

## NORTH BRIDGE HOUSE SCHOOL TO OPEN IN CANONBURY

North Bridge House, a co-educational private day school with campuses in Camden Town and Hampstead, is opening a new senior school in the former Canonbury Academy at 6-9 Canonbury Place this September. It will offer education for young people aged 13-18.

The Canonbury Society is pleased that this historic Grade II listed building, which has been empty for some time, will now be occupied. We welcome the school's plans to restore King Edward's Hall, formerly the home of the Tower Theatre, now in disrepair. But we are concerned that occupation by a school of 200-300 pupils could constitute an over-use.



North Bridge House School will open at 6-9 Canonbury Place in September. By Rosemary Brown



Detail in historic fireplace at NBHS, Canonbury.

Planning permission already exists for the building's use as a non-residential education and training centre, albeit with restrictions.

A number of meetings have been held with school officials who are keen to work with local residents on issues which will arise in the restoration phase and the operation of the school from September onwards. The main concerns identified include pupil numbers, noise, traffic and parking, building care and preservation, community relations and community use of the King Edward's Hall. We are hopeful that once these issues have been resolved and safeguards have been put into place; good sustainable relationships will ensue between residents, local businesses, the Canonbury Society and the school.

North Bridge House will be the first and only independent senior school in Islington. It will be the biggest employer in Canonbury by some margin and we wish it success.

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## WE'LL MISS YOU HARLEY SHERLOCK

By FRANK HOPKINS

In a characteristic aside Harley Sherlock once stated that RIBA really means 'Remember I'm the Bloody Architect'. We shall miss Harley's pithy humour and conviviality after he moves to Sanderstead, Surrey this spring.

Harley is well-remembered in Canonbury for his stout stand with Prof. Barrie Scott against the Basil Spence Partnership's project to demolish houses in the Alwynes to build flats. He played an active role in what became known as the "Battle of the Alwynes" which led to the inaugural meeting of The Canonbury Society in February 1971.

Harley qualified as an architect in 1952 and later formed Andrews Sherlock and Partners. The partnership became known for progressive urban schemes of low rise housing designed to bring

people closer to shops, pubs and places of work.

Harley was born and brought up in the (then) rural village of Sanderstead. Educated at Canford School in Dorset, he was called-up in 1944 to the Rifle Brigade. After service in Egypt, the Palestine and Cyprus he returned to study at the Architectural Association in London.

Harley married and built the house at 13 Alwyne Place for Folly where they lived all their married life with their children Patrick, Tom and Sarah Jane. Harley served on committees active in housing, transport and environmental issues, and in 2009 was awarded the MBE for these services.

In his influential books *Cities are Good for Us* (1991) and *An Architect in Islington*,

Harley campaigned for urban housing to respect the environment and the community. His long career as a distinguished architect, planning advocate and transport campaigner has greatly enhanced lives locally and more widely.



Harley was presented with an engraved beer tankard by The Canonbury Society. By Elizabeth Lambert

# PLANNING NEWS:

## SAFEGUARDING CANONBURY'S CHARACTER By JAMES COATES

The Canonbury Society reviewed more than 30 planning applications affecting the Canonbury Conservation Area in the past year. They were mainly for additions and alterations to Victorian buildings. We objected to several on the grounds that they were not in keeping with the character of the Conservation Area and failed to comply with some aspect of the design rules. In virtually all cases the Council took a similar view and proposals were withdrawn or modified.

### 85 CANONBURY ROAD AND THE FORMER MECCA BINGO HALL

The major planning events in 2013 were the public inquiries into the proposed development of the Ford Site, 85 Canonbury Road; and the former Mecca Bingo Hall on Essex Road. The Society objected to both schemes and gave evidence (for the Ford Site in partnership with the Upper Street Resident's Association). The Council also opposed both cases and appeals by the developers were rejected. The Ford Site developers then modified their designs to reduce the

height and bulk, and preserve views of Union Chapel tower from Canonbury Road. Although the new design was a slight improvement, we objected again; but the Council granted approval. The old buildings have now been pulled down. For a good view of the Union Chapel from Canonbury Road, go before building work starts.



