

Camden Residents' Association Newsletter

October 2021

www.camdenresidentsbath.org

No Liveable Neighbourhood for Camden in the foreseeable future, but...

"We won't give up!"

Jeremy Labram, Chair.

We have missed out on a Liveable Neighbourhood for Camden despite a real sense of optimism after the last local election.



As your Chair of the CRA I still see a massive responsibility to those who campaigned before us, to keep fighting for a change for the better.

- Were all our efforts over the last four years a complete waste of time?
- Was the continual lobbying, outreach and cooperation to neighbouring communities and detailed analysis to no avail?

I can't allow myself to believe so. Our case is strong. It is a matter of political timing – we're now too late for this election cycle. We need to get an undertaking from one or more of the main parties at the local next election in 2023 that we will be top of the list.

Camden Road is still a dangerous road to travel along on foot or bike and hopeless for chatting to neighbours

and passers-by. It remains a through route for many people who have nothing to do with area itself and has spawned other cut throughs as well.

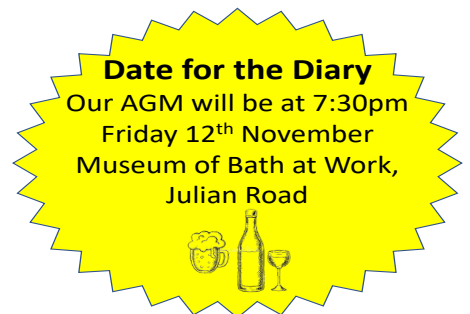
I started to look back at the history in the CRA minutes and elsewhere. The brutal fact is that the traffic issues have been a continual concern to residents for over 30 years. Traffic calming measures were added in 1999. They might have been effective then for a while, but over the **last 22 years** the 'too much traffic' theme has remained.

My colleague, **Bob Williams**, takes over the story on page 2 and hints at why we are featuring cherries, snakes and ladders this year.



We're aiming to organise a **street party** in the summer next year

We hope this will bring us residents together and demonstrate for a day what a liveable neighbourhood might look and feel like for residents and those who walk or cycle along our



Date for the Diary

Our AGM will be at 7:30pm
Friday 12th November
Museum of Bath at Work,
Julian Road



roads. Hope you will be able to join us.

Bob Crampton, of Radio Bath and fellow committee member looks at the origins and meaning of the Street Party and hopefully we'll be able to feast on fresh cherries there too.

John Long, Committee Member, and now leader of Friends of Camden Meadow, explains how he has got Council backing for all his team's hard work to tame the forest below Camden Crescent.



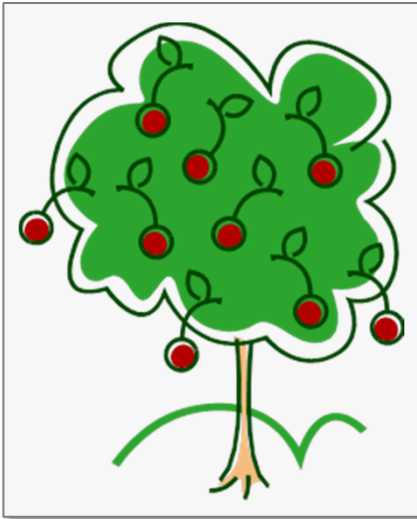
Finally Our **Treasurer**, explains the fabulous progress made by the Friends of Hedgemoor Park to make the journey into the city so delightful for many of us.



- Do look on our web-site and subscribe to receive our weekly posts by email
- and please join us at the AGM in its lovely new venue.

A brief history of Camden and its traffic

Bob Williams



In the **1960s** Bath Council widened Camden Road by shortening the front gardens of Upper Camden Place and building the now familiar 'ramparts'. In the remaining part of each garden a cherry tree was planted: 60 years on just one of them is still alive.

The widening was intended to allow traffic to flow freely down what had been a narrow lane along the ridge of the hill. Since then, quite logically it has got increasingly popular as an alternative to the London Road – all the more illustrated by the current closure of Cleveland Bridge.

