

Myddelton Square Association

December 2025 Newsletter

The Myddelton Square Association (MSA) is a Residents' Association for residents and property owners in Myddelton Square, EC1. For information or to join, please visit our website at <http://www.myddeltonsquare.co.uk> or email hello@myddeltonsquare.co.uk. This newsletter is distributed to all letterboxes in Myddelton Square and by email.

AGM

The 46th AGM of the Myddelton Square Association will take place on:

Thursday 26th February 2026 - 7pm for drinks, formal proceedings from 7:30pm

Our next meeting will be held in St. Mark's Church. Please join us to meet your neighbours over drinks and nibbles, and to discuss matters affecting our neighbourhood. An agenda will be circulated by email before the meeting.

Membership

We welcome new members wanting to join the Myddelton Square Association. There is a modest annual membership subscription of £10, payable in January (or at the AGM). Further information can be found on our website at <http://www.myddeltonsquare.co.uk>. If you have any queries or wish to raise any issues relevant to the Square, please speak to a member of the committee or send an email to membership@myddeltonsquare.co.uk.

News

MSA held its annual summer garden party in August. In October Myddelton Square was used to film a short scene for a TV drama called "Fightland". In November the film "Christmas Karma" was released, for which Myddelton Square was used as a filming location in 2024. MSA arranged a cinema visit to watch it.

The Myddelton Square book club meets on the third Tuesday of each month to read and discuss a range of genres. Email amandac.gray@hotmail.co.uk for information. Members of the gardening group and book club also recently spent a Sunday afternoon making Christmas wreaths. Have you spotted any around the square?

Next year our friends at the Amwell Society are planning a festival from 19th to 28th June 2026 to celebrate 200 years of the Amwell area. Look out for more information, or check their website: <https://www.amwell.org.uk/>

200th Anniversary Period of the Building of Myddelton Square

The 200th anniversary period of the building of Myddelton Square is well underway. The history of the area, and Myddelton Square, is documented in the Survey of London: Volume 47, Northern Clerkenwell & Pentonville. It can be browsed at British History Online: <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol47/pp192-216#h2-s12> (or consulted nearby at the London Metropolitan Archives).

One of our members, Giles Colchester, has delved further and has several anecdotes about former residents in the square. Mary Cosh's book "The Squares of Islington" tells us that the layout of Myddelton Square was by the New River Company's surveyor William Chadwell Mylne, and the exact site was a large field called Butchers Mantells [the Commandry Mantells were the property of the Priory of St John, now more famous for its association with Ambulances]. From 1824 to 1829 the new square appears in Sewer Rate Books under the name Chadwell Square. By 1827, 67 of its 73 houses are recorded, a number of them being empty.

The actor playwright Thomas Dibdin (1771-1841) was one of the first residents and lived at No. 5 near the south-west corner. He wrote admiringly in his autobiography that the area "not five years since, was an immense field, where people used to be stopped and robbed on their return in the evening from Sadler's Wells; and the ground floor of the parlour where I sit was as nearly as possible the very spot where my wife and I fell over a recumbent cow, on our way home one murky night in a thunder storm, and only regained the solitary path... by the timely aid of a tremendous flash of lightning."

William Chadwell Mylne also designed St. Mark's Church. St Mark's was completed in 1827. It was damaged during the Blitz on 11th January 1941, along with some of the houses on the north side of the square. A side chapel was used for services until repairs were completed in the 1960s.

Charles Booth's poverty map (circa 1890) shows Myddelton Square as "Middle class. Well-to-do", but after this many houses were converted into lodging houses, often used by young professional men. Many houses have since been converted into flats.

Other notable residents of Myddelton Square include painters (Edward Hughes was born 1832 on the square, and Guido Philipp Schmitt lived at no. 9), Wesleyan Methodists (Jabez Bunting at number 30, and John Hannah and Elijah Hoole at no. 8), physicians (Sir George Buchanan, epidemiologist known for his work on smallpox, typhus and TB was born on Myddelton Square, Golding Bird lived at no. 19 and Edward Ballard lived at no. 42), writers (Stanley Lees Gifford, founder of "The Standard" newspaper and novelist B.S. Johnson) and political activists (Fenner Brockway, at no. 60 which became the base for the Independent Labour Party).

If you have any interesting tales about the history of your house or the square, or memories to share of living here then it would be great to hear of them. We can include them on our website or in future editions of Square Roots. Please forward any contributions to hello@myddeltonsquare.co.uk.

Local Policing

Myddelton Square Association is represented at meetings of the Clerkenwell Safer Neighbourhood Panel, a liaison between our local police team, the Council and various local groups. Please e-mail us if there are issues you would like raised at this meeting.

Please take the time to report any crimes or criminal activity (call 101 or report online at <https://www.met.police.uk/ro/report/>). Individual crime reports may not receive a follow-up, but reporting helps our local police team identify hotspots and allocate resources.

The Met has recently set up “Met Engage”. Sign up at <https://www.metengage.co.uk/> to receive periodic emails keeping you informed and surveys helping you shape local policing.

Myddelton Square Gardening Group (MSGG)

2025 has been a particularly challenging year for the Gardening Group.

We have had to cope with a second year of drought, without a working standpipe during what has apparently been the longest drought since records began. The lack of water has resulted in the loss of numerous bushes and other planting - and we will need funding to replace these.

New trees planted this year (Crab apple, Magnolia and flowering Cherry) have also been badly affected and it is doubtful after two consecutive years without water that the three 'Crepe Myrtles' on the west side of the Gardens will survive.

However, we are pleased that there is now more positive news:

The leaking pipe to the standpipe (but not the fountain) has finally been fixed this autumn—but was too late to save any of the planting affected by the drought.

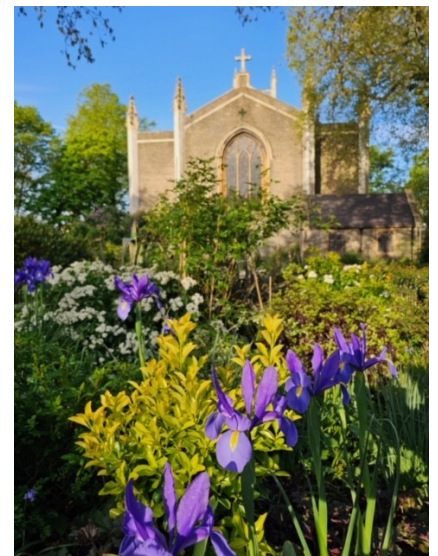
The London In Bloom judge Julie Hogarth had a couple of suggestions that we might like to take on board in 2026.

Firstly, to have an Open Day where MSGG could take people around the Gardens and engage with the wider community. As part of this, we could discuss our achievements to date, future plans and provide information about volunteering. We could also sell plants and refreshments.

Secondly, to allocate a planting area to encourage the younger members of the community. The 4th Clerkenwell Rainbows, Brownies and Guides who meet at St. Mark's church are happy to be involved. Part of the west side of the Gardens could be set aside for this.

If you would like to get involved in a gardening day, or if you would like to make a donation of plants or money please e-mail: msq.garden@gmail.com

You can also look out for posters on the gates for upcoming Gardening Days.



Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration

Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration have announced that they will open in May 2026, offering exhibitions of illustration from around the world, a library and activity space, courses, workshops for families and schools, a café, a shop and new public gardens. One of the galleries will be dedicated to Quentin Blake's archive, while other exhibitions will include 'MURUGIAH: Ever Feel Like...' which delves into the kaleidoscopic world of the British-Sri Lankan illustrator, artist and designer MURUGIAH.

The Centre's team have asked us to thank the members of the Myddelton Square Association for their input, support for the fundraising campaign and patience during the construction process. The bench that the Association supported will be back on the Viewing Platform from the spring for all to enjoy. There will also be a public pathway connecting Myddelton Passage to Amwell Street during and half an hour either side of opening hours.

If you'd like to get more involved as a supporter, a volunteer or in other way, please get in touch at info@qbcentre.org.uk

You can find out more about the centre and their project and sign up to the newsletter, including information about future events, on their website at <https://www.qbcentre.org.uk>.

Alternatively you can follow them at @qbcentre, or support the Centre by making a donation, joining the Friends at <https://www.qbcentre.org.uk/support>, or emailing Emily Curran at emily.curran@qbcentre.org.uk

St. Mark's Church

St Mark's warmly welcomes everyone, aiming to support our local community. The bells ring at 9:30am for our Sunday morning Eucharist with hymns and Junior Church (DBS accredited) with tea & coffee afterwards.

On Wednesday evenings at 6.30pm we have said BCP Eucharist. A hot meal is then offered before a Bible Study session.

On Thursdays a Tots & Mothers group meets for play and conversation. Every Saturday (11am – 4:30pm) the "New to You" Shop opens with quality pre-loved clothes, books, bric-a-brac & toys at bargain prices.

On the first Sunday of each month we hold Choral Evensong followed by "wine, nibbles and chat".

Our Christmas Services are:

- Sunday 21st December, 9:30am, Eucharist & Family Crib Service.
- Thursday 25th December, 9:30am Christmas Day Eucharist.
- Sunday 4th January 2026, 6:30pm Choral Evensong celebrating St Mark's Dedication Day.