

The Finchley Society Newsletter

OCTOBER. 1988 No,8/88 Supplement

It seems an age since the Supplement of June, so, if you weren't around, or involved, please join in a resume of Finchley Society affairs that have occurred meantime.

MIDSUMMER DAY FAREWELL

The many friends who gathered at Hendon Crematorium on June 21st to pay their personal farewells to Paddy Musgrove and the variety of activities which they represented, bore testimony to his many interests and the esteem and affection in which he was held by his peers in each of them.

In a simple, moving and non-religious act of remembrance which commenced with opening music (Rachmaninov's "Vocalise", James Galway - flute), tributes were paid by Norman Burgess for The Finchley Society and Percy Reboul for Hendon and District Archaeological Society.

Esther Johnson's reading of John Betjeman's poem "Middlesex" distilled for so many of us present the very essence of Paddy's "caring" about his surroundings and his striving to ensure that they should remain pleasant for all.

In "Committal" to closing music (Vaughan Williams' "The Lark Ascending"- Pinchas Zukerman, violin) David Smith spoke eloquently for all present, family and friends with words that surely voiced our thoughts, including — "Dear Paddy, we were taken aback at the suddenness of your departure. So recently you were amongst us, as busy and as wise as ever. Forgive us if we did not say "goodbye" and "thank you", for we did not know that we were speaking to you for the last time."

DOCKLANDS - 26th JUNE Freddie Cohn

Fifty-one into Forty-nine won't go. Still, nothing is impossible. John Neal, well known to many of us for his geographical and historical knowledge, made his comments standing up, only occasionally crouching down next to the driver, while a young man managed somehow, without seat, at the back of the coach.

Both the weather and the traffic were kinder to us than we had expected. "Regeneration" was the object of the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) which had been established about eight years ago. Much building has taken place during that time, but although there was and still is much talk about the "conservation" of East London, I have to admit that I did not see many signs of this. What will mainly stick in my memory are hundreds of different shapes and sizes of boxes, elongated and standing upright, with, stretches of water between and a few young trees and little else, apart from countless building sites. Yet, doubtless, some of the buildings making up the new skyline had different functions prior to having been re-shaped.

The Hays Galleria is one such example. It is a bright conversion - we stopped there for morning coffee. It reminded one of the new Covent Garden and must be attractive to tourists. The water-spilling sculpture in the glazed centre is certainly very welcoming. (Are we not inclined to take art too seriously?)

It was also pleasant to watch the multi-coloured sailing boats where not so long ago dockers must have laboured. But, I wondered, how do the new inhabitants entertain themselves otherwise? Where are the sports fields and cinemas, the shops and the restaurants except in the Galleria? Perhaps I had become somewhat drowsy after the ample chicken and ham salad at the "City Pride" pub and the short walk to the proposed new Museum of Docklands (closed to visitors) where the restoration of some of the artefacts from the docks is currently taking

New housing can be exciting, but here I was mainly impressed by the quantity of new buildings rather than their quality. Perhaps the knowledge that most if not all the accommodation can only be afforded by the well-to-do had an effect on me. Was this part of London to be reserved almost exclusively for those who live in the expensive flats? What about those who are employed here in the various business concerns, those who look after the buildings and the grounds or have some other work to do? Presumably they have to travel during the rush hours to come here, while the young executive in the Yuppie Tower Block ponders which of the two or three bathrooms in his flat he will use, getting ready to drive to the nearby City Airport. We had our final stop there. The place was businesslike, functional, clinical. It made me want to get back to the coach rather than to wait for a plane to take me to Brussels or Paris.

We expected hold-ups on our return journey but fortunately we mistakenly slipped into the motorway, which shortened the time, if not the distance.

The day had been organised with great care. We expressed our thanks to John Neal and the driver, but no doubt there were others who contributed to this pleasurable and stimulating experience. Many thanks to them.

MEETING 30th JUNE

"TRAFFIC" occupied the minds of Finchley Society members gathered at Avenue House on Thursday 30th June for the monthly meeting.

