

The Finchley Society Newsletter

OCTOBER 1991 No. 8191 SUPPLEMENT

MAKE WAY FOR THE HORSES! Timothy Johnson

Two hefty shires, drawing the weighty College Farm horse-bus were bearing down on a group of people, prams and small children standing in their path on Country Fair day, Sunday 2nd June.

Make way for the horses! Stand clear! Stand back please!" boomed the loudspeakers. The obstructionists turned their heads to look, but their feet didn't budge. Safety-conscious bystanders took up the cry Stand clear!, stand back, Oh, get out of the way!" and finally, but slowly, the road was cleared. Perhaps at College Farm everything, including of course the horses, are just "friends", moving or not!

The afternoon was crammed with entertainment, The Whittington Handbell ringers (we hope they will come again) gave two performances, and so did the Borehamwood Band. The Pex Puppet Theatre played to an over-packed house, and the horse bus, having finally forced a passage, carried hundreds of happy passengers on a series of circular trips. There were queues for donkey rides and the blue carousel revolved from 1 p.m to 6 p.m. with a full complement on every ride. The Bouncing Castle bounded with cheerful children for a solid five hours and so did the Crackerjack Ball Pool. The Model Horse-drawn Vehicles Club of Great Britain mounted a splendid exhibition including the Tally Ho mail coach of local renown.

In College Farm Gallery people seemed to be finding the very picture they had always wanted, and portrait artist Ben Berry was producing instant likenesses for his sitters to take home. Even if College Farm had achieved nothing else over the years, its Monthly Crafts Market would merit very special attention, and many patrons of Country Fairs come specially for what it has to offer. Demands of would be stallholders have so far outstripped the available space that the organiser can be very selective, and this shows in the excellent range of crafts goods on offer.

The St. John Ambulance, whose services we are pleased to have every month, runs a children's roller-coaster and does demonstrations of how to save life by resuscitation in cases of electric shock and other calamities on the home front.

Quite apart from the arts, crafts and fairground follies, the many breeds of farm animals have their own fans. There are pigs, sheep, goats, horses, cows, highland cattle and rare-breed exotic poultry. Star of the show on Sunday, 2nd June was Church End Hollyhock (to be known as "Holly"), a week-old foal born to Lilly, a rare-breed Dales Pony. In continuity with local history, Dales ponies have recently been re-introduced to the farm from the North Country. Many local people will remember them as having drawn Express Dairy milk floats in former days, and Jane and Chris Ower have now brought them back to Finchley.

It is interesting to reflect that it is eleven years (how time passes!) since the Finchley Society first collaborated with Chris and Jane to hold the first experimental Open Day. That basic idea of inviting local people to see the farm has now developed into the regular first-Sunday-of-every-month Country Fair, which draws the public from all over the London area today. And so it is that far more people know of the Finchley Society through its continued association with the Farm than are aware of all the good work the Society is doing elsewhere - it makes you think, doesn't it?

#### JUNE 8th BARBECUE

Only the hardest "few" - the very tip-of-the-tip of The Finchley Society iceberg of membership (excuse the weather pun) braved the elements for the celebratory barbecue at College Farm on the evening of Saturday, June 8th. You'll remember that this was the second, summer phase, of our celebration of the Society's 20th Anniversary. In fact there were eighty members and friends present on that "barmy" instead of the expected "balmy", evening - which on reflection wasn't a bad total considering they were in some danger of turning blue with cold!

However, the excellent barbecue conducted by Kay and Gordon Lowe (Kay is Betty and Norman Burgess's daughter) and the salads that were made up in the nearby Fitzalan Road kitchen of member Eva Wilson, did sustain, so everyone survived the cold long enough to be thoroughly entertained by Mike Smart and Carole Clarke (Guild Players/Methodist Church) with a programme of folk and funny songs.

Finally, special thanks go of course to our hosts for the evening - the College Farm "farmers" Chris and Jane Ower. Even their good deed for the day didn't escape whatever it was that the fates had in for Fin.Soc. that evening - they were taking the two shire horses for exercise with the omnibus and very kindly invited those

children who were present for the evening, to go along for the ride - up to Tally Ho and back. However, the ride was abruptly shortened when, before even reaching the junction with East End Road, one of the pair threw a shoe and so they were forced to return immediately.

#### EAST FINCHLEY COMMUNITY FESTIVAL     Adele Cohen

The Summer Solstice, long lovely days in June - where were they this year? Arriving at Cherry Tree Wood at 9.40 a.m. on Saturday, the 22nd for the East Finchley Community Festival, ready to set up one's stall, it was a matter of fervent prayer that, at least, we should escape the rain! And we did! The Festival was all but over when the rain returned.

