

IN THIS ISSUE	
<b>NNA contacts</b>	2
<b>Members' news</b>	2
- <i>Bomber command memorial</i>	
<b>Opening the garden</b>	3
- <i>Linda and Stephen Williams</i>	
<b>NNA notables</b>	4
- <i>Anita Besson, doyenne of contemporary ceramics</i>	
<b>Saga of 11 Netherhall</b>	6
- <i>Ian McDonald</i>	
<b>Events</b>	8

## Victory for Mourne House residents as Council rejects extra floor and glass lift

A PLANNING application to extend the height of a block of flats in Maresfield Gardens and to add a glass-sided lift shaft to the front of the building has been rejected by Camden Council after a vigorous campaign by residents, aided by members of the NNA.

The 22 residents of the flats at Mourne House, 11-13 Maresfield Gardens, were horrified last autumn when the freeholder of the building put in an application without consultation with them to add an additional storey, creating a luxury penthouse flat across the roof, and to build an external lift at the front.

Apart from issues of noise and disturbance, privacy and rights of light, the granting of the application would have severely compromised the conservation area, according to architect Stephen Williams who, along with fellow NNA committee member Liam O'Connor, looks after planning issues for the association.

### Dangerous precedent

"The proposed height and massing would have extended above and beyond the established streetscape roofline, setting a dangerous precedent for the neighbourhood," he adds.

The new glass lift shaft, as well as blocking the kitchen and bathroom windows of some of the flats, thus having a detrimental impact on leaseholders' natural light and air, would also have been out of character with the rest of the conservation area.

The rights of light infringements that would have been caused by the lift shaft

*continued on page 2*

## New chair for association



LINDA WILLIAMS,\* who has been a member of the NNA committee for the past two years and an active member of the events and good neighbours groups since

2007, was elected NNA chair at the association's annual general meeting in February, succeeding Stuart Houghton, who decided to stand down after many years of service.

"Since being on the committee," she told *NNA News*, "I have come to realise how important this neighbourhood association is. It has obviously had many successes in the past, but more recently I have personally witnessed three occasions when the NNA has had a major impact on important local decisions – the redevelopment of South Hampstead High School, the issue of the Free School in Maresfield Gardens, and the Mourne House planning application. We have worked closely with members and local councillors alike and our views have been listened to and been effective.

"There are many other issues, such as the new Localism Act and ongoing discussions with Camden Council about traffic, in which it is vital our voice is heard. We need to be vigilant and active in representing members' views and fighting for their concerns, whether that means opposing proposals we are against or supporting those we agree with.

"To do this well we need to be more representative of the neighbourhood, and over the next year we will be doing our best to invite and encourage new

residents and families to join the NNA.

"Those people who are members, including some newcomers to the area, remark on how friendly everyone is and what a feeling of community there is. We must build on this so that when an important issue occurs, we can canvass everyone's views and put these forward.

"We also welcome new members to the committee and sub-groups and hope that anyone interested will contact us."

*\*See biographical note on Linda, page 7*

### Stuart Houghton

Thanking Stuart Houghton for his eight years as chair, NNA founder member Patricia Whitehouse reminded the AGM that Stuart had also been a founder member back in 1983 and had served on the committee ever since.

He had assumed the chairmanship at a time of real crisis when it was feared the association might disband. But under his leadership, the NNA had rallied and become strong again.

Now, however, Stuart's interests were very much in the north of England, not least as vice-chair of Lancaster City Football Club, and he was spending quite a bit of time up there.

"We wish him well in his efforts to bring some good manners into the game of football," she said, "and hope that when he is here in Hampstead, we will continue to see him at our social events."

There was another vote of thanks – to Hugh Isaacs, who was also stepping down from the committee after many years of service, not least as Neighbourhood Watch representative.

Andy Wilkins, who recently revitalised the NNA website at the new address of [www.netherhallneighbours.com](http://www.netherhallneighbours.com), was elected to the committee; the remaining committee members were re-elected.

**AGM report continued on page 7**

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### ► Mourn House victory *continued from page 1*

would not only have affected the residents of these flats, but also those of numbers 9 and 15 Maresfield and quite possibly those of the buildings opposite.

