

THE ARLINGTONIAN

December 2017 The newsletter of the Arlington Association

Reasons to be cheerful

It's awards season – and once again the Arlington Association has a lovely list of reasons to celebrate. The work of our tireless gardening volunteers has once again been recognised and praised, both locally and nationally.

🌿 Our work beautifying Arlington Square gained us a Gold medal in London in Bloom's Best Small Parks category.

🌿 Once again the Royal Horticultural Society gave us the highest rating of Outstanding in their It's Your Neighbourhood awards.

🌿 We were runner-up to St James's Square in the London Garden Society's Best Public Large Square category.

🌿 And as the banner attached to Arlington Square's railings proudly declares, not only have we kept our Green Flag status, once again we achieved a place in the nation's top ten Best Loved Parks in the 2017 People's Choice Awards.

Islington received a Gold in the London in Bloom awards and, as reported in the last *Arlingtonian*, the borough was entered into the national Britain in Bloom awards, City category. Naturally Arlington Square was the first garden to be inspected by the national judges. We are happy to report that Isling-



Gardening volunteers display the banner proclaiming Arlington Square as one of Britain's Best Loved Parks. Right: the AA's Paul Thompson and Alison Rice receive London in Bloom's Gold award from Mike Fitt OBE, Chairman of the Royal Parks Guild

ton, the borough with the smallest amount of green space per capita in the whole of the UK, won a Britain in Bloom Silver Medal.



The official start of Yuletide



When does the Christmas season begin? Switching on the Oxford Street lights? Too early. Festival of nine lessons and carols from King's College, Cambridge? Too late.

The Arlington Association has decreed that Christmas this year will officially start at 3.30 on Sunday 10 December. That's when we'll be gathering for our annual Christmas Fair in the Square. There'll be mulled wine and homemade cakes, Arlington produce to buy and lusty community singing of seasonal songs and carols. And if we are all nice and not too naughty, maybe a visit from our old friend from Lapland and his four elvish helpers, Arl and Tonia, Rydon and Linton.

This year we're rattling the buckets for two worthy local causes. Every penny we raise will go towards Pack Up, the Monday lunch club for the disadvantaged and homeless at St James' Church Hall, and the Mildmay Mission Hospital in Shoreditch, a world leader in specialist HIV service delivery and care. Mildmay's nursing services began with a local cholera outbreak in 1866.

So put on your Christmas jumpers and join friends and neighbours for what is always a delightful and friendly start to the festive season. And if you fancy contributing a cake or mince pies, please bring your tasty offerings to the square from 3pm on the day.

The fate of the Fete is in your hands...

There may be no Summer Fete next year.

Everyone tells us that our annual Fete is a fun and favourite celebration (see opposite). It's also our major fundraising event for deserving local causes and for our work greening the area.

But it simply won't happen in 2018 unless we find someone to take over as chief organiser. In past years, the

driving force has been the AA's tireless chair Gordon McArthur. But he will be on holiday next September – and anyway he deserves a break from many years running the Fete.

Whoever takes over won't be alone. We have a team of regular volunteers and a template for the organisation of the day. We just need someone to step up and agree to take the lead. You will

have plenty of experienced help to guide you and you will earn the undying gratitude of your friends and neighbours, not to mention local good causes. So do consider volunteering to help us. Maybe you could jobshare the task with a partner or friend?

To find out more about what's involved, email us without obligation at arlingtonassociation@hotmail.co.uk.



Top: a new metal edging for the rosebeds. Above: germander will border the southern beds. Right: Rod at work on the benches

What's new in the square?

Our gardening plans for spring include planting plenty of snowdrops and mini daffodils in Arlington Square's rejuvenated circular beds. The perimeter beds near the northeast gate opposite the vicarage are also due to be boosted with some interesting new plants.

The square's four rectangular rosebeds have recently been professionally edged with bespoke metal borders, produced and installed by the company who edged the two circular beds. The two southern beds will be edged with the evergreen hedge germander (*Teucrium lucidrys*) to match the northern rosebeds where it replaced the lavender that had proved too brittle for a public garden.

Teucrium is a hardy evergreen that makes an excellent low and neat flowering hedge. The plants have small, dark green leaves with reddish edges and a pleasant spicy aroma, and in summer and autumn they have dainty pink flowers. Germander was traditionally a medicinal plant planted in knot gardens and used to treat gout.