For me, the day was a difficult one - Philip and I had been associated with the Festival since its inception, but from the group of young people who work so hard to organise it, I had so much warmth and support. There was the usual happy and informal atmosphere of a village fete one has come to expect of this event, the Procession from along the High Road opening the Festival on its arrival in Cherry Tree Wood. For the children, the opportunity to examine closely the visiting Fire Engine proved an exciting attraction; whilst for all of us the very colourful and graceful little Indian dancers were enchanting.

The stall I was responsible for (Pensioners' Voice) was very near The Finchley Society's splendid display stand, so reciprocal visits were made and, although there was no noticeable increase in membership, hopefully many more people are aware of our existence and the work we do.

This year we were visited by His Worship the Mayor, Cllr. Pym and by the Chairman of Social Services Committee, Cllr. Barbara Langstone.

With such uninviting weather, we did wonder if there would be as great an attendance this year but the crowds did turn out, although maybe they did not stay for so long - it wasn't really the sort of day for sitting around picnicking on the grass!

#### JUNE MEETING     David Smith

Peter Clayton gave us a thoroughly well-researched, well documented and interesting biography of Miss Octavia Hill, known in her time as "one of the great women of the Victorian Age", known today as one of the three

founders of the National Trust, and since this meeting, known as someone of note who lived in Finchley.

Octavia Hill was born in Wisbech, Cambs, on the banks of the Nene in December 1838. She died in 1912. Her father's radical views and pioneering educational zeal put him at odds with the worthies of the town and his eventual bankruptcy hastened the family's departure from that town in 1840. They then lived in various parts of the country - Hampstead, Leeds, Gloucester - before coming to Finchley in time for the census of 1851 which showed them living at Brownsell Cottages, High Road, East Finchley. Although the family did not live here long, Octavia derived great enjoyment from her rural surroundings. She wrote later of performing with her sisters 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' on the bank beside the stream (Strawberry Vale), with no-one watching. We, the Finchleians of today, are tempted to conjecture that these early stirrings of inspiration and creativity helped Octavia in adult life to strive for the preservation of the English countryside and for the betterment of the living and working conditions of what she termed "the industrious classes".

Just as we were delighted to learn of Finchley's seminal influence on Octavia, our speaker was equally delighted on discovering that several members of his audience remembered Brownsell Cottages before they were demolished in the 1960s. (They were in the High Road, opposite the Green Man public house but a little to the south. Further research on these is being undertaken at the moment).

Octavia continued to be concerned about the less-fortunate members of society and was much influenced by the ideas of Henry Mayhew, expressed in his book "London Labour and the London Poor". The work of Ruskin and of Morris were also great influences on her. Ruskin once asked her what she wanted to do with her life. Her reply was: "I want to improve the housing of the poor". She developed her ideas in a practical way by purchasing three houses in Marylebone and "training the tenants" to create and maintain good standards of household organisation and hygiene. She proved that housing used in this way could be made to pay. Her pioneering social work expanded and many people were helped to leave their slum dwellings and to take pride in their homes and in their lives. Eventually Royal patronage and international fame deservedly came her way.

She was anxious to see protection for the open spaces around London as the urban expansion of the 1870s and 1880s continued. "Space for the people" was one of her themes and in her book "Our Common Land", published in 1877, she saw four different uses of open space: where

people could sit, or play, or stroll, or spend a day. She wanted to bring colour to people's lives and because of her efforts many of London's squares and churchyards were opened up to the public for the first time. She campaigned for the preservation of spaces such as Burnham Beeches and Parliament Hill Fields (and thankfully won!) and was advocating a "green belt" for London as early as 1888.

Her advocacy of the benefits of public access to open spaces, and of sustained improvement in people's lives, inspired many to follow her lead and to begin bequeathing property to the nation. The formation of the National Trust in 1895 was the natural sequel to all that she had done and remains a national memorial to her work and vision.

#### WISBECH VISITORS ON A "HILL" TRAIL Norman and Betty Burgess

On Sunday 21 July over 50 members and guests of the Wisbech Society, guided by Peter Clayton of Elm, retraced the life and career of the Victorian housing management reformer, open space campaigner and founder of The National Trust, Octavia Hill.

The day commenced in Wisbech at 7/8 South Brink where she was born in 1838 and where her father and mother started the family tradition of caring for the poor. Renee Bass of the Octavia Hill Trust and Frances Bloomfield, a third generation Trust tenant, journeyed to Wisbech to participate in the day from the outset.

On the outskirts of London the group was joined by Professor Charles Capen McLaughlin, the distinguished urban scholar from the American University of Washington, who had flown over specially for the occasion and Judy Bolognesi, who represented the young generation of trainee Octavia Hill Women Housing Managers at the Church Commissioners. At Finchley, where Octavia Hill spent her childhood "jumping hedges and climbing trees", an Octavia Hill Commemoration Ceremony took place on the Glebeland site, arranged by Dr. Oliver Natelson, including the planting of an oak tree and a time capsule. The Finchley Society was represented for the rest of the day by Norman and Betty Burgess.

