

Amwell Society Late Summer Party

When Society members get-together informally, friendships are sometimes forged and introductions to near neighbours established. Every year we meet in St. Helena Garden at the junction with Lloyd Baker Street and Lloyd Square. This little garden, laid out when the Margery Street Estate was built in 1933, was, in the 1990s an overgrown, tangled, weed-ridden place into which people passing down the pathway threw rubbish. With the support of the London Borough of Islington [LBI] the Society adopted the garden and has been looking after it every since. It has to be mentioned that, although members have given occasional help, the garden was looked after for many years by Barbara Holliman and more recently by Darian and Delia Mitchell.

This summer's party will take place in St. Helena's Garden on **Saturday 7 September 18.00 and 20.00**. The Society will supply the first drink and canapés but we'd be grateful to those who bring some wine or beer to share. Bring a neighbour who isn't a Society member. If the weather is wet, a notice about the alternative venue will be attached to the railings.



What does the future hold for Myddelton Square Gardens?

PUBLIC METING TO BE HELD ON MONDAY 12 AUGUST AT 19.00 AT ST. MARK'S CHURCH TO BE CHAIRED BY COUNCILLOR GEORGE ALLEN.

Work together to co-ordinate the community response into one united voice!

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 1044 or e-mail info@amwell.org.uk Chairman – Darian Mitchell. Secretary – Francois Smit. Treasurer - Bruce McDougall. Newsletter editor – David Sulkin. The Amwell Society is a constituted group with annual, audited accounts. The Society is a member Civic Voice and the London Forum

Doorstep Day

Sunday 1st September

Several years ago the Society organised a series of Doorstep Days. The formula is simple. If you have something you don't want or need and is in reasonable condition, put it outside your house on the Doorstep Day with a label. For example:

Amwell Society Doorstep Day. If you like these chairs you are welcome to take them away.

We don't advise that you put out any electrical equipment as its safety cannot be guaranteed. Nor any equipment with potentially dangerous blades or moving parts. A chair that needs reupholstering or a piece of furniture needing polishing or a simple repair is ideal. Knick-knacks that you haven't taken to the charity shop often find a good home too.

In the past we have had notes from people who have put out items only to find that they have been snapped up in a moment. If you have any nice stories to tell after Doorstep Day, please let us know. david@davidsulkin.co.uk and we'll post them on our website.



Message from our chairman

It is nice to have had some sunny weather over the past few weeks after such a cold spring. Have you noticed that there are no Mirabel plums on the plum tree in St Helena Garden this year? That's a pity for the enthusiastic jam

makers, but a blessing for the road sweepers and me. We have to clear up the windfall squashed fruit.

There has been quite a deal of activity in the garden squares this year with local residents making up for the shortfall in gardening and planting as the Council cuts back on services. I personally believe this is a rather good thing. A bit of communal activity brings people together.

The planning application for the Mount Pleasant development has now gone in and we have until the end of August to respond, although the letter from LBI gives a deadline of 1st August. There are many documents to consider and most people will not have the time or inclination to read them all, but if you feel strongly about the development, either positively or negatively, then it is worth writing to the planning officer to give your views. If you wish to have any influence on the decision to grant planning permission you need to be specific. In a large development such as this the Committee usually grants permission with provisos and amendments, rather than expecting the applicant to go back to the drawing board. What I think is important is that we get some of the money which is allocated to the community to mitigate the effects of a large development which is spent locally on improving the infrastructure in the area. Wilmington Square and Granville Square have both been identified as open spaces available to the new residents of Mount Pleasant and both could benefit from upgrading. So if you are going to write to the Planning officer don't forget to mention how you would like to see what is known as Section 106 money spent.

The saga of Myddelton Square has taken a rather bizarre turn. The freeholder is now proposing a collection of improvements to the gardens including an outdoor gym and a two-lane Crown bowling green. I enquired whether these facilities will be provided free of charge but have had no response. It's hard to know whether to take these proposals seriously or not. Fortunately members of the Myddelton Square Leaseholder's Association have taken the initiative to establish a group of interested



residents to communicate with the freeholder and the council and keep an eye on what's going on. Contact Monica Potts on monica-potts@btconnect.com to join the group and keep abreast of events.

You'll notice on the front page of the newsletter that a meeting is to be held at St. Mark's Church on 12 August at 19.00 I think the turn-out will be big so I suggest you get there early to find a seat.

We have already had some local activity to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the New River. St Mark's Church put on a very enjoyable concert, Community Splash, and Clerkenwell Parochial Primary School sang a specially composed song "New River". I am pleased to be able to tell you that Thames Water has agreed to Fund a grand event will happen on 29th September at the New River Head to which we will all get an invitation, but we are still in the planning stage. A group of architecture students and a local theatre company are hoping to stage a re-enactment of the opening of the New River. The plan is for this to be a kind of pop-up event which will also take place in Finsbury Park and Clissold Park as part of their local festivities to celebrate the anniversary. Fingers crossed it all goes to plan, like the very successful Amwell Street Fete this summer. Darian Mitchell.