The speaker was Carmen Hass-Klau, traffic consultant, lecturer and proponent of the benefits of "Traffic Calming". This theme was also maintained later in the evening by Finchley Society Vice President Bill Tyler who took the opportunity to explain why the Society opposes the Department of Transport's proposed tunnel scheme for the North Circular Road at Henly's Corner - why in fact a little "calming" at the junction would be preferable to "expressing-it-through".

Carmen set her talk against the background facts that unfettered increasing traffic density will bring in its wake equal increases in accidents, air and

noise pollution and environmental deterioration. Therefore, she argued, we must seek to develop alternative scenarios. These should include

- * An increasing use of public transport (both nationally and locally)
- * Where through-traffic can be streamed or by-passed, the urban roads thus vacated should be "re-developed" to reinstate pedestrians, cyclists and a slower pace of vehicles - to 20mph.
- * Where through-traffic must still be accommodated (as perhaps in the larger conurbations) then this policy of "traffic calming" should be concentrated in the residential streets where, the speaker indicated, current traffic speeds are often nothing short of homicidal and the original perspective 'scale' of the streets is buried by cars.

The essence of "Traffic Calming", said Carmen, is not a crude pedestrianising and exclusion of traffic, but the restoration of equal rights for all road users. Thus the points of concentration are -

- * Reduction of carriageways to the minimum necessary.
- * Widening of footways, with real landscaping of trees and greenery.
- * Provision of cycleways.
- * Visual delineation of junctions/cross-roads, etc. by devices such as coloured paving, slightly ramped intersections, narrowing of carriageways.

On the subject of the Henly's Corner road scheme, Bill Tyler (fully reported in our September newsletter) observed that as a result of the proposed scheme, which is capable of doubling traffic flow at Henly's Corner, there is the grave danger that unwelcome traffic could be drawn back from the long journey around the M25 to a non-stop shorter North Circular Road route.

So the Finchley Society argument revolves around the need to gain peak-period improvements, with much less change to local traffic flows than the big scheme would cause. All of this could of course be done at much less cost.

Turning to the evening's theme of "Traffic Calming", Bill referred to some interesting potential for Finchley that could result from the North Circular Road improvements already determined for the Green Man and Manor Tavern intersections. It is speculated that upon their completion, the direct route from North Finchley to Henly's Corner would be via High Road to the Green Man and right along North Circular Road without further impediment. That being so, there would be a very strong case for "traffic-calming" along the entire length of Ballards Lane and its surroundings!

1988 CARNIVAL PROCESSION - "FLOATERS" VIEW

The combined efforts of Fin.Soc. volunteers and staff from the Hendon and Finchley Times, "toting" their buckets along the carnival procession route, added a further £80.21 towards our £1000 target this year for the "Re-Tree Barnet Fund"

That may not seem a large sum, but one must consider the many calls on the pockets and purses of Carnival bystanders and that a high proportion of the charities parading are of the "human" kind, Cancer Research, Children in Need, Great Ormond Street Wishing Well Appeal, etc. "Trees?" said one young

man in the throng outside the Malt and Hops! - perhaps it was no more than a "human" response.

So there we are, £80.21, and glad of it! and the Fin.Soc. floaters, who rattled buckets and blew balloons, had an enjoyable afternoon!

Nonetheless, should the Finchley Society decide in another future year to join the parade again, the occasion will clearly demand a much greater degree of "presentation" if we are to achieve a more solid aim (financial or promotional) than the loose change and an afternoon's fun of 1988.

FINCHLEY CARNIVAL Esther Johnson

As we settled dawn in the mud on Thursday, in the charity marquee, peering through the jungle of green leaves which was our plant supply, a gallant band of Folkloric Czechs was singing and fiddling to itself somewhere outside in the pouring rain. In spite of the weather, our wonderful staff was kept fairly busy: by the way, one or two members brought or sent their house guests to work for us - ladies who hailed from such places as Gloucester and Australia. (The charming recruit from 'Down-Under' was called - guess what? -yes, of course, Sheila!)

On Friday the 'sun came out; so did the dancing Czechs, and we could really see them. The men looked dashing in yellow trousers, and the girls had whirling striped skirts and red stockings. Back at the stand, people seemed to be buying our pens by the half-dozen. Does this mean someone is planning to open a new branch of The Finchley Society?

