

## A HAPPY EASTER TO ALL OUR MEMBERS AND NEIGHBOURS

### The Amwell Society AGM

This year's **Annual General Meeting** will be held at Clerkenwell Parochial School, Amwell Street on **Tuesday 14 May at 7pm**. Drinks and snacks available from 6.30pm.

Our keynote speaker this year is Alain Head, the Society's Architectural Advisor and until quite recently, a lifelong resident of the Amwell area.

The title of Alain's talk is **Architectural Soup**: Using examples from around the world, he will take a lighthearted look at how buildings develop and change over time and asks questions about how we should look after our built heritage.

- 6.30pm. Drinks and snacks.
- 7.00pm. Business of the AGM including annual accounts and election of committee members.
- 7.30pm. Alain Head's talk followed by questions.
- 08.45pm [approximately] meeting ends.

### 2nd Window-box Competition

Following the huge success of last year's window-box competition, our committee members, Sally Hull and Joanna Ward are arranging a second festival of flowers, hoping now, that it will now become an annual event.

Sally and Joanna aim to fill the Amwell area with even more flowers and plants again this year. The competition is open to all, not just members, living within the Amwell Triangle. Flowers, herbs, fruits and even vegetables can be grown in a window box and we hope that green-fingered neighbours will be inspired to create something colourful, scented, sculptural or even edible.

Judges will be keeping an eye out for window boxes of note and encouraging those who have not thought of entering the competition to do so. If you see an especially lovely or clever window-box display by a gardening neighbour or friend, you can enter on their behalf. So, enter or nominate a window box by sending your name and address to Joanna at [joward001@icloud.com](mailto:joward001@icloud.com)

The window boxes will be judged before the **Amwell Street Party** and winners announced on **Sunday 14 July**. Wonderful prizes are to be donated by businesses on Amwell Street. See more details on the Society's website.

### Amwell Street Party - call for volunteers

The next Amwell Street Party will be held on **Sunday 14 July 2019 between 11:00 - 18:00**. Amwell Street will be closed to traffic between Ingelbert Street and River Street on the day to allow for the delivery, set-up, decorating and the safe running of the whole event.

The Party brings all parts of our community together to enjoy each other's company and the special quality of our neighbourhood - architecture which stretches across the ages but especially from 1820 to the present day. This year's theme is 'Garden Party.' There will be a cake competition stall, summer hat competition stall, tombola and raffles, a strawberries and cream stall as well as live music, fairground rides, a bouncy castle and of course, the popular dog show enthusiastically hosted by Amwell Vets.

It's a mammoth planning operation to get everything ready and running smoothly, so the organisers would be very grateful for volunteer help. That's setting up equipment between 08:00 - 11:00 and then shifts to run stalls throughout the day. Extra help would be much appreciated at the end too, between 18:00 - 20:00. You don't need to devote the entire day to volunteering, just a few hours would be much appreciated. Please get in touch...

There will be a mix of charity and commercial stalls.

Come to the Party and bring friends and relations All will be welcome. If you can volunteer, run a stall or want any information, please ring 020 7683 7091 or write to [amwellstreet@gmail.com](mailto:amwellstreet@gmail.com) There's a website too [www.amwellstreet.com](http://www.amwellstreet.com)



**Amwell Street Party 2018**

## Recycling in Islington re-evaluated. David Sulkin reports

Many members are interested to know, reliably, the point of taking care about recycling in Islington and the Amwell area. The London Borough of Islington [LBI] has an excellent Recycling and Rubbish section of its website. If you're interested in which plastics can be recycled, facts about food-waste re-cycling and many ways of disposing of small and large items, then the first stop are the LBI pages at [www.islington.gov.uk/recycling-and-rubbish](http://www.islington.gov.uk/recycling-and-rubbish)

A few weeks ago I met the outstandingly enthusiastic and well-informed Matthew Homer, Waste Strategy and Support Manager (Public Realm), Environment and Regeneration at LBI. He was happy to tell me about his day-to-day responsibilities and he explained that, while re-cycling in Islington was originally aimed at addressing the problem of tons and tons of Islington weekly rubbish going into landfill sites, the picture has changed significantly. Now LBI's objective is to help us recycle as many waste products as we can with the objective of saving the planet.

Matthew explained to me that, when he was working with colleagues on redesigning the LBI website, the team decided to focus on *facts* about recycling, to help people know dates of collections, details on exactly what can and cannot be recycled from home collections as well as specialist recycling points for clothing textiles and shoes that are not suitable for charity-shop donations. For example, the nearest Amwell textile recycling point is in Rosebery Avenue at the junction with Hardwick Street, EC1R 4RG. There is another in Rosebery Avenue Rosebery opposite Sadler's Wells EC1R 4TN. There are sections on the LBI website covering collections and collection days in the Amwell area, exactly what you can and cannot recycle, reporting a problem, furniture and bulky waste, dog fouling and fly-tipping. The website also reminds us that the little batteries we use so often, cannot easily be recycled. Every supermarket should have a battery recycling canister at the checkout, so remember to take your batteries shopping.