Ground is cleared for construction of a residential scheme at 85 Canonbury Road. By Jack Lambert

A much more modest application to use the Bingo Hall as a church and make minor alterations to the auditorium and foyer was approved by the Council. The art deco tile façade on Essex Road has been restored and the building is now in use as a church. We are pressing for the car park at the back to be tidied up.

### SCHOOL KEEPER'S HOUSE

The former school keeper's house beside Canonbury School, an interesting Arts and Crafts style building, was demolished despite our objections. It is being replaced by a new incongruous block of flats. Planning approval 'slipped through the net' as the Council did not notify us in advance of its own application.

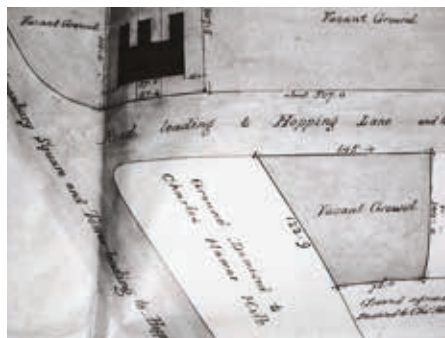
### POLICY ON SASH WINDOWS

We have requested that the Council clarify its policy on rules for installing double-glazed units in existing sash windows of listed buildings. Watch our website for updates.

# PLACING CANONBURY: PIECING TOGETHER A HOUSE'S HISTORY

By A TERRACE RESIDENT

We bought our house from Irish builders in 1979 after they renovated the terrace comprising of 18, 19 and 20 Canonbury Place. The ramshackle villas were known for their fox dens and steady flow of homeless people - our wooden floors still bear the burn marks where the occupants built fires to keep warm. In the early days, quite a few of the old inhabitants would bang on the front door at night trying to get in.



Detail from the 1837 contract between Charles Hamor Hill and The Marquess.

The builders bought the terrace for £50,000 after the Council had compulsorily purchased it. They renovated and sold the houses for just over £100,000

each. A banner headline in the *Islington Gazette* asked 'Have house prices gone mad? £100,000 price broken in Canonbury.'

To learn more, I explored the London Metropolitan Archives and books on Islington including Samuel Lewis's *The History and Topography of the Parish of St Mary Islington, in the county of Middlesex*, published in 1842 (free online version available from googlebooks).

I discovered that Charles Hamor Hill (1785-1863), took out the lease on Canonbury Tower from the Marquess of Northampton, Spencer Alwyne Compton in 1837. Hamor Hill was a London District Surveyor for 20 years and Surveyor for the Leathersellers' Company for nearly four decades until his death aged 77.

When he took up residence in Canonbury Tower, Hamor Hill negotiated a licence with the Marquess to build three roads in the surrounding meadows which became Canonbury Park North and South and Grange Road (now Grange Grove).

By 1850 Hamor Hill had constructed 50 elegant villas, generously set out in twos

and threes, with front and back gardens. 18 Canonbury Place was one of them. Little remains to tell us about the early years of the house, but documents relating to 20 Canonbury Place lead me to believe that all three houses were completed around 1848.



The abandoned terrace of 18, 19 and 20 Canonbury Place in 1975. (c) The Islington Local History Centre

Unearthing these details has been fascinating - I wonder if other Canonbury residents would be interested in recounting their own houses' histories and adding them to The Canonbury Society website to build up a history of the neighbourhood? If so, contact the newsletter team at [rosemary@canonburypark.plus.com](mailto:rosemary@canonburypark.plus.com)



# LOOK WHAT'S COOKING

## AT URBAN HOPE

Being positioned around the corner from Essex Road's busiest chicken shop presents a challenge to us. We are concerned about the diets of the young people who come to Urban Hope. Whilst Islington Council agreed it would look to ban the setting up of new fast-food outlets within 200 metres of a primary or secondary school in 2012, there are no similar plans related to youth projects.

