

REPORTS OF RECENT EVENTS

OCTOBER MEETING - A CAUTIONARY TALE - "MAPS AS FICTION"

At the October monthly meeting, speaker Peter Barber cautioned that maps, even the very latest productions, and no matter how high their basic "accuracy", may well in part be "fictional" - and often deliberately so! As members reeled at this suggestion, from no less an eminent authority than Mr. Barber, Deputy Map Librarian at the British Library, he went on to reveal through an excellent slide presentation, some of the reasons why "Maps as fiction" has always been a fact of life.

Fundamentally, he explained, even the act of reproducing the globe on a flat sheet by any of the many known cartographers' "projections" creates artificialities - perhaps stretching the length of a coastline or creating an out of scale illusion of area (so often, for example in the case of Greenland or Australia). Peter Barber illustrated with a 13th century circular map of the world, produced in St. Albans, showing Jerusalem at the centre - and again with McArthur's unique projection with the North Pole centred - it did wonders to the appearance of the southern hemisphere!

He continued with demonstrations of how "political" considerations have, always introduced fiction into maps, usually by omissions.

Warsaw Pact countries are known to use poetic licence in the mapping of strategically sensitive areas - roads usually disappear mysteriously (even our Ordnance Survey maps of Salisbury Plain contain less than useful detail). Examples from earlier times included a large scale map of Barbados drawn by a Quaker gentleman who, because of his particular beliefs, cheerfully omitted Parish Churches and Military Forts, both important landscape features of the time! Early Portuguese maps of the world on the other hand included exaggerated additions to project the image of their successful colonisation.

Turning to our own locality, Mr. Barber cited Finchley as an example of a place undermapped for centuries because it simply was of little interest either politically or economically and further handicapped by having a large and featureless common at its heart. Then, when Royal hunting in nearby Enfield Chase made Finchley a useful country base for some of the gentry - and when the Bishop of London sought to capitalise

by selling off some of his Finchley/Hornsey estates, well, Finchley featured clearly and in detail on subsequent maps of, say, Middlesex.

On the subject of the effect of economics on maps, he demonstrated with a classic Ordnance Survey sheet of Finchley in the late 19th century which showed building densities then around 40 years out of date, roads around 20 years outdated and the railway network quite up-to-date. This was an exaggerated case because of the rapid changes of development then taking place in the area. Due to the spread in time of the preceding specific surveys, that map could be said to be complete fiction because Finchley never had at any one time that exact combination of rail, roads and buildings.

Peter Barber summed up with this advice to map-minded members — always ask, "Why was this map made?" He concluded with the following words, "In the final analysis a map is not reality - only an image in the mind of the cartographer."

#### NOVEMBER MEETING

"Join the Finchley Society and learn something new every month!" - well it's not the Fin. Soc. slogan word for word but it is in line with the 'Educate' aspect of "Conserve, Enhance, Inform, Educate".

At the November monthly meeting the educating was done by Philip Yenning, Secretary of the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings (S.P.A.B.) who expressed his liking for our slogan and mentioned how much his organisation prefers, for maximum effect, to work alongside active local societies.

Among the many pearls of information that emerged during Mr. Yenning's talk was one that quite astonished his audience - speaking of the various categories of protection available for buildings, e.g. "Scheduled", or Listing (in 3 Grades), he revealed that religious buildings are exempt (although religious bodies exercise their own controls) - and that Cathedrals are outside of all protection! Thus, with Hereford's current agony in mind over the means to raise funds sufficient for restoration, the Dean and Chapter of Hereford Cathedral could, with impunity, knock down the entire building! (However, that might release more, not less, agony!).

Recovering their breath after absorbing that dramatic but unlikely option for minimising conservation costs, Mr. Yenning's audience were introduced to the origins and work of his organisation. Founded in the mid-nineteenth century (1877) in the era of "Hollywood Gothic", it was felt necessary to stem some of the

"improvements" that the Victorians of the day were perpetrating on many fine old buildings – so the watchwords were of "restraint and restoration".

In recognition of its record of effort through the years the SPAB now has a statutory role as one of the five national amenity bodies that must be involved whenever applications are in hand in respect of Listed Buildings. The other four bodies are – The Georgian Group; The Victorian Society; Ancient Monuments Society; Council for British Archaeology.

