

The Belsize Society is a Registered Charity (number 1180842), continuing the work of the Belsize Residents Association.

www.belsize.org.uk

Notes from your Chair

Welcome to the November BelSoc Newsletter.

It was great to see many of you at events over the summer. The summer party was in a lovely setting and we're grateful to the hosts. Averil Nottage introduced us to the three architects that shaped the Belsize area in a historic walk on a dry and sometimes sunny October Sunday. We report on these two events

This Newsletter contains an invitation to Belsize residents. You're being asked to contribute to Camden Council's Sustainability Team's Strategy Room. You have to apply and be selected to sit on a "citizen's jury", judging the policy options available and helping Camden as they design their climate action plans. Following on from that, we also have a piece about retrofitting, covering insulation and heat pumps.

We have a review of Peter Darley's new book that explores the Chalk Farm Railway Lands, a maze of railway lines, canals, depots, tunnels and bridges. Averil's review also lists the seven wonders of this area.

Regal developers recently took on the development of the 100 Avenue Road site. The Newsletter includes a report of their consultation as they plan next steps.

We were pleased to host, with the Friends of the Belsize Library, a wonderful talk by Lester Hillman covering numerous weather events over the centuries. The Friends have also let us know about their events over the winter and we cover the Gathering Leaves Hong Kong Book Library, which operates from the Belsize Library.

We hope that you can join us to sing carols in Belsize Village and enjoy the Newsletter.

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|---|
| Our local railway history - | 2 |
| BelSoc Summer party, Spring Walk - | 3 |
| Volunteering, Membership fees - | 3 |
| Retrofitting a flat/Carols this year - | 4 |
| Join the Strategy Room - | 5 |
| 100 Avenue Road Development Forum - | 6 |
| BelSoc/Friends of the Library event - | 7 |
| Upcoming Belsize Library Talks - | 7 |
| Hong Kong Books Library - | 7 |
| Dates for Your Diary - | 8 |



BELSOC CAROL SINGING 2024

*Belsize Terrace,
Saturday, 21 December
from 4:30pm
Mince pies, singing and great
company!*

Donations to local charity



OUR LOCAL RAILWAY HERITAGE

Local historian Averil Nottage writes:

Peter Darley has just published the **Chalk Farm Railway Lands: a guided tour from 1830 to 2030** about a significant aspect of our local heritage. You couldn't wish for a better guide. Peter's knowledge and long-standing enthusiasm for his subject shines through.

In 1830 it was proposed to build the London to Birmingham Railway through the fields alongside the planned Adelaide Road. It was the first inter-city railway to London and brought goods from England's industrial heartlands. Robert Stephenson, as the Chief Engineer, faced many challenges, including digging the Primrose Hill tunnel through stiff clay and creating an underground Winding Engine House to pull engines by rope up the incline from Euston.

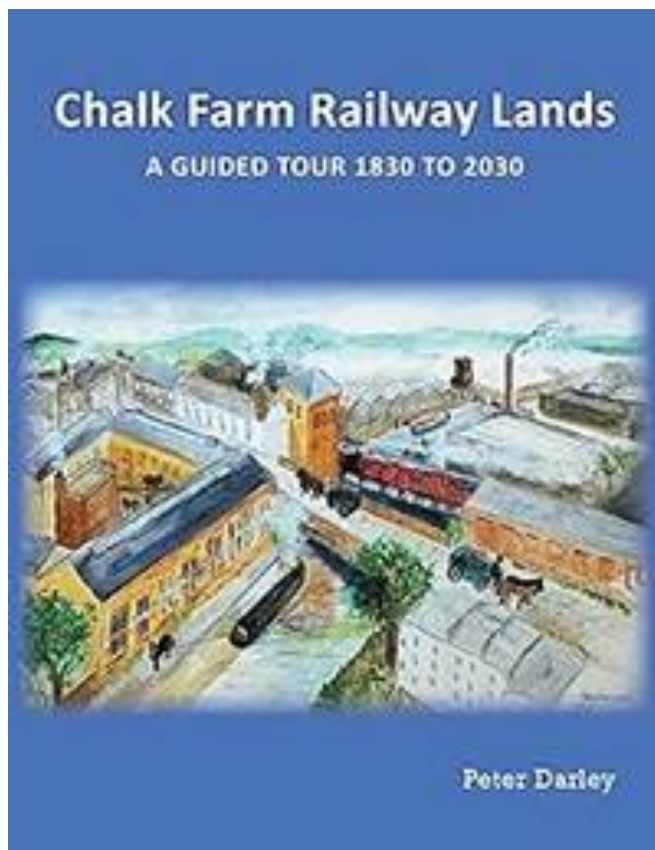
The company's London goods depot was between Chalk Farm and the Regent's Canal where Camden Station opened. The depot housed the goods yard, locomotive sheds, warehouses, and stables. The Roundhouse was built in 1847 to cope with large numbers of goods engines. From 1851 trains transported goods directly to and from London Docks making the Roundhouse redundant, and it became a store. At its peak, 800 horses transported goods from the station by road. Horses continued to be used until the 1950s. The last steam trains were in 1962 and, around then, commercial traffic on the canal ceased.