The Mourn House residents association approached the NNA for help. Stephen Williams attended meetings with them and drew up a list of objections to the scheme, not least of which was the structural unsuitability of the proposed development, as it is believed that the building is not able to support additional floors. Liam O'Connor also provided advice to the residents.

A letter was then submitted to Camden Council and a vigorous campaign mounted against the application. This included letters of objection from a number of NNA members and a report in the *Ham and High*. Fortunately in January this year Camden rejected the freeholder's application.

## HM The Queen to unveil Liam's Bomber Command memorial



THE MEMORIAL in Green Park to honour the 55,573 men of Bomber Command who lost their lives in World War II, which will be unveiled by HM The Queen on 28th June, was designed by architect and NNA committee member Liam O'Connor.

Liam is also known for the design and construction of the Commonwealth Memorial Gates on Constitution Hill.

The new memorial is built of Portland stone with a steel and aluminium roof. The aluminium is re-cast from material melted down from a Halifax bomber, shot down over Belgium on its way home from a raid over Germany in May 1944; all eight crew members were killed.

Within the memorial is a one and a half times life-size bronze sculpture of a seven-man Lancaster bomber aircrew; it will be one of the largest public sculptures erected in central London for decades. The sculptor, Philip Jackson, is known for his HM Queen Elizabeth memorial on The Mall and the Bobby Moore memorial at the new Wembley Stadium.

According to the RAF Benevolent Fund, which will manage the memorial, the reason for its erection in London is that the city owes its comparative safety from aerial bombardment during the war to RAF Bomber Command. Their continued offensive over Germany ensured that enemy aircraft production was focused on building fighters to defend Germany from our bombers rather than bombers with which to attack the UK.

### Elgar statue

Liam is also the driving force behind the project to have a statue of Elgar erected in Netherhall Gardens. It is hoped to be able to site this as near as possible to the composer's former house which was on land now occupied by numbers 42 and 44 Netherhall. Those interested in helping with the project, in fundraising, publicity or any other aspect in which they have relevant expertise, should email [liam@liamoconnor.com](mailto:liam@liamoconnor.com)

# Opening to the public

*Stephen and Linda Williams give a flavour of what is involved in opening their garden to the public under the National Gardens Scheme each June*

WE CAME HOME from a summer holiday a few years ago to discover that we had won a Camden Council 'Seen from the street' award for one of the best front gardens in the area.\* We don't know who nominated us, we hadn't heard of the competition and we missed the prize-giving, but it led to us not only winning two more 'Camden in bloom' certificates, but also to opening our garden one afternoon a year in June as part of the nationwide National Gardens Scheme, which raises millions of pounds every year for charity.

After winning our first award we were featured in a two-page spread in the *Evening Standard* and have subsequently seen pictures of our garden in several gardening publications and been recommended by garden writers.

The *Good Gardens Guide* asked if we would be included in their book and recently we have been published in the terribly-named *Most Amazing Gardens in Britain and Ireland*.

The garden evolved out of Stephen's passion for gardens and his desire to create something that would complement our Edwardian house which was built in the 1920s for the Danish artist, Arild Rosenkrantz.

## Arts and Crafts

The garden layout and detailing reflects the principles of the 'Arts and Crafts' movement, with more than one reference to Sir Edwin Lutyens.

However, it is the choice, number and variety of often rare plants which excites Stephen and he is always pleased to discuss them with visitors.

The garden needs hard work all the year round, but in early spring we carry out a survey to see what has survived the winter, which areas need adding to and where a change of planting might be appropriate. Then we go plant finding!

A week or two before we open the garden there is a flurry of activity: washing down the terrace, paths and steps, filling in some pots with colourful plants and generally tidying up.

Opening to the public is a great incentive for doing all those jobs that you keep putting off.

*'At 2pm the doorbell rang; a little old lady stood there with her galoshes and umbrella and asked if we were serving tea yet'*

We put up the bright yellow posters supplied by the NGS in local nurseries and on noticeboards, tell all our friends and neighbours, and hope that lots of people are going to visit on the day, praying all the time for fine weather.

We also serve tea and cakes so we have to prepare for that as well. Although we don't bake cakes ourselves, we commission a friend who is an excellent baker to supply the cakes and biscuits, preferring the home made variety to shop-bought ones.

All money raised from the teas and the entrance fee (though entry is free for NNA members) goes to the charities supported by the NGS. These are usually cancer related, such as Macmillan Nurses, the Marie Curie Hospice and Cancer Research, as well as a few for retired gardeners and horticultural students.

The first year we were ready to open the garden gate at 2pm. The heavens had opened despite our prayers and the rain was so torrential that we didn't expect anyone to appear. At 2pm on the dot the doorbell rang; a little old lady stood there with her galoshes and umbrella and asked if we were serving tea yet.

From then on we had about 100 intrepid visitors, ready to brave the rain to see a new garden and treat themselves to tea and cakes. Since then we have had a good turn out each year, the best being 300 visitors one sunny afternoon, raising much-needed funds for charity.

What has been good is that everyone who visits loves gardens and gardening and it is a pleasure to meet them and talk to them about their favourite plants and the problems they face in their own gardens. Neighbours have also met each other for the first time, and new families in the road have met other families with children and started up friendships.

Stephen makes a point, when he sees young children, to ask if they would like

to feed the fish in our ponds. The offer has never been refused and they usually ask for more fish food to throw in.

Many enthusiasts come. One pair of Australians had marked us down as a 'must-see' in London during their UK gardens expedition. Enthusiasts love to talk about plants they do not recognise and will always stay in the garden, often with notebooks to hand, even when the rain is at its worst, entering into long conversations about the pruning of a *Viburnum plicatum f. tomentosum 'Mariesii'* or the interesting new *Schefflera*. This last plant, which we put in recently, was bought from a specialist nursery in North Wales, that brings back thousands of new plants from expeditions to the Far East (Taiwan in this case).

## Practical jokes

But the garden is not only for plant spotters. It has jokes such as the crooked-stemmed Harry Lauder's walking stick (*Corylus avellana 'Contorta'*) or the 'Devil's Walking Stick' (*Aralia elata 'Variegata'*), which is alluringly attractive but very painful if its spiky stems are grabbed. Curiously the *Aralia's* other common name is the 'Angelica tree'.

The garden also has things for children like the *Arisarum proboscideum*, whose flowers poke out of the small leaves and look like the tail and backside of mice; hence its common name 'Mouse plant'.

In diametrically opposite corners of the garden the two super powers face each other in the form of the *Cercis canadensis* or 'Forest pansy' from North America and from China the *Cercis chinensis 'Avondale'*, both stunningly beautiful small trees but quite different.

Most of all the garden is for visual pleasure, a place to sit and relax, read a book or sip a drink. For one day a year we are pleased to welcome visitors to enjoy it with us.

This year we will open on Sunday, 17 June, between 2 and 6 pm.

We hope the roses will be in full bloom and the sun shining. As gardeners we always live in hope. NNA

*\*Little House, 16A Maresfield Gardens*



# Doyenne of contemporary ceramics

*The Galerie Besson played a key role in the international market for modern pottery and, despite selling it last year, Anita remains a major force in the field*

WHEN I arrived at Anita Besson's wonderfully light and airy flat overlooking both Maresfield Gardens and Nutley Terrace, she was unwrapping a parcel newly arrived from Japan – a gift from the Mayor of Osaka for a lecture she'd given on iconic potter and late good friend Dame Lucie Rie.

As with so many 'retired' people, since she sold her internationally-renowned Bond Street-based Galerie Besson last year, Anita's been busier than ever – giving talks, mounting exhibitions, buying and selling and travelling wherever the world of modern ceramics takes one of its doyennes.

She is recently back from Milan where hers was the first exhibition in a brand new gallery, and later this year she will be putting on a show of the work of four artists at La Borne, one of France's best-known centres for ceramics. Already there is talk of a show in 2014 at Paris' Musée National de Céramique-Sèvres.

So, how did she get into 'pots' and, more significantly, how did she come to own her own gallery, let alone one that has played such an important part in the international market for contemporary and twentieth-century studio ceramics – and in the careers of some of its most successful exponents?

## Doctor manquée

It certainly wasn't in the family! In fact, with a pharmacist mother and a gynaecologist uncle, Anita would have liked to have studied medicine. However, she needed Latin for that and a misogynist Latin teacher seems to have gone out of his way to ensure she failed.