Work continues in the community garden in the southwest corner of the square, with more trimming of the hedges and new roses to be planted to climb along the fence.

Meanwhile, the square's benches are getting a facelift. How many of them are there? Go on – take a guess.

Would you believe there are 32? And the Arlington Association's deputy chair Rod Austin has volunteered to renovate every one of them. Over the winter months he'll be sanding them and painting them with a teak-coloured stain that should also be resistant to mould, moss and rot from water exposure.

If you have an hour or two to spare and can help Rod, please contact him at rodaustin@btopenworld.com.



Fun-filled Fete furnishes funds

The sun shone, the band played Dixieland jazz and we all had a jolly good time on 2 September.

Thanks to our trusty volunteers and to everyone who opened their wallets so generously, our Summer Fete raised a hefty £3,640 profit, which means we were able to make handsome donations to three local good causes, as well as topping up our gardening fund and supporting the Christmas Fair in the Square

We are grateful to the Rhythm Kings who provided jaunty background music, and to the many generous companies who donated our terrific raffle prizes.

Our Good Cause policy is to donate to local organisations where a gift of several hundred pounds can make a real difference. The three local causes to benefit from this year's Fete are the Angel Narrowboat, the Islington Refugee Centre and the Stuart Lowe Trust.



Above: the Rhythm Kings and the Arlington produce stall. Below: gambling with the Human Fruit Machine. Right: a note of thanks



I am writing from the Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants to thank you for your incredibly kind donation. We are delighted that you have decided to so generously support our crucial work to enable some of the most vulnerable members of our community through times of transition in their lives and become fully integrated into our community.

The Centre provides integrated services and activities that meet the complex, severe and multiple needs of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. Our services help to reduce mental distress, improve educational and employment potential, improve independence and integration and reduce isolation. We believe in looking after the whole person – attending to each person's practical, emotional, psychological and social well-being. We work together to build a safe, positive experience of community for those who have no other sources of emotional and practical support.

We would not be able to undertake this work without the generosity and understanding of our supporters. Your kind donation will enable us to continue to provide crucial English classes, social activities, well-being services and crisis support to over 170 asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants this year.

With all best wishes, and many thanks from all the Centre staff, volunteers and visitors,

Katie Commons
 Head of Fundraising and Development
www.islingtoncentre.co.uk

New-style Proms next year

The Islington Proms concluded another triumphant season on 19 November with a scintillating concert of Mozart's music played by the gifted quartet Pocket Sinfonia. It was a fitting end to the 2017 season and to Fr John Burniston's six years as the Islington Proms co-ordinator. His work ensuring that the Proms offer the highest quality music in friendly surroundings will be carried on by two talented pianists, Adam Dickson and Yoon Chung.

Their plan for 2018 is to concentrate the Proms into a short midsummer period, instead of stretching them through the year. The season will open with the traditional Pocket Prom in the vicarage garden on 7 June, and continue with a series of concerts at St James' in Prebend Street (right), which has excellent acoustics and a beautiful Bechstein grand piano. Performers already booked to appear include Gut Strings, a chamber group comprising some of the UK's leading baroque players, and the distinguished Canadian tenor Colin Ainsworth. For updates, join the mailing list by contacting info@islingtonproms.org.



Free membership

A reminder: you are automatically a member of the Arlington Association if you live in the western part of the Arlington Conservation area – from Prebend Street south to the Regents Canal, from New North Road west to Union Square. Membership is free and you are welcome to join in all the AA's community activities.

The Association has a website, www.arlingtonassociation.org.uk, a Facebook page that we invite you to Like, www.facebook.com/ArlingtonAssociation, and a twitter account @arlingtonia. We also try to post relevant events on nextdoor.com. To join our mailing list and receive updates on local news and events, simply send us an email: arlingtonassociation@hotmail.co.uk.

Holborn Studios reprieved – for now

The High Court has quashed Galliard Homes' plans to demolish the iconic Holborn studios on the canal (right). The studios, dubbed by Helmut Newton 'the Abbey Road of photography', are part of the Regent's Canal Conservation Area and are recognised as being of townscape merit and heritage assets.

However the developers have now submitted a revised but little-changed plan to Hackney council. The closing date for comments and objections was officially November 14 but Holborn Studios management tell us that the Hackney Planning Officer will accept and note any objections made up until Hackney's planning sub-committee next meet – which could be any time in 2018.

