Maida Hill Market here soon!

The official opening of Maida Hill Market on the newly redeveloped plaza at the Prince of Wales Junction is on **Thursday June 11th**.

There will be a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 4pm followed by a drinks reception at 5pm at the London Print Studio, 425 Harrow Road. After the reception, there will be a consultation event organised by Harrow Road Partnership Forum to find out what types of events local people would like to see at the new market plaza.

The Market will be operated by Geraud Markets UK Limited, a family-owned company that has managed markets in France for over 150 years. Marking the start of a new era for our local High Street, Maida Hill Market will have some 25 stalls, initially opening on Thursday and Friday from 12 noon to 8pm and all day Saturday. Traders will offer a range of food and goods not currently available around Harrow Road.
Picturing Harrow Road

This London Print Studio project involved taking photos of shop fronts on Harrow Road and the people who work there. The resulting photos have been digitally stitched together to make up the ‘largest street portrait in the world’. You can see some of the pictures in the special supplement included with this issue of Maida Hill Life.

London Print Studio director John Phillips and assistant Molly Jacobs have been taking the photographs – and they’ve had a few interesting experiences on the way.

“We were stopped several times by the police who wanted to know why we were taking photos on the street,” says John, “and once we were told we were being stopped under anti-terrorism legislation! Fortunately, we were able to account for ourselves.

‘Most shopkeepers were happy to have their photos taken once we had engaged with them. One place that didn’t want to be photographed was the Royal Bank of Scotland, which is ironic when you consider that they photograph all their customers on CCTV, with or without permission.

‘After we’d been photographing for a few days people started to approach us on the street and were fascinated to hear what we were doing. One 12-year-old boy told us that his ambition was to become an artist.

‘We’ve been keen to photograph the whole buildings rather than just the shop fronts, because the facades give the full flavour of the area. Many buildings in London have been extensively documented over the years, whereas areas like Harrow Road haven’t been. We want to redress that balance.’

The London Print Studio

The London Print Studio, originally called Paddington Printshop, was founded in 1974 by John Phillips and Pippa Smith as a visual art project helping community organisations to promote their ideas through graphic media.

In 1991, Paddington Printshop became London Print Workshop and in 2000 it moved to the current premises at 425 Harrow Road, a custom-designed printmaking and graphic arts studio with a wide range of equipment.

Now, the Studio runs family workshops, exhibitions and open workshops. It also has excellent facilities for printmaking of all kinds. It runs training courses for beginners and those wanting to refresh their printmaking skills, and it offers work experience programmes.

Find out more about the London Print Studio at www.londonprintstudio.org.uk or call them on 020 8969 3247.

The Print Studio is at 425 Harrow Road, W10 4RE

Carnival with Flamboyan

Founded by Gloria Cummings in 1986, Flamboyan International Carnival Arts runs costume-making workshops and other community activities with a Carnival flavour. Though they run projects year-round, the focus of their activities is from April through to Notting Hill Carnival on the August Bank Holiday weekend.

Based at 1, Fernhead Road (overlooking the site of the new Maida Hill Market), Flamboyan is famous for its elaborate costumes which are a regular fixture at the Notting Hill Carnival where they have a float. Last year, the group won the Challenge Shield Prize for Small Bands.

“We’re always looking for volunteers to help us with our work,’ says Gloria. ‘We have an open-door policy here. If you’d like to get involved with making costumes or taking part in the Carnival – or both – get in touch and we’ll be happy to put you to work!’

Gloria is originally from Trinidad, the Caribbean island with the strongest Carnival tradition. She’s lived and worked around Maida Hill since 1966 and worked for Westminster Community Relations Council for 17 years.

She still returns to Trinidad every year where she works with a charity for street children, preparing costumes for the Trinidad Carnival.

‘Flamboyan is an important part of the local creative industries and we can provide training in costume-making and event management,’ continues Gloria. ‘We also work with local schools and offer internships.

‘Costumes are so important for Carnival – they’re something that everyone can get involved in helping to make and they’re the most eye-catching attraction of the whole event. They make it like a huge open-air West End show – which is entirely free!’

Flamboyan International Carnival Arts
www.flamboyan.co.uk
1 Fernhead Road, W9 3EU
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The Paddington Branch of the Grand Union Canal, a section of which runs through Maida Hill, bordering Harrow Road, was opened in 1820. The canal prospered as part of the network that linked the industrial heartlands of the Midlands and the North with London. By the middle of the 19th century, commercial traffic on the canal had declined steeply as railways began to rule the roost. But the waterway was still much used for pleasure trips by barge and steamboat and rowing boats were available for hire just by the Carlton Bridge, which still crosses the canal on Great Western Road.