Anita was born in Zurich, but only just. Though her parents were both Swiss, they had so fallen in love with Majorca, where they honeymooned in 1931, that her grandparents bought them a small farm there. Her father had trained as an agricultural engineer. Her elder sister, Miette, was born there but the birth had been difficult and her mother's brother insisted on Switzerland for Anita's delivery. Aged three weeks, she was "carted off to Majorca in a dog basket!"

But the outbreak of the Spanish civil war in 1936 made it impossible to stay

and the family fled back to Switzerland. Six years later her parents divorced and the girls stayed with their mother. Her father married twice more and she subsequently acquired two stepbrothers, one of whom moved to New Zealand, and a stepsister now living in Australia.

By the age of 12 Anita spoke German, French and Italian (she later also learnt Spanish in just two months!) and, her unfortunate experience with Latin having put medicine off the map, it was proposed she study to become an interpreter. However, she was to need a fourth language for that.

## Anglophile

As it happened, her mother was something of an anglophile and, through an artist friend, had arranged for Miette to spend a year with the Raeburn family in Surrey. Anita, then 15, visited her sister here and fell in love with England.

Thereafter, she saved up her pocket money and came regularly for holidays which, thanks to the extremely well connected and music-loving Raeburns (son Christopher became a recognised Mozart scholar in Vienna and later a well-known classical music producer), were spent going to the theatre and concerts.

Also through the Raeburns she met Lucie Rie, and thus began a life-long friendship and Anita's association with the world of ceramics.

This friendship also triggered her first visit to Maresfield Gardens.

Lucie had been born in Vienna in 1902. Her father was a doctor and a colleague of Sigmund Freud. When she came to London, Freud's architect son Ernst supported her. She also knew Sigmund's daughter Anna, of course.

While still in Vienna, Anna had befriended American philanthropist Dorothy Burlingham, daughter of artist Louis Comfort Tiffany and granddaughter of Tiffany's founder. Dorothy came to London with the Freuds in 1938 and for 40 years lived and worked in the house in Maresfield Gardens that is now the Freud Museum.

On Anita's second visit to England in 1949, Lucie recommended her to look

*'Aged only 16, Anita found herself having lunch with the then very elderly widow of Sigmund Freud'*

after the Burlingham grandchildren in Walberswick, Suffolk. To this end, aged only 16, Anita found herself having lunch at 20 Maresfield Gardens with Dorothy, Anna and the then very elderly widow of Sigmund Freud.

Thanks to all these visits and a great deal of reading, which she still loves, Anita's English improved to the extent that this became her main language at interpreters school.

Her first job, as a translator, was, not surprisingly, in England. Her employer was the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), the quango for the co-op movement worldwide, and she was mostly translating written material from their office in Mayfair, although after three years she also became secretary to the Director. Another 18 months on she asked if she could attend, at her own expense, the ICA's congress in Lausanne, where her sister lived.

Furious when her request was turned down, she started looking at the small ads in *The Times* and spotted one headed 'Art gallery seeks secretary'.

This turned out to be Marlborough Fine Art, one of London's most illustrious modern art galleries, run then by Frank Lloyd, who is reputed to have said "I don't collect paintings, I collect money", and Harry Fischer, the more academic of the two. The men had both emigrated from Vienna but had met in 1940 as soldiers in the (British) Pioneer Corps.

Anita became registrar, responsible for shipping all the artwork and, needless to say, soon got to know not only London's art aristocracy – Francis Bacon, Henry Moore, Graham Sutherland – but also the foremost artists and collectors from around the world.

During the 1960s the gallery mounted exhibitions by Van Gogh, Miró (from whom she has a signed poster dedicated to her), Jackson Pollock and Egon



eight of them British and one Catalan, Claudi Casanovas, whom Anita describes as “one of the most innovative ceramics artists working today” and is still one of her favourites.

Just a few years after this Anita was approached about starting her own gallery specialising in contemporary ceramics.

Recognising that she had an instinct for it – “I did seem to have a feeling for who or what would be the next big thing, which I didn’t really have for painting”, she decided to pursue the idea.

Premises were found in the Royal Arcade, off Bond Street. But Fischer’s solicitor advised her against a

joint venture (“You’ll do all the work; he’ll take the money!”) and, thanks to a deal with Wolfgang and a loan from Fishers’ bank, who had known her for 16 years, Galerie Besson was born in 1988.

Lucie Rie, then aged 86, produced over 60 pots for Anita’s first exhibition and the gallery was a success from the start.

There is little doubt that it changed the world of ceramics. When Anita started, ‘craft’ was a pejorative word in the art world. Now fine art galleries everywhere take it seriously, the big auction houses include pots in their sales and increasingly museums are acquiring good collections.

The pioneer artists themselves would be amazed at the prices their work currently fetches, she says. In the early days, Lucie Rie, for example, really struggled to make a living; a bowl of hers recently sold in New York for £22,000.

Twelve years ago Anita was asked to help mount an exhibition at the Olympia Art Fair which would pair Lucie’s work with that of Gwen John.

She worked on the project with former museum curator Matthew Hall, and subsequently offered him a part-time job at her gallery. This evolved into a full time arrangement and last year, with the help of Australian backers James Erskine and David Coe, Matthew bought the gallery.

On her website last March (2011) Anita explained: “It has been an extraordinary and exciting 23 years for me. I have met many wonderful artists who have given me encouragement, support and friendship. Now, after 245 exhibitions and aged 77, I have come to the decision to close the gallery and start a new phase of my life – just as exciting but less demanding than organising 10 exhibitions each year!

“It has been my intention that my gallery should be useful in promoting ceramics on the international market. I feel that that has been achieved.

“My recent trip to Japan for the Lucie Rie travelling exhibition, and the wonderful reception I received there, has made me realise, more than I had ever expected, the possibilities which are still open to me.

“On a personal level, I am sure you can imagine that the decision to close the gallery has not been easy but I feel that this is the right time to change direction while I still have the energy to do so. I shall continue to work, but without a gallery, and look forward to new projects as a consultant.”

Apart from the travel such consultancy has already involved, plus the odd holiday (she recently spent three weeks at an ayurvedic centre in India), Anita now divides her time between Hampstead and Somerset, where she has a second home, next to the potters and long-time friends Elizabeth Raeburn and Rodney Lawrence.

### Always in Hampstead

Since coming to London she has always lived in Hampstead – originally in West Hampstead, then a flat in Heath Street and ultimately her current flat, which she took over from the Raeburns with whom she had stayed when she first came to England. “For years Maresfield Gardens was the only street I’d heard of!”

While her reputation has been second to none in the international ceramics world, it shows no sign of diminishing since she sold her gallery. A DVD is about to be made telling the Galerie Besson story and there is talk of a book about her to coincide with the Sèvres show.

But perhaps this appreciation written by art critic Angus Stewart in 2006 will serve as the greatest tribute:

“Like a vessel with many sails she can catch a slight wind and turn it to advantage. She is not adverse; she is an adventuress and there are many who have achieved an ambition because of her encouragement.”

NNA

Schiele, among many other superstars of the contemporary art world.

In 1971 the Marlborough directors decided to go their separate ways and Harry Fischer asked Anita to join him as a director of what became Fischer Fine Art, which she did the following year. “Harry was brilliant”, she says.

One day a work in the window by expressionist artist Ernst Ludwig Kirchner was spotted by German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt as he drove past; Schmidt came into the gallery and bought a watercolour for his wife.

At one point the BBC asked Henry Moore to present a programme from Milan about the last Michelangelo Pietà and Anita went as his translator. Thereafter she visited him on a regular basis and he gave her a signed etching.

### “That’s not art”

All this time Anita’s friendship with and interest in the work of Lucie Rie, Hans Coper and other potters, both established and up-and-coming, flourished. She tried to persuade Harry to let her mount a ceramics exhibition but his reaction was: “That’s not art.” Only after Harry had died in 1977 did his son Wolfgang agree.

Her first show of works by Lucie Rie and Hans Coper realised sales in excess of £100,000, so she was given free reign to repeat the exercise every two years. The next, in 1984, featured nine potters,

# A Netherhall nightmare

*A house behind a hoarding is being demolished and rebuilt. Former resident Ian McDonald recounts the sorry saga with a happy ending*



◀ The house at 11 Netherhall Gardens as it was 10 years ago

**O**VER 30 YEARS AGO I bought a long lease on a flat at 11 Netherhall Gardens. The building was of a stalwart even somewhat imposing Edwardian design. In 1949 it had been converted into 10 self-contained flats. It is now being demolished after a fairly protracted and painful period of decline.

But when I first moved there it had no signs of decay. The tenants included a concert pianist, a criminal psychiatrist (who worked in Broadmoor), a psychotherapist and no doubt others of equally exotic persuasion. As a humble civil servant I kept my head down.

An elderly Austrian couple owned the freehold of the house and were responsible for the maintenance and upkeep, being recompensed yearly by the leaseholders.

The decisive moment came in 1983 when the Austrian man died and left his elderly wife to shoulder the burdens of the freehold alone. She found it impossible and retired more and more into the seclusion of her flat.

Soon roof tiles were not replaced, the wood round the communal windows started to rot and ominous cracks appeared in the hall walls. The leaseholders became increasingly worried as the signs of decay affected their comfort and, perhaps as importantly, the prospects for the potential sale of their flats.

Eventually we went in a body to the widow and proposed that she should sell her freehold to a company we would set up and in which she would have a share. The company could then manage the maintenance of the building. She was relieved and pleased at the prospect. But unfortunately she went to bed that evening and dreamed a dream. Her dead husband came to her and sternly told her to have nothing to do with the idea. That was the end of that.

## Signs of neglect

Some years passed. The Austrian widow had become a recluse who was seldom seen outside her flat. She did not respond to any offers of help or companionship. Meanwhile, no maintenance was being done on the building, which was showing obvious signs of neglect. The situation could not be allowed to continue. Regretfully we had to take the matter to court.

That was the beginning of a very confused – and expensive – period. As a collection of tenants we were not very focused or knowledgeable in legal matters and we probably did not choose our solicitors as carefully as we should have. In fact we went through about three solicitors and seemed to get no further forward. Twice we got to something which resembled a court hearing, but there seemed no conclusion.

Then in 1992 the little old lady died in very tragic circumstances. Her body was discovered by the milkman. We were naturally upset but also had to admit that we thought that now there would be a way through our difficulties. She had no relatives and had left her entire estate, including the freehold of our house, to two charities. Her executor was her solicitor. Surely now we would be able to resolve our problems.

Not a bit of it. Her solicitor was in his 80s and was either unable or unwilling to respond to letters. When we did get a response, it was only to inform us that as executor he could not fund any maintenance since that might involve his becoming personally liable.

It was only in 2003 that we finally reached a legal settlement. It seemed at the time very satisfactory. In essence the then current tenants were given the freehold to share.

With a light heart we approached a surveyor to find out what would be required to put the building at long last into proper repair.

He gave us unwelcome news. When the house had been converted into flats for some unexplained reason the load-bearing walls had not been built on top of each other. As a result it was straining apart and would require extensive internal demolition and rebuilding. The cost was estimated at two or three millions at least. We could not afford that kind of money.

## Wizard scheme

The idea was then floated that we should demolish the building ourselves and rebuild it with 15 flats instead of the current 10. We could then sell off the extra flats to pay for the cost of the building work and we would be left with flats for ourselves. It seemed a wizard scheme, although even then I worried about whether we were, as an untrained bunch of tenants, up to the complexities of the enterprise.

But we ploughed on. We hired architects who drew up plans. We debated furiously about whether the flats

should have balconies or not. It all came to a sickening end when the Council refused us planning permission. Not once but twice. We seemed to be no nearer to any satisfactory conclusion.

That summer I was in Italy trying to forget about my housing troubles. One hot afternoon I sat in the local bar and talked in a desultory way with another Englishman who happened to sit at the same table. For lack of anything better to talk about I gave him a short account of the difficulties I was having with my London flat.

### Moment of salvation

It turned out that he was an estate manager by profession so, after making some enquiries about his standing, I asked if he would attend the next tenants' management meeting as my representative. (I had long since found these meetings tedious, complex and soporific.) He agreed and when he attended the meeting he so impressed the others that they asked him to represent us all in any further negotiations.

That was the moment of salvation. He said he would not be involved in any rebuild project. That was too dangerous and complex for us, he thought. But he would for a fixed percentage and for a fixed period of time negotiate for the best sale price he could and take in hand all the legal difficulties.

I will spare you the details of the complexities of the sale. It took about a year. There were many thrills and spills with, for instance, one of the tenants being a Japanese speaker living predominantly in Tokyo and another

being carted off to hospital for a cancer operation at a critical moment in the sales negotiation.

Finally, however, as in all good stories there was a happy ending. We sold at the top of the market and I at least was able to buy a more comfortable flat only two doors further along Netherhall Gardens. As to whether this is a tale of terror or of instruction, I leave that to you. *NNA*

*Ian McDonald, a – now retired – career civil servant, became well known as the spokesman for the Ministry of Defence during the Falklands conflict, because of his deadpan delivery of bulletins and refusal to answer questions. Novelist Julian Barnes, writing in The Guardian 20 years later, described him as “a man with the delivery and charisma of a speak-your-weight machine”!*

*However, Ian told a Daily Telegraph reporter, also writing on the 20th anniversary of the war: “I knew right from the start there would be bad news as well as good, which is why the delivery I chose was drained of all emotion with no adjectives, short and truthful. Of course I actually felt very emotional at the time.”*

*But his style was not without admirers. In ‘When Britain Went To War’, a Channel 4 documentary on the 20th anniversary, Janet Street-Porter, who presented the satirical Six O’Clock Show in the 1980s, claims: “I really fancied him. He was so restrained and controlled.” And indeed for over two years after the conflict Ian had to deal with a very persistent woman stalker (not J S-P!). Ian remains an NNA member.*

► *continued from page 1*

Guest speaker at the meeting was Dr Richard Stone. A panel member of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, he was able to give an insider view of what he called the ‘collective failure’ by the Metropolitan Police in the investigation of the murder. There were many reasons to conclude that ‘institutional racism’ had contributed significantly to that failure.

For police to show they had learned lessons from the case, the number of black people subjected to ‘stop and search’, relative to white, should have gone down; instead it had doubled in the 13 years since the end of the Inquiry. Also the picture was worse in terms of numbers of black officers: there was no one ready to replace the one black chief constable and four at chief officer level retiring at the end of this year.

Because of the interest in Richard’s talk, it is hoped to organise a follow-up.

## LINDA WILLIAMS

NEW NNA CHAIR Linda Williams has lived in the area since the age of three and in Maresfield Gardens since 1978. When she first moved to number 16, it was to a one-bedroom upstairs flat, which she regarded as a temporary home.

Thereafter she converted the attic into an office and, when the downstairs flat became available after the owner’s death, she was lucky enough to be able to buy it and convert the two flats into a house.

When she and Steve got married in 2001, she says she did reluctantly offer to move but he seemed happy to leave Blackheath and come to Hampstead.

Workwise, Linda was a non-fiction book editor, first in a paperback house learning the ropes, then as a senior editor at Weidenfeld & Nicolson, and then freelance for a couple of large publishers. She worked with many well-known authors on subjects ranging from biography to royalty, espionage, theatre, music and books of Jewish interest.

Later she was commissioned to write two illustrated guides to Victorian house style, offering room by room advice about appropriate furniture, decoration, curtains, tiling, etc.

She also set up the Osband Press to publish a limited edition art book with hand-printed woodcuts by an Israeli artist then living in Hampstead.

In 1995, after her father’s death, she got involved with a family property investment company, in which she now works part time.

**THE SUCCESSION of squatters who occupied 11 Netherhall before demolition have now finally gone and the developers intend to replace the building with one much more akin to the original late 1880s house. Neighbour and former NNA planning representative Mayer Hillman told NNA News:**

**“Not only had the house been structurally weakened during its conversion into flats some 60 years ago, but ugly rendering had been applied to the brickwork. Following discussions with Camden, with near neighbours on both sides of the road and with the developers themselves, the new building will incorporate bricks that as nearly as possible match the originals. We have a very good relationship with the architect, the developer and the project manager, all of whom are extremely co-operative, and we therefore feel confident that the final building will retain the Conservation Area character from the street.”**

**Builders Bennett Construction say the existing front façade and the party wall with No 9 Netherhall will be underpinned and retained. They expect to have “significant interaction with Network Rail throughout the project as the Belsize Tunnel (carrying all rail traffic into and out of London to the Midlands) sits just 10m below the site.” The plan, which is scheduled for completion in mid-2013, is to build nine flats and an underground garage.**



## RECENT EVENTS

### *Anthony Coles reports:*

BETWEEN THE publication of our last newsletter and the end of the year NNA members were able to enjoy a recital by the English Guitar Quartet at Netherhall House (**19 Nov**); the Hampstead Players' production of *Fiddler on the Roof* at Hampstead Parish Church (**24-26 Nov**); a superb wine tasting quiz (**25 Nov**) compered by Malcolm Gluck and hosted by Linda and Stephen Williams, with wines kindly donated by Waitrose; the annual Christmas Bazaar (**26-27 Nov**) at the Danish YWCA; and a reception, fashion show and sale preview evening arranged by Susanne Lawrence at Hampstead High Street fashion boutique Jane and Dada (**7 Dec**).

This year to date there has been our own Annual General Meeting (**20 Feb**) at the Anna Freud Centre with speaker Dr Richard Stone and a reception catered by Gina da Silva; an Indian bazaar of textiles, clothes, bags and jewellery (**21-22 Mar**) at the home of Victoria Brittain; and a talk (**18 Apr**) by Stephen Myers on the hidden rivers of Fleet, Tyburn and Westbourne organised by the Heath & Hampstead Society.

There have also been a number of talks, exhibitions, receptions and other events hosted by the Freud Museum to which NNA members have been invited free of charge or at concessionary rates, and concerts by the Cavatina Trust.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**Tuesday 22 May:** 7.30pm. Allegrì String Quartet (part of the Hampstead Arts Festival), Hampstead Parish Church  
**Sunday 17 June:** 2-6pm. Linda and Stephen Williams' Open Garden in aid of the National Gardens Scheme - various charities. Free admission to NNA members. Tea and cakes. Little House, 16A Maresfield Gardens  
**Sunday 9 September:** Netherhall street party. For further details keep an eye on website [www.netherhallneighbours.com](http://www.netherhallneighbours.com)



▲ Last September's street party

### **Hampstead Arts Festival 2012**

(see [www.hamandhighfest.co.uk](http://www.hamandhighfest.co.uk))

**Tuesday 27 November:** 7.30pm. Matthew Trusler (violin), Hampstead Parish Church

**1-29 November:** 1-2pm. Writers talking (Margaret Drabble, Howard Jacobson, Deborah Moggach etc), Burgh House

**Tuesday 4 December:** 7.30pm. Stephen Kovacevich (piano) and friends, Hampstead Parish Church

**Thursday 6 December:** 1-2pm. Charles Dickens celebration, Burgh House

## SITS VAC

**Volunteers are sought for the following positions on the NNA Committee:**

**Licensing:** to attend and comment on licensing applications and appeals

**Neighbourhood Watch:** to attend meetings of and liaise with the Froggnal and Fitzjohn's Safer Neighbourhood Team

**Events:** to help organise local social events

Contact: [linda@osbandpress.co.uk](mailto:linda@osbandpress.co.uk)

## COUNCILLORS' SURGERIES

**1st Saturday of month, 10-11am**  
near Barclays Bank  
Hampstead High Street, NW3  
**3rd Saturday of month, 11am-12**  
Holy Trinity Church  
Finchley Road, NW3 5HT  
**3rd Monday of month, 6-7pm**  
Camden Town Hall  
Judd Street, off Euston Road

### **Froggnal and Fitzjohns Councillors:**

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London Borough of Camden  
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London WC1H 9JE  
Tel: 020 7974 2792

## NNA MEMBERSHIP 2012

IF YOU HAVE NOT yet renewed your NNA membership, or are new to the area, please join now. It is still only £5 per person for a year or £8 for a household. The association works to maintain and/or improve the character of the environment, runs social events and provides a 'good neighbours' service. So please fill in this form and return it with your payment to the address below. And if you have a new neighbour, or there are other flats in your building, please spread the word and encourage them to join or notify Patricia Whitehouse: tel 020 7435 0798 or email [patricia.whitehouse@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:patricia.whitehouse@hotmail.co.uk)

Title: ..... Forename: ..... Surname: .....

Title: ..... Forename: ..... Surname: .....

Address: .....

Tel no: ..... Mobile: ..... Email: .....

Do you have any skills or interests that could help us?.....

**Annual subscription (£5 per person or £8 per household**  
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Please send form and payment to the NNA Membership Secretary, Flat 1, 36 Netherhall Gardens NW3 5TP