A very warm welcome to new members

- ★ Alice Howard - In with the Old, Amwell Street
- ★ Howard Clark - Sadler's Wells
- ★ Susan De Mont - Angel Association
- ★ Michael Coffey & Barbara Burraccino - St Peters Street N.1
- ★ Adrian & Jamie Dicks - Rosebery Avenue
- ★ Deian Tecwyn - New River Head
- ★ Peter Barron - Albany Street NW1
- ★ Julian & Marcyanna Carr - Cruikshank Street
- ★ Maggie Paton - Charles Allen House, Amwell Street
- ★ Roseann Ward - Great Percy Street
- ★ Rachel & Izzat Darwazeh - Percy Circus
- ★ Joyce Smith - Wharton Street
- ★ Fionuala & Keith Baker - Amwell Street

**Happy 90th birthday greetings to founder-member, Tom Gooding.
Many happy returns Tom!**

Thank you to Alain Head for the excellent article about Bagnigge Wells

Mount Pleasant. Take Action Now **Darian Mitchell writes...**

The development of the Mount Pleasant site will have a significant impact on the Amwell area for good or ill. After a relatively short period of consultation and three exhibitions, Royal Mail put in its planning application in April which was finally published and put out for public consultation on 21 June with a closing date of 1st August for comments. In reality we will have in addition at least the whole of the month of August to comment, as Islington will consider communications from the public until the hearing by the Planning Committee which is some way off.

The planning application is lengthy and complicated as would be expected for such a large development. The most useful document is probably the non-technical summary and there are lots of diagrams and drawings which give some indication of what the development will look like. The planning application is on the Islington Council website application number P2013/1423/FUL and some sections of it and pictures from the exhibitions are on the Amwell Society website for ease of reference. Comments should be sent to Sarah Ricketts, Major Applications Team, Planning and Development, PO Box 333, 222 Upper Street, N1 1YA or by e-mail to planning@islington.gov.uk It is important to always quote the Application number.

As mentioned in the last newsletter a public forum has been established called the Mount Pleasant Forum on which the Amwell Society is represented. We have agreed to give them a page on our website www.amwell.org.uk. The forum has had a number of meetings and one of its members has produced a list of possible objections to the development which might help members of the public formulate their own views. This list and the minutes have been posted on our website. Information about the Mount Pleasant Forum and how to join can be obtained from Edward Denison on edenison13@gmail.com

The Amwell Society committee will write a response to this application from the point of view of an amenity society, and bearing in mind the current planning policies of both Islington Council and The Mayor of London, not to mention National policies. Party politics sometimes come together on the need for more housing provision which means the maximum use of brownfield sites that lead to high rise and densely built developments. Attitudes of Amwell Society members vary from "it's a really good thing" to "it's a monstrosity" so we will need to express views to which most members can sign up.

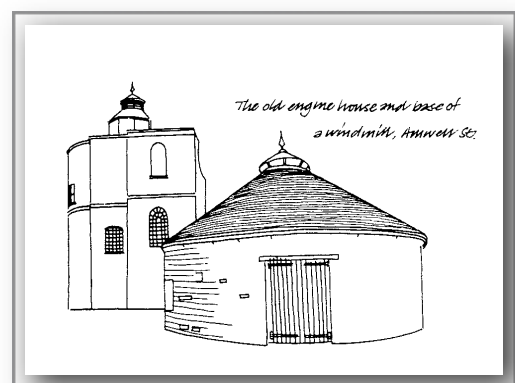
The New River Head Heritage Plan

After Turnhold the development company, which owns the New River Head, site lost its appeal against Islington Council's refusal of their planning application to build town houses in a gated community around the Engine House and the Windmill base, things went very quiet.

Then in March this year Turnhold submitted three new planning applications. Fundamentally these had the same shortfalls as the previous applications. The proposed gated residential community, which as well as being damaging to the preservation of a heritage asset, is incompatible with the 1999 planning brief which earmarked the site for a heritage and educational centre with public access to the buildings and gardens.

On 10 April, using delegated powers, LBI Planning officers turned down all three applications. In July Turnhold launched an appeal against this decision which has yet to be heard.

As part of their previous appeal Turnhold stated that they thought the 1999 planning brief, which proposed a Heritage Centre on the site was too old to be considered seriously. Consequently the Chief Planning Officer put the brief before the Planning committee for re-adoption. This seems to have resulted in LBI drawing up a new draft planning brief for the New River Head Key Site which went out for public consultation in June. The consultation included a small exhibition at Finsbury Town Hall which was run by very helpful LBI planning officers. Some members attended and made their views known while others looked at the new planning brief that was posted on line and available in hard copy form by writing to the Planning department. The new draft largely reiterated the aspirations of the 1999 planning brief that this important site *should* be the home of a Heritage and Education Centre marking the 400 years history of the New River and the New River Head in perpetuity.



Oral history...who'd like to talk?

Oral history is the collection of historical information about individuals, families, important events, or everyday life. David Sulkin is very keen to meet and talk to people who have lived in the Amwell area for some time so that their memories can be noted. Very often people say 'I can't remember a thing about the past' or 'What I remember can't be of any interest to anyone'. That 's definitely not true.

Several years ago the lovely, gentle Ena Norris, who lived at Wharton Cottages and died at the age of 99 mentioned how she came to live in the Amwell area.

'It was in the War. I lived with my husband and baby in the Caledonian Road. He was a fireman. In 1941 Hitler kept him very busy in the City night after night. The air-raid siren went and so I got under the table with my baby. That's what they told you to do in those days. Well, the bombs began to drop and they sounded as they were coming right at me. Then suddenly I knew we had had a direct hit when I saw the fireplace come towards me. After that we were homeless. A friend of mind knew Miss Lloyd Baker and told me to go and see her. She was stern and asked me if I was a trustworthy, prompt with rent and tidy. I must have impressed her because she showed me this little place and I have lived here ever since. My children grew up here and me and my husband were very happy...'

Maybe your memories don't go as far back as Ena's but if you have seen the Amwell area change for the better or for the worse, get in touch and tell me your tales. Telephone number 020 7837 3444. You'd be welcome to come and have a cup of coffee and a natter....



Children at Clerkenwell Parochial School in 1912. Photo sent from Canada by David Forsyth of his aunt, Alice Garraty. She is the only girl in the back row. What tales could Alice tell? We have identified the exact spot at CPS where this picture was taken