Back in June **2002**: the Wiltshire Gazette and Herald ran this all too familiar story. **Nearly 20 years on and we're back where we started!**

Campaigns for traffic calming succeeded in getting speed humps installed (later removed and then replaced again), a 20 mph speed limit and the allocation of parking spaces to narrow the road and slow down traffic. This has proved no obstacle to increased traffic volumes and associated congestion and pollution.

The national requirement to introduce Clean Air Zones in **2015** offered a new glimmer of hope.

NEWS

19th June 2002

Camden rat run is unsafe



RESIDENTS have hit out at the volume of traffic on a well known Bath "rat run" saying they are fed up of their parked cars being damaged and having their children put at risk from speeding vehicles.

Homeowners on Camden Road, which acts as thoroughfare between Bath and Larkhall, have said the sheer weight of traffic on the narrow road, in both directions, has made life mayhem for motorists and pedestrians alike.

Mum, Linda Smith, said: "It must be the worst road in Bath.

"It is just not built for this sort of traffic. It is getting worse and worse. It is going to lead to mayhem.

Forced into action by a decision by the Supreme Court, the Government allowed local councils to introduce measures to reduce levels of illegal pollution and one of those was BANES.

Unfortunately, the Council decided to exclude private cars from being charged so the CAZ has made no noticeable difference to the traffic in Camden. There is currently a push to reverse this car exclusion by our neighbouring Lansdown Crescent Association.

Then the prospect of the Liveable Neighbourhood (formerly Low Traffic Neighbourhood) concept offered the most promising solution we had seen. At last through traffic would be blocked while still preserving access for residents on 'neighbourhood streets'.

First implemented in Waltham Forest in 2014, the new administration in

2019 made manifesto commitment to introduce them in Bath.

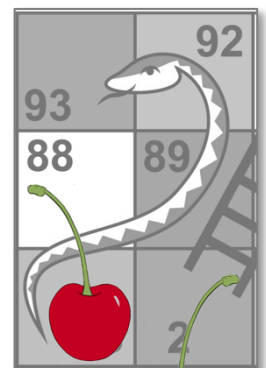
Along with its declaration of a climate emergency we were made to feel that the time was right.

However, it was not to be. The Council, incredibly, decided that a very strong bid for a liveable neighbourhood in Camden could not be included in the first wave of 14 schemes.

So we have slid down the snake and are back to square one or maybe two.

Let's take a moment to reflect on a long struggle and dust ourselves down for the next stage and our street party.

Cherry anyone?



Camden Meadow

John Long reports



Working left to right: a large area of hazel and laurel coppiced. A cherry tree and two conifers revealed. Glimpses of the river and canal opened up and conifer standing proud from root to tip.

At last year's AGM we voted for the CRA to find a way of working with the Council to tackle, what was then, the ambiguous and slightly forlorn land in front of Camden Crescent.

Under the 'two Johns' leadership, here we are one short year later, and what a lot has happened! The 'Friends of Camden Meadow' group has been established, as a spin off from the CRA, now with over 25 local members who have really got stuck in. And the impact of this local effort has been incredible. A large part of the land has been transformed.

- The wildflower meadow has been expanded,
- Areas of dense and overgrown hazel and laurel have been tamed, and
- Some of our beautiful and historic views opened back up for all to enjoy.

We are open to any local people who would like to play an active part in the vision for, and long term management of, this historically and ecologically important piece of land, the gateway to our beautiful Camden neighbourhood. Being a Friends group means that the Council recognises it as the principal local body with an interest in the land and will work with it as land partners,

helping to facilitate the group's long term vision and consulting with it on any future decisions which affect it.

The purpose of Friends of Camden Meadow is, first and foremost, to care for this land. No longer forgotten, but clearly and visibly being looked after. It is not the group's intention to try to turn back time and see the land restored into a pristine lawn. That would be almost impossible now anyway, and there's no shortage of neatly lawned crescents in Bath. Nor to try to imitate any other of Bath's many crescent gardens. Rather, here, to work with, and celebrate, the uniqueness of this land. To see it as something special.

Initially the group has been tackling the north-eastern quarter of the land, and focussing on taming the overgrowth. Essentially that has involved cutting back and coppicing the laurel and hazel that has been allowed to take over the land in recent years, reducing their height and dominance in order to open the land up and let in some much needed sunlight to the meadow floor and allow other plants to grow, aiding biodiversity. Happily, this work has also restored some of the

amazing views across the City and Avon Valley.

Longer term, work will be more about management than major change

- Caring for the coppiced hazel (allowing it to grow, but not to take over again)
- Reinvigorating and expanding the wildflower meadow
- Doing a little targeted planting (adding a smattering of native fruit trees here and there (a cherry maybe?))
- Providing a little more diversity, insect friendly blossom, and tasty fruit) and
- Working with the Council to improve the lower boundary to Upper Hedgemoat Road.



If you'd like to get involved and become a member of Friends of Camden Meadow, you would be very welcome. It's good fun, and a great way to meet other local people.

Check out the Friends of Camden Meadow website for membership information.

www.camdenmeadow.org

Street Party

Bob Crampton looks at the true meaning of the street party

Street parties are seen as a typical British knees-up. Picture the scene. Close knit brick houses sprouting bunting everywhere; outside - heaving trestle tables stretching for



what seems like miles; lashings of ginger beer and homemade cakes; the odd pale ale and a profusion of silly hats. Those were the days!

They evolved after the first world war. In 1919 they were known as Child Teas or Peace Teas. They were

what they said on the tin – an event for poor and orphaned kids to tuck in.

A few years later street parties grew up. They became an occasional family celebration usually to mark a royal marriage, a royal jubilee or a coronation. Any excuse to let your hair down by royal appointment.

The 1953 Coronation of the present Queen Elizabeth brought a tiny relaxation of the rationing rules. Her subjects were allowed an extra pound of sugar and 4 ounces of margarine to pull together the party fayre.

Winning the World Cup in 1966 was another year when the joyous reaction led to the street outside. Food and footballs and chants were some of the ingredients then.

Nowadays it's more than likely there's going to be a modern BBQ with an overflow of burgers and beer accompanied by an earth-shaking

sound system. Still it's a simple thing to bring the community together.

Maybe not so simple to set up:

- Months of planning by willing residents;
- Permission from the council for a road closure – Camden Road is a main bus route...that has to be taken into account;
- There's health and safety, possible insurance; and a licence if alcohol is being sold.
- Our Committee has floated the idea of a street party on **Sunday 5th June** next year for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June. It could be a one-day taste of a traffic free environment. You never know, with the first cherries of the summer too..



Hedgemean Park

Nigel Pollard, Treasurer of CRA and FoHP reports on recent progress and plans. The CRA is a Group Member of the FoHP.



The last 18 months have helped us all to appreciate our local Hedgemean Park.

With the Friends support and interest our local Council must take the most of the credit for the continuing upkeep and the number of improvements that have taken place over the last few years.

Most prominent of these has been the installation of two 'Interpretation Boards' highlighting the Parks unique history which has been further enhanced by the exposure of the many stone walls and terraces. Furthermore, we have introduced a 'Tree Trail' emphasising the park's wealth of wonderful trees, of which eight are recorded in the National Database either as 'Remarkable' or indeed, 'County Champions'.

There is also a new notice board at the London Street entrance together with a handrail. The *Friends* are also going to repaint the gate to bring this back to its former Edwardian glory.

The Friends have raised funds to purchase over 1000 native bluebells and other bulbs to plant in the area below the park's Victorian Battlement & Tower.



If you wish to help, please see the *Friends* Notice Board in the park, or the Website, www.hedgemean.org for our planned gardening dates.

For next year we are also looking to the Queen's Jubilee in June as a justification to bring a band back to the Bandstand which we'll need to coordinate with the proposed CRA Street Party!



Andrews ➤ Thanks to Andrews Property Group for their continued help in printing this newsletter.