A nice young man from the Red Cross stall had just pointed out that I was displaying the Middlesex Map 1811 3 upside down when a lot of policemen, etc. arrived and asked us to leave the tent while they searched it - grumbling gently we stood outside clutching our money boxes. The reason for the search was revealed later when Mrs Thatcher appeared among .us.

On Saturday afternoon, I left the others slaving away, and escaped to see the entrance of the Little Princesses, who were perched on the College Farm horse omnibus (which, incidentally, had been given a yellow rosette by the procession judges). The bus, which was 'dressed overall' with flowers and driven by a suitably-dressed Christopher, looked splendid; and I cannot forget the sight of Jane's slight figure in impeccable riding costume walking by the head of that giant bay horse.

At the end of the day, the rain came down again. Having just informed our Vice-chairman that "we don't sell many books at the Carnival", I felt rather silly when Hon. Treasurer announced record sales!!

Thank you, everybody, who helped us.

Footnote: The Hon. Treasurer, reporting on the carnival, pays tribute to the valuable work done by those who manned the stall and/or who donated plants and items for sale - for there was a most welcome £97.43 surplus-over-expenditure. Additionally, £16.26 was donated in the bottle for the "Re-Tree

Barnet Fund" and no less than five new subscribing members joined the Society -- worth every minute of effort; thank you Esther and team!

FRIERN BARNET SUMMER SHOW Esther Johnson

The distinguished team erecting our stand on the wet evening of Thursday, 11th August included the Chairman (who acted as transport officer, porter and electrician) and the Chairman's Lady (who showed great dexterity with a hammer). All was finished in good time, so we wandered off to see what was going on in the art marquee - it was sad that owing to "logistical" problems there was no College Farm stand this year, but here in the picture gallery the name of the farm was widely emblazoned.

Friday was a fine day, and the arena soon filled up with Teddy Bears having a picnic. We had been given a huge number of plants and flowers to sell, and the busiest time for our helpers came about 3 p.m. I had cunningly retreated to the refreshment tent, so missed it. On the way back I was entranced by the sight of several beautiful owls - yes OWLS. They were sitting quietly on separate perches, huge eyes wide open. (I do wish I could turn my head round back to front). Later on these birds gave a display in the arena, flying about under orders. The wind was very strong, which hampered their flight, and one was blown over the charity marquee. "That's another one you'll have to go and look for" said one discouraged flight-master to his assistant. Things were perhaps not so exciting behind our bookstall, but we managed to sell a good many maps and other things.

Saturday was again windy and wet to start with, but brighter later. When it was discovered that "THEY" had mislaid the key to the main gate, our member on duty at our stand at opening time scrambled through the Friary Park fence in order not to be late. The mid-afternoon entry of our Vice-Chairman was announced by a loud bang, and the lights went out. (I don't think the two events were actually connected!). This meant that our photographs of fallen trees were unilluminated for a while. In front of this display we had a large bottle for donations to the "Re-Tree Barnet" fund. One small girl asked her daddy for money to put in it, and was evidently not satisfied with his offering. "Why can't you put a pound in??" she demanded angrily. Daddy did not explain!

Shire Publications seemed to be the popular buy on our bookstall - our new supply of these dwindled rapidly.

By the way, don't be afraid of volunteering your help at events like this. Most of our staff appear to find the job amusing! See you next year?

OPEN DAYS AT THE FARM: 8 PLUS, OR 8 PLUIE? Timothy Johnson

College Farm Open days, believe it or not, are now in their ninth year. We have all noticed that quite a lot of rain is apt to fall on Finchley in the space of nine years, so it is not surprising that some of these open days have had a share of it. We have also had the odd blizzard, some king-size hailstones and other climatic excitements. Adverse weather obviously affects

attendances, but not one single open day has yet been cancelled on account of it. The curtain always goes up and there is always an audience to play to.

The somewhat wintry "Summer Fair" of 3rd July illustrated the point. Rain fell incessantly from a hopeless-looking sky. All the many indoor attractions operated normally and most of the usual outdoor activities were transferred to the vastness of the Big Barn where the band played, alternating with performances by Pex Puppets, and those two indefatigable stalwarts, Leslie Hill and Betty Hiteshi, with their helpers, ran a whole series of children's games and sideshows. Young Master Robert Ower of College Farm spent an energetic afternoon fielding balls misaimed at coconuts, while Miss Kathryn Ower was being versatile elsewhere. Customers were clearly enjoying themselves and one young visitor from Hammersmith seemed to speak for them all when she said it was a "good place to spend a wet afternoon".

In contrast, the next open day, 7th August, was brilliantly sunny and very hot, but Finchley looked quite deserted. Most of the citizens were assumed to be far away on holiday, or perhaps seizing a rare opportunity to spend an overheated day in traffic jams and tail-backs. Considering this, the fair was remarkably well patronised. Horse omnibus rides were popular, so were donkey rides and the Bouncing Castle. The "Hill-Hiteshi Fairground" resumed its rightful place in the sun, drawing excited crowds of small people to the Gallery Courtyard. Elsewhere, the fair was in full swing and the band gave an al fresco concert.

Over 2000 people came to the fair on 4th September, and even more lined the streets of Finchley to see the horse-drawn carriage procession. On its return to the farm, the 19 vehicles were judged by T.V. "Crimewatch" presenter Sue Cook and producer Billy Macqueen. William Barber, from Hayes, Middlesex won the College Farm Cup for the best trade turn-out, and the Barclays Bank Challenge Cup, for the best private turn-out, was awarded to Pat Watson from Bethnal Green. The 19 well turned-out period vehicles, some of them dating back to the early years of the century, were, together with an exhibition of miniature horse drawn vehicles by the Model Horse-Drawn Vehicles Club, the main feature of one of the year's best and brightest Country Fairs. Even the sun came out to see - and stayed to watch!

Country Fairs continue regularly on the first Sunday of every month until Christmas, and next year's season starts on the first Sunday in February.

Footnote: Timothy was on holiday for the Country Fair of 2nd October but, true to form, the farm was once more athrong with visitors on a magical sunny afternoon and the "attractions" were all kept very busy. Bill Williams reports an attendance figure in excess of 1100. P.S. Milly the Middle White sow continues to do her bit for attendance, having produced another litter of 10 delightful pure-bred piglets - if you haven't yet, do go and see them!!

"We'll reach Henley-on-Thames, for a cup of coffee at The Copper Kettle, at 10.10" and John Neal, London Tourist Board Guide, and driver, Ian, kept their word - as the coach-load of Fin.Soc. members and Nansen Villagers pulled into Henley, the first stop on the coach trip to Lacock Abbey - exactly on time. The morning was hazy, but warm, the M25 was free-flowing! and historic Henley proved a more than interesting coffee stop - three 16th-century coaching inns, Victorian boathouses now housing an art gallery, the chequerboard Church of St. Mary's, the Chantry House dating back to 1400 and, of course, the Thames itself. There was time for a stroll around all these sights, and more - as well as the promised cup of coffee.

Our route on to Marlborough ran through Savernake Forest. Dating back at least until the time of William the Conqueror, the Forest has over 2,000 acres of oak, beech and chestnut. It has seen its battles too: Cavaliers and Roundheads fought in these woods during the Civil War. Is Marlborough the burial place of Merlin? If rumour is correct, he lies under the prehistoric Mound, at the west end of town, in what is now the grounds of Marlborough College (founded in 1843). In the long and wide High Street, seemingly, each building has a tale to tell - Pepys stayed in the 17th-century White Hart (now the Tudor Tea Rooms), and dined so well one night, he slept through the departure of all five London coaches the next day! The Church of Sts Peter and Paul graces the west end of the Street while at the east stands the. Town Hall, 19th-century design, built in 1900. Behind this lies the Green, the original Saxon centre of Marlborough. An avenue of limes, planted in 1840 runs aslant the Green, which today is surrounded by a delightful mixture of buildings, both in scale and style. We took our lunch at Marlborough - and not a Pepys among us - everyone rejoined the coach!