Boat trips started on the canal in 1951 and the towpaths opened in 1972. The first market stalls opened in 1973 and by the 1980s Camden Lock had a fully-fledged market. The Camden Goods Station closed around 1980. From 1966 the Roundhouse became an iconic rock venue, closing in 1983 before reopening in 1996 as a centre for the performing arts.

Peter ends the book by describing his dream that by 2030 the seven wonders of the Chalk Farm Railway Lands will all be publicly accessible. These are:

- the Stationary Winding Engine Vaults, only accessible under Network Rail supervision
- Primrose Hill Tunnel East Portal, now only partly visible
- the Roundhouse, open for events but with the hub and undercroft not usually open
- the Stables complex, largely accessible in the Stables Market
- vaults, horse tunnels and catacombs, parts are incorporated into the market, but much is inaccessible
- the Interchange Warehouse, now offices with no access to the historically significant basement and canal basin
- Hampstead Road Locks and the Regent's Canal Information Centre which are publicly accessible.

The book costs £25 and can be obtained by e-mailing Peter at Darleyp@aol.com including your address.



BelSoc Autumn Historic Walk

Averil Nottage led the autumn BelSoc historic walk twice for over sixty people on a dry, October Sunday. We walked from Belsize Village to Englands Lane covering a century of development in Belsize, much still standing and very much the present fabric of our area.

We were introduced to Daniel Tidy, a developer of the former Belsize House lands, who constructed the stucco housing stock (Belsize Avenue, Belsize Square). We really enjoyed the architectural transition from stucco to the red-brick housing as we headed toward Eton Avenue. The developer William Willets responded to the lessening popularity of stucco and met the new demands for more individual features for houses, including more ornate windows. The next transition, to the Arts and Crafts was then drawn to our attention as we entered Eton Avenue. Were these buildings the precursors to the garden suburbs of Hampstead and other areas?

Averil is planning a walk for next Spring, and we're already very much looking forward to hosting this.



Volunteering for the BelSoc

If you have a few days to spare, or more time, then please do consider helping the Society. We're always on the look out for those that can help run the organisation, so if you would like join the committee and take on a role, then get in touch. This could mean helping with the Newsletter, or working on membership, or organising the Society events. We're also about to revitalise the website and looking for help as we do this.

Beyond committee roles, there are plenty of ways to help us in individual activities.

If this interests you, then please do get in touch emailing membership@belsize.or.uk.

BelSoc Summer Party

This year's party brought over sixty of us together, including many new members, to catch up, eat some great cakes and enjoy a very sunny garden.

Thanks to the volunteers that helped to cater for the event, and to Angelina and Kamal Kohli for providing a lovely setting for the party.



BelSoc's annual membership fees

For the 2025 subscription year, the BelSoc annual membership fee will rise from £10 to £20, following the resolution at the AGM. The Society is a not-for-profit and non-political Charitable Incorporated Organisation, led by volunteers, but costs for activities have risen since we last raised fees over a decade ago. Membership fees support all our activities, and you will continue to see the Society engage with the concerns of residents on planning matters and local issues, organise events about the heritage of the Belsize area, and publish the Newsletter and TYCT.

We would be grateful if members that pay by standing order can adjust these to £20 ahead of next year's payment due next January. Over the coming months, we will be refreshing Society publications, such as the forms to join, alongside updating the website which will enable new and old members to support us. Contact us using membership@belsize.org.uk with any questions.

Retrofitting a flat

An air source heat pump is big, about twice the size of an air conditioner, and is mounted externally, which might mean that it will require planning permission in our conservation area. Heated water is distributed through radiators or underfloor. It doesn't provide cooling, ventilation or domestic hot water.

