



Jump start: Dancers entertain the crowd in St James' Square.

## Dancing in the streets

Our coverage of the East Finchley Festival in last month's issue unfortunately crowded out news of Muswell Hill's own community event, which happened just the day before on the piazza area close to the Everyman Cinema.

Proceedings at Midsummer Muswell began with the Muswell Hill Brass Band before talented locals took to the stage with dance, comedy and plenty of music to please the crowds. Before long,

brave teddies were lining up to parachute from the roof of St James Church, which raised much-needed funds for roof repairs and for cerebral palsy charity CPotential.

After a public vote, the

inaugural small business awards were presented to Crocodile Café, Toffs, Clissold Arms, Kimberleys and Broadway Pet Store. The fun will return with A Very Merry Muswell in December.

## Change to courses at historic Highgate institution

The Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution has opened its doors for 2018-9 booking for its popular educational courses. This year it has adjusted its schedules to provide for longer courses in the autumn and spring term with a shorter four-week summer term, followed by a number of two-day courses.

Anne Jamieson, Chair of the Institution's Education Committee, said: "We have found that a lot of our students have difficulty with summer attendance because of holidays and other commitments. Overall, we will have a slight increase in the number of classes offered, and in addition, there will be a significant expansion of our short one and two-day courses throughout June.

"This summer we have

repeated our Dante's *Divine Comedy* option because of popular demand and in the autumn we have two short courses: Homer's *Iliad* in translation with Isabel Raphael, and an architectural programme called The Development of the Modern Home.

The Institution, founded over 175 years ago in the centre of Highgate Village, is easily accessible by public transport. Courses are open to anybody.

Membership, which currently starts at £91 a year, allows priority booking and provides access to a members' room with newspapers and all the major periodicals, as well as one of London's best libraries with over 25,000 books.

Other activities include a Film Club, a Science Group and an Opera Circle. Further information can be found online at [www.HLSI.net](http://www.HLSI.net).

# How the North London Hospice started in a flat

By Daphne Chamberlain

*Did you know that the North London Hospice started life in a Muswell Hill flat? It was the home of Harriet Copperman, and she has told us the story of that hectic time.*

In the early 1980s, modern hospices were starting elsewhere in London, but none in north London. Most people with life-limiting illnesses died in hospital or at home, with little specialised help available.

### Birth of a dream

The Hampstead Community Health Committee set up a sub-committee to look at palliative care needs for Hampstead Health Authority. Harriet, working as a nurse-midwife at the time, and Dr Chris Hindley, a Highgate GP, were co-opted onto this.

A new palliative care unit was set up in the Royal Free, but the CHC subcommittee decided a hospice project was needed for an area much larger than Hampstead. So, the North London Hospice Group (NLHG) was established as a charity.

### Getting started

Help the Aged provided £10,000, and a very generous anonymous philanthropist donated £60,000 for one year, which would pay for two nurses, a part time doctor, a physiotherapist, a social worker and a secretary.

This enabled the Hospice community service to start up. It was 1984, and everything was run from the spare bedroom of Harriet's flat. Local GPs referred patients to the team, and for the first year she never turned off her beeper.

At considerable financial risk, Harriet had given in her notice at the Royal Free palliative care unit, and became the first employee of the NLHG, setting up the home care team. In her words: "A hospice is not a building. It's a concept. If possible, most people want to die in their own beds. We had to offer ourselves and our services to the community. You often had to go the extra 10 miles, not just one, to enable the patient to remain at home. You're on call, working by yourself in the middle of the night, but you get enormous job satisfaction."

### Up and running

Headquarters later expanded to a neighbouring flat, then to free accommodation in Ballards Lane, provided by Kurt Weinberg. The NHS funded two



Harriet Copperman with her certificate. Photo Mike Coles

more nurses, and an anonymous benefactor gave £40,000 a year for home care. Harriet says simply: "We can never express our gratitude."

In 1987 the hospice's current Woodside Park site was acquired. The estimated £2.5million cost of building an in-patient unit there was achieved by fundraising and donations.

Harriet pays tribute to dedicated long-time supporters such as Baroness Julia Neuberger, Jewish Care and the Peabody Trust, as well as Dame Cicely Saunders, known as the founder of the modern hospice movement.

Serving Barnet, Haringey and Enfield, the NLH was the first multi-faith hospice in the UK. It offers care for everyone, of all faiths and none, with home visits, in-patient care when necessary, and day care therapy. Families and friends are supported too. Each individual is helped to lead as full a life as possible. All professional services are free, and three-quarters of the running costs come from donations and legacies.

### Record-keeping

Earlier this year, Harriet and David Oliviere, first social work director at the hospice, told The Finchley Society the story of how it all began. Harriet has also lodged her written account with the Society. Already an OBE, she was recently awarded a Certificate of Recognition of her Lifetime Achievement from Barnet Council.

## Care can be different

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