Since the turn of the year, this has changed. Our website has been re-implemented using the popular WordPress content management system. The appearance of the site is unchanged, but with a little practice, the content can now be maintained by committee members and others. Many thanks to Chris Duggan of Myddelton Square office@chrisduggan.co.uk for getting us through this phase.

Our home page has now been revised, and the Latest News and Shops & Services sections updated. We have more work to maintain postings about key planning issues and to remove out-of-date material and duplication. We are also intending to publish a list of all current planning applications affecting our area – but the London Borough of Islington website from which we obtain our data has been out of action recently!

Please make use of the website [www.amwell.org.uk](http://www.amwell.org.uk) and let us know of any further improvements/amendments you would like to see made. You can e-mail us at [info@amwell.org.uk](mailto:info@amwell.org.uk)

## News from the Peel Centre

The Peel Centre in Percy Circus is at the heart of our community. The Peel provides services for older people, child care and youth activities. The Peel is supported by LBI and has a small endowment of its own. It also works in partnership with many other organisations to increase its reach and effectiveness. Everyone knows that these days its very hard to make ends meet in the world of community and social provision. That applies equally to local authorities and to charities. The Peel is used as a local polling station so when you go to vote on 7 May look around you and if you have any questions, talk to Peel staff.

## A sigh of relief in Myddelton Square

As members will remember, the Myddelton Square Gardens Group [MSqGG] has been working hard for many months monitoring the activities of the freeholder, Marcus Cooper, who bought the freehold of the Square and refused to provide LBI with a lease to continue its stewardship of this long-standing public open-space.

This week MSqGG received the following statement from James Gilchrist, Head of Greenspace and Leisure Services LBI about the Council's application for a new lease on Myddelton Square Gardens. The message read:

*Good news was received last Friday - the landlord for Myddelton Square has finally conceded that we are entitled to a new tenancy. We will now prepare a draft consent order and start negotiating the terms of the new tenancy. It is therefore likely that the anticipated court case will not now happen. Of course, the following negotiation may in itself be a battle. But a definite positive step forward.*

Residents of Myddelton Square and especially Monica Potts, are to be congratulated for their determination in maintaining the Gardens as a public open space and keeping us all informed about progress on their campaign. Myddelton Square requires some care and attention and a photographic survey is already underway. The photos illustrate that there is considerable need for maintenance and repair work in the Gardens. MSqGG will put this subject on the agenda of its next meeting and invite discussion and input from LBI, residents in the Square and others.



This photo is taken from the survey and shows that Myddelton Square needs more than a little bit of tidying and planting.

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## Bevin Court community restoration project

They say there's no good news in the world but there is! Islington Museum has been awarded a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a project to restore the large mural by artist Peter Yates in the foyer of Bevin Court. The project will also reinstate a bust of Ernest Bevin, create a guided walk around *Lubetkin's Islington*, develop a website capturing stories about Bevin Court and produce a film by young people on the building's heritage. For more information about the project as it progresses, follow on [www.bevincourt.wordpress.com](http://www.bevincourt.wordpress.com) Amwell Society members are welcome to attend an event to launch the project at the Peel Centre between 14.00 and 16.00 on Saturday 23 May. Come and find out:

- How Bevin and Lenin are connected
- What happened to the busts of both Bevin and Lenin
- What happened in April 1941. A big blast
- Why the mural is important
- What a remarkable mural Peter Yates has left us
- What a remarkable building Lubetkin has left us

The investment of the Heritage Lottery Fund in the restoration shows that small local projects of national importance can get funding. This will be a splendid and well-deserved restoration. Well done to all involved! Below is a picture of the Yates' mural at Bevin Court. Find out more about him at [www.peteryates.co.uk](http://www.peteryates.co.uk)



## Arches, fleas and bargains. 13 June

The Church of St Mark, Myddelton Square will be holding its very popular Flea Market on **Saturday 13 June between 11.00 and 15.00**. 50p entrance. They'll be something for everyone to find amongst the treasures on sale! This year funds are being raised towards the urgent repairs needed to the west arch - watch for when the scaffolding goes up! Please support this event if you can....doesn't everyone love a flea market?

## Clerkenwell's two-choir coalition

Our Most Holy Redeemer in Exmouth Market is hosting an evening of choral music on Friday 8 May at 19.30. Exciting chamber choir *Chantage* (winner of the BBC Radio 3 Choir of the Year competition in 2008) joins forces with the new kids on the block, the locally-based, LGBT-friendly group *The Fourth Choir* which was formed only 18 months ago and which has already sung at the Café de Paris, the Hackney Empire, twice at the Festival Hall, Two Temple Place and King's College London. The Fourth Choir rehearses once a week in the evening at Clerkenwell Parochial School.

For this special concert the two choirs will perform music selected from four centuries of masterpieces, from Renaissance genius, William Byrd to contemporary classics by living composers and culminating when the 60 voices of both choirs merge to perform Harris's sublime piece for double-choir *Faire is the Heaven* and Rachmaninov's thrilling *Ave Maria*. If you haven't been to a choral concert at OMHR you have a treat in store. The church has an exceptional acoustic for choral music which has to be heard to be believed.

So, whether the election leaves you red with anger, suffering from the blues or green with jealousy, the two-choir coalition at OMHR on Friday 8 May will prove the perfect antidote and raise your spirits to higher things.

Tickets can be bought at [www.thefourthchoir.com](http://www.thefourthchoir.com) [£12, £10 concessions] or at the door on the night [£15, £12 concessions]

## One day. Two dates. Is that possible?

**Amwell Street Fayre.** Following last year's huge success, the Amwell Street Fayre is to be held again on **Sunday 21 June**. Big up the activists from the community of shops for all their hard work. Amwell Street will be closed with food stalls, music, all kinds of fun stuff. Kick-off around 12.00. Join the scrum until about 17.00. The Society will be have a stall so come and check us out.

**Open gardens.** On **Sunday 21 June** a group of gardens in the Amwell area will be open to help the National Garden Scheme which supports seven major national charities. The gardens, which will be open from 14.00 - 17.30 are 11 Chadwell Street, 27 Myddelton Square, Lloyd Square Gardens, New River Head Gardens and 49 Wharton Street. There's something for everyone in each garden with live music on the bandstand at 49 Wharton Street.