Everyone knows that glass is almost 100% recyclable. That's also true too for most clean cardboard, paper and aluminium. Tin cans are perfect for recycling too. So too are beer and screw-cap bottle tops. Most people think that aerosol cans cannot be recycled but that's old hat. They can and should be put into your green recycling box.

Many people are confused about which plastics can and cannot be recycled, There is also a resentment towards supermarkets and food producers which supply food and household goods in plastics that *might or might not* be suitable for recycling. We all know how it feels to have a hand hovering between the recycling box and the general rubbish bin - 'Recycle? Dump? Recycle? Dump?' Later there's a tendency to get into a 'I can't be bothered' frame of mind, giving up recycling plastics altogether.

**Try the LBI recycling quiz also on line. You might think you know what can and cannot be recycled - you'll be surprised.**

## Does recycling work in Islington? Doesn't everything get dumped in landfill?

I put this question to Matthew Homer [right] and was amazed by what he



said. By all accounts LBI is impressively effective in recycling with the long view of contributing to sustainability and the reduction of risks posed by carbon emissions and plastic waste.

LBI belongs to a consortium called the North West London Authority [NLWA]. As well as LBI it includes the councils of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Waltham Forest. NLWA's function is to arrange for the transport and disposal of waste collected by these boroughs, ensuring waste minimisation and recycling.

A question that many people ask is, what can be recycled and what cannot? Neighbours are confused by conflicting information. It was reassuring to hear from Matthew that, after initial sorting of waste materials in Hornsey Lane, all waste goes to the NLWA in Enfield where sophisticated machinery identifies all kinds of materials; plastics, cardboard, paper, glass, aluminium, cans etc etc by using specialist machinery. It's worth noting that, to encourage recycling in Islington, we don't have to sort our recycling before its collected as people do in many other parts of England. We can put all recycling materials into one green box and it is sorted for us in Hornsey Lane and in Enfield. We are also fortunate to benefit from weekly collections.

I asked Matthew about waste that cannot be recycled and he said that anything that cannot be recycled but can be safely burned is incinerated for energy at the North London Heat and Power Plant. He added that, 'virtually nothing from Islington goes into landfill'.

Matthew also told me that the recycling of organic waste is vitally important and that about 30% of Islington households help by separating organic waste from their general recycling. I said that I thought that 30% was a low percentage but he said that, against the national average, this was good. He added that some people don't like the 'yukkiness' of collecting organic waste but if you use biodegradable caddy liners and empty the caddy regularly, you minimise smells and help the environment no end. Quite few people in Islington cannot manage their own compost in the garden and the challenge is greatest for people who live in flats. However, the compost that's made from organic waste goes directly to farmers and food producers in the East of England. Your garden clippings are classed as organic waste too and are as important as your organic kitchen waste. They are collected weekly too.

### ...more on recycling...

Remember, you want to know more about how to recycle in Islington, the LBI website is the best starting point. [www.islington.gov.uk/recycling-and-rubbish/recycling-and-rubbish-collections](http://www.islington.gov.uk/recycling-and-rubbish/recycling-and-rubbish-collections) The site is full of clear and practical information for residents.

If you want to know more about the LBI Hornsey Road facility look at [www.wiseuptowaste.org.uk/recycle/reuse-and-recycling-centres/islington-hornsey-street/](http://www.wiseuptowaste.org.uk/recycle/reuse-and-recycling-centres/islington-hornsey-street/) It's possible to take large items to Hornsey Road yourself but check the website or ring 020 8884 5645 before setting off.

The NLWA website is also excellent with many interesting features as well as invitations to all kinds of recycling workshops. Go to [www.nlwa.gov.uk](http://www.nlwa.gov.uk) An example of one NLWA article is entitled *254 million bread crusts binned each year*. NLWA says that across its partner boroughs, 254 million bread crusts are put in the organic waste [or general bin] every year as one in four people say they don't like the end slices of a loaf. That's the equivalent of just under 13 million loaves of bread a year or - if a loaf costs £1.00 - over £13 million is being thrown away in crusts alone. This article is followed by another called *Plastics Confusion; making sure residents don't lose faith*. If you want to know more about waste, how to play your part, opportunities to take part in workshops and consultations go to the NLWA website.

It is also great to know that LBI helps residents dispose of almost any item. Nowadays there is a charge but there are also special reductions. For example, if you want to recycle a good piece of furniture that has not come to the end of its useful life, you can contact Bright Sparks at 176 Seven Sisters Rd, Finsbury Park, London N7 7PX. 020 7272 9156. Bright Sparks ensures that donations go to people who are desperately short of good furniture. Bright Sparks can renovate small electrical items too ensuring that they are safe for future use. For more details look at [www.brightsparksonline.com](http://www.brightsparksonline.com)

Matthew Homer looked into the future and said that government has ambitious plans for recycling and is planning to enforce a consistency of recycling collection systems nation-wide, create a significant reform of labelling so that people can be clearly see which plastics must be recycled, a reduction on reliance on plastics, working with food manufactures to comply with rules on packaging that doesn't damage the environment and a deposit return scheme for glass and plastic bottles and drinks cans.

