

WHO OWNS CANONBURY?

By David Ireland

"Canonbury? Surely that's not a place where people live?" Thus, Virginia Bell, grand-daughter of Vanessa and great-niece of Virginia Woolf, recalling the "pioneering" move by her mother's family into Canonbury in the 1930s.

Canonbury has certainly had its ups and downs, providing elegant homes in the 1840s and 1850s for the wealthy, but by 1900, according to writer Paula Davies, colonised by a new generation of (heaven forbid!) "clerks, jewellers, bricklayers and washerwomen", and "during the depression between the wars, at its lowest ebb". Evelyn Waugh semi-seriously described 17a Canonbury Square, briefly his home from 1928, as "half a house in a slum". Come the late 1950s, though, spurred on by the new estate owners' aim of "transforming Canonbury into another Chelsea", gentrification – or "Canonburyisation", as then Times journalist Stuart Weir put it, and not as a compliment – saw the area trading up again (such that objectors to the creation of the first Marquess Estate in the late 1960s were described as "the snobs living in Canonbury").

Who owns (and owned) Canonbury, though? It's not straightforward finding out – doing numerous Land Registry searches is expensive, local streets and squares were built piecemeal and could change their names, and ownership sleuths can't always agree (the UK-wide land-based wealth of our richest landowner, the 7th Marquess of Northampton, was put at £200m by Kevin Cahill in Who Owns Britain in 2001, but at £65m in the 2009 Sunday Times Rich List).

The early history is well enough documented. The manor of Canonbury, a triangle bounded on the West by Upper Street, on the East by Lower Street (Essex Road) and on the North by Hopping Lane (St Paul's Road) was granted to the priory of St Bartholemew's, Smithfield, in 1253 by Ralph de Berners. After the dissolution of the monasteries in 1536, it passed through the hands of Henry VIII, Thomas Cromwell, Anne of Cleves, the Earl of Warwick, Edward VI, Thomas Wentworth and then, in 1570, John Spencer, Lord Mayor of London.

Spencer's daughter Eliza married Lord Compton in 1599, to whom the manor passed on her father's death in 1609. Lord Compton, later Earl of Northampton, began the Northampton family ownership of Canonbury which ran on uninterrupted until first, 1938 (a postponed scheme by Islington Borough Council to build 564 homes in South-East Canonbury on part of the estate's land) and then, 1954, when the Northampton Estate sold the majority of the old manor to two property companies, Western Ground Rents (jointly controlled by insurers Clerical Medical and Equity & Law) and Oriel Property Trust.

The Observer commented in 1965 that the Northampton Estate retained "about 250 tenants and leases property for £300 to £1000 a year, and more". Today (we think), the Estate's residual Canonbury ownership is concentrated in and around Canonbury Place (including Canonbury Tower – now home to the Canonbury

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Vanessa Bell: Pioneering



Evelyn Waugh: Half a house in a slum



Canonbury Square – but not as we know it (in 1958); Photo credit: Islington Local History Centre

Message from the Chairman

With much talk of Britain's "broken society", it was heartening to hear at the Mayor's Civic Awards ceremony about the many selfless individuals running clubs (boxing, youth) and associations (tenant, learning disabilities) which so enrich our community.

Although The Canonbury Society was delighted to pick up an award (see page 4), and our thanks go to Cllr Barbara Smith for our nomination, we are conscious that our remit of preserving the outstanding beauty of Canonbury could appear largely motivated by self-interest. However, we always try to present balanced arguments whenever we object or support initiatives, and we are proud of our efforts to support Canonbury organisations and shops, and to preserve the landscape, for the benefit of all.

Over the last year, we have reviewed many planning and tree applications as well as new policy documents issued by Islington Council and the Mayor of London. As always, we are keen to work positively with all Council departments who directly affect the current and future life of our conservation

area. We are delighted to welcome Kate Graham the new Conservation and Design Manager at Islington (see page 4). We are also grateful to our three supportive Ward Councillors and are sorry that Cllr Lucy Watt, who played a big part in many of our campaigns, is stepping down. (see page 5).

For more information about our campaigns and our work, do visit our website at www.canonburysociety.org.uk.

Once again we enjoyed two good parties. Our summer party was held at 5 Canonbury Place and our winter party was held at Myddelton Cottage in Canonbury Park South. Our heart-felt thanks go to our wonderful hosts, respectively Margaret and Stuart Evans and Nina Konrad and Jerry Norton.

Philip Walker



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Masonic Research Centre, but once the north-west corner of the original Canonbury House which dates back to c.1370) and the Alwynes, though freeholds there have been gradually sold off.

"Canonburyisation" certainly increased the proportion of private ownership. Peter Thorold, in *The London Rich*, comments that (after 1954) "freeholds were usually in the hands of petty landlords who could make only miserable returns from renting". Selling, though, involved displacing protected tenants ("in some cases, the means of persuasion were tough"). Author J. John Palen (in his 1984 study of gentrification) adds that "ownership was largely precluded until the 1960s because of the difficulties of obtaining mortgage finance...over time loan institutions...have lent

generously on the assumption that if any property was to sustain its price, areas like Canonbury were certainties".

Private owners, property companies, the Northampton estate, the property arms of pension funds (e.g. BP and Shell Mex), all feature in Canonbury's recent ownership roll but the biggest Canonbury landowner today is undoubtedly Islington Council. Within the Canonbury conservation area (thanks to Head of Housing Strategy Denise Lewis, Principal Housing Development Officer Thandi Gonzales and their colleagues for the numbers), the council has 290 leaseholders and 250 tenants, in St Mary's, Canonbury and Mildmay Wards, – thus a grand council-owned total of 540 (this excludes housing association tenants).

WHO LIVED IN YOUR HOUSE?

Who Lived In Your House? Finding out who lived in your own house (tracking ownership is much trickier) can be researched at the excellent Islington Local History Centre (Finsbury Library, 245 St John St, Tel: 0207-527-7988). The Centre possesses Rate Books (pre-1841 inquiries, street listings of each house and ratepayer), Census Returns (1841-1901, indexed by street) and Electoral Registers (1901 onwards, by ward and street). The Centre also has several guides to tracing the history and age of your house. Phoning ahead of a visit is recommended. DI

EVENTS IN 2010 REVEAL IMPORTANCE OF ROSE BOWL YOUTH CENTRE

FRIENDS OF THE ROSE BOWL AND THE ROSE BOWL CENTRE REPORT



The beginning of the new decade brought success as well as frustration to the Rose Bowl Centre and Friends of the Rose Bowl.

Following in the wake of a banner year in 2009 which saw more young people than ever benefitting from the opportunities and support available, a decision to temporarily close the Centre was taken in February following several break-ins and staffing issues. The homework clubs, break-dance classes, cooking lessons and after-school meals, field trips and the newly-launched music studio supported by the community were put on hold while the Centre re-grouped following staffing matters and extensive damage acquired during the vandalism.

A task force including representatives from the Rose Bowl Management Committee and Friends of the Rose Bowl has been set up to ensure the centre opens just as soon as possible. It is led by Thanos Morphitis, Director of Strategy and Commissioning for Islington Children's Services. Islington Council has operational responsibility

for the Centre, but it relies on community support from the Rose Bowl Centre Management Committee and Friends of the Rose Bowl to fund the running of the facility.

"This situation really demonstrated the essential role the Rose Bowl Centre plays in the community," said Jane Simmonds, chair of The Rose Bowl Centre and The Friends of the Rose Bowl. "Tensions run high on the New River Green Estate. The Rose Bowl plays a pivotal role in helping young people work towards meaningful goals to achieve their potential. We look forward to continuing to support the excellent work of the Rose Bowl as soon as it can reopen."

The Friends of the Rose Bowl is grateful for the community support that allows it to reinforce and expand the essential work of the Rose Bowl Centre. "We want to assure everyone who lives locally that we are doing everything possible to re-open a new and improved centre. We need your support more than ever," Jane Simmonds said.



Young people from the Rose Bowl Youth Centre enjoyed sightseeing in London

To keep up to date on progress at the Rose Bowl Centre, visit www.friendsoftherosebowl.org.uk and <http://www.rosebowlcentre.org>.

Rosemary Brown

WRITE ON FOR THE ROSE BOWL: POSTCARDS DELIVER PROCEEDS

A series of vivid, quirky Islington postcards are on sale to raise funds for The Rose Bowl Centre.

The colourful images have been assembled by Canonbury Society committee member, Susan Millership, and designer Robin Farrow. All the proceeds go to The Rose Bowl Centre, via the Friends of the Rose Bowl.