Mr. Yenning explained that in conservation, the main mechanism employed, especially for ancient monuments, is to have them SCHEDULED – a very strong protection. For other, fine buildings, LISTING in one or other of the categories, Grade 1, 2 Star, Grade 2, at least ensures that permission has to be sought before changes can be made. Philip indicated that his society's principal concerns today are for the remaining good examples of great industrial buildings (mills, etc.), old farm buildings and Victorian institutions (e.g. Friern Hospital). He conceded that conversion is sometimes the answer but that this can often result in the production of what is essentially a "fake".

The best course, he suggested is naturally to maintain in some form the original use but that is not possible if the use itself is outdated as in the case of many types of mill. The "twist of use" is another interesting approach – here Philip instanced a former Turkish Bath near Liverpool Street Station which has become a Turkish Restaurant! Another twist he mentioned is a former Victorian Church near Chichester within which a shopping arcade has been created – and which could easily be restored and reconsecrated if a later revival demanded it. Philip declared his view that the greatest mistake is to try to conserve a building using unsympathetic materials (as in the case of a domestic house by cladding or the use of uncharacteristic DIY doors and windows).

He ended his talk by proposing a single moral at the heart of conservation – that it is always worth trying to keep a good building going, even in mothballs, so as to open up a better chance of finding for it a future use and renewal of life – and that one should not abandon hope of that, for the world around is in perpetual change!

#### TRIBUTE TO PADDY

On the morning of Saturday, 26th November, there were around fifty people present when a Hungarian Oak sapling, the gift of the Borough of Barnet, was

planted in the grounds of Avenue House as a tribute to Paddy Musgrove.

Both tree and location had been carefully chosen by Finchley Society member Ken Duffin, also of the Borough Parks Division - and a most pleasant siting it is, in the bowl at the foot of the wooded slope in the far corner across the lawn from the drawing room of the house.

Paddy's daughter Leonie performed the planting ceremony - or rather her small son Rhys (an enthusiastic environmentalist in the making if ever there was one!) did the lion's share of the spadework, watched by his sister Sophie and his uncle (Paddy's son) Derrnot. Also among those present was the Mayor, Councillor Don Goodman, who was kind enough to make a short address in praise of the local renown, hard work for the community and sheer lust for life, that were the hallmarks of Paddy Musgrove.

The entire occasion was recorded on video by Christopher Burgess, our Chairman's son, so hopefully at some future Finchley Society gathering we may be reminded of the pleasant simplicity with which the former Chairman and dedicated Finchley Society worker, was honoured. Meantime, if you haven't yet visited the setting of the new tree, it really is to be recommended - both the views, of it and from it, bring pleasure and peace to one's mind. Paddy would have been glad that that should be so.

#### MUSIC HALL EVENING 3RD DECEMBER, 1988 Norman Burgess

Just 74 members thoroughly enjoyed a 'truly professional evening's entertainment' complete with the monocled Chairman (Keith Hewitt) and the troupe of 8 entertainers that brought back the days of the Music Hall with rumbustuous audience participation. The scintillating costumes and enthusiasm of the performers gave us a delightful evening of nostalgia from the turn of the century. The hot (piping) potatoes served with either cheese or sausage was a welcome snack during the interval followed by mince pies (all cooked by Betty Burgess). The committee planned this evening in aid of the Re-tree Barnet Fund back in June and every newsletter since has carried notices. The profit amounted to only £33.00 which meant that it was the equivalent of only 11 of the tickets sold. A disappointing support from members when so much organisation was put into the evening.

#### CHRISTMAS PARTY 1988

There were four clear "winners" at this year's party -

\* Joan Sturdy who scored sixteen and a half (half?) points out of an "impossible" thirty in Andrew Forsyth's old-Finchley-views picture quiz.

\* Ted Neale who is a man to watch in future when buying your raffle tickets - his numbers just kept being drawn and drawn and drawn! (Is it significant that he is a Certified Master Hypnotist?)

\* Sid Slavny, magician, whose amazing non-stop magic performance captivated us all.

\* Norman Bar, with a marvellously impenetrable words quiz, much of it based on Fin.Soc. 'Newsletter Editions (the Editors were hopeless!), but not all -- here are two of his more 'oblique' little numbers, answered by Norman at the end of the evening -

Q. Who wrote, on what occasion and in what year, "These developments are an excrescence on the skin of civilisation, a carbuncle on the body of common decency, a wart on the hand of Society, a blister on the sensitivity of all decent men, women and children first?"