Urban Hope is developing alternatives to fast food. We have a long tradition of teaching young people to cook low-cost nutritious, tasty meals. It has led to

By BEN BELL

careers in the restaurant industry for some; but most are now simply proud to tell us about meals they have cooked at home for parents and siblings.

We not only cook together, but there is an emphasis on sitting down and sharing meals. It's often in the context of a shared meal that we are able to provide emotional and other practical support to children and young people. We have found that with the support of local donors we are able to provide young people with meals that rival the appeal of fast food whilst providing a family mealtime feel.

We blog about what we cook each week on our website: [www.urbanhope.co.uk](http://www.urbanhope.co.uk)



*Making healthy meals at Urban Hope.*

## RECORD YEAR FOR ISLINGTON GIVING



*Celebrating Islington Giving Week.*  
© Eleonore de Bonneval

Thanks to generous support from residents and businesses, over 40 local organisations have been supported across the borough through Islington Giving. We have managed to raise over £2.6m for Islington in three years; and over 1,000 volunteers are now involved. Last year we held the first Islington Giving Week which saw over 3,500 people attending 35 events. This will take place again this year from 9–15 June 2014.

For more information contact: [lizzie.hunt@islingtongiving.org.uk](mailto:lizzie.hunt@islingtongiving.org.uk) or 020 7288 6941 and visit: [www.islingtongiving.org.uk](http://www.islingtongiving.org.uk)

## BEST AUCTION EVER FOR FRIENDS OF THE ROSE BOWL

By JANE SIMMONDS

The Friends of the Rose Bowl's Annual Gala Auction in February raised over £23,000 on the night; more than ever before. A local charity run by volunteers, the Friends rely on funding from local supporters to help raise £40,000 a year for the Rose Bowl Youth Club. Islington Council provides a further £60,000. However, given anticipated cuts in 2015, we are concerned about the Council's continuing level of support.

The Rose Bowl tackles issues of the social exclusion of young people through innovative programmes that help to develop a sense of personal worth and belief.

A highlight of the year was Rose Bowl in the Park, a day of community events including sports, circus skills, workshops and live music run by the young people's Steering Committee. The Friends funded a successful summer course where young people created a brilliant show based on *Beegu*, a book by Alexis Deacon who attended the final performance. At the request of Rose Bowl participants, the Friends provided funds to re-start the

Homework Club and introduce Cypher Nights featuring cyclical rapping.

Visit our website: <http://www.friendsoftherosebowl.org.uk> where you will find case studies and our Annual Review 2013. If you would like to get involved or learn more, please email: [info@friendsoftherosebowl.org.uk](mailto:info@friendsoftherosebowl.org.uk).



*Swinging into action with activities at the Rose Bowl.*

## Message from: the Chairman 2014

By PHILIP WALKER



One of the many tributes paid to our distinguished founder-member Harley Sherlock (see p1) commended his passionate belief that good architecture fosters a good community. It follows that one of The Canonbury Society's functions is not only to safeguard the 'built environment,' but also to safeguard the community residing in it.

former Canonbury Academy and the dilapidated King Edward Hall, both on Canonbury Place.

More information is available on page 1 and on our website, but suffice it to say that subject to some sensible limits on numbers, noise, hours of occupation, traffic and parking; we hope our new neighbour will fully engage with the community and become a great asset. As such we welcome them to Canonbury.

Jerry Norton (winter party) and George Mackintosh and Eri (summer party).

At our summer garden party Jack Lambert presented Harley Sherlock with an engraved pewter tankard full of beer and thanked him for his huge contribution, not only to the Society and Canonbury; but to Islington and to innovation in architecture and town planning. His exuberance on all these subjects will be missed!

In this context it is interesting to observe our diverse reactions when another community, North Bridge House School, successfully bid to occupy the

Once again The Canonbury Society enjoyed two great seasonal parties. We send our heartfelt thanks to our wonderful hosts Nina Konrad and

Keep up with our news by visiting [www.canonburysociety.org.uk](http://www.canonburysociety.org.uk)

# CELEBRATING THE NEW RIVER

## JOURNEY FROM THE SOURCE

By JACK LAMBERT

A group of 10 stalwart hikers travelled to Hertford East on 21 September 2013 to explore the upper reaches of Sir Hugh Myddelton's New River one week before the 400th anniversary of its official opening in 1613. Led by Chairman Philip Walker's pace-setting mum Molly (83), we tromped through light rain along meadows and past the Chadwell and Amwell springs that feed the New River.

After 2 hours we gratefully stopped for a pub lunch in St Margaret's at the The Jolly Fisherman. Some had to return to London after lunch, but most of us carried on 3 more miles to Broxbourne, with its historic church and listed pumping station. Despite the less than glorious weather, it was a very enjoyable day which could be repeated next September if there is sufficient interest.



Jack Lambert, Judith Parker, Philip Walker, Molly Walker, Sean O'Sullivan, Liz Walker, Cara Chanteau, Sharon White and Susan Buchanan. By Christopher Lambert

## A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT

By ANGELA POTTER

I couldn't resist the romance of being at the New River Head celebrations on Sunday 29th September where, on that very day 400 years ago, the New River first started to flow. I now reside in Gloucestershire; but for nearly 40 years I lived a few yards from its course through Islington; first near Colebrooke Row, and later in Alwyne Road. In fact I was part of the team that secured Heritage Lottery money to restore the Canonbury section of the New River Walk.

Now I live near Westonbirt, the 19th century home of the Holford family who made their money as Governors and Shareholders of the New River Company. As I guide visitors around the house, I tell them about the New River. It seems I can't get away from it.

The New River Head celebrations -- well attended by Canonbury residents -- were marked with a play enacting Sir Hugh Middleton's trials in completing this extraordinary engineering feat -- so ahead of its time -- that has become an enduring asset to London.

# FRIENDS OF THE NEW RIVER

By JACK LAMBERT

## FEATHERED FRIENDS

At least one drake and two ducks of the 32 mallards on the New River last February got together and produced the first ducklings since 2006. Mum No. 1 hatched 9 eggs in June and Mum No. 2 hatched 8 eggs in July. All 17 ducklings survived to maturity.



Introducing the first ducklings on our patch of the New River since 2006. By Jack Lambert

Not to be outdone by the mallards, 4 pairs of moorhens made nests, including the popular 'floating nest' which is in its third season of use. All pairs raised at least one clutch of 4-6 chicks and three pairs managed 2 clutches.

Most of the fully fledged chicks flew to other sites leaving about a dozen adults to produce the Class of 2014.

A great spotted woodpecker began its third season of mating calls and territorial marking with short staccato dawn drumming from a hollow ash tree near the large cascade. On Valentine's Day she gave an especially impassioned sequence to attract a mate...or so it seemed. A heron has appeared regularly throughout the year.

## GO WITH THE FLOW

Greenspace carried out major works on both sections of the New River Walk to improve their circulation systems. The Douglas Road section has two new pumps and new pipework including three spectacular mini Chatsworth-style fountains. In the Canonbury Grove section, the submersible pump chamber at Canonbury Road has been cleared of 15 years' worth of silt and gunk making the flow stronger and more dependable.

The rampantly-growing 'water milfoil' weed that threatened to block circulation for the last 10 years suddenly and inexplicably stopped.

The team of volunteers who removed it on Saturday mornings can now focus on clearing the pump intake grille and gathering windfall branches.



Mini Chatsworth-style fountains now ornament the New River in Canonbury. By Jack Lambert

## CYCLE BAN

After a long campaign, including support from Cllr. Wally Burgess, new signage prohibiting cycling was installed last spring at all entrance gates to the Douglas Road section of the New River Walk. Cyclists have been directed to a parallel route along Canonbury Park South. So far the reduction in cyclists -- though not yet 100% -- makes a significant contribution to pedestrian safety.



# CANONBURY NEIGHBOURS

## TRAVEL THE WORLD By GILL HOPKINS

Some of the best things in life happen by accident! In 1997, Marcella and Gavin Menzies invited us to join them for a three-week visit to Peru. It was so enjoyable that we asked other Canonbury friends to travel with us along the Camino de Santiago de Compostella.



*Cantravellers in Labrang, China.*

Two years later 14 Cantravellers journeyed from Jaca to Santiago staying in monasteries, convents and paradors. I created an electronic folder entitled Cantravel (hence our name) which is now packed with photos and memories of more than 20 trips together.

Daily accounts of our travels were written and illustrated by group members and compiled into journals

featuring our adventures in China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Guatemala, Iran, Turkey, Uzbekistan, along the Danube and Spain. We also have accounts of shorter visits to St Petersburg, Berlin, Cairo, Paris, Krakow, Lisbon and Rome; and Normandy for the 1999 summer eclipse.

Every evening we met for a glass of wine, a talk on a relevant topic and planned the next day. We each took turns giving a talk, being responsible for a kitty; and organising the next day. Our travels have always followed these straightforward practices.

Memorable talks by group members include: jade, Mozarabic architecture, the Siege of Leningrad, sword making in Toledo, Persian carpets, Mayan civilization, Chopin, Persian gardens, Kamal Ataturk, Ulugh Bek and many more.

An unspoken rule, never to dine in the same place twice, could pose problems. My husband Frank and I spent a full day in Trujillo, Spain researching a suitable venue which is still viewed as the worst restaurant ever selected.

Three times a year we meet to reminisce and discuss future travel. What seemed disasters are now hilarious memories. Promises of a fabulous hotel in Kashgar were dashed when we reached a building with all the charm of a British Rail waiting room. Our dream hotel had been closed by the Chinese Tourist Office. In Mexico we received a call to say that our Mexican airline had gone bankrupt. We all burst out laughing, yet another 'pequeño problema'!

We are not all Canonbury residents now, but Cantravel still plays a hugely enjoyable part of our lives. Plans for this year are probably a tour of Sicily, and next year – who knows?



*Gill Hopkins demonstrates Mexican fare near Merida.*

## WHY I LOVE CANONBURY:

By GAVIN MENZIES

My wife Marcella, daughter Vanessa and I came to Canonbury 43 years ago when I was a Merchant Banker in the City. My friends thought Canonbury was a strange place where dissident journalists and artists settled!

We came in early autumn when Alwyne Road was a mass of golden trees. One house was for sale. Giant mushrooms sprouted from the earth floor. There was no electricity and the gas lights did not work. But the New River ran at the back of the garden. Owls hooted from four enormous plane trees and foxes chased squirrels across the lawn – a truly marvellous spot. We have been entranced from that day to this.

Canonbury's greatest asset is the people who live and work here. Hanways Print Centre who put together my books; theatres, pubs, libraries, the Marquess Tavern, and not least our neighbours.

We are members of an informal group of 14 neighbours 'Cantravellers' (see story above). Together we have travelled across China by public transport viewing the Silk Road from a different

angle; along the Via de la Plata; to Patagonian glaciers; through the Karakoram and Hindu Kush; and many other places. Each has been a wonderful adventure.



Everything one wants can be found in Canonbury, not least superb transport facilities – being able to reach the British Library and the British Museum in 20 minutes, and City Airport in 40. Nowhere else can rival this.

If Her Majesty offered to swap Buckingham Palace for our house, I would politely decline and tell her I hope to leave Canonbury for the last time in my wooden box.

Thanks to everyone who has made the last 43 years so special! How incredibly lucky we have been to live in Canonbury!

*Gavin Menzies is the bestselling author of 1421: The Year China Discovered America, 1434: The Year a Magnificent Chinese Fleet Sailed to Italy and Ignited the Renaissance, The Lost Empire of Atlantis: History's Greatest Mystery Revealed and Who Discovered America? The Untold History of the Peopling of the Americas with Ian Hudson.*



## ST STEPHEN'S, CANONBURY CELEBRATES 175 YEARS

St Stephen's, Canonbury opened its doors at the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign when London's population was rapidly rising. It was built at a cost of £4,703 on historic ground once owned by the Canons of St Paul's. At a crowded service on 18 June 1839, St Stephen's was consecrated by the Bishop in the presence of the Lord Mayor of London.