If you live in a house or a ground floor flat you can probably position one on the rear wall or in the garden. If you live in an upper floor flat it is unlikely that you will be able to fit one.

You might find an air source heat pump combi of interest. They are more expensive, and at the moment don't qualify for a government grant (but hopefully that will change). They are quite large and heavy to install. However, they do have the advantage that they are fitted internally, so don't require planning permission. Heated air is distributed through duct work and grilles in the floor or ceiling.

Pichler and Viessmann combis both provide heating, cooling, ventilation and hot water all in one unit. Insulation is the top priority in retrofit. Ideally 10 cms of wood fibre should be fitted to the external walls, probably internally, with as much as possible in the ceiling and floor. Any draughts should be stopped. The next priority is double glazing. Both of these should be carried out before a heat pump is installed. One or two electric heaters can be added if needed.

There is some support offered to residents. Camden lists the energy efficiency grants available at <https://www.camden.gov.uk/energy-efficiency-grants>.


Stay in touch on retrofit@belsize.org.uk.



BelSoc Carol Singing 2024

The Society's carol singing will take place in Belsize Village on Saturday 21 December, 4.30pm. Please join us for the event, to enjoy the sing-along and a mince pie or two. Donations will be collected for a local charity. (The Marie Curie Hospice - which we have supported in the past - is currently closed for major works.)

As in previous years, Matthew Watts will lead our singing and we're again hoping that the Primrose Hill Community Choir members might join us. Members may like to note that the Concert for the Homeless (which Matthew is involved with) is on 24 November, 7pm. Tickets are £25 with proceeds to Crisis and St Mary's Primrose Hill.



London Classical Choir & Orchestra
Trumpets: Nina Poulos & Olivia Vird; Viola: Roger Cowley
Violoncello: BHW4 Producers; conductor: Matthew Watts

Concert for the Homeless

Sunday 24th November 2024, 7-9pm

The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace (Jenkins)

Concerto for Two Trumpets (Vivaldi)
Agnus Dei (Byrd)



Attend in person
St Mary's Church, London NW3 3DJ
(enter via Elworthy Road)

Tickets
£15 (concessions: £10) in advance*
or £20 (£15) on the door

Or watch the livestream*
available on YouTube for three weeks

*Links
for advance tickets, livestream & donations at
londonclassicalchoir.com

Proceeds to
Crisis
& St Mary's Church Cold Weather Shelter



Join the Strategy Room!

Camden's sustainability team asks Belsize residents to apply to participate and writes:

Step into the Swiss Cottage Strategy Room, to help inform Camden's next Climate Action Plan. Taking place at Swiss Cottage Community Centre on 23 November, please apply for one of the twelve spaces using details on this page.

In the space of 90 minutes, you will discuss what makes a better future on food and energy. You'll discuss different options with your fellow participants and vote.

Camden Council's Sustainability Team is looking for 12 participants aged 18 and over to participate. Each participant will receive a £20 voucher for their time.

You don't need any special skills or knowledge to take part, all you need to bring is yourself!

The Strategy Room is Nesta's award-winning experience that combines facilitated deliberation, interactive polling and collective intelligence to bring people on our journey to reducing emissions. In the Strategy Room, a facilitator will be there to guide you through the session.

The main purpose of this is for the Council to test how different climate policies would work for residents in the Belsize Park area, and help identify what policies and actions we will want to include as part of the Council's next Climate Action Plan from 2026 onwards (the link to the current climate strategy is here: <https://www.camden.gov.uk/documents/20142/344816220/Camden+Climate+Action+Plan.pdf/1518b741-3a82-b442-7d71-9d43c158f3aa?t=1636039744726>).

APPLY TO TAKE PART:



- Date: Saturday 23rd November
- Time: 12pm – 1.30pm
- Venue: Room 4, Swiss Cottage Community Centre
- How to participate: Please register for the strategy room through the QR code or at this link: <https://forms.office.com/e/ZucaizTGu5>.

Please note: there are only 12 spots available – the Council will be in touch ahead of the session to confirm places



100 Avenue Road Development Forum: Update from New Developer

Alan Selwyn, BelSoc Planning, writes:

This online meeting was organised by Camden with the 100 Avenue Road developers to present revisions to the permitted scheme and answer questions on the proposals.