Onwards to Lacock, past mysterious Silbury Hill, 135ft high, 2780 years old, and still no one knows why it was built. The white horse we passed was carved in the chalk in 1780. Its designer, Dr. Alsop, directed the diggers by shouting through a trumpet - from a mile away!.

Lacock preserves its history in exquisite form - the village hall (1889) is the only building of later date than 1830. In previous times, pigs were let loose to eat the rubbish in the streets. Not so today, no litter marred the outside of Lacock's mostly stone-built houses, sleepy in the weak sunshine that had crept through the haze. The Tithe Barn and lockup, the Sign of the Angel Hotel and King John's Hunting Lodge were just three of the fine buildings on view.

The Abbey itself was founded in 1232 but, come the Dissolution of the Monasteries, it was bought by William Sharington, who converted the nunnery into a family home. Happily for the visitor, he retained many of its medieval features, including the Chaplain's Room and Chapter House. The rooms on view included the imposing Hall, with terracotta figures set in niches high on the walls, the Stone Gallery with its Renaissance fireplace, and the tiny Tower Room, which William Sharington used as a strong room for his valuables and important papers.

The Abbey and the village were owned for 400 years by the Talbot family. In 1944, Miss Matilda Talbot gave both to the National Trust, but her great-nephew and great-niece still live in the Abbey, as tenants of the Trust. One

of their better-known forebears was William Henry Fox Talbot (1800-77), a pioneer of photography and the inventor of the negative. A museum devoted to his photographic career stands just outside the Abbey gates.

After tea at the Stable Rooms, it was back to our coach for the speedy two-hour return journey to Finchley, safely ending a rich and varied day-out-to-remember!

PARTITA

On Saturday, 17th September, manfully competing with the last night of the Proms, College Farm Gallery Association presented an evening of classical and speciality music for guitar and flute, given by the trio Partita. They performed in the newly-lit and decorated charities-stalls room at the farm, next to the main exhibition room.

Gallery Chairman, Brian Lacey, whose friendship with guitarist Alan Jones of the trio was the springboard for the event, spoke of the hopes of the Gallery members that this would be the first of many such occasions on which they might be hosts to artists of other disciplines, entertaining and raising funds to maintain and develop College Farm.

Over sixty guests certainly enjoyed "Partita" (Chambers Dictionary - "A Suite; a set of variations"), the other members of which are Hugh and Vicky Campbell, performers respectively on flute and guitar. Their programme contained a number of classical Spanish pieces but also modern works from America and Cuba, a set of Celtic pieces by Gerald Garcia and an arrangement by guitarist John Williams of the Theme and Variations from Brahms' Sextet, Opus 18.

In addition to the enjoyment that the evening gave, a little more than £120 was raised in donations at the door, in aid of College Farm. An added bonus for guests was a previewing of the special paintings exhibition that was to be held the following day, Sunday, 18th.

SEPTEMBER MEETING David Smith

The diversity of members' interests was again illustrated in our September "Members' Evening". Andrew Forsyth showed us slides of his extensive collection of old post-cards and photographs, starting with a photo quiz based on Whetstone High Road. He then took us down winding, rural Hendon Lane and into the secret world of Finchley Garden Village and their sports day of 1911. From there, we dropped into Christ's College where the table was set for dinner with the school trophies for decoration, and up into the tower to admire the views. Horses queued at the horse-trough where King Edward Hall's apex stands. A correspondent had written on one card: "Finchley is a nice clean place". A horse-bus trotted off to Oxford Circus. Another card told us that "Large and costly motors constantly pass". (but less constantly, we felt, than today!)

The work of Barnet Care was explained by Shirley Avery. This organisation brings practical help to the relatives of handicapped people, both young and old, but resources are never enough to cope with the demand - there are over 50 families waiting for help at the moment.

Members were encouraged to support this work and to make contact with Barnet Care via their office at John Groom's at Edgware.