A. Me, writing the Finchley Society Christmas Quiz 1988.

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Q. What is the difference in meaning between the words illegal and unlawful?

A. Illegal is a sick bird; unlawful is against the law!

There was much else going on besides, for the 75 or so members enjoying the evening - Shirley Avery and eleven helpers prepared, served and cleared away after, the best spread of Christmas Party snacks yet! - Kurt Weinberg and Alec Sturdy presided over liquid refreshments - Norman Burgess read apologies from Spike for unavoidable last-minute absence and a Christmas Card message from the Mayor - and the rest of us, in between all these distractions, got on with the business of a "good chat"!

What better way to wind up another hectic Finchley Society year?

#### NEWS FROM DOWN-ON-THE-FARM

During the afternoon of Sunday 6th November, an enormous brightly coloured hot air balloon made several ascents from College Farm's south field. Passengers, up in the sky and no doubt delighted by their own audacity, waved happily to the assembled spectators and sheep below. Perhaps because unsuitable weather could have caused disappointment, this

spectacular item of the programme had not been announced. It came as a surprise. But it is rumoured that the balloonists could make a return visit at one of the First Sundays in 1989. So look out for large low flying objects!

Without a doubt the most consistently successful event at College Farm is the annual Christmas Fair. It can call forth traffic jams in the surrounding roads to surpass anything seen in High Summer. The pedestrian density in the peak afternoon period rivals that of Trafalgar Square on New Year's Eve - but is more orderly. It has become the year's biggest farm event too, filling every available square inch and resulting in unsatisfied demand for space from stall holders and others anxious to take part. Thus it was on Sunday, 4th December, 1988!

But the Gallery committee is by no means complacent. The economic climate can be as treacherously volatile as the weather forecasts, fashion is fickle, and there is competition from a whole host of other seasonal attractions. So the aim is obviously to offer the kind of entertainment that people will not want to miss, with such a variety of things to do, to see, to hear, to eat, to drink, and to take home, that customers of all ages can enjoy themselves and be glad they came. This recipe is still effective. It was easy to see that most of the visitors were very happy, but there must be at least some who found the afternoon "crush hour" a bit claustrophobic. So if anyone does not care for crowds they could take advice from Father Christmas. "Come early next time", he says. (The Christmas Fair always opens at 11 a.m.)

The Events Committee, which was set up last April to plan and organise the public entertainments, has announced the programme for 1989. There will be a Country Fair or similar attraction on the first Sunday of every month from February to December inclusive, starting normally at 2 p.m., except for December when Father Christmas will hold court from 11 a.m.

It is interesting to note that three of the most popular events of 1988 were those of February, November and December, attracting more people and producing better results than some of the Summer Fairs. This may - or may not - be partly due to the eccentricities of the weather, but we hope to see as many people as possible for the launch of the 1989 season on Sunday, 5th February.

M.E.T.331 - A LITTLE PIECE OF FINCHLEY IN DERBYSHIRE  
Cyril Smeeton

Metropolitan Electric Tramways car No. 331 (nicknamed "Cissie") went into service just fifty-eight years

ago, in December, 1930. No. 331 was an experimental car, which had been preceded in 1927 by the legendary "Bluebell" (another Finchley car, involved in the celebrated accident on Barnet Hill on 17th June, 1927).

In 1929, two more experimental cars (Nos. 320 and 330), appeared, of very advanced streamlined design with exceptionally luxurious seating and decorations, to be succeeded by No. 331, designed to try out the idea of central platforms before a production order of a new fleet was placed. No. 331's central platforms were unique in London, but the production order for 54 new cars although of a design closely similar in outline to 331, had traditional end platforms. (One of the experimental cars from 1927 and 1929, No. 355, is on view at the London Transport Museum at Covent Garden).

No.331 ran mostly on the Cricklewood to Whetstone service (No.40) which, at rush hours, worked between Golders Green station and Tally Ho! Corner, sometimes Golders Green to Whetstone. Because of its great length (40 ft) 331 and similar "Felthams" did not reach Barnet Church owing to clearance difficulties at the bridge at the foot of Barnet Hill. At rush hour two conductors were carried, and one of these had always to be on the platform at stops to close the doors when passengers boarded or alighted. The motorman opened the doors from his cab, and the conductor closed them by means of a lever on the opposite side of the platform to that on which the doors opened. These doors were air-worked, with an emergency handle to allow them to be opened from the platform.