After 10 years, only the foundations and basement have been built, with the site now sold to Regal who wish to redesign elements of the scheme. This requires new consent, and they are consulting between now and the end of the year, hoping to start work in early 2025 with a 3 year build time.

They will not change the existing permitted envelope but have managed to squeeze in an additional 52 units by minimising the service ducts and other modifications. There will be 166 units in the tower - now 26 storeys - and 70 in the adjoining lower building - now 8 storeys. The lower building, in addition to affordable housing units, will contain shops and a community space, which will be refined in consultation with The Winch.

The existing two buildings were to be faced in concrete with large amounts of glass. This is no longer considered acceptable in terms of energy requirements so the outside will now be clad in brick with smaller windows and curved corner balconies. This may help reduce the visual intrusion this tower presents though it will not reduce the huge scale.

There were other environmental discussions around the effects on wind, shadowing, glare from the windows, micro-climate and improvements to the landscaping.

Affordable housing will increase from 30% to 35%, now said to be “true affordable”. There are two main types included in this scheme: ‘social affordable rent’ for those on Housing Benefit and ‘intermediate rent’ designed to be achievable for those in salaried work. A Housing Association will manage these. Camden prefers this to shared ownership schemes for various reasons explained. The way the 35% is calculated has also improved to give better-quality homes by calculating floor space and habitable room area rather than simply number of units (which tends to favour small flats such as studios). 35% also meets the GLA London Plan requirement and Mayor of London Plan.

It does seem as though the new provision is an improvement on the original scheme in this respect.

Of the remaining 65%, the original scheme focussed more on private rentals, whereas this scheme now targets private sales. The developers said this would favour a more stable population, with more family sized units (though they cannot control buy to lets or overseas sales).

Access was discussed, during the building work and after, for deliveries, bin collection and so on. We have concerns about vehicle access, which is primarily from Eton Road (and presumably the rather narrow Winchester Road from Swiss Cottage). Small deliveries and disabled parking are planned to be in the basement via the ramp under Hampstead Theatre. Larger deliveries (to the shops), waste collection and any other utilities will be from ground level between the theatre and the tower. Both will create a hazard for pedestrians. More work is needed.

Other than blue badge spaces in the basement there will be no residents’ parking on site and the council will not issue residents’ parking permits, as this will be a ‘car-free’ development.

I was impressed by the level of detail discussed in the 2 hour meeting and attention to answering residents’ questions, also by the commitment by the Council to achieve the best results from the proposed revisions.

More details will be published in the next couple of months with further consultation. Members are encouraged to take part.

BELSIZE COMMUNITY LIBRARY AND BELSIZE SOCIETY: JOINT EVENT

Organised by the Friends of the Belsize Community Library with BelSoc support, Lester Hillman's talk "... A Hard Rain's a Gonna Fall" described weather events over the last centuries. His presentation opened with the 1975 evening in Belsize/Hampstead when up to 200 millimetres of rain fell in an hour representing one third of a whole year's rainfall. Memories of that evening were shared, with both the presenter and audience members remembering the 14 August evening.

Rain was combined with hailstones, immense in size. Lester told us about the Wyldes Farm - the grade II* farmhouse still a feature of North End - that became inundated as run-off flowed through the house down to Golders Green. Its power crushed parked cars. There were numerous flooded areas in and around Belsize Park.

The talk also highlighted that rainfall was localised other parts of London did not have unusual rainfall. In fact, almost all the rainfall was in a very small area centred on Whitestone Pond. Distant from the formal measurement stations, it was only because the Hampstead Scientific Society had placed a weather station and observatory near the pond, operating since 1905, that data would be collected about this event.

How freakish was this? The rest of the talk then did contextualise the event. We were introduced to the 1091 tornado that flattened 600 houses on St Mary Le Bow mentioned in the Chronicles; and to more recent storms including one that flattened a tree in 2011 in Aspen Grove. Rarity confirmed, the talk concluded, we left the library into a calm evening.



Upcoming Belsize Library Talks

The Friends of the Belsize Library have organised an exciting set of speakers over the winter. Talks will be at Belsize Community Library, Antrim Road, NW3 4XN, starting at 7.30pm. Suggested donation £5

Thursday 21st November, 7.30pm: The Extraordinary Life of Elizabeth Blackwell. An illustrated talk by Pamela Holmes on the famous 18th century botanical illustrator who eloped from Scotland to London and later rescued her husband from the notorious Marshalsea debtors prison.