The 1841 census of the 'new' St Stephen's district showed 3,953 people inhabiting 620 houses. Women outnumbered men 2,298 to 1,655 and the average family per house was 6 to 7 people. Happy 175th Birthday, St Stephen's, Canonbury.

*From: History of St. Stephen's Church, Canonbury: The Building and the People from Its Consecration in June 1839 to June 1989 by Mary Cosh.*

## CANONBURY SOCIETY SUMMER GARDEN PARTY

**Sunday 29 June 2014**

The Canonbury Society's Summer Garden Party 2014 celebrates world travel.

Join your neighbours from 1 – 4 pm. in a Canonbury garden. In the spirit of the Cantravellers (see story p5), express yourself as a tourist, or in an exotic item of clothing you picked up on your travels. Guests may also wish to bring international food dishes to share.

Further details of the party will be distributed to members this summer.

## CANONBURY SOCIETY: 43rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2014

**Tuesday 20 May at 7 pm**  
(doors open at 6.45 pm)

**at The Canonbury**

Award-winning journalist Peter Gruner of *The Islington Tribune* is the guest speaker at our AGM where you can learn the latest on planning, parking, trees, community charities, and Canonbury Society events. Officers for the year will be elected. Send your nominations to Rosemary Brown, 11 Canonbury Park South, London N1 2JR. Come and meet your neighbours. Drinks and nibbles follow the meeting.

## LOCAL GARDENS OPEN FOR CHARITY

UNDER THE NATIONAL GARDENS SCHEME 2014

**Sunday, 12 April**

4 Canonbury Place,  
2 - 6 pm £3.50

**Sunday, 1 June**

37 Alwyne Road, 2 - 6 pm, Teas, Raffle,  
Plant sales £3.50

31 Canonbury Park North,  
2 - 6 pm Refreshments £3.50

**Saturday, 12 July**

5 Northampton Park 4 - 7 pm Wine,  
Refreshments £4

**Sunday, 20 July**

29 Canonbury Park North 12 - 4 pm  
Refreshments £3

*Children are admitted free to all gardens.*

*For further information on The National Gardens Scheme, visit [ngs.org.uk](http://ngs.org.uk)*

## ISLINGTON GARDENER'S PLANT SALE

Home-grown plants and homemade teas available on Sunday 18 May from 2 to 4.30 pm at 36 St Mary's Grove, N1.

The Canonbury Society

# JOIN UP!

**BENEFITS:** Receive this Newsletter FREE. Attend special events such as garden parties and the AGM. Help support conservation in Canonbury. The minimum subscription is £1.00, but further donations are always welcome. Please tick as appropriate, complete your name/address details, and make your cheques payable to 'The Canonbury Society'.

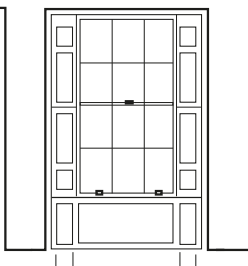
**NAME** .....

**ADDRESS** .....

**TEL** .....

**EMAIL** .....

**PLEASE SEND TO:** The Hon Treasurer, 3 Alwyne Road, London N1 2HH



I/We wish to pay my/our annual subscription for 2014

I/We wish to join the Society as new members

I/We enclose £ .....

## CANONBURY SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2014

1. Philip Walker – Chairman
2. Jack Lambert – Planning, and Chairman of Friends of the New River Walk
3. Sharon White – Treasurer
4. Rosemary Brown – Secretary, newsletter, events
5. David Ireland – Newsletter and events
6. Sarah Ross Goobey – Membership Secretary
7. James Coates – Planning
8. Marcella Menzies
9. Susan Millership

Continuing thanks to Gill Hopkins (webmaster).