If this development were allowed to go ahead, it would further erode the industrial fabric of the Regent's Canal and turn stretches of it into just a watery backdrop for modern apartments. Ian Shacklock, the Chair of Friends of Regent's Canal, said: 'This is a vicious assault on a thriving local community. This is not a brownfield site. The buildings are



being put to imaginative and productive use. The proposed replacements are sterile and bland.'

If you care about the look of 'our' canal, check out the newly-submitted plans for destroying Holborn Studios. More information on the plans and how best to comment is available on www.friendsofholbornstudios.com.

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ Arlington Square will yet again be appearing on TV. This time it will feature in season three of *Stan Lee's Lucky Man* starring James Nesbitt as luck-controlling Detective Inspector Clayton. Filming took place on 22–23 November and the series is scheduled to air on Sky 1 next year. As always, the film production company have made a donation to the Arlington Association, which will go towards our work greening the local area.

■ There has been another spike in crime in our area. Neighbours tell of snatched mobile phones, bad behaviour, stolen bicycles and at least one stolen car. As always, we are urged to report crimes and report all anti-social behaviour (ASB). Joseph Kitchingham is the police sergeant for three local wards including ours, St Peter's, and we have three dedicated ward officers (although one is currently on maternity leave). ASB in local parks can be reported to the Parks Patrol via Islington's 24-hour hotline 020 7527 7272. ASB can also be reported by calling 101 or emailing stpeters.snt@police.uk. Litter and fly-tipping problems should be reported to david.rawlings@islington.gov.uk.

■ Wildlife in Arlington Square is not confined to teenagers with beer cans and illicit cigarettes (or TV stars who can't read the No Dogs sign). The latest wild sighting was a stoat. Our spotters were alerted by a dog barking outside the square and the raucous behaviour of crows and magpies protesting loudly from the corner rooftops. A terrified-looking stoat finally dashed out of the square, across Arlington Avenue, under some gates and towards the canal.



The *Arlingtonian* is written, edited and designed by volunteers from the Arlington Association. Please send your comments, complaints, compliments and ideas for stories to arlingtonassociation@hotmail.co.uk

Why Arlington? (continued)

Our research into why our Square is called Arlington continues. The latest possible clue came from a neighbour who was a pupil at Highbury Hill School for Girls, now Highbury Fields School.

She tells us that when she was there, the school had three 'houses' named Alwyne, Wellington and – you guessed it – Arlington.

Some time between 1851 and 1854 (around the time that Arlington Square was being built) Canonbury Terrace was renamed Alwyne Villas after Spencer Joshua Alwyne Compton, the Marquis of Northampton, a local landowner. And in the first half of the 19th century, many places and institutions were named after national hero the Duke of Wellington. (Islington has a Wellington Road, a

Wellington Square, a Wellington Mews – and today's Almeida Street was Wellington Street until 1890.) So perhaps the school's three houses were simply named after prominent Islington street names.

The school was founded in 1844 in Gray's Inn Road, as a Model School for the Home and Colonial Society. It moved to Highbury Hill House in Islington in 1894 and changed its name to Highbury Hill High School for Girls. In 1981, despite vocal protests, it merged with Shelburne High School for Girls and became the comprehensive Highbury Fields School.

It no longer has three 'houses'. We've asked the school if they have any idea why they once used the names Alwyne, Wellington and Arlington. If they have, you will be the first to know.

Calendar of events

Christmas Fair in the Square
Sunday 10 December 3.30–5pm
Arlington Square

Arlington Association AGM
Monday 9 April 7pm
St James' Hall, Packington Street

Islington Proms
9–17 June
Mostly at St James', Prebend Street

NGS gardens open for charity
Sunday 17 June 2–5.30pm
Arlington Avenue, Arlington Square

Summer Fete – but only if we find an organiser (see page 2)
Saturday 8 September 1.30–5pm
Arlington Square

Community Gardening Days
(from 10am in Arlington Square)

Saturday 20 January
Saturday 17 February
Saturday 17 March
Saturday 21 April
Saturday 19 May
Saturday 9 June
Saturday 21 July
Saturday 11 August

Do come and do your bit to help us enhance the area. It's always fun, a good way to catch up with local news and gossip, and a chance for some gentle exercise in the fresh air. We provide hot drinks and choice biscuits. Children are very welcome, as are novice gardeners and experts alike.