Thursday 12th December, 7.30pm: Working With Music and Paint. An illustrated talk with live piano music by musician and painter Ruth Waterman.

Thursday 16th January, 7.30pm: Survivors of the Holocaust. A talk by Dr Bea Lewkowicz. As we approach the 80th anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz. Dr Bea Lewkowicz chairs a discussion with survivors about their experiences during and after the war.

Thursday 20th February, 7.30pm: Belsize House and other Local Country Estates. An illustrated talk by local historian Averil Nottage.

Belsize Library hosts Hong Kong Books Library

Gathering Leaves Hong Kong is a Hong Kong Books Library located in the Belsize Community Library since 2022. The mission is to preserve Hong Kong Language and culture, and to connect Hongkongers to the local community.

Gathering Leaves have collected 1000 books, they are books written by Hongkongers or books about Hong Kong. The HK Books Library is open every Saturday from 3 to 7pm. Other than regular Saturday sessions that welcome everyone, it also hosts a regular Qi Kung class on Monday afternoons, all free for the community.

The group have been hosting a variety of events to celebrate HK culture ranging from poetry readings, book talks, movie screenings, music and live performances. Their webpage is <https://www.glhk.org>.

Dates for your diary

Belsize Society Carol Singing

Saturday, 21 December, 4:30pm, Carol Singing, Belsize Terrace. Donations welcomed.

Belsize Community Library, Antrim Road, NW3

Thursday 21 Nov, 7.30pm. The Extraordinary Life of Elizabeth Blackwell. An illustrated talk by Pamela Holmes on the famous 18th century botanical illustrator.

Thursday, 12 Dec 7.30pm. Working With Music and Paint. An illustrated talk with live piano music by musician and painter Ruth Waterman.

Thursday, 16 Jan, 7.30pm. Survivors of the Holocaust. As we approach the 80th anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz. Dr Bea Lewkowicz chairs a discussion with survivors about their experiences.

Thursday, Feb 20 7.30pm. Belsize House and other Local Country Estates. An illustrated talk by local historian Averil Nottage.

Burgh House, New End Square, NW3

Burgh House bookings on eventbrite.co.uk.

Wednesday, 13 Nov, 7pm. 'On Dorothy Bohm'. Art historian Monica Bohm-Duchen will give a wide-ranging yet personal illustrated talk about her photographer mother's remarkable life. £6.

Friday 29 Nov, 7.15pm. Layman Human: Chanterelle Humaine. Join a bit of communal singing and an intimate evening of acoustic, jazz-tinged, personal and conscious songs. £13.50, £15 on the door.

St Peter's Church, Belsize Square, NW3

Saturday, 9 Nov, 6:30pm, Lucy Russell, violin and Paul Nicholson, piano perform sonatas by Brahms and Robert Schumann and Clara Schumann's Three Romances. Admission by donation.

Saturday, 16 Nov, 6:30pm. Glain Dafydd and Natalie Salzman perform works by J S Bach, Saint-Saëns, de Falla and Debussy. Admission by donation.

Sunday 8 December, 6.30pm: Belsize Baroque plays Bach's Christmas Oratorio. Tickets £15 at www.belsizebaroque.org.uk.

The Freud Museum, 20 Maresfield Gdns NW3

Monday 16 Dec, 7.30pm. What do Women Want (of Freud and Therapy)? Susie Orbach and Lisa Appignanesi look back on the history of Women and Psychoanalysis. £25.

Contact Us

For membership and general enquiries:
Anne Stevens
020 7794 0874
membership@belsize.org.uk

Prabhat Vaze (Chair)
07930 406230
chair@belsize.org.uk

For Newsletter submissions and letters:
info@belsize.org.uk. Deadline for next issue is: **23 January 2025**

To send posters for noticeboards:
haverstockboard@belsize.org.uk
villageboard@belsize.org.uk

To send details for Tradesmen You Can Trust:
TYCT@belsize.org.uk

For planning matters:
planning@belsize.org.uk

Interested in keeping up with Belsize news and events? If you wish to receive occasional emails from us with news about Belsize and BelSoc and are not already on our list, please send your email address to info@belsize.org.uk

To find out the latest about Camden Planning:
<https://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigationenvironment/planning-and-built-environment/>

Would you like to join our committee and/or help with events, distribution and other tasks? If so, please email info@belsize.org.uk

www.belsize.org.uk