

# The Finchley Society Newsletter

JUNE 1988 No.6/88 SUPPLEMENT

## HENLY'S CORNER - RETIRED WOUNDED BUT NOT YET DONE

You will doubtless already know from newspaper reports, or from the announcement at the AGM, that The Finchley Society has withdrawn from formal participation in the current Inquiry. To explain for the benefit of the membership at large the background to this action, we think it appropriate to publish in full the text of the press release which the Society issued at the time to local and national press and to London-region radio and television stations.

Text, 18th May, 1988

"The major amenity society in Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's constituency has withdrawn from the Public Inquiry into Department of Transport proposals for a massive underpass scheme at the junction of London's North Circular Road and the A1 trunk road.

The scheme lies wholly within the London Borough of Barnet which enthusiastically supports the Department's proposals in principle. The Finchley Society, with other -objectors, considers the scheme unnecessary and a waste of £44m of public money.

The Society has repeatedly asked for evening sessions as the only effective way for objectors to hear the evidence of the Department's witnesses and supporters and to cross examine them on their evidence. The Inspector, Vice-Admiral Sir Peter Buchanan, KBE, has consistently refused such sessions and the Society has complained to Mrs Thatcher, in writing and at a meeting with her, that objectors from her constituency are being severely disadvantaged. Her response has been that the method of running the enquiry is entirely up to the Inspector and that the Secretary of State, who proposes the scheme and appoints the Inspector and receives his report (i.e. is prosecutor, judge and jury), cannot intervene.

Max Caller, Director of Technical Services of the London Borough of Barnet was programmed for 2.5 days of Inquiry time to give evidence and be cross-examined commencing on Wednesday, 27th April. As soon as this was known, Bill Tyler, a vice-President of the Finchley Society and acting as the Society's advocate, wrote to the Inspector to say he had a prior commitment that would take him abroad over those three days but would be available on Wednesday, May 4th when the Inquiry re-opened after a recess over the May Bank Holiday weekend. He asked the Inspector to seek agreement from Barnet to return for cross-examination (the Inspector has no power to recall witnesses) and he would be present briefly on 27th to hear Barnet's response.

The Inspector commenced the Wednesday session by stating "...it would be helpful for ... (Barnet)...to allocate a further day or half a day in future. ... There are two particular points about this concerning two of the principal objectors. ... I think the second point is the Finchley Society which is represented by Mr. Tyler who is here briefly this morning and is not available until next Wednesday ... it would be helpful if the Finchley Society would be able to crossexamine the witness on its evidence." In a further comment the Inspector said " ... I would request that the London Borough of

Barnet be prepared to consider being programmed in for another half day or day after."

Counsel for Barnet confirmed "There is no objection at all to that, Sir, obviously that is something we anticipated might happen, it is only a question when we might be programmed in and that could be done to the convenience of all parties."

In the afternoon session that day, Barnet's Counsel said it was most unlikely he could be present on 4th May and in subsequent discussion, it was agreed Barnet would continue to be present on Thursday, 5th May, Friday, 6th May and Wednesday, 11th May.

In his absence abroad, a message had been left for Bill Tyler by the Inquiry Programme Officer to say that the Society's' cross-examination of Barnet should take place on 11th May, a date on which Bill Tyler was booked at a Planning Appeal elsewhere. No attempt had been made to ascertain whether this was a suitable date. Barnet Council were not prepared to allocate further time and the Society is therefore unable to pursue essential arguments in support of its case against the scheme.

Bill Tyler had spent considerable time in studying Max Caller's published proof of evidence and in preparing questions for cross-examination, all of which is wasted.

The Society does not see any purpose in continuing to take part in an Inquiry in which the Inspector, together with his previous decisions and harassment of objectors, has shown that he has no interest in making sure the arguments against the scheme are fully put to him and in which the main supporter of the scheme refuses to be subject to cross-examination by a principal objector.

In addition, the continuing serious depletion of an amenity society's funds in such circumstances would be wholly unacceptable.

These matters serve to underline the severe handicap under which groups of ordinary caring citizens find themselves, in attempting to represent a commonsense view of their own environment, against plans drawn up and steamrollered by "outsider" forces.

The Society has already written to the Prime Minister, asking her to seek the Inspector's dismissal by the Secretary of State for Transport and is now taking advice on what legal steps it may be necessary to take to ensure that the Inquiry is conducted without prejudice to Objectors' cases."