Inside, 331 was the height of luxury; deep-sprung fawn mocquette covered seats were arranged longitudinally in each of the two lower saloons, with transverse seats for two at the corners, the latter being fixed. The longitudinal seats each had arm rests, of the same pattern as the Underground trains then newly in service.

Upstairs, reversible seats for two, together with fixed seats at each end arranged as benches, were covered in best quality blue leather. Internal paintwork was white, and the best quality Indian huglam timber formed the panelling and framework, while the panelled surfaces were covered with crocodile-skin pattern heavy-duty blue leathercloth. The floors were the earlier slatted type, however, as experiments had shewn that linoleum-covered floors did not stand up to the wear and tear of London traffic. The car was metal-framed, built as a single entity.

Outside, the car was clad in aluminium panelling except for the dashes, which were steel. The livery

was rather different from the standard "M.E.T." red and white: the white being still in evidence, but the vermilion of all the older cars was replaced by the darker red of an exceptionally glossy finish. To emphasise the clean lines of the new car black lines were continued right round the body at three levels, to relieve the large expanses of red, the white being largely confined to a wide band above the lower deck windows. The car's equipment was of the latest types: air, magnetic and hand brakes were fitted, and the two motors of the older cars gave way to four very powerful light-weight motors of Swiss design, made by the General Electric Company.

I and other London members have pressed the Tramway Museum Society for many years to restore the car, and it is now at "the top of the list" because, after running on the 40 route (and no other) until its conversion for trolleybuses on 1st/2nd August, 1936, 331 was sold to Sunderland Corporation, where it had another lease of life until 1952 when Sunderland closed down and it was bought by J. W. Fowler, the founder of the Light Railway Transport League, and owner of a printing works at 245 Cricklewood Broadway. Jay Fowler has since died, and the car has been in store at a number of places since leaving Sunderland, arriving at Crich in July, 1961 where it has remained in store, very since.

That the car is being restored at this time is pure good fortune: the Glasgow Garden Festival held in 1988 had a tram service, composed of three cars from Crich. These were such a success that the Garden Festival organisers have asked for trams for the 1990 Festival to be held at Gateshead. There is a Gateshead car at Crich, and a Newcastle one, which are earmarked for the Festival, and, of course, 331 qualifies for inclusion because it can go to Gateshead as "Sunderland 100", (though the colours and fittings will be pure "M.E.T."). When 331 comes back to Crich at the end of 1990, "100" will give way to "331" and any Finchley Society visitors to Crich will, in due course, be able to ride on this genuine Finchley car carrying "40" route numbers and bearing ~, destinations "Whetstone-North Finchley-Church End-Temple Fortune-Golders Green-Cricklewood". (My driving duties and affections will then be transferred from our L.C.C. No. 106 to 331!)

Finchley Society members are very welcome at Crich - especially when I am driving! The Museum is open in the Summer months (to end of September) Mondays to Thursdays plus week-ends and Bank holidays. In the last two weeks of July and all August, it is open on Fridays and during October, at weekends only.

The cost of restoring 331 is astronomical - some £100,000 is being spent, even though much of the work

will be done by volunteers. The Society would appreciate any help with this particular car (from Finchley residents especially); perhaps a party might like to visit us one day, we cater for coach parties to include afternoon tea, etc. I will send brief notes on progress with 331 in about three months' time, when some idea of how long the work will take to complete, will have emerged.

#### TAILPIECES

Fire\_Alert            Mary Hodgkinson

Carelessness about fire precautions is for me - and for other members, I know - a constant concern. Last year for the first time, I noticed examples of this laxity in cafes and department stores. After the washrooms of 'powder rooms' have been cleaned, the outer doors are propped open with a fire extinguisher. A fire prevention officer tells me that this is "certainly not good practice". On each occasion I have had a word with the manager. Public-spirited members please note!

Doggy doings        Dorothy Fox

Notices displayed on the promenade at Peel, Isle of Man, read - "Dogs are not permitted to foul the beach between the months of April and September"

Presumably, they can do their worst from October to March!

For The Finchley Society  
John and Carol Halls, Newsletter Editors