Harry Sharpe retired from teaching nine years ago and set about answering his rhetorical question "What do you find to do?" He is still hard at work proving that daily employment for many is but a hindrance in their quest for useful tasks and unending satisfaction. He took us from his old association with the City - he started his working life as an office boy with Lloyds - to his new one with the Worshipful Company of Arbitrators. He shared with us his delight in the London writings of Dickens and his triumph at acquiring a door-knocker that could tell a tale or two. He reminded us too of the walks that Dickens used to take in the green lanes around Cobley's Farm (where else but in Finchley!) and listed the connections between our area and the likes of Barnaby Rudge, Dombey and Son and Sarah Gamp. To round off his tour de force, Harry suggested that many hard-working members of the Fin.Soc. managed to find plenty to do and that there was much work awaiting others who dared take up the challenge.

The second 'commercial break' of the evening was provided by Pat Dunnill who spoke about the work of the 'Save the Children Fund' and her own efforts to raise ever-needed cash for the wants of others. Three recent natural disasters had placed even greater pressure on this relief agency.

Kurt Weinberg, our Honorary Secretary, recently visited Africa and was able in an extensive four-country tour to fit in a week's safari in the Serengeti National Park. He saw life from the top of a Bedford truck and recorded those experiences with slides. We saw evocative shots of nonchalant lions, statuesque giraffe, zebras and wildebeest and sunset over Lake Harrison, the second largest man-made lake in the world.

Norman Burgess expressed his thanks to all the speakers and to those who had provided the refreshments. Roll on the next Members' Evening!

P.S. We were also shown pictures of a visit to Finchley in 1905 by Princess Christian. "Who's she?" everyone asked. Well, she was Queen Victoria's fourth child, born in 1846.

NO LITTER IN ASSISI Mari I'Anson

Faded terracotta roof-tiles, mellowed pink-tinged stone walls, narrow streets winding upwards and sloping steeply downwards. Always a breathtaking view around each bend with deepest green Cypresses pushing up into the clear sky. Pale and silvery Olive trees straddle on gnarled trunks in fields of sun-bleached grass. Swallows and martins circle the sky around numerous domes and bells ring out the quarter hour Doves coo in the woods and the scent of wild flowers is everywhere

This 'word picture' echoes my artist's eye view of Assisi in Italy where I spent two weeks in June this year. The birthplace and home of St. Francis, patron saint of all Italy, is hardly changed since the middle ages. Old city walls still surround what must be one of the prime examples of 'conservation' with not a modern building in sight, although the interiors of some hotels are garish in their attempt to show they live in the 20th century. Shops are reached by stepping down into semi-basements that once housed domestic animals. The stone walls and floors retain their natural state.

There is peace there, for although a tourist attraction, the coaches go no further than the parking areas outside the old walls below Assisi, and cars are forbidden entry unless local. Thus groups of tourists seem to pass through to look at churches and chapels, buy their souvenirs and ice creams and disappear through the nearest arched gateway.

There is no litter in the streets of Assisi. Huge wheelie-bins on each street corner bear evidence of their continuous use, producing the only unpleasant smell in the whole place!

I painted solidly for two weeks and brought back to Finchley the ambience of Assisi in acrylic and watercolour, in sketchbooks and in photographs. There is enough work to fill a couple of exhibitions and some of it can also be seen at College Farm Gallery.

THE VERY READABLE THERMOMETER

Member David Heale has researched the history of a splendid Stephens Ink advertising piece - a 5ft thermometer - which he spotted outside a private house in the Essex village of Stock.

The owner, Mrs Jennifer Patterson, is the daughter of a G.P. who originally practised in Golcar, Yorkshire. Her father (also something of a collector) saw such a thermometer in 1938 outside a newsagents in the nearby village of Milnsbridge (boyhood home of Harold Wilson) and so impressed the newsagent by his interest in it that the friendly shopkeeper arranged for one to be 'supplied' to the doctor!

Moving in 1946 to practise in Essex, the Stephens thermometer - by then a much cherished family piece - came too. Mrs Patterson indicates that to this day its simulated ink (blue dyed alcohol) still registers accurate temperatures.

Incidentally, Mrs. Patterson tells David that she's sure that such a thermometer featured quite prominently in a scene or scenes of an Alec Guinness film, but cannot remember the title. Can any Fin.Soc. film buffs provide the answer?

For The Finchley Society:

John and Carol Halls, Finchley Park, N12 9JT