END OF TEXT

Since the withdrawal there has been a further exchange of letters between (for the Society) Bill Tyler and (as Finchley M.P.) Mrs Margaret Thatcher. In brief, instructed by the executive committee, Bill continues to press for the dismissal of the Inspector and seeks Mrs. Thatcher's good offices as MP with Mr. Paul Channon, Secretary of State for Transport, so that the case for such dismissal may be presented directly to him.

Mrs. Thatcher has not yet responded to that specific request but in an earlier letter, made a clear statement that "It is of course essential that all points of view are put forward during this stage of the proceedings" (which of course is central to our argument in that we believe that the

presentation of our view is being thwarted). She then continued however, to suggest that since the Inspector was "duly appointed by the Secretaries of State in accordance with normal procedures adopted for Inquiries of this type throughout the country", we must continue to accommodate the Inspector's methods of running the Inquiry.

It remains the society's view that injustices are being endured by perfectly reasonable but increasingly frustrated objectors. So convinced are we of the Inspector's prejudices that we have at present no intention of formally returning to the Inquiry.

After attending a number of recent local meetings on the subject and particularly after attending the Council's Town Planning and Research Committee meeting on 9th May, Pat Dunnill, the Finchley Society's "special observer" on the future of the hospital and site, has written a strong and compelling letter to the Secretary of State for the Environment. It is important enough for all members to see in full, as follows —

1st June, 1988

I am writing to you on behalf of the Finchley Society to urge you to call in plans for the Friern Hospital site and to set up a wide-ranging Public Inquiry to cover all possible uses and schemes for this large area (and not just to consider outline planning permissions recently granted). We make this request for the following reasons.

1. We consider that a scheme to safeguard the future of the listed building to be of paramount importance. Barnet Council has not yet considered any such proposal. No other plans should be implemented until the future of the listed building has been decided and safeguarded.

2. Designated Metropolitan Open Land (which we understand should be maintained equally as well as Green Belt) has been assigned to commercial use under the current outline planning permissions. This land should be retained as open space, for the use of the public, possibly for sports facilities.

3. The Planning Brief for Friern Hospital though passed after "consultation" was not amended as a result of this "consultation". Any other views (including our own) were ignored in preparing the final Brief.

4. By including "retail" possibilities in the Planning Brief the Council ignored its own Shopping and Town Centre Topic Study (which directed major retail floor space to named secondary Town centres). There is no point in preparing such Studies if they are to be overturned as soon as the possibility of large profits is seen. The policy was hastily amended (11/11/1987) although previously retail use for Friern Hospital had been refused (22/10/1986) because of the impact on local shopping!

5. DoE guidelines have been ignored (circular 12/87). No claim has been established for the "very special circumstances" in order to justify the erection of commercial buildings (warehouses in this case).

6. We believe that the Shopping Impact Study submitted by Hampstead Health Authority's agents grossly underestimates the effect on local shopping centres of the proposed retail park. A reduction of at least 5% given for Finchley Central could have devastating effects on the viability of shops

here - there are already a dozen empty shops in Ballards Lane, N3. There is no possibility of a large new population which the proposed retail park would serve and it has been stated that 70% of the trade would come from an area within a ten-minute car drive. Other retail parks (e.g. Staples Corner) together with out-of-centre superstores (e.g. Tesco at Friern Barnet and Neasden) must all reduce trade for the established shopping centres.

7. The proposed retail park would serve only those customers coming by car (since bulky goods are to be encouraged) thus ignoring the non-car-owner. LRT has offered only the possible diversion of existing bus routes. The trend towards forcing people to use cars for shopping should be discouraged not encouraged.

8. The congestion caused by traffic coming from the proposed retail park would be considerable on the North Circular Road and on the Colney Hatch Lane flyover. It would be intolerable at the Colney Hatch Lane/Woodhouse Road/Friern Barnet Road junction - this is recognised by Hampstead Health Authority's own Traffic study.

9. The proposed new west-bound road on the south side of the NCR would create a dangerous junction when linked to the slip road from the NCR. The proposed new road to the north of NCR would be unacceptably close to the new Fairview housing estate.

10. According to the Controller of Development Services' (LBB) report (p.11) Counsel's view is that "no mechanism exists for binding subsequent purchasers of the land to the terms of those agreements". We are therefore concerned for the future of the listed Friern Hospital in the event of its being sold.

