



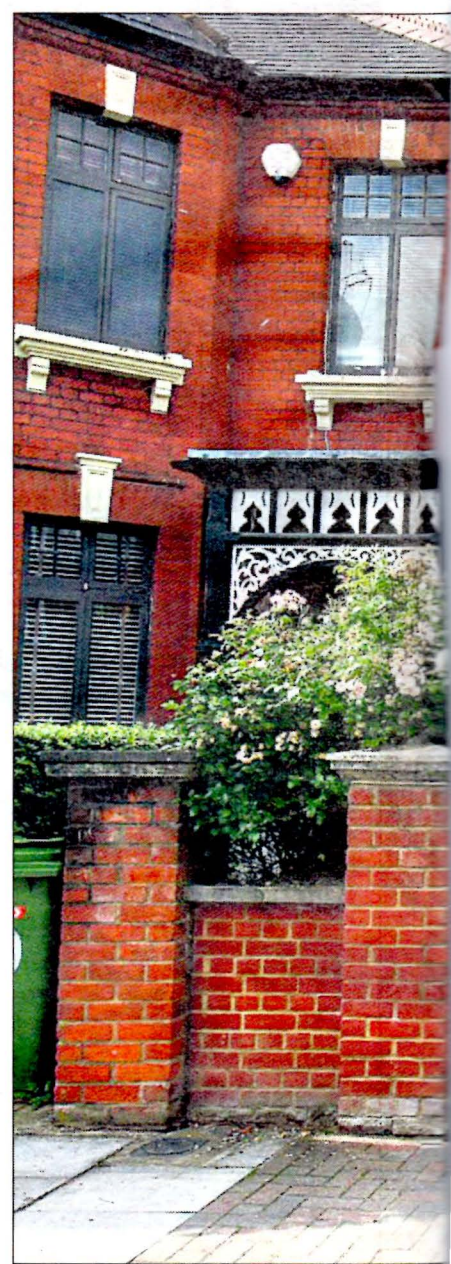
Peace memorial: one of sculptor Fred Kormis's figures in 97-acre Gladstone Park

Spotlight Cricklewood

Famous faces help tell story of a suburb with real sense of community

Novelist Zadie Smith was inspired by growing up in this part of north-west London, which ex-mayor Ken Livingstone calls home.

Anthea Masey went to find out more



Bright spot: the Broadway is enlivened by its Asian fruit and vegetable shops



Green appeal: pretty gardens, some of them communal, serve the enclave of cottages known as Cricklewood Railway Terraces, which were built in the 1880s

WHO is Cricklewood's favourite celebrity? Could it be novelist Zadie Smith, who opened her first novel *White Teeth* with the lines: "Early in the morning, late in the century, Cricklewood Broadway" and who has recently returned to her home territory with her latest novel, *NW*? Or is it former London mayor Ken Livingstone, a long-time local resident who famously keeps newts in his garden pond?

Seven miles north-west of central London, this suburb sits on Watling Street, one of the straightest roads out of the capital; the old Roman road is now better known as the A5. Cricklewood Broadway is the heart of the neighbourhood and the current Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, has noticed that the place could do with a facelift. The Mayor's Outer London Fund and the boroughs of Barnet and Brent have pledged £2.26 million towards town-centre improvements.

Tonight, Zadie Smith returns to her home turf with a charity event at the handsome, four-star Crown Moran Hotel, the Broadway's landmark red-brick and terracotta former pub, while on Saturday, the second annual Silk Street festival celebrates the area's cultural diversity.

The Broadway couldn't be a more typical London street with its cheap cafés, old bingo hall, pound stores and Asian corner shops with their bright displays of fruit and veg – all giving no clue to the fine roads of Victorian and Edwardian houses that lie behind. The Mapesbury Estate conservation area is a grid of roads running off Exeter Road

and Lydford Road, with mainly red-brick Edwardian detached and semi-detached houses. The Cricklewood Railway Terraces is the other conservation area. East of Cricklewood Broadway and north of Kara Way, this little enclave of cottages – some with communal gardens, some with little front gardens set out opposite an access path – were built in the 1880s when the Midland Railway moved its depot from Kentish Town to Cricklewood.

WHAT THERE IS TO BUY

Cricklewood also offers terraces of Victorian houses off Anson road, with semi-detached and terrace Edwardian houses between the Broadway and Fordwych Road, Twenties and Thirties houses east of the railway, and mansion flats near Shoot Up Hill.

Stewart Boyd, of the local branch of estate agents Winkworth, says property prices are now well above the level achieved at the last peak in the autumn of 2007.

Using as an example his own three-bedroom garden flat, he revealed that he bought it in 2007 near the top of the market for £285,000, and that last year an offer of £308,000 fell through. He put it back on the market again this year and recently sold it for £350,000.

Buyers on the Mapesbury Estate now expect to pay at least £1.2 million for a substantial house. The large twenties semi-detached houses in Asmara and Somali roads sell for between £1.2 million and £1.5 million.

Smaller Thirties semi-detached houses in and around Pennine Drive sell for between £380,000 and

£470,000, while in the roads off Anson Road, a three- or four-bedroom Victorian terrace is £550,000 to £700,000, a two-bedroom railway cottage can be bought for about £400,000, and a two-bedroom garden flat is between £350,000 and £400,000.

The area attracts: Cricklewood has a real sense of community. People often arrive here first when they can't afford Queen's Park or West Hampstead.

Staying power: there are long-standing Irish and Jewish residents who have brought up their families in Cricklewood.

SHOPS AND RESTAURANTS

The shopping along Cricklewood Broadway serves day-to-day needs but won't set shopaholics' hearts racing.

There is a big B&Q on Cricklewood Lane and where Cricklewood Broadway turns back into Edgware Road there is a small retail park with branches of Matalan and Wickes. Close by there is a good lighting shop, Arrow Lighting, and Raft sells solid wood furniture. Elementree on the Broadway is a popular wine bar and restaurant.

On the Mapesbury Estate, people tend to make for the shops on Walm Lane next to Willesden Green station where there is a gastropub, The Queensbury, with an associated deli and café.

OPEN SPACES

Gladstone Park covers 97 acres between Cricklewood and Dollis Hill, with a walled garden, a café, tennis courts and children's playgrounds. The Mapesbury Dell on Hoveden Road is a community "secret garden" with a children's playground, owned by the

**CHECK THE STATS****WHAT HOMES COST:**

BUYING IN CRICKLEWOOD
(Average prices)

One-bedroom flat £265,000

Two-bedroom flat £363,000

Two-bedroom house £356,000

Three-bedroom house £555,000

Four-bedroom house £893,000

Source: Zoopla.co.uk

RENTING IN CRICKLEWOOD
(Average rates)

One-bedroom flat £1,231 a month

Two-bedroom flat £1,610 a month

Two-bedroom house £1,554 a month

Three-bedroom house £2,154 a month

Four-bedroom house £2,670 a month

Source: Zoopla.co.uk

GO ONLINE FOR MORE:

- The best schools, the best streets, the most expensive homes in the area and the latest new housing developments, plus an insight into the rental scene
- How this area compares with the rest of the UK
- Smart maps to plot your property search

For all this and more, visit
homesandproperty.co.uk/spotlightcricklewood



Wood work: at Raft, a furniture shop on Cricklewood Broadway, designer Emily Proctor with a "teak root" table



council but maintained in part by local volunteers. There is birdwatching and sailing on the Welsh Harp reservoir.

Leisure and the arts: there is a Cineworld multiplex cinema at Staples Corner, while The Tricycle Theatre in Kilburn, a leading fringe venue, also has a cinema. Virgin Active on Cricklewood Lane and the Manor Health Club on Cricklewood Broadway offer private swimming pools. There's a council-owned pool at Swiss Cottage.

Travel: Willesden Green (Zone 2; annual travelcard £1,216) and Dollis Hill (Zone

Ahead of the game: Zadie Smith used Cricklewood for literary inspiration

Brick by brick: the entrance to pretty community garden Mapesbury Dell, between homes in Hoveden Road



THANKS to reader Colin Greener who suggested covering Cricklewood via Facebook. If you have an area you would like us to feature, tweet us @homesproperty

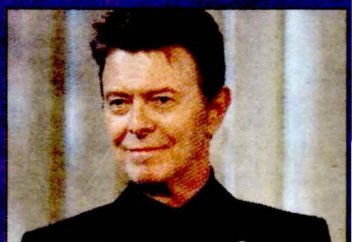


What do you like about Cricklewood? Have your say at **ESHomesAndProperty**

3; annual travelcard £1,424) are on the Jubilee line (15 minutes to Bond Street); Cricklewood is on Thameslink with trains to Farringdon (18 minutes).

Council: the boundaries of three councils meet in Cricklewood. In Conservative controlled Barnet, band D council tax for 2013/14 is £1,416.20, in Labour-controlled Camden it is £1,324.48, and in Brent, which is also Labour-controlled, it is £1,361.84.

Photographs: **Graham Hussey**

**TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE**

What is the link between David Bowie and a Cricklewood "oddy"? Find the answer at **homesandproperty.co.uk/spotlightcricklewood**

To **find a home** in Cricklewood, visit:

homesandproperty.co.uk/cricklewood



£450,000

A TWO-BEDROOM flat on the top floor of a conversion in Teignmouth Road, close to Kilburn Tube station. Through KFH.

■ Visit **homesandproperty.co.uk/teignmouth**



£749,950

A FOUR-BEDROOM house in Larch Road, NW2, recently refurbished with a bright loft room and modern kitchen. Through Camerons Stiff & Co.

■ Visit **homesandproperty.co.uk/larch**



£1.1 MILLION

THIS three-storey period house near Cricklewood train station in Chichele Road, NW2, has been converted into nine studio flats. Through Foxtons.

■ Visit **homesandproperty.co.uk/chichele**



£399,950

A NEWLY REFURBISHED two-bedroom flat within a classic period conversion in Fordwych Road, Cricklewood. Through Greene & Co.

■ Visit **homesandproperty.co.uk/fordwych**