**Clear recycling sacks and green organic waste caddy liners can be obtained free of charge from Finsbury Library, 245 St John's Street, EC1V 4NB. Ring to check availability of the bags before you set off. 020 7527 7960.**

### .....and on cycling! Chairman, Paul Thornton reports

After a 55-year gap, I recently took courage in both hands and resumed cycling, with valuable help from LBI, which offers one-to-one tuition for nervous returners. Two months later I am confidently riding Santander Bikes around London having paid £90 for a year's "all-you-can-eat" biking – and rather more for a decent helmet. Still visibly less accomplished than most other road users, I find that the overwhelming majority of motorists and cyclists are extremely courteous and give me wide berth – though a handful of each have caused me a few anxious moments. With some trepidation I have now signed up for a 150-mile cycling tour with my grand-children in the summer; a bridge too far?

The Amwell Society is a member of the London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies, the London-wide umbrella organisation for the civic movement. In total the Forum represents well over 100 societies such as ours. I have been a member of the Forum's board for the past 18 months, and continue to be impressed by the quality and breadth of the work done by hard-working volunteers on our behalf. Forum representatives are currently engaged near full-time on the Examination in Public of Mayor Sadiq Khan's New London Plan, which will have profound implications for our built environment, green spaces, transport infrastructure and many other aspects of life in London. The Forum's latest newsletter can be downloaded at [www.londonforum.org.uk/newsforum.php](http://www.londonforum.org.uk/newsforum.php)

The Amwell Society numbers many distinguished residents amongst its members, including one of the country's foremost comic artists and graphic novelists, Posy Simmons – creator of such unforgettable characters as Gemma Boverly and Tamara Drewe. Posy is being honoured with a retrospective exhibition at the **House of Illustration, Granary Square, Kings Cross, opening on 24 May**. The Amwell Society will be arranging a private view of the exhibition for members, date to be confirmed.

### A fund-raising event for the Angel Canal Boat Trust

*'An illustrated journey from Green Fields to Canal-side Living'* by Giles Eyre, tracing the evolution of the City Road Basin, Regent's Canal through two centuries at **6.30pm on Wednesday 1 May at St James Church Hall, Preband Street, N1 8PF. £5.00**

Telephone 07970 175488 for tickets.



## Finsbury Health Centre

On Saturday 16 March a meeting was held at the Peel Centre so that Barb Jacobson and John Allan could report on the long-standing struggle to see Finsbury Health Centre [FHC] fully restored and celebrated. Barb and John must be complemented on their tenacity and determination over many, many years to work with different departments of LBI and the NHS to achieve their ambition. This has proved, sadly, almost impossible and the Finsbury Health Centre Preservation Trust is now thinking how it can recharge its mission.

FHC was opened in 1938 and is now Listed Grade I. It is recognised internationally as a beacon of social and architectural progress that anticipated the foundation of the NHS by a more than ten years. The building was largely the brainchild of two immigrants, Dr. Chuni Katial [1898-1978] a local ward councillor and chairman of Finsbury Council's Public Health Committee and architect Berthold Lubetkin [1901-1990] who had arrived in England in 1931 after experiencing the Russian Revolution and being fired with visions of modern architecture's transforming potential.



**The welcoming foyer mural at FHC with health messages, now painted over.**

Designed to be adaptable to changing healthcare requirements, FHC served as a casualty station during WWII and has continued a community health facility ever since. It accommodates two GP practices and provides a range of other services as part of the Whittington Health NHS Trust. It has suffered the effects of numerous changes of ownership and management under the continuous re-organisation of the NHS, most recently being taken over by NHS Property Services Ltd [NHS PropCo] following the Health & Social Care Act 2012.

As a result of these upheavals, FHC has had minimal maintenance or investment over many years. This has become a cause for increasing concern and, following a successful campaign to prevent the sale of the building, prompted the formation of the FHC Preservation Trust to secure its future in beneficial NHS use.



**FHC entrance foyer, something between a club and office social area**

The last repairs to FHC were in the 1990s. There is now a pressing need for interior upgrade and adaptations - all modifications that are entirely feasible within conservation protocols due to the inherent flexibility of the original plans. Outline proposals have been prepared for the necessary works, which after consultation with key stakeholders, could readily be developed towards a fully costed scheme. A Conservation Plan documenting the heritage significance of the building is also in place to guide the detailed design work.



**The photo-mural - the first thing you saw on arriving at FHC and a technique much favoured by Lubetkin - shows a map of London with the FHC at the centre.**

The Preservation Trust is appealing for an injection of new energy to support the work. Despite the 1990s repairs, the structure is in a poor state, but it is such an important building its degradation or even loss cannot be contemplated. We will keep Amwell Society members informed on progress but this jewel in the crown of local and national architecture cannot be allowed to be vandalised by careless inaction by NHS PropCo.

The photos show FHC when it was opened in 1938 and are included in John Allan's book *Lubetkin. Artifice* [1992 and 2012].