In the last century, the canal declined drastically and the stretch by Harrow Road became a bleak, derelict and uninviting place. But things have improved beyond recognition in recent years and now the towpath is used for fishing, walking and jogging, and as a handy cycle route by commuters. It’s well stocked with fish including perch, bream and pike and is a haven for birdlife like herons, cormorants, coots and moorhens.

The easiest way to get on to the towpath is to cross the canal over the Ha’penny Steps bridge on Harrow Road, just opposite Second Avenue. ‘Ha’penny’ is a contraction of halfpenny, the toll that was once charged to cross the bridge.

If you turn left after crossing the bridge, you’ll walk past Meanwhile Gardens with its nature reserve and skateboard park. Not long after, you’ll reach picturesque Little Venice with its many moored houseboats and narrowboats. Here the canal branches westwards into Maida Hill Tunnel and the Regents Canal, while the main branch continues to Paddington Basin.

If you haven’t been to Paddington Basin before, it really is worth a visit. A whole futuristic modern mini-city has appeared there over the last five years, including an amphitheatre, some striking high-rise architecture and a cluster of shops, restaurants and cafes.

If, instead of turning left, you turn right from the Ha’penny Bridge, a short walk will get you to Ladbroke Grove. Note the modern apartment building about 100 metres before the Ladbroke Grove Bridge. The penthouse was home to the competitors in the current series of the BBC’s ‘The Apprentice’. Don’t expect to see any of them now though – the show was actually filmed last autumn.

If you carry on, you’ll pass through green areas where you can imagine yourself in the countryside, through industrial areas, and 12 miles from the Ha’penny Steps, the end of the Paddington Branch of the Grand Union Canal at a T-junction called Bull’s Bridge.

At Bull’s Bridge, turn left and after the dramatic sweep of the seven Hanwell locks, you’ll eventually reach the Thames at Brentford, across the river from Kew Gardens. This might seem a long way to walk from Ha’penny Bridge – some 18 miles in total, But it’s a great cycle ride, the few rougher parts easily ridden on a sturdy bike.

Alternatively turn right at Bull’s Bridge – it’s only 137 miles to Birmingham.

Find out more about the canal at the British Waterways website www.waterscape.com
Harrow Road’s musical secret

It’s on Delaware Road, just off Elgin Avenue, a five-minute walk from Harrow Road. It’s a long low building, undistinguished apart from the ornate white stucco decorating the main entrance.

Yet it’s one of the UK’s greatest culture hotspots – the home of the BBC Symphony Orchestra and a place where the Beatles, David Bowie, Jimi Hendrix, and The Clash have all played. The BBC’s Radiophonic Workshop, creators of the original theme tune for Doctor Who, was based there. We’re talking about the Maida Vale Studios.

The building that now houses the studios originally opened in 1909 as the Maida Vale Roller Skating Palace & Club, at a time when roller skating was undergoing one of its periodic crazes.

The skating only lasted until 1912 when the building fell into the hands of the government, becoming a national insurance office. In 1934, the BBC took it over as a studio for operatic and orchestral broadcasts. The building suffered a direct hit during the Blitz but was repaired.

The Studios have a strong tradition of recording up-and-coming bands for broadcast. They were the home of the John Peel Sessions and today sessions are still recorded there for Radio One’s Zane Lowe Show and for Steve Lamacq’s In New Music We Trust show.

So next time you’re listening to an inspiring orchestral performance or some cutting-edge contemporary music on BBC Radio, just remember that it may well have been recorded around the corner from where you live.

Then and now – Andy Demetrie

Andy Demetrie, who arrived in London from Cyprus in 1960, has had his hairdressers at 6b Marylands Road since 1976 and he’s known the Harrow Road area since the 1960s. He’ll cut your hair with skill and style for a very competitive price – and the stories and chat come as a free bonus.

‘Harrow Road was a thriving high street back in the 60s and 70s,’ remembers Andy. ‘We had Woolworths, Marks and Spencers and Boots. The white [now Costcutters] building next to the new Maida Hill Market at the Prince of Wales Junction was a branch of Burton’s the tailor – we all went there to get our made-to-measure suits.

‘A Wimpy Bar opened up in the early 70’s and Lulu was the celebrity guest who cut the ribbon. The place was always packed.

‘In fact, Harrow Road was always busy back then – on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays the pavements were so crowded, you had to elbow your way along them.

‘Things started to go downhill in the late seventies,’ Andy reckons. ‘Marks and Spencers pulled out then and after that so did the other big names. That’s what led to the decline in my opinion.

‘If the new Maida Hill Market can help to bring life back to Harrow Road then I’m all for it!’

Andy’s Hairdressers: 020 7286 2228
6b Marylands Road, London W9