On the way to the London buildings the coach took the party around Hampstead Garden Suburb stopping to see the first house built in 1907 at Asmunds Hill, Temple Fortune where Henrietta Barnett, who worked closely with Octavia Hill, founded the now famous Garden Suburb for the artisan and middle classes of that time. Margaret Wolfit (daughter of Sir Donald Wolfit and remembered for her

stage portrayal of Octavia Hill), read excerpts from Octavia's writings and letters at the houses bought for Octavia's management by John Ruskin. The first coach stop was at Sarsden Buildings, now off St. Christopher's Place, Octavia's first building project in the 1870s. Virginia creepers in pots were presented by the visiting party to adorn a high blank brick wall that she had frequently referred to.

At the Church Commissioners' London Estate Office at Ospringle House, Waterloo, SE1, where the Octavia Hill management skills are still practised, lunch was generously provided by the Supervisor of Housing Managers, Janet Shearman. The chairman of The Wisbech Society, Richard Barnwell, and local children planted a Crab Apple Tree. Richard also presented bedding plants and a framed photograph of Octavia's South Brink birthplace.

On departing, each visitor was presented by Janet Shearman with a copy of the biography of Octavia Hill by E. Moberly Bell. Janet then accompanied the group on a walk through Southwark to examine the secondary phase of Octavia Hill's housing work, notably at Gable and Redcross Cottages with its Hall and Garden. The party then travelled on to Crockham Hill, near Westerham in Kent, where local expert Kevin Reynolds conducted a footpath walk over Mariner's Hill, an early National Trust property, bought by Octavia Hill for just £500. This has spectacular views over the Weald of Kent.

Greeting the group at Froghole Corner were members of the family including Mrs. Susan Ouvrey (who attended the Finchley Society meeting on 27 June), Mrs. Ursula Cash and Octavia's great, great, great niece, Elizabeth Cash. After tea in the garden of Larksfield, Octavia's cottage, where she spent the latter days of her life, three of the children of the present owners, Peter and Sheila Dickinson, Anna, Tom and Zoe helped plant a variegated Maple Tree from a Wisbech nursery to commemorate the visit. In Crockham Hill Church, Margaret Wolfit read from Octavia's 1875 article "Space for the People", and at her grave beneath a Yew tree overlooking the countryside she helped to save, Margaret laid a simple red rose from Octavia's favourite garden at Redcross Hall.

Richard Barnwell laid a bunch of Wisbech flowers, followed by representatives of various organisations connected with Octavia Hill, including John Brian of the Working Men's College in Camden Town where she taught. Wild flowers from Finchley, her childhood home, were laid by Norman Burgess. Further Wisbech flowers were added by Renee Bass of the Octavia Hill Trust and finally by Mrs. Bolton, of The Finchley Society, and the

Brownsell Cottage Research Committee. All of this was followed by a short prayer at the graveside by Church warden Kevin Reynolds.

Richard Barnwell said: "We are so grateful to Peter Clayton for arranging this fascinating day. I don't think most people realise that the origins of Olivia's work were in Wisbech. Like her father and mother, she strove for acceptable living standards for everyone and her influence continues today. I was astonished at the number of people devoted to Octavia Hill's memory, who helped, and the trust they showed us and in each other. We hope that it may be possible to further the connection between Wisbech and all the places and organisations associated with her remarkable life."

Following a suggestion from Norman Burgess, Peter Clayton has promised to repeat this 'pilgrimage' starting at Finchley in April or May 1992 if approved by our committees. We were very privileged to share this 12 hour, unforgettable day.

#### THE TWO SUMMER SHOWS - COMMENT

Rather as was the case last year, we're sorry to disappoint you with a complete absence of jolly and amusing anecdotes, respectively from the Carnival and the Friern Barnet Show - the actual events aside, that takes the skilled observation and wit of an Esther Johnson or at least a sound-alike!

In fact, for the second year running, the Carnival was a disappointment for Fin.Soc. This year, as reported in advance, we took no space in the so-called Charities Marquee, choosing instead to employ the display trailer on an outdoor pitch. That was undoubtedly wise, for general member-opinion has it that the marquee was "a mess" and we certainly reduced our outgoings for the occasion - which was also just as well, for with few "sales", we did not quite recover our costs.

The weather on the Saturday was only poor-to-middling and there was no throng of likely Finchley Society members queuing up to join or to buy. However, other general "member-opinion" seemed to approve highly of the 1991 trailer display, so all's well that ended well.

At the Friern Barnet Show our surplus of income over expenditure was a healthy £17, thanks to Joan Butcher's full turnout of helpers through Friday and Saturday, and the stall overflowing with items for sale, all backed by the dismantled 1991 display from the trailer. There were no qualms about that marquee - it was a pleasure to be there and in the company of both the other exhibitors

and the visitors. Even the weather was a joy - a good time was had by all!!

FINCHLEY COMMUNITY FORUM'S OPEN DAY, 21st SEPTEMBