

IN THIS ISSUE	
Police report	2
High-rise for Avenue Road	3
- Tulip Siddiq MP	
Junior corner	3
Netherhall notables	4
- Dr Peter D. Sharrock, Britain's Indiana Jones	
NNA conservation criteria	6
- Linda Williams	
All change at SHHS	7
Hampstead Arts Festival	8

Residents fear impact of TfL's 'flawed' new cycle superhighway proposals

Transport for London's plan for a cycle superhighway from Swiss Cottage to Regent's Park and beyond has generated heated reactions and not least from those in the roads affected. NNA planning and schools representative Stephen Williams explains the issues it throws up

AS RESIDENTS have recently become aware, Transport for London (TfL) is proposing a major new Cycle Superhighway – CS11 – which would stretch from Swiss Cottage to New Cavendish Street, and take in the whole of Regent's Park. Proposals have only recently been revealed and the consultation process ended on 20 March, hardly time for people to consider them.

The plan includes the closing of the northern section of Avenue Road, between College Crescent and Adelaide Road, and turning this into a bus and cycle route. The one-way gyratory system at Swiss Cottage would be removed with two-way traffic on the section of Finchley Road beside the Odeon, effectively reducing both north and southbound traffic from four lanes to two. Other entries into side streets will be restricted and four of the gates into Regent's Park will be closed to cars at commuter times.

This scheme is seriously flawed for a number of reasons and local residents' groups have been urging their members to oppose it.

This is not because of opposition to a cycle superhighway *per se* but because serious local issues have not been properly taken into account.



▲ Artist's impression of the new Swiss Cottage – or a dreamscape?

The closure to cars of the alternative route into the West End (into Regent's Park from the bottom of Avenue Road) together with the probable building of HS2 and its effect on local roads – *ie* the proposed closure of Adelaide Road for months at a time over several years – and the redevelopment of 100 Avenue Road (*see article, page 3*), combined with the pressure of the school run, will push even more cars into Finchley Road, Arkwright Road and our own residential side streets and at certain times of the day roads that already experience severe problems will be subject to gridlock.

Extra traffic will also mean an increase in air pollution – in an area where pollution is already way above EU-permitted levels.

Woefully inadequate

The so-called consultation process was woefully inadequate, not reaching many of the community directly affected by the scheme. Even MP Tulip Siddiq, who lives on Finchley Road, had received no information directly to her door.

As a result of our disquiet about the proposals and the lack of proper consultation, Tulip called a meeting on 14 March for local residents' associations and other stakeholders to meet representatives of TfL. I attended on behalf of the NNA and I must report that all those attending shared my views.

NNA chair Linda Williams and I also attended a public meeting called by
continued overleaf

NNA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 7th April 2016, 43 Maresfield Gardens

7.00pm RECEPTION: drinks and buffet

7.30pm AGM business and report on crime from ward police officer Edward Bromilow



8.15pm GUEST SPEAKER: Peter Sharrock
'From 12th century Cambodia to Maresfield Gardens'

Former Vietnam war correspondent and now a specialist in the art and archaeology of Southeast Asia, Dr Peter Sharrock hit the headlines when he made a major find in the Cambodian jungle and the *Independent* dubbed him Britain's Indiana Jones (*see feature article on pages 4 and 5*)

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Cycle superhighway

continued from front page

Jessica Learmond-Criqui, of the I Love Hampstead e-newsletter, where residents met and questioned representatives of TfL. The atmosphere here was generally hostile as Hampstead residents made clear their feelings of not having been properly consulted and what they saw as the scheme's major flaws which will diminish life in Hampstead.

TfL representatives seemed oblivious to these and took a high-handed approach, resisting calls for further consultation and labelling any opposition at the meeting as NIMBY-like.

The overwhelming view, and one supported by both Labour MP Tulip Siddiq and Conservative mayoral candidate Zac Goldsmith, is that TfL needs to stop the present proposals and enter into further evaluation and consultation with the local community. If we can all work together, a scheme might emerge that will be acceptable to the very strong cycle lobby, which of course wants safer cycle routes, as well as car drivers, those who live in Hampstead and local businesses. Our MP has called for a steering committee to be set up but it is unclear whether TfL is listening. At the time of going to press the consultation period is closed and we await a response.

POLICE REPORT

AS THE 'NEW' police officer for this area, I'd like to give a very brief run down on local crime.

Frognal and Fitzjohn's is one of the lowest crime wards, perhaps *the* lowest, in Camden. What crime we do experience is almost exclusively thefts from or of vehicles and burglary.

Vehicle crime is typically carried out by either the breaking of a car window or interference with its electronic locks to steal anything the criminals can lay their hands on. Loose change, sunglasses, a bag left on the back seat – even if you know there's nothing in there, they will still have a look. It's not uncommon to get reports of men walking the length of a street trying car doors on the off chance one is unlocked.

Builders' vans are also a favoured target for their tools and, given how much work is going on in the area, it draws them to us like moths to a flame.

The burglaries at the moment are taking two forms. First is the traditional break in. Every one I have dealt with so far has involved a burglar gaining access to the rear of a property, particularly older properties, and breaking a window.

The second kind is where they present themselves to elderly or vulnerable people claiming to be builders or inspectors to try to get inside or scam them out of money.

In addition there have been several serious crimes – specifically aggravated burglaries and robberies – over the last year; you could almost say that on the rare occasion crime happens here, it happens in a big way. All I can say on this is, it is extremely rare, and some of the Yard's finest minds are trying to target the culprits.

Making contact

I have been asked to comment on a few things, which I will do in greater depth at the AGM – specifically about the number of police in the area, how best to make contact with the police and what to do about lost/found property.

For the time being though, if you ever need to speak to the police about an incident, your best first port of call is to dial 101, or in an emergency 999; both are 24/7 numbers. Only Kentish Town and Holborn police stations are open to the public in the traditional sense; Kentish Town is open 24/7.

Unfortunately, for the most part we no longer take reports of or take in lost property, unless it is dangerous, like knives or drugs. This is because of the massive reduction in budget over the last few years. In fact we still have warehouses full of lost property that has never and probably will never be reclaimed. This is a shame in that people may well think: if the police don't want it, what am I supposed to do with it? A perfectly reasonable question! Some officers will still take found property from you out of the goodness of their hearts, but the 'official' line is that people finding lost property should make enquiries themselves to try to get it back to the owner.

Also we no longer issue reference numbers to people who report their own lost property to us; insurance companies should be aware of this. The only exception is passports, which still need to be reported to the passport office as lost or stolen.



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100 Avenue Road: a cause for concern

New local MP Tulip Siddiq explains how the Government resurrected a project that was objected to by residents and turned down by Camden Council



I AM incredibly proud to represent my home seat of Hampstead and Kilburn. Having lived here for nearly 20 years, I have long admired the impact

of our residents' groups in the light of challenges posed by a rapidly changing neighbourhood. Whether it is protecting open spaces such as Hampstead Heath or confronting major infrastructure projects such as HS2, it has always been my view that residents should have a crucial say in deciding the plans that are to be approved.

Last week, I invited constituents to Parliament to discuss Transport for London (TfL) plans for Cycle Superhighway 11 (CS11). Represented at the meeting were councillors past and present, and several representatives from residents' associations. As your Member of Parliament, it is my duty to ensure that concerns are heard and acted upon.

It was clear to me from the meeting that TfL will need to undertake further efforts to outline the impact of CS11. I have called for a renewed consultation period to take place after the Mayoral elections, and for a working group to be set up. This will give residents the opportunity to ensure that their voice is heard – a far cry from the process to approve the skyscraper on Avenue Road.

Roundly rejected

For two years, I stood alongside campaigners of all political stripes against this proposed development. There were over 3,000 local objections but only four local supporters, 940 letters of opposition and only one of support. Labour and Conservative councillors joined together to vote down the proposals. In sum, the skyscraper was wholly rejected. I was therefore appalled when Greg Clark MP, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, overturned the decision.

Unfortunately, the power to call-in planning applications are very general

and the Secretary of State can call-in an application for virtually any reason. In practice, however, very few applications are called-in and these normally relate to planning applications which raise issues of national significance or substantial controversy. The Secretary of State also has a similar power to 'recover' a planning appeal which has been submitted to the planning inspectorate. This is what has happened in the case of Avenue Road.

Planning appeals can be recovered so that inspectors, instead of making the decision themselves, will provide a recommendation on how the appeal should be determined. The Minister can then make the decision based on a number of factors.

Right to appeal

Constituents have since been in touch with me regarding their rights to appeal the Minister's decision in this case. They are entitled to appeal the decision within six weeks through powers afforded to them in Section 288 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This provides for challenges to the validity of certain orders, but they must be based on grounds of law rather than substantive detail pertaining to the local area.

Successful challenges to the Government include a number of the appeals relating to gypsy and traveller development in the green belt. Some aspects of this policy were found by the High Court to breach provisions in the Equality Act 2010 and the European Convention of Human Rights.

If constituents believe the decision pertaining to Avenue Road breaches such laws, then I would wholly encourage them to appeal. However, I fear that objections relating to the height of the building, or the inevitable traffic chaos on a red route, may not qualify for such grounds of complaint.

Having read the Minister's report, it appears the skyscraper was 'recovered' on the basis that it would have a "significant impact on the Government's objective to secure a better balance between housing demand and supply".

Whatever one's views on the housing crisis, and there is certainly agreement

that we must build more affordable homes, I don't believe it is appropriate to 'recover' a project facing near-unanimous opposition from local residents. At the very least, compromise could have been sought. Yet the ruling has been to force a 24-storey building on a community, based on a report that glosses over the major points of contention.

I believe that the consequences of building a skyscraper next to a cherished public space are abundantly clear. The development will bring significant disruption to an otherwise peaceful area of Swiss Cottage, particularly the open space that enjoys huge popularity with the public. The area is also home to a population that includes elderly individuals in care and those with special needs and I fear the construction of this monstrosity will form a great disturbance to their lives.

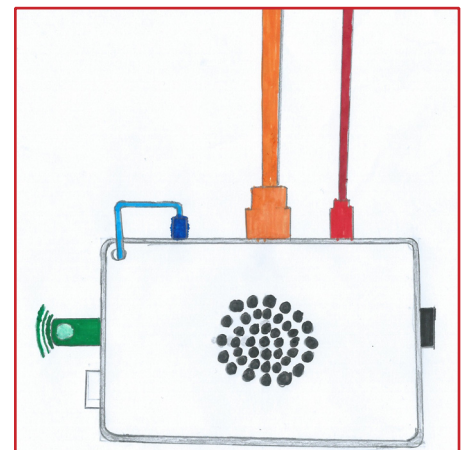
When a senior and respected decision-maker overrules the wishes of locally elected representatives on matters that solely affect local residents, I believe we have huge cause for concern. Residents are understandably appalled at this disregard for local democracy-making and I have written to the Minister saying as much. I will endeavour to keep all those interested in this process informed when I receive a reply.

Tulip Siddiq, Member of Parliament for Hampstead and Kilburn

JUNIOR CORNER

My Kano computer

by Joe Wilkins, aged 10, of Netherhall Gardens



Britain's 'Indiana Jones'

Southeast Asian art historian, Peter Sharrock's fame peaked when he discovered the long lost legs of an important Buddhist statue in the Cambodian jungle

The British 'Indiana Jones' is how *The Independent* newspaper described Maresfield Gardens resident Dr Peter Sharrock when, nearly seven years ago, deep in the Cambodian jungle some miles from the main tourist site of Angkor Wat, he finally found the long lost legs of an 800 year-old statue. The bust of Hevajra, a tantric Buddhist deity, had been excavated and salvaged in 1925 by French archaeologists who sold it to New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. But the legs, one of its eight heads and all 16 arms remained missing, and photos taken by the French at the time of the excavations were the only clues as to their possible whereabouts.

The beauty of this story is that Sharrock, now a senior teaching fellow in the art and archaeology of Southeast Asia at London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), had learned about the Khmer empire while at school and always wanted to see Angkor Wat. But in 1971 when he first got to Cambodia – as a foreign correspondent covering the Indochina war for Reuters news agency – he could not even visit the famous temple site because the area was occupied by both the Khmers Rouges and the North Vietnamese army; he had to wait 20 years for that privilege.

And it was nearly another 18 years, while attending a conference in Cambodia in 2009, before he got out into the forest where, as he put it to *The Independent*, "no tourist goes".

Nor will he reveal the site's whereabouts for fear of looting, although the Cambodian government has now pledged to excavate it fully.

"There was no road," he told the reporter; "only a sort of animal track into the forest. It was pretty unpleasant. There were snakes all over the place, and in the back of my mind was the knowledge that the Khmers Rouges had planted land mines all over Angkor."

With friend David Green, "we went out and on, and were about to give up, when finally I spotted something through the trees. We strode through the creepers and thorns, and I realised that I'd seen the carved square corner of the statue's

pedestal. And, lo and behold, there were the legs lying beside it."

Sharrock believes the statue would have been of exceptional importance in the time of King Jayavarman VII, emperor of the Khmers at the height of their power in 1200 AD, and current thinking is that it would have been broken up and dumped outside the city walls when a 14th century revival of Hinduism succeeded the earlier veneration of Buddhist deities. Luckily, given the atrocities committed in the region in the 1970s, Cambodia's antiquities have suffered little war damage, save for a handful of bullet marks and the odd bit of graffiti.

Career dilemma

The third of four children, Sharrock was born towards the end of the second world war just south of Derby, where his father was a Rolls Royce engine designer. However, neither engineering nor science was Peter's thing and, having been into art, languages and literature as a boy, he went on to study English at Downing College, Cambridge, under the renowned literary critic F.R. Leavis. He is now chair of the Leavis Society.

Career-wise he was torn between art history and writing but Reuters offered the chance to travel and to write professionally, so after – or perhaps because – "a friend's father tried to put me off", he applied and was accepted.

After six months in Fleet Street, he was sent to Rome for a year where he learned Italian, brushed up his Latin in order to be able to read Vatican press releases, and developed a penchant for espresso coffee. For his next assignment, on the advice of a former Moscow and China correspondent, he pushed for the Far East and found himself in "dull, puritanical" Singapore. A few months later, however, he was despatched to Cambodia, based in Phnom Penh, for two years, and then to Saigon where he spent the last two years of the Vietnam war.

"I hated the war, but loved the people and the countries," he says, and cites what the French say of Indochina: "Il s'attache à la peau". And stick to his

skin it surely did; "it was in my system for good", he admits.

In 1971 during his Cambodia stint he was flown up to Siem Reap, where he met French archaeologist Bernard Philippe Groslier, the last conservator of Angkor, which had been the seat of the Khmer kingdom from the 9th to the 15th centuries. Groslier was going into the Angkor site daily to shore up the big Baphuon temple that had been dismantled before being restored and was then in a precarious state, but he refused to take Sharrock with him because he feared the Khmers Rouges would not let him back in if he was found to have taken a journalist in.

Most of Cambodia was insecure during his years there; 19 journalists are still missing. There was a scant government press briefing at 6 am each day after which the press corps would take off in their cars to find their own news of the war. "Sometimes we would get a bad feeling and stop and turn round." But the reporters were really observers, he says. "Our job was just to get to the officer in charge of the front line to obtain information; it was the photographers who had to stick their necks out." Nevertheless, he admits to becoming addicted to the adrenaline.

His regret is failing to predict how close to the end of the war it was; he left just before the fall of Saigon; "I would have loved to have been there for that and for the first communist government. They are such a cultured people."

Police state

Instead, he returned to London, from where he was sent to Algeria for 18 months. "It was a pretty miserable life," he says. "The glorious socialist days of Ben Bella were over and things were going downhill. A military dictatorship had turned the country into a police state and the relationship with France was bad. You could really feel the oppression. It was a pleasure to cross the border into Tunisia and Morocco."

From Algeria, however, he had to cover Libya, which involved coming into contact with Gaddafi. "He was pompous



and quite unpredictable,” says Sharrock, “but no fool, indeed impressively sharp.” A Bedouin, he would sleep during the day and hold his meetings at night. Before being granted an interview, Sharrock had to stay up till 3 am for three nights in an alcohol-free hotel in Tunis before finally being called to Gaddafi’s palace on the fourth night.

Idi Amin’s antics

Thereafter it was to Kenya to cover East Africa, “a much more pleasant part of the world to live in, with tropical highlands, big game and wonderful people.” But no less dangerous than North Africa. His time there – from 1976 to 1981– involved Idi Amin’s antics in Uganda (“scary; locking up the press was far from unknown”), revolution in Ethiopia, socialist misery in Tanzania, dreadful happenings in Rwanda and Burundi, not to mention armed conflict and a hijacking in Somalia.

He does admit to missing one big story though: “I was in Nairobi when the Tanzanian army invaded Uganda and Amin fled. I rang Kampala to see what the situation was and got hold of someone in a hotel there who told me, ‘We are overcome.’” Reuters’ policy was that there had to be two separate sources for a news story and, before Sharrock could find a second, frustratingly he was beaten to the wire by UPI (news agency).

In truth he’d had his fill of war reporting and, when Reuters who by now were leading the world in computerised financial systems asked him to open up operations in Israel, he was ready. Based in Tel Aviv, the job involved meeting bankers and business people, and he very much enjoyed working in this

“growth-oriented, attractive, creative, outspoken, democratic, open society”.

He attended an ulpan to learn Hebrew where he met Daniele Moyal, who was to become his second wife. His first wife, with whom he has a daughter, the distinguished theatre director Thea Sharrock, was a fellow journalist. Daniele, born in Morocco and brought up in Canada, is a philosophy professor.

The couple moved to West Germany, based in Frankfurt, where they spent four years before moving to and getting married in Switzerland in 1989. Again, Peter had left a country on the eve of a world-shattering development: “Helmut Kohl thought the Berlin wall would come down, but the rest of us didn’t!”

However his next assignment was to open up Eastern Europe for Reuters following the collapse of the Soviet Union; this was quite a challenge given that the region had no commercial law.

Manhattan to Maresfield

In 1994 he moved to Manhattan and was then promoted global director of customer relations based at Reuters’ world headquarters in London. “We looked for a new home in Covent Garden,” he recalls, “but were put off by the pollution. Then an estate agent suggested Hampstead and we moved here” – initially to Nutley Terrace and 15 years ago to a garden flat in Maresfield at the back of St Mary’s School that has “the largest and oldest (140 years) pear tree in north London.”

But this was to be his last job with Reuters. His beloved Indochina was calling him back. Vietnam had opened its doors in 1986, and Cambodia followed three years later. Finally, after the fall of Pol Pot and the Khmers

Rouges, he was able to visit the great temple complexes of Angkor. Now he wanted to study and write about the region’s art history.

There is a flourishing contemporary art scheme in Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand, he says, but for him the interesting period is when Angkor was the greatest empire on earth outside China. He duly quit Reuters for academia, and did an MA at SOAS followed by a PhD; his 2007 doctorate offered a new interpretation of the Buddhism of Angkor’s greatest king Jayavarman VII who reigned from 1181 to 1218 and instigated what was effectively the world’s first NHS.

Since then he has continued to research, lecture and publish (including a history of Vietnam and an academic guidebook to another great Cambodian temple Banteay Chhmar) and is a project board member of SOAS’ new Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme.

Highly motivated

One of his post-graduate diploma students, American engineer and millionaire philanthropist Fred Eychaner (“who wrote a brilliant essay from an engineer’s viewpoint on what it took to build Angkor Wat”), was so moved by the disruption to study and conservation caused by wars in the region that he recently gave SOAS \$30 million, one of the largest donations ever made to a UK university. This funds three teaching posts and pays for 15 students a year from Southeast Asia to come to SOAS with the aim of bringing new energy to their museums, art galleries and fine arts departments when they return home. Southeast Asian students are highly motivated and knowledgeable, says Sharrock, “and they considerably brighten up the place when here!”

It is no surprise to learn that Peter would love to go and live out there himself but “the region is not too hot on philosophy so that would be somewhat problematic for Daniele.” So he contents himself with frequent visits and when at home is surrounded by some beautiful Southeast Asian artefacts collected over the years. He goes into SOAS three or four days a week, a couple of days to teach and the rest of the time for committee and board meetings.

And retirement? “I don’t think so,” he says. After all, he is still marginally younger than Harrison Ford and the press keeps promising a new Indiana Jones movie!

Susanne Lawrence, NNA

Preserving our conservation area

Linda Williams explains the criteria to be applied in future when considering whether and when the NNA should support or oppose local planning applications

NNA residents are fortunate to live in a conservation area loudly defended by local associations and individuals. However, over recent years the character of our streets is being slowly changed as the prices of our properties have risen and land is being valued by the cost of square footage rather than by the beauty of the building on it.

The NNA has never objected to modern buildings alongside the varied other properties in our roads. We supported the redesign of South Hampstead High School because we preferred a brand new building built to high standards by a renowned architectural firm to the existing series of architecturally unconnected buildings, which were no longer fit for purpose. By including features of our existing streetscape, but using a modern interpretation and materials, I think we can be proud of the way the new building has blended into the landscape.

However, we are aware that recent planning applications have sought to maximise development on plots of land. If a façade has had to be retained, then the rest of the building has been demolished to increase the height, depth and width of a building, and the ground dug out for new multiple basements. Gardens are being reduced to accommodate this over-development with the subsequent loss of green spaces and local flora and fauna. We are aware that several large buildings in our neighbourhood are due to come onto the market in the near future and are ripe for massive redevelopment.

We are also concerned that luxury flats are being bought by foreigners for investment purposes and as a consequence being left empty for large chunks of the year. Whilst we cannot control this, it is sad that our mixed neighbourhood, where council tenants and home owners lived side by side, is being eroded and some buildings are becoming like ghost towns.

What can we do?

The Netherhall Neighbourhood Forum has been put on hold for the time being for reasons explained previously. However, we have come up with a



▲ Number 2 Maresfield Gardens: permission was granted for excessive development on this long-blighted site

number of features in our streets and planning issues which we feel are important to many local residents and worth fighting for.

Our committee is voluntary and our specialist advice is given freely within members' busy lives. Also, our couple of planning/architectural advisers do not carry professional indemnity for any advice given so the NNA is continuously conscious that its advisers' comments and actions will not lay the NNA or any individual open to possible litigation.

Planning criteria

The NNA is careful not to enter into neighbours' disputes, supporting one resident against another, over particular planning problems, but seeks to remain dispassionate; any comments and actions are based solely on the wish to protect the integrity of our Conservation Area by ensuring Camden applies its planning controls diligently and, where necessary, by urging Camden to incorporate further necessary controls, such as is the case with deep basements, to address current pressures which threaten our neighbourhood.

The NNA committee has therefore decided that the NNA should only get involved in a planning issue if an

application meets one or more of the following criteria:

- **Damage to the character of the Conservation Area**
- **Increase in height of buildings or additional floors on blocks of flats**
- **Excessive basement developments**
- **Excessive increases in the footprints of buildings**
- **Loss of green open space in both front and back gardens**
- **Back land development**
- **Changes to the frontages and sides of buildings seen from the street**
- **Major changes to rear of buildings**
- **Crossovers and parking bays**
- **New schools or increased pupil numbers at existing schools**
- **Loss of existing trees**

New designs

The NNA will not object to new proposals of a high quality of design which recreate or are in the style of existing Victorian and Edwardian neighbouring buildings. Nor do we in principle oppose new proposals that are in a contemporary style, providing they are of a high quality of design and use high quality materials which are sympathetic to the character of the existing buildings and enhance the neighbourhood. Any new development should not result in the loss of an existing building of high architectural interest or merit.

Poorly designed developments, or those which introduce materials which are not sympathetic to and do not enhance the general character of our area, will be opposed.

The list above is not definitive and we ask residents and members to comment and put forward some other criteria, which they feel will have an impact on our neighbourhood. For example, while certain single applications may not themselves warrant objections, the sheer number and accumulation of applications within a small area may result in a fundamental change in the character of that area.

Your feedback is important to us so please make your voices heard. Contact me at: linda@osbandpress.co.uk

Linda Williams, Chair, NNA

NNA NEWS SPRING 2016



◀ **Uncovered: the 1957 murals painted for the school by Turner-nominated English abstract artist Gillian Ayres CBE**

‘Old Girl’ Ruth Stone remembers the murals

In 1957, in my second year at South Hampstead, something wonderful happened: colour burst into the rather dreary, still post-war, 1950s. The school dining-room was rebuilt, and with great foresight and courage the architect Michael Greenwood commissioned a young artist, Gillian Ayres, to provide a four-panelled mural. It was an abstract ‘action’ painting in vivid colours. You need to remember how monochromatic the ‘50s were: TV and films were largely black and white, as were newspapers and even cars. So the murals with their vibrant splashes of colour were a great talking-point.

However, some years later I became concerned that they had disappeared. I don’t remember them being treated with much respect: they were on a dark back wall with no lighting and the serving tables were lined up in front of them.

Fast forward to 2015. It was my first visit to the newly-finished building. Deputy Head Sandrine Paillasse showed me round, and as we walked down the stairs I gasped: “It can’t be!” But it was... two of the Ayres panels were on display in the entrance hall, looking quite magnificent. And the two smaller panels on the lower floor create a wonderfully snug corner with comfortable seats.

Papered over

My fear had been that they had been painted over, yet it was clear that someone had cared for them in the intervening decades. I turned to the internet and read with interest about the original commission and about this generation of pupils going to see Gillian Ayres’ work at the Alan Cristea Gallery.

I then found an article in the *Independent* from 1995, which filled in some of the gaps. The murals had indeed been papered over and, when uncovered in 1983, the headmistress had offered to return them to Gillian. She quite rightly replied that she had been paid £100 for them, and that the school could do whatever it saw fit with them.

Now they form the centre of an increasing art collection at the school, including more paintings from Gillian. These, combined with the ever-changing display of pupils’ artwork, contribute to a building that is finally in complete harmony with her far-sighted vision. **NNA**

All change at South Hampstead

Helen Pike reports on her three year term as head of SHHS, as she leaves to become the first woman Master of Magdalen College School in Oxford, where her partner is a don

It is hard to believe that it is already two years since I appeared in your newsletter and spoke at your AGM. It was good to see many of you visit the school last year, not only at the residents’ evening, but at various other events. In November we hosted the Ham and High Literary Festival featuring authors Max Hastings, Andrew Marr and Toby Young; and you might have appreciated the vintage refreshment van! You might also have seen hundreds of Old Girls arriving for tea last June. South Hampstead does many things well, and for me the provision of cake would have to be high on that list.

You may also have seen Gillian Ayres’ 1957 Hampstead murals in our atrium. Inspired by the response to their restoration, last year we began collecting modern art. A parent very kindly donated some Sulyagin collages and we commissioned six giant penguin sculptures from William Sweetlove to raise awareness of global warming and funds for Marine Conservation. Gillian was so pleased that we responded to her work in this way that she has given the school five more paintings.

Other highlights have included the many concerts and plays; parents and visitors comment that these performances, and particularly our annual musicals, just don’t feel like school events. There is certainly no comparison with the school concerts I made a paltry contribution to as a child, a paltry contribution which

I am afraid continues — I am one of 25 staff members being taught a musical instrument by one of the girls. This is part of our work on the nature of teaching and learning, and the importance for everyone, and particularly teachers, to remain a learner.

The school is in the vanguard of research on what actually improves learning in the classroom, and this is why we hosted the international ResearchEd conference last September. We also collaborate with a number of local schools, including Quintin Kynaston’s Teacher Toolkit.

I have been happier here than I ever could have imagined, and this is not because of the beautiful building, the murals or even the penguins. It is the people who make great schools, and the girls’ spirit and commitment to the wider world is a joy to nurture.

As am I sure that you as our neighbours appreciate as keenly as we do, my time at the school has been dominated in one way or another by the new building. When I was appointed, it was a growing hole in the ground, as we burrowed 12 metres down to construct our new sports hall. When I arrived in September 2013, piling and steel frameworks were in place. As a new Head, it was difficult not to see the construction work as metaphorical. But of course, fine buildings outlast most of us, and great institutions outlast us all; the privilege lies in being a steward to one of them for a few years.

Festival's fourth year

Report by Eric Usadi, music director and co-chair, Hampstead Arts Festival

THE HAMPSTEAD Arts Festival (HAF) is returning to NW3 in November with two weeks of classical music, jazz and conversation. HAF was born as a re-boot of the former Hampstead and Highgate Festival and is now in its fourth year.

Part of HAF's attraction to both audiences and performing artists is Hampstead itself. Beautiful, intimate and historic sites populate what is one of London's greenest areas. HAF's 2016 concerts will take place at two such venues which are also acoustically excellent: St John's Downshire Hill, an idyllic setting for small ensembles, and the 18th century Hampstead Parish Church, ideal for choral and orchestral music. Spoken word events will take place at the lovely Burgh House.

Our programmes are, by design, eclectic. We present romantic lieder, jazz (we've teamed up with the London Jazz Festival), contemporary chamber music, baroque masterpieces, young people's concerts (courtesy of CAVATINA Chamber Music Trust), silent film with live accompaniment, and conversations with novelists, politicians and actors.

Recent events include recitals by Angela Hewitt, Ian Bostridge, Sophie Bevan and Mahan Esfahani; the Wihan, Brodsky and Armida String Quartets; Natalie Clein's personal debut performing all the Bach Cello



▲ BBC New Generation Artists the Armida String Quartet made their London debut at last year's festival

Suites; the world premiere of Joseph Phibbs' "Letters from Warsaw", co-commissioned and performed by Krzysztof Chorzelski of the Belcea Quartet to commemorate his mother's childhood experience in the Warsaw Ghetto; Berlin-based Israeli pianist Matan Porat improvising live accompaniment for a screening of Buster Keaton's 'The General'; Piers Plowright interviewing Dr Jonathan Miller, Deborah Moggach, Shami Chakrabarti and Melvyn Bragg; poetry readings by Sinead Cusack and Sian Phillips.

The 2016 festival will take place from **6-20 November**. The lineup will include pianist Stephen Hough, the Arditti String Quartet, Paris-based jazz pianist Yaron Herman, violinist Anthony Marwood, cellist Raphael Wallfisch, James Sherlock conducting Bach's Christmas Oratorio and much more.

The complete programme will be announced in early June on the website: www.HampsteadArtsFestival.com

OBITUARIES

NNA NEWS is sorry to report the recent passing of two long-time Maresfield Gardens residents and NNA members, each of whom has been featured on our 'NNA Notables' pages.

Anita Besson, founder of the innovative Galerie Besson and doyenne of the modern international ceramics market, died in October 2015, aged 82. (See *NNA News, Spring 2012*)

Pamela Majaro, pianist, artist and co-founder with her husband Simon of the Cavatina Chamber Music Trust which brings chamber music to young people, died in February 2016, aged 83. (See *NNA News, Summer 2010*)

CONGRATULATIONS

Desmond Julian, the Scottish-born inventor of the concept of the coronary care unit, is 90 this April. A former Professor of Cardiology, he went on to be the Medical Director of the British Heart Foundation. He moved to Netherhall Gardens in 1989.



WHAT'S ON

A 5-week series of talks on opera will be held on Friday afternoons at Hampstead Old Town Hall from 15 April. Tickets at £20 per lecture or £85 for the series will support music training for gifted young people facing hardships. Contact patricia.orwell@btinternet.com

NNA MEMBERSHIP 2016

IF YOU HAVE NOT yet renewed your NNA membership or are new to the area and/or have not yet joined, please do so now. It only costs £8 per person for a year or £10 for a family. The association works to maintain and improve the character of the environment, runs social events and provides a 'good neighbours' service. Please fill in this form and post it together with your payment through the letterbox of either 18 Maresfield Gardens or Flat 3, 22 Netherhall Gardens; alternatively renew or join online at www.netherhallneighbours.com. And if you have a new neighbour, or there are other flats in your building, please encourage them to join or notify Pat Whitehouse: tel 020 7435 0798, patriciawhitehouse34c@gmail.com

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