Finally we wish to state that two of us attended the Town Planning and Research Committee meeting (9/5/88) called specially to consider the outline planning applications Friern Hospital. We were astonished and utterly dismayed that no consideration at all was given to the petition and numerous letters from local residents and amenity organisations opposing plans submitted by Hampstead Health Authority. After discussion of the amendment to request a Public Inquiry (which was lost because the proposer came from the minority party) the recommendations were approved without any comment from any member. We are appalled that such an important matter should be decided without due regard for the wider planning issues or the views of local residents.

Yours truly,

FLAG

The "Finchley Local Action Group" are affiliating with Fin.Soc. and at our executive committee meeting on 2nd June it was agreed that their activities deserve our firm support.

The group emerged originally as a result of growing concern for the Nether Street environment, currently under severe developer pressure. Much of the greater public awareness of the subject, now in evidence, is due to lobbying, canvassing and publicity created by FLAG. Their work is already being extended into other areas of Finchley facing similar out-of-character development pressure.

## AGM 1988 - REPORT

President Spike Milligan, unable to chair the AGM due to a last-minute commitment in Sussex, sent warm greetings and apologies for his absence, to all Finchley Society members, especially to the full house of 85 members or so who attended the AGM.

Another message of goodwill to the Society was received from retired Chairman, Rosalind Batchelor (from her new location in York), urging members to keep up their efforts towards maintaining a 'pleasant' Finchley, trusting that membership would reach the magic 1000 figure in 1988/89 -and that the future of College Farm would benefit (at last) from security of tenure for the tenants, Chris and Jane Ower.

Chairman Norman Burgess drew members' attention to the current environmental campaign and opposition to unbridled developers' "rape" which is so apparent in the Borough of Barnet. Vice President Bill Tyler reported the Finchley Society's withdrawal from the Henly's Corner Inquiry, and Shirley Avery reported that the St. Mary's Finchley Churchyard and Church Survey is now fully analysed and documented, ending nine years' work. (Copies of the printed version of the survey may eventually become Fin. Soc. bookstall items).

Concluding the formal section of the AGM, the following elections were made

Chairman	Norman Burgess (unopposed)
Vice Chairman (vacant office)	Norman Bar
Elected Committee members	Harry Sharpe - returned Heather Winton Barbara Warren Lynn Bresler
Hon. Treasurer	Joe Ingall (unopposed)
Hon. Secretary*	Kurt Weinberg (unopposed)
Hon. Auditor	Albert Jefferies (reappointed)

\*The Hon.Sec. due to retire within a year or two, seeks an 'assistant' who might then succeed him in the post - response please to Kurt on 01-339 2066.

After refreshments the meeting was entertained with a film, kindly organised by Norman Burgess - loaned by the Finchley Cine Society and titled "Finchley 1960". It proved to be a fine opportunity for older members to indulge in 'friend/acquaintance' spotting - and for the remainder to marvel at such things as trolley buses, the low level of traffic on the North Circular Road, and now- forgotten High St. shops. -

Incidentally, which member attending the AGM will be the first to correctly advise Norman Burgess (346 6337) of the identity of the mysterious bald-headed man who featured so often during the film?!

FOOTNOTE: Another feature of the AGM evening in the drawing room at Avenue House was the much improved lighting from six modern (but suitably 'period') electric chandeliers, recently installed to replace the former fluorescent lighting. These were a gift from Finchley Rotary Club who donated for the purpose, a legacy from the estate of Harry Posner. Vice President Jean Scott, chairing the AGM in the absence of Spike Milligan, remarked that the

new lighting revealed just how attractive is the gold-decorated wooden ceiling of the room - not previously noticeable above the former fluorescent lighting.

#### REPORTERS' NOTES: OTHER EVENTS SINCE THE MARCH SUPPLEMENT

#### MARCH MEETING

For the first time so far as could be remembered, there occurred a very last-minute announcement from the expected speaker (Marianne Watson-Smythe from the organisation SAVE) that she was unable to attend and that no substitute was available.

Revealing this to the audience assembled at Avenue House, Chairman Norman Burgess gamely referred to the evening's revised proceedings as "Like Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark!" Not untypically the situation was saved by the valiant efforts of Kurt Weinberg and helpers, laying on the screening of three films - and the service of refreshments as an interval!!

Film number one covered a significant recent event in the lives of most members, the postwar rebuilding of the City of London, - and particularly the construction of the new Barbican complex. The second screening was most apt in view of a then-forthcoming Fin.Soc. coach outing, covering as it did a "History of the Fens". Finally, and continuing a watery theme, the third film "For the want of water" illustrated the vital work being undertaken in arid and underdeveloped countries in providing pumps, wells and irrigation for the greater well-being of the people and to dramatically benefit their farming techniques. -

We certainly learned how lucky we are in our temperate, well-watered island!