Jane Simmonds, chairwoman of the Friends of the Rose Bowl, said: "The postcards have not only helped to raise the profile of the Rose Bowl Centre, but they've also brought in valuable extra funds."

Mary Wiggin, managing director of Coexistence, on Upper Street, Islington, which is sponsoring some of the printing said: "We are proud to support a local charity that is so dynamic in working to improve young people's prospects."



Write way to raise funds: Sales of postcards of Canonbury support the work of the Rose Bowl Youth Centre. Photo credit: Tony Mines

The cards are available via the Friends of the Rose Bowl website at www.friendsoftherosebowl.org and at Monte's Delicatessen, 23 Canonbury Lane. A pack of seven cards costs £4.

SKIPPING FOR HAITI

Young people at The Rose Bowl Centre skipped into action to raise funds for children caught in Haiti's earthquake.

The Skipathon supporting UNICEF's Haiti Earthquake Children's Appeal was held 25th January when young people skipped in a continuous relay for as long as possible during the evening youth session. They raised an impressive £500. Skipping ropes were provided by the Canonbury Safer Neighbourhood Team.

GALA AUCTION SUCCESS!

Once again the Canonbury community pulled out all the stops to raise an amazing £20,000 during the Friends of the Rose Bowl auction in February. Held at The Canonbury, the auction attracted over 150 guests who bid on items ranging from weekends in country cottages to teeth whitening and gourmet meals.

A special thanks goes to the community for its continuing support along with all those who donated such a wonderful range of prizes, the auctioneers and the team who organised and ran the event.

PLANNING: SOME THORNY ISSUES

The Canonbury Society has reviewed 70 planning applications since November 2009. Although Islington Council aims to send us relevant applications, it is helpful if members inform us of cases causing concern. Current contentious applications are:

FORD GARAGE SITE, 85 CANONBURY ROAD

The Canonbury Society has objected twice to proposals to redevelop the site formerly occupied by Highbury Ford. We are not opposed to redevelopment but the sheer size, height and density of the predominantly residential scheme that is hard to accept. We believe the scheme is unsympathetic to the buildings in the immediate vicinity; especially the diminution of the setting of the Grade 2* listed Union Chapel.

The case attracted over 600 letters of objection and 120 people attended the West Area Planning Committee in February where the proposals were unanimously rejected. The applicant, Notting Hill Housing Trust, is likely to appeal. The Canonbury Society would like to thank everyone who wrote and also Kate Graham, Islington's Conservation and Design Manager, whose letter containing criticism of the scheme accords with our own.

40 CANONBURY SQUARE Both the Society and several local residents have objected to the proposals for a large subterranean development below the existing garden.



Major plans for former listed cinema and bingo hall

FORMER CARLTON CINEMA (MECCA BINGO HALL)

The Society objected to the scale of the additional housing proposed, with two storeys added on top of the roof of the auditorium since the first public consultation. Although the block of flats on the Astey's Row car park would hide the ugly rear and side elevations of the cinema, its height is excessive and the glazed curtain wall is not aesthetically pleasing. There are also concerns about parking in surrounding streets – particularly on Sundays when there may be large church congregations.

THE CANONBURY

The Society objected to several aspects of the landscaping proposals for the garden, particularly the extent of hard paving and fake timber decking. Agreement has been reached on the species and location of trees to replace those felled when the extension of the pub took place.

BT OUTREACH EQUIPMENT BOXES

Increasing numbers of large dark green boxes (to house new broadband equipment?) have been appearing on our streets. We have objected in particular to the one in Canonbury Road and a proposed box in front of the listed pub, The Canonbury. Thanks to the efforts of local architect Roger Mears, public consultation is now being made before the BT boxes are installed.

COUNCIL PLANNING STRATEGIES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS.

We have considered and commented on four major documents published for consultation. Documents 1-3 replace the development plan.

1. Islington Core Strategy
2. Development Management Policies
3. Site Specific Allocations
4. Tree Policy

Along with other local amenity bodies, we met senior Council officers in the autumn and we maintain regular contact with our Councillors.

By James Coates and Philip Walker

FRIENDS OF THE NEW RIVER WALK



Gone, (now back) fishing

HERON RETURNS, RATS DISAPPEAR

After an unexplained absence of over seven months, the original June 1998 heron (or a close look-a-like) returned to fish on 25 September, and has again become a regular and welcome visitor. Brown rats in and along the river became so prevalent that last June, professional pest controllers were brought in and the rats disappeared within a day or two (not to return, but do let us know if you see any).

CARP POPULATION

Last summer saw an enormous increase in medium-sized fish (6 to 9 inches long) which are clearly the offspring of the six original 12-15 inch mirror carp introduced to the restored 'river' in June 1998 when Princess Alexandra re-opened the gardens.

CANONBURY GROVE SECTION

Crucial areas of waterfowl habitat were lost or greatly diminished when shrubs and undergrowth were severely cut back in early March by private contractors employed by the Council. Very low branches and vegetation over the water which used to provide cover and nest supports for moorhens were removed. Areas hardest hit were the southern island and the Alwyne Road bank running south to Canonbury Road. We are assured that in the future contractors will have to adhere to the principles of the existing wildlife management plan.

WILDLIFE

Another good year for the moorhens, with two breeding pairs producing lots of chicks in two batches. Most grew to adulthood and moved off eventually. Once again, the five or so 'resident' mallards failed to produce any surviving ducklings, possibly due to numerous local predators. Compared to moorhens, the mallards are somewhat laid back parents.

HISTORIC RAILINGS RESTORATION

The railings condition survey, funded jointly by The Friends and the Council's Canonbury Area Budget Grant, has been completed. Temporary stabilising supports have been installed at a number of panels rendered potentially unsafe by growing tree roots. This gives us time to explore sources of funding for restoration which could cost up to £250,000.

DOG CONTROLS

Last summer also saw considerable damage caused by powerful dogs "ring-barking" numerous trees, after being encouraged by owners to sharpen their claws on them. Happily, a two week regime of intensive, on-site monitoring and education by specialist Parks Patrol Officers averted the need to change the existing 'Dogs on lead when asked' notices to a stricter 'Dog Free Zone'.

VOLUNTEERS

Local Friends spent over 132 'person hours' in 46 sessions over the year, thinning out water plants which quickly block the water circulation if left unchecked. Workers included: Diane Brace and her granddaughters; James Coates; William Greaves; George Mackintosh and his children – Islay, Iona and Euan; Jack Lambert and Liz, Philip and Tom Walker. A new record was set on 22 August when nine volunteers got to work in the presence of seven newly hatched moorhen chicks.

Saturday morning volunteer sessions run from April to October, weather permitting.

Ring Jack Lambert on 0207 359 8315 for details.

By Jack Lambert
Chairman, Friends of the New River Walk

SHAKESPEARE RETURNS

If you didn't know better, you might think the extraordinary tale of the Tower Theatre troupe was an unknown Shakespearean play. It's a saga of pathos, mystery, magic and most importantly...all is resolved in the end.

Here's the scenario. Five years after being forced out of Canonbury Tower, their home for 50 years, the roving troupe at last found a site in Shoreditch to build a theatre. Incredibly this solved the 500 year-old mystery of the whereabouts of London's first purpose-built playhouse. The northeast corner of 'The Theatre' built by James Burbage in 1576 was uncovered on the very site being purchased by the Tower Theatre. The location of the playhouse where William Shakespeare launched his career -- where Romeo and Juliet premiered -- would be the wandering troupe's new home.

Indeed, it may be more than a coincidence that Shakespeare's company was also made 'homeless' by their landlord in 1598. Their eviction led to the establishment of The Globe after Shakespeare and company dismantled 'The Theatre', rowed it across the Thames and re-assembled it in time to perform Hamlet and Henry V.

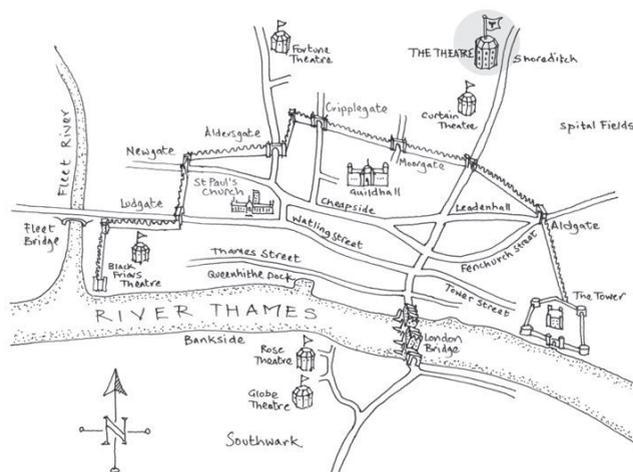
Now four centuries after re-emerging as The Globe, 'The Theatre' returns to life in its original location as the 21st century headquarters of the Tower Theatre. The troupe is recreating the spirit of 'The Theatre' in a new development incorporating a 135-seat auditorium and celebrating its illustrious predecessor.

Planning permission for the historic initiative was granted last October with a little bit of help from the Canonbury Society. "The Society wrote us a lovely letter in support of our planning application saying that we had been good neighbours for 50 years and that a lot of members supported us and would be interested in the project," said Penny Tuerk of the Tower Theatre.

Further archaeological investigations are scheduled before work begins on the site. Visitors to the Museum of London will be able to watch the dig by webcam and view the finds in a gallery devoted to this extraordinary discovery.

After securing more than half of the funding needed, the Tower Theatre has launched an appeal to raise £3.1 million to complete the work. You can be part of bringing London theatre back to its roots by contacting Dinah.Irvine@thetheatre.org.uk or donating through the JustGiving site on www.justgiving.com/thetheatreappeal.

Meanwhile the show must go on and the Tower Theatre continues to offer 18 productions a year including Julius Caesar on 13-22 May at St. Leonard's Church, Shoreditch. For information about the productions and progress on The Theatre, visit www.towertheatre.org.uk.



The location of the playhouse (upper right) where William Shakespeare honed his skills will be the new home of the Tower Theatre troupe.

The Tower Theatre troupe will be sharing 'Golden Moments of Shakespeare' at the Canonbury Society's annual summer garden party. See page 6.

Rosemary Brown

CIVIC AWARD FOR CANONBURY SOCIETY

The Canonbury Society was among nine organisations and individuals honoured in the Mayor's Civic Awards for 2010.

"Anything to do with Canonbury, they are there," said Cllr. Barbara Smith who nominated the Canonbury Society for this year's award.

Cllr. Smith paid tribute to the society's beginnings in 1971 to save the Victorian villas known as The Alwynes from destruction.

"The fight was won and the Canonbury Society continues to preserve the special character of the conservation area by monitoring planning applications and being involved in licensing applications, traffic schemes and environmental issues," she told the audience assembled to recognise the efforts of those who make Islington a better place to live.

"The wonderful thing about the Canonbury Society is that it has not fossilised -- you always meet new people," said Cllr. Smith. "Today the Society is thriving."

The Canonbury Society will celebrate its 40th birthday in 2011. "I am delighted they will enter their 40th year as holders of the Mayor's Civic Award," said Cllr. Smith.

Speaking at the ceremony, Islington's Mayor Cllr Anna Berent, said: "The Mayor's Civic Awards shines a spotlight on those committed community-minded volunteers whose passion for improving life for those around them really captures the unique spirit of Islington."

The Canonbury Society was delighted to be recognised by the Mayor's Awards. "We hope that we will always be an effective voice of reason in preserving the special character of Canonbury," Philip Walker, chairman of the Canonbury Society, said.



Canonbury Society committee members were honoured with the Mayor's Civic Award. Photo credit: Charles Dean

BRING US YOUR CONSERVATION PROJECTS

The Canonbury Society exists for its members, and to conserve our local area. The Society currently has built up a modest community fund which we would like to recycle back into local projects within the conservation area with a conservation theme. The subject will be discussed at this year's AGM on 19 May (see page 6), but if you have a project to be considered, please send details (nature of project, location, conservation angle) to the Hon Treasurer, Canonbury Society, 5 Alwyne Place, London, N1 2NL. DI

New roles at SPAB . . . and St Paul's

Combining living in Canonbury with passions which must surely echo with most Canonbury Society members, David Heath was at the turn of the year elected new chairman of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, Britain's oldest heritage charity, founded in 1877. David was Chief Conservation Architect for English Heritage until 2007. At SPAB, he will oversee the completion and launch of the society's new Strategic Plan, as well as emphasising the day-to-day importance of conservative repair.

Gavin Ralston, who with wife Nicola has generously hosted both summer and Christmas parties for the Society at Canonbury House, has been appointed a Lay Canon at St Paul's Cathedral. Gavin, who also serves as a churchwarden of St Lawrence Jewry in the City of London, was formally appointed at an "installation Evensong" on 8 March 2010.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW CONSERVATION OFFICER

Kate Graham joined the London Borough of Islington in November 2009 as Conservation and Design Manager. Among her responsibilities will be a review of existing conservation areas and the preparation of character appraisals for each.



Prior to her new role, Kate spent four years in English Heritage's London Region as a Senior Historic Buildings Adviser specialising in the care and repair of the historic environment. She has enjoyed a varied

career in the conservation arena and has a particular interest in the role that local communities play in the protection of the historic environment.

Kate has a degree in Building Conservation from London's Architectural Association, in addition to her MA in Ancient History and MA in Architectural History.

Kate is the guest speaker at The Canonbury Society AGM on 19th May (see page 6).

WHAT WE CAMPAIGN ABOUT AND WHY

More to our life than planning

The phrase "Canonbury Conservation Area" at first glance might smack far more of things ancient than modern, but in fact, the Conservation Area is surprisingly non-homogenous. The architecture within it is by no means just Georgian and Victorian, but actually spans eight centuries, from the original Canonbury House (dating back to c.1370) to new developments in the very late 20th century (e.g. Irving Mews). After centuries of being in private hands – the Northampton Estate – the Conservation Area's biggest landowner by a distance is now Islington Council, with 540 council-owned properties.

Amid this diverse mix of architecture and population, the Society's principal aim is "to conserve the special character of Canonbury by

opposing incongruous redevelopment or building alterations and promoting changes which might enhance Canonbury".

This does mean much time monitoring planning, tree and licensing applications, but this is far from being our only activity. The society also participates in many initiatives. Sometimes we lead with our own, such as "Save Our Shops", our 2009 campaign, and sometimes we support others such as saving the Essex Road Post Office, Islington Council's "I Shop Local", the Rose Bowl Youth Club, Friends of New River Walk, and Safer Neighbourhoods. More recently, we attended a meeting of most of the resident and conservation groups in Islington in an effort not only to understand some of the

issues being tackled within the borough, but also to join forces when necessary.

A good example of this cooperation was our united front at the March planning committee hearing on 85 Canonbury Road. Here the Society also represented The Islington Society, The Islington Archaeology & History Society, The Upper Street Association, The Highbury Fields Association and The Estorick Collection. I suspect there will be more liaison in the future.

Do let us know if you think the Society should be involved in other initiatives or campaigns. We are here to help!

Philip Walker, Chairman

SMALL BUT NOT BEAUTIFUL

Disgusted of Canonbury writes...

Why oh why do we need the plague of new 20mph signs? While only 12 inches across, they are yet another piece of disfiguring street signage. The new 20mph limit on non-major roads in Islington has been heavily promoted in the local press, average speed cameras are promised/threatened – isn't that enough? DI

NEW CHALLENGES FOR LUCY WATT

Lucy Watt, Liberal Democrat Member for Canonbury Ward, and member and friend of the Canonbury Society will not stand in the Islington Council elections in May.

A councillor since 2002, Lucy says now is the time to move on to a new challenge.

"Whilst I've really loved the role over the last eight years, and will miss it immensely, I've decided that this is the right thing to do," she said. "Being a councillor in Canonbury, and becoming deputy leader of the council, has been a huge privilege," she said.

"I would really like to thank all of you who have been supportive of my work in the ward. Without you all, we would not have achieved so much in Canonbury."

Lucy promises to remain involved with the local community.

Canonbury Society chairman Philip Walker paid tribute to Lucy. "We have enjoyed working with Lucy. She's been a true friend of the Canonbury Society. We wish her well in future endeavours."



Lucy Watt with Canonbury Society chairman Philip Walker

PRIORITIES FOR SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS

Fellow Canonbury Society Committee member Jane Simmonds and I sit on the Canonbury Safer Neighbourhood Panel which meets regularly with the police team to discuss priorities and the latest crime situation.

Current priorities are youth engagement and burglary. We considered removing burglary from the list because the number had fallen over the past two years, but they were up by 90% in February. Youth engagement includes tackling vandalism on the New River Green Estate and in Essex Road and supporting the Rose Bowl Youth Club, particularly through police training in boxing.

"Current priorities are youth engagement and burglary"

The Panel's website:

www.met.police.uk/teams/islington/canonbury/index.php will be re-launched with a survey of residents and businesses to get their views on crime and priorities. We will let you know when it's ready. Copies will also be available in hard copy. Survey results will be discussed at the next public meeting at 7.30 p.m. on Tuesday 15 June at the Walter Sickert Community Centre. Everyone is welcome.

James Coates

www.met.police.uk/teams/islington/canonbury/index.php

SUPPORT OUR LOCAL SHOPS: SO FAR SO GOOD

"Support Our Local Shops" was the front page headline on last year's newsletter, a plea at a time when one-in-five London shops were predicted to fail by Christmas. One year on, shops around the country are indeed suffering, if not quite as much as feared – the national retail vacancy rate is now 12%.

The picture in Canonbury is much more encouraging. Of the 30+ local shops surveyed 12 months ago, only one – Threshers (part of a national chain collapse) – has gone under.

Islington Council is trying to raise awareness of local shops by asking people to pledge to buy 50% of their weekly shopping locally. Sign the pledge (www.islington.gov.uk/shopping) and receive an "I Shop Local" cotton shopping bag (200 already handed out, as we went to press). We encourage you to continue to shop locally. DI

GOLDEN MOMENTS OF SHAKESPEARE: 2010 SUMMER GARDEN PARTY

*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his GOLD* complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair some time declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade...*

-- Shakespeare's Sonnet 18

*Guests are invited to wear gold

In celebration of summer, Shak-speare, and thenew home of the Tower Theatre (see page 4), the Canonbury Society's annual Summer Garden Party will pay tribute to the Bard on 27 June from 1 to 4 p.m. With the glittering assistance of the Tower Theatre troupe, our theme for 2010 is 'golden moments of Shakespeare.'

Members of the troupe festooned in gold will provide light entertainment as they join us in the grounds of 40, Alwyne Road to share golden passages from Shakespeare's sonnets and plays. Thanks to host George Mackintosh.

To salute summer and the Tower Theatre's new home above the ruins of London's first purpose-built playhouse where Shakespeare debuted his best-loved plays, the Canonbury Society invites guests to don their golden finery.

Whatever weather the English summer brings, we intend to make Shakespearian merry. Members will receive party details this summer.



LOCAL GARDENS OPEN FOR CHARITY UNDER THE NATIONAL GARDENS SCHEME 2010

Sunday, 25 April

Malvern Terrace Gardens, Barnsbury
2 - 5:30 teas, music, plant sales

Sunday, 6 June

37 Alwyne Road, Canonbury
2 - 6 teas, raffle, plant sales

Sunday, 13 June

De Beauvoir Gardens
2 - 6 teas
158 Culford Road
114 de Beauvoir Road
52 Northchurch Road
21 Northchurch Terrace

Sunday, 20 June

Islington Gardens
2 - 6
Barnsbury Wood
(off Crescent St, N of Thornhill Square)
1 Battlebridge Court, Wharfdale Road
44 Hemingford Road
36 Thornhill Square
5 Northampton Park
1 - 5:30

Sunday, 18 July

29 Canonbury Park North
12 - 4

For further information consult The National Garden Scheme "Yellow Book" or www.ngs.org.uk

CANONBURY SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2010

Philip Walker - Chairman

Liz Watson - Treasurer

Rosemary Brown - Secretary, newsletter and events

Sharon White - Membership Secretary

Jack Lambert - Planning, Chairman of Friends of the New River Walk

James Coates - Planning

David Ireland - Newsletter and events

Susan Millership

Jane Simmonds

Marcella Menzies

Iain Carson

Goodbye and many thanks to Jacquie Glomski, our former Membership Secretary. Continuing thanks to Gill Hopkins (webmaster) and Beate Hohmann of Galaxe of Stars (website host).

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'.

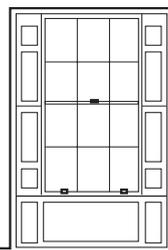
NAME

ADDRESS

TEL

EMAIL

PLEASE SEND TO: The Hon Treasurer, 5 Alwyne Place, London N1 2NL



I/We wish to pay my/our annual subscription for 2010

I/We wish to join the Society as new members

I/We enclose £

OUR 2010 AGM

Whether you want to meet new people, grill a Counsellor, or share a glass of wine after the proceedings, the Canonbury Society invites you to our Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 19th May at 7.30 p.m. (doors open at 7 p.m.) at St. Stephen's Church.

New Conservation and Design Manager at Islington Council Kate Graham (see page 4) is our guest speaker.

At the AGM, we'll be seeking your views on forthcoming campaigns and inviting you to nominate conservation projects for small grants. Committee members will report back on parking, planning, finance, trees and events.