

Ministry of Nitrogen Dioxide



TAKE YOUR SON & HEIR WHERE THERE IS SUN AND AIR?

Secretary of the *Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum*, **Stephen Taylor**, with something of a wake-up call for all those who rather enjoy that much underrated pastime, commonly referred to as breathing.

Traffic – it won't go away. As an issue, anyway. Every time the Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum has held public consultations, people tell us how concerned they are about the traffic. The noise. The filthy air.

We should all be glad we're living on a hill, because London's bad air might well be killing us.

- Ed. I hate to break this to everyone, but if you view Hampstead from an aeroplane on a smoggy day, you might observe London's pollution cloud looming directly upon the hill that is old Hampers.

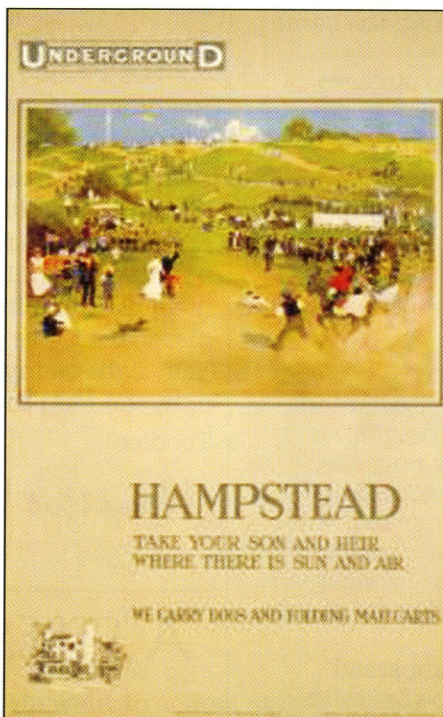
Epidemiologists calculate 4,000 of us die prematurely each year from air pollution. Of course, this isn't what appears on our death certificates: heart disease, lung disease or cancer is what's generally recorded as cause of death. But statistical analysis tells a grim story. Living in and breathing the air of London shortens our lives by years. Here in Hampstead too.

If you've been following the news, you'll know the EU has been threatening London with a €300m fine for allowing this continue. The Supreme Court last month confirmed the UK government must clean up London's air.

Where does all this filthy air come from? For centuries, London's smog was caused by coal fires. Complaints go all the way back to the 14th century. Thankfully, the Clean Air Act of 1956 sorted that out – but only after the Great Smog of 1952 killed some 12,000 Londoners.

Nowadays the culprits are nitrogen dioxide and tiny particles known as PM10. Half of the NO₂ we breathe and 80% of the PM10 comes from motor traffic.

Whilst rejecting the law suit of an American for the return of his property – a man, Hampstead judge and former Kenwood resident Lord Mansfield is often [mis]quoted as saying: "the air



Even the Heath is now home to HGV'S and NO₂ - Where will it end?

of England is too pure for any slave to breathe". Not us, m'lord [cough, splutter], for we are all today enslaved to automobiles.

The question is, can Hampstead ever be free of heavy motor traffic? In time, yes. Present volumes are not the result of natural forces or even the operations of a 'free market', but of public policy.

The IMF reports we spend more subsidising fossil fuels than we spend on health care. The real cost of motoring has never been so low. What policy has done, policy can undo – in time.

The signs are encouraging. Car ownership in the city has been steadily falling since 1991. It makes sense to be planning for a Hampstead with fewer vehicles on its roads.

The Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum, established under the Localism Act of 2011, is preparing planning policies to reflect your views.

Development affects traffic and thus air quality. We need to take local readings. Contact air@hampsteadforum.org or www.hampsteadforum.org/air if you would like to help.

-Ed's tuppence worth A.K.A. the Hampstead People's Popular Front manifesto.

I doubt the current government - even cyclist Boris Johnson will jeopardise Britain's booming HGV-property development-industrial complex for something as fiscally superfluous as clean air. I mean, who needs air when there are serious readies to be made? Who do these European upstarts think they are, telling us we'd be better off breathing clean air? European Parliament! We want our dirty British air or else.

1. On a London-wide level, the phasing out and banning of all non-hybrid vehicles is an obvious step. If a double-decker bus can run on electricity, so can most HGV's. It isn't rocket science. Surely, 85% of vehicles could be hybrid within 5 years if the will was there.

2. Prevent HGV through-traffic from entering Hampstead's roads which regularly collapse (eg. Heath Street/ New End) and are clearly not designed to accommodate such vehicles. Off to the Finchley Road with you!

3. Ban all unnecessary demolition of structurally sound Hampstead buildings. Currently permission is being granted in dozens of Hampstead streets for unwarranted development projects - the result? A constant flow of highly polluting HGV traffic.

4. Fewer HGV's and car pollution will encourage safer cycling - as would a few half-decent, segregated cycle lanes wherever possible.