#### SORTING OURSELVES OUT

On the evening of 14th April the most frequently used words on the lips of twelve Fin.Soc. members visiting the North London District Post Office Sorting Office in Islington, must surely have been "amazing!" and "incredible!" These applied equally to the statistics we absorbed and to the techniques/dexterities we observed.

It was unfortunate that this evening event was not able to be publicised enough in advance to catch a newsletter edition, so that only members attending the March monthly meeting were able to be alerted to it, hence the small number there on the night. For anyone else who ever has a chance to make such a visit we can say unequivocally - "you will be fascinated".

#### CIVIC TRUST ENVIRONMENT WEEK 1988

In one of The Finchley Society's main events of the week, Kurt Weinberg and Nansen Village were hosts on Saturday afternoon/evening, 23rd April, at a barbecue and auction, in aid of the Hendon and Finchley Times "Re-Tree Barnet Fund".

Over 70 people, plus children, greatly enjoyed the event which succeeded in raising a total in excess of £400.00, all to be donated to the fund.

Grateful thanks go to more than 40 local shops, restaurants / businesses who supported the Society by "pledging" the goods and/or services which were the subject of the auction, together with half-a-dozen or so private gifts from members. Thanks also to Norman Burgess, our Chairman and 'Auctioneer-for-the-day', who jovially "hammered" the lots away, and to Bill Williams who assisted Kurt in soliciting the "pledges".

Finally, and not least, the event would not have succeeded without the generosity of the Nansen Village overseas-student community who, together with Kurt and Charlotte Weinberg and staff, prepared delicious salad bars, cooked and served barbecued chicken and hamburgers - and generally added much warmth to the occasion.

#### PUBLICITY STALLS: CIVIC TRUST ENVIRONMENT WEEK

On the successive Saturdays, April 23rd and 30th, the Society "set up its stall" for two hours on each occasion respectively at Sainsbury's, North Finchley, on 23rd and at Tesco, Church End on 30th.

Actively handing out recruitment leaflets and chatting to the passers-by, David Smith and colleagues report that 400 leaflets were accepted at Sainsbury's and around 200 (in a rather short two hours) at Tesco. Let us hope for a due proportion of new members enrolling as a result.

Two interesting sidelights on the exercise - 1. with one particular exception on the 30th, (about which Mari I'Anson will relate the amusing/sad story if you ask her) no leaflets were found discarded in the area of our stall, nor round-the-corner blowing in the wind - 2. the team on each occasion were 'surprised' by the distinctions between those who would or would-not accept leaflets, or stop to talk. David says that personal pre-judgments were soon abandoned!

#### DARLANDS LAKE - 24th APRIL

Derek Warren, Fin.Soc. member and also Hon. Warden at the Herts and Middx Wildlife Trust reserve at Darlands Lake, Totteridge, reports that the open-day walks were once again a resounding success.

Taking the morning and afternoon periods together, a total of 91 visitors were recorded. This figure doubles that of 1987's Spring Open Day, but Derek sadly has to report that only 9 of those 91 were Finchley Society members! Well, the remaining 800 or so of us will have to show a more determined spirit next time that Darlands is open, for we missed not only a good showing by those rare fritillaries but the totals of other interesting things logged during the day, including 15 other varieties of wild flowers, 25 species of birds sighted, 2 lone mammals (rabbit and squirrel) and even (on 24th April!) an active wild-bee nest and a butterfly.

#### LITTER CLEAR-UP 30TH APRIL

On Saturday morning, 30th April, members were again in action in one of our principal Environment Week events - this time a Litter Clear-Up in Charter

Gardens and on the North Circular Road verges immediately to east and west of Regent's Park Road.

The event got off to an unexpectedly interesting start when, mustering by the 'Naked Lady' with their attendant publicity placards and wearing fluorescent yellow safety-waistcoats, the group was approached by the crew of a passing police patrol car with the deathless line "Would you mind telling me, sir, precisely what your intentions are?" They were dutifully 'advised' and departed greatly relieved that they hadn't stumbled upon an unannounced political demo or march!

From only around two hours of sustained collecting, there was amassed twenty two well-filled bags of "expected rubbish" (wrappers, fast-food containers, plastic of all sorts, etc.) plus an amazing collection of 'hardware', much of it in the motor-parts category, including a silencer, most of a plastic bumper, two tyres, nave-plates and a can containing petrol - all this together with a quantity of discarded drinks cans that was numerically breathtaking.

In one thirty-yard strip of central verge in the fork between Falloden Way and the North Circular Road, Vice President David Smith (who led the morning's event) conducted a personal survey of discarded cans, which numbered an astonishing 496!! As a result of this he intends to formulate specific Finchley Society proposals that can be submitted to Council engineers and road traffic experts, for a scheme to encourage passing motorists to deposit their litter centrally rather than discard it liberally! More news on this in due course.

#### SCHOOLS "PAINT A TREE" COMPETITION 1<sup>ST</sup> MAY

Only five of the 31 schools invited to take part in this environment week competition were able to submit entries, but they delighted us with their paintings. The winners were

Age Group	School
4 - 7 YEARS	
1st Kathryn Parsons, 71 Ravensdale Aye, N12	St. Theresa's
2nd Dominic Edmondson, 67 Woodgrange Ave, N12	St. Theresa's
3rd Isabel Ritchie, 3 Cardrew Aye, N12	St. Theresa's
7 - 9 YEARS	
1st Danielle Wittman	St. Mary's
2nd Louise Maye, 144 Station Road, N3	St. Theresa's
3rd Robert Ower, 43 Fitzalan Road, N3	Chalgrove
9 - 11 YEARS	
Emma Spence	Frith Manor
Karen Casey, 10 Richmond Road, N2	St Theresa's
Anne-Marie Quirke, 4 Park Road, N2	St Theresa's

#### APRIL MEETING: "LIBRARIES IN BARNET"

Librarian Peter Davis's audience at the monthly meeting on April 28th was surprised to learn just what a prolonged period of slow development has

surrounded the establishment in Finchley/Barnet/Hendon of the library service we enjoy today.

Despite some local and private enterprises around the turn of the 19th/20th century exemplified by

1888 A Barnet library bequest of Julia Hyde which led to the Hyde Institute of 1904.

1898 A reading-room instituted opposite East Finchley Station, by Henry Stephens

The early years of this century locally were most unkind to those wishing for local public libraries. Indeed it was the Hendon Council which led the way, gaining a grant from the Carnegie Trust, resulting in the opening in 1929 of the Hendon Library. Friern Barnet followed in 1933, the same year that a Finchley service was opened in temporary quarters in Avenue House. Not before 1935 and 1938 were public libraries established in North and East Finchley respectively.

The "temporary quarters" at Avenue House for Church End, Finchley were lost in 1939 when the house was put to other, wartime uses. The library then located in a succession of shops during the war and until 1954, when the present Hendon Lane site was opened. Almost before the staff there could draw breath, they found themselves drawn together with their fellows in Hendon, East Finchley, Friern Barnet and Barnet, working towards the 1965 creation of the new London Borough of Barnet.

Chief Librarian, Donald Reynolds, who had earlier arrived from Leeds and Sheffield where there had been a solid and excellent tradition of public libraries from way, way back - and who had been dismayed at the poor state of affairs he found in Finchley - welcomed the L.B. of Barnet with great relief. With a total population (then) of 300,000 he was able to urge his staff to begin to compare their situation with that of a CITY library service!

Peter Davis turned the spotlight finally on the facilities available today in Finchley and throughout the Borough.

- \* greatly expanded Travelling-library service
- \* books with improved-legibility for the slightly visually handicapped and older readers
- \* extensive children's libraries
- \* close links with the schools' library services
- \* gramophone record (and cassette) lending
- \* sets of theatrical plays (with individual scripts for each character) for loan.
- \* a direct-to-your-home lending service for the officially "housebound".
- \* microfiche link-ups of stock and records from each of the 16 libraries in the Borough
- \* finally, an excellent record of long-service and experience among the senior librarians in those 16 locations.

Expressing a vote of thanks to the speaker, Paddy Musgrove summed-up very neatly the local libraries history that had been revealed, saying "in view of the considerable struggle to establish a modern library service in Finchley, we must be (and we are) very grateful to the staff and libraries that serve us so well today".

ELY - SATURDAY, 14th MAY

A "full coach load", which included five non-member 'guests', embarked on a varied, enjoyable and immensely informative day visiting the City of Ely and its cathedral, rounded-off by a brief encounter with an original "fen" at nearby Wicken.

If ever there was a site with a history of development riddled with amazing "accidents", Ely really must take first prize. The original Isle of Ely (Isle of Eels) occupying only seven miles by two at a height of 60 ft above sea level was for many centuries only accessible by water. Occupation commenced in AD 673 when the land owner Etheldreda (a Saxon princess) fled her Northumbrian second husband and created a suitably isolated monastery there for monks and nuns, becoming a nun herself.

Two hundred years later the marauding Danes destroyed it, but another monastery was built, completed in AD 970, prior to the Norman invasion of England a century later. By another accident, Ely being the last bastion of defence against the Normans by Hereward the Wake, was chosen by his Norman "conquerors" as the site on which to commemorate their final victory by replacing the monastery with a "real big" church to show the Saxons 'how'! That marked the beginnings, in 1081, of the present cathedral. They built a traditional cruciform of nave, two transepts and a short-choir, with a tower at the centre of the cross.

The 'accidents' continued when, in 1332 that tower collapsed (it had unfortunately stood on a pocket of sand in the midst of surrounding gravel) and, seeing no straightforward way of replacing it on what was now a much wider circle of stable foundations, the experts, Alan of Walsingham and William Harvey, the King's carpenter, threw caution to the winds with a wild design of an octagonal tower of wood (later covered in lead, bringing its weight to 400 tons) suspended, virtually cantilevered in the space above that wider circle of nave and transept around where the original tower had stood. Well, it's still there today!

At the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII, Ely got off lightly because it was also a Bishopric, but the final 'accident' for Ely came at the time of the Civil War, when the cathedral escaped what might easily have been serious desecration by the puritan victors because guess what, Oliver Cromwell himself had a soft spot for it, having lived in the City when he was MP for nearby Cambridge!

All of this amazing history was assembled for the Finchley Society visitors by - in the cathedral, the Dean (the Reverend Bill Patterson) and Canon Murray MacDonald - around the City by Mrs Margaret Haynes, Secretary of the Ely Society and her colleague from the Society, Mrs. Doughty.

Other notable gems we absorbed included a ghost or two (Oliver Cromwell's house has one, as does a building which is now a dry cleaners - didn't you always suspect that there are things that even dry-cleaning cannot remove?! the claim to the oldest tree in England (a 300 year-old plane tree) and a Russian cannon captured during the siege of Sebastopol and sent to Ely by Queen Victoria in 1861 curiously in lieu of a visit she herself was to have made to the city! Most of us also visited the museum of stained glass, situated high up above the nave in the cathedral itself where the history, production and changing styles of stained glass from medieval to the present day, were graphically illustrated.

Finally, leaving Ely at 5 p.m., there was ample time for glimpse of how a fen looked and was 'worked,' for its several products of peat, reeds, fish and grasses, for so many centuries before modern fenland reclamation began in earnest in the 17th century, when our party visited Wicken Fen, a National Trust property and centre of fen-lore learning. After a brief talk by the Chief Warden we took an interesting three-quarter mile walk around the marshy area on a path of boards literally on stilts, right around the reserve, all to the accompaniment of cuckoo, snipe, pheasant, chill-chaff and a host of other "calling, buzzing and rustling" creatures, in the still of the evening.

Quite a way to end the day! Well, almost, for we did have the return coach journey to make, though thankfully that was safe and uneventful

DOWN ON THE FARM      Timothy Johnson

### The Mayor Approves

The Mayor of Barnet, Councillor Malcolm Lester, thinks College Farm and its 'open days' are a wonderful asset to the community. He expressed this view at the 'May Fair', where he presented prizes to winners of The Finchley Society Schools Art Competition, on the theme "Trees", and was taken on a conducted tour of the Fair by Finchley Society Chairman, Norman Burgess. But "First Sunday Fairs" are now big events and there was not time to see everything - How many people do manage to complete the circuit nowadays?

Here is a list of some of the May Day features: A profusion of poultry breeds in outdoor pens. Rare-breed farm animals in fields and indoor quarters. Exciting shopping possibilities in the monthly Crafts Market. Picture Gallery. Colourful plant and flower stalls, freshly baked cakes and the Farm Shop itself. Exhibition of Miniature Horse-Drawn Vehicles. Demonstrations of country crafts. Environment displays. Donkey Rides. 'The Little Fairground' and puppet shows for the children. Devon Cream teas in the Tea House and self-service snacks in the Aviary Tea Room. Live background music by The Boreham Wood Band. 'Environment Week' features also included David Smith's 'Anti-Litter Bureau' and a Gallery Raffle, contributing £40 to The Finchley Society Tree Appeal.

### AND IN JUNE - MORE OF THE SAME

Substitute "Hosier and Dickinson" (making a welcome return appearance) for "Borehamwood" band, inflatable castle for children's roundabout, and the attractions of May, listed above, were repeated - and gave equal measures of pleasure.

The June "First Sunday" has always had a special emphasis in crafts and this year was no exception, with a bumper turn-out of 27 stalls in the big barn and others strategically sited to fill the odd space. Brisk business was being reported!

Members who haven't visited the farm recently really should make a point of doing so soon - the rate of development of some of the younger animals has to be seen to be believed - and isn't it curious that the pigs are always a focal point of interest!

ALL THIS, but with seasonal variations, happens regularly on the first Sunday of every month, 2 pm to 6pm, admission £1, OAPs and children 50p. Dozens of people help to present the Fair and thousands come to enjoy it. The funds raised help to keep College Farm on the map of-Finchley.

Advance Announcements - for your diary

Saturday, 17th September at 8pm in College Farm Gallery. The Lauderdale Guitar Society presents a programme of Classical and Chamber Music. Oils, watercolours and -other pictures by members of the Gallery Association will be exhibited. Refreshments. Charity Collection. No admission charge.

The Musical Evening is a prelude to --

Sunday, 18th September 2pm to 6pm. Major exhibition of pictures by College Farm artists in the Gallery and Exhibition Hall. This will be, in effect, an extra 'open day' but with admission to the Farm and Gallery at the normal daily rate of 75p (concessions 50p).

#### WHEELED BINS - A CONTRA VIEW

The May Newsletter reported David Smith's reinforcement of the Society's opposition to wheeled bins and the Chairman in his excellent report also commented on "the grey mausoleums that desecrate the appearance of our roads".

I feel confident that most, if not all, of the opposition to 'Wheelie bins' has come from householders who have not experienced the advantages of this new introduction by L.B. of Barnet. It is suggested that the bins make the streets unsightly. This is certainly so for part of one day each week, but the net result is an improvement at other times. With the old system, especially on a windy day, paper and other refuse from the bins is scattered around the street only to be collected sometime later by householders or left for a few weeks or months until the road is swept. The take-away food cartons deposited by passing pedestrians are not affected either way.

The large capacity of the bins is another environmental advantage. No longer is it necessary for householders to leave plastic bags or boxes full of refuse by the bin in the hope that the dustmen will remove them. The greatest environmental benefit is in the elimination of smoke pollution from bonfires. All garden refuse, with the exception of bricks, soil and stones, may be put in the wheelie bin. Before the wheelie bin opponents suggest that all garden refuse is placed on the compost heap, I would remind them that perennial weeds such as mare's tail, bindweed and twitch are not suitable for composting, neither are woody clippings from shrubs. Car owning wheelie bin users rarely need to make a trip to the amenity site (refuse tip) at Summers Lane.

Whilst I am wholeheartedly in favour of wheelie bins (as are all the users to whom I have spoken) this does not mean that I think the system perfect. I am still of the opinion that the binmen could collect the bins from a site within say 30 feet- of the pavement. This would result in a small increased cost in wages but would scupper the vehement opposition from present non-users of my cherished wheelie bin.

## FINCHLEY IN RETROSPECT NO. 1

### Occasional recollections of Andrew Forsyth

In the 1930s, before the days of the welfare state, it was not unusual to see in Ballards Lane or High Road an unemployed man singing or playing a musical instrument and hoping for pennies from passers-by.

When we lived in Queen's Avenue I remember that a man stationed himself near our house in the middle of the road (quite safe in those days) and sang "Onward Christian Soldiers" in a rather gloomy voice. I don't think he received many contributions.

In the High Road at Tally Ho Corner, outside Woolworth's 3d and 6d stores, we sometimes saw someone who looked like a seafaring man wearing a navy blue jersey and with only one arm. He had a portable harmonium operated by turning a handle, and my recollection is of his playing, rather too slowly, the hymn tune "Hollingside" (that used to go with "Jesu, Lover of My Soul" before the Welsh tune "Aberystwyth" became so popular). I don't know whether the repertoire included any other religious or secular music because I only remember hearing that one tune. My mother sometimes handed me a penny to give to him, for which he was very grateful. Does anyone else remember this man and others like him?

Those, for some people, were the not so good old days!

### KING EDWARD HALL Irene Shuttle

As I went along Regents Park Road and passed the King Edward Hall, I gazed up at the old Edwardian edifice and couldn't help taking a trip down Memory Lane. Those of my vintage will remember the days before the war when it was a very popular venue of so many local functions ... dances, dinners, displays and receptions. In my youth I thought it all so very elegant with its gold decor and red plush curtains which draped the long leaded windows, not forgetting the stage and balcony.

Earlier, as a child, I remember that my school used to hold its annual prize-giving and concert there. (I can't say I was a regular recipient of the former, but was always a keen contributor to the latter). I remember that the dressing rooms were quite some way from the stage, and to get from one to the other, the performers had to negotiate quite a hazardous route through the attics. It was known as the 'Chicken Run' Is it still there?

In the 'thirties' we were very fortunate then to have quite a choice of good places where local organisations and clubs could celebrate their social occasions There as the 'Arcadia', which later became a roller skating rink, then a car showroom before becoming extinct. There were also the two Finchley Dance Halls opposite the swimming pool. Yes, I remember them well and can still hear the strains of the four piece band playing the 'Last Waltz'.

When the Municipal Offices were bombed in 1940, some of the departments were transferred to the Hall. I expect the old rafters now reverberate to the buzz of typewriters and computers, replacing the melodies of yesteryear.

## CHRIST'S COLLEGE SCHOOL SITE

Members who read in the May Newsletter about the Society's submissions for the future of the buildings and site, and/or who studied Paddy Musgrove's text in full when it was displayed at the AGM, might also be interested to read how 'parallel' to our view, is the one being taken by Barnet Borough Arts Council.

Their March '88 magazine "Barnet Arts" contained an analysis under the heading "A Central Hall for the Borough", and some interesting extracts from that are as follows. -

The Finchley Society have long taken an interest in the future use of this historic site, and in January representatives of BBAC societies including the Finchley Society walked round the buildings and found them offering 'spaces that could well be used for meetings, exhibitions, crafts workshops and, especially, performance - particularly the beautiful hall of the old building, with its balconies, stage and ornamental roof. A number of rooms, some up to seventy feet long, could be utilised as rehearsal and recording studios, meeting and study rooms. A home for a heritage centre - something Finchley has needed for some time - could well be founded here. The provision of good performance and arts facilities on the site could make up for some of the disappointment felt as plans for the Civic Centre on adjoining land melted away, as did those for a theatre within the Gaumont complex at Finchley Tally Ho.

Good facilities in Finchley Central would both serve an area of the Borough that lacks meeting and entertainment spaces and, with its central position, could act as a Civic Hall and arts centre too.

On hotel use, the Brief reads

"An hotel development should incorporate Christ's College old building in a manner which would preserve its integrity as an historic building and preserve its setting. Consideration should be given to retaining the hall element of the Christ College new building as part of a conference suite or as a hall for public use if this should prove feasible in terms of site layout."

A very positive response is going to be needed, as the key wording in the planning brief is the last phrase in the paragraph above: "as part of a conference suite or as a hall for public use if this should prove feasible in terms of site layout ...". In other words, How big is the car park?

As with all public facilities, lofty aims such as culture, recreation and entertainment are in practice firmly limited by the number of spaces for visitors' cars: as a minimum, a place of entertainment would be required to provide one parking space for every ten seats and a hotel would have to offer two spaces for every three bedrooms. Pubs and wine bars are expected to provide one space for every ten square metres of area, and clubs one space for every ten of the maximum number of members likely to attend at any one time.

The Council has to look at other considerations too, of course - such as how big a hotel would have to be, in order to be viable, and the amount of income that could be generated by arts and entertainment facilities - but we

believe that an arts centre facility in Finchley would meet with a massive public response, if the experience of the new theatres now open at the Old Bull Arts Centre in Barnet is anything to go by." Ends Pam Edwards, BBAC.

The Council's Estates and Developments Committee meeting at which the Planning Brief will be discussed, has been programmed for early July. All of the councillors involved will have by then received personal copies of the Finchley Society proposals, so we await the results of their deliberations with interest.

WATCHDOGS Mary Hodgkinson

1. Butchery! One of our Watchdogs went into a Finchley butcher's shop to protest about a poster advertising an 'Easter Special', which was nailed to the tree outside. She approached him in a civilised manner, saying that the local authority would take a serious view if the offence were reported. She added, "With this open frontage, your goods need no advertising."

Thanks to the manager for co-operating. The poster was taken down. But the long ugly nails remained!

2. Indelible Memory During a television programme on register office weddings, a Registrar was shown with a bottle of ink with label clearly visible on his desk - an unexpected commercial for Stephens' blue-black ink, still required for official documents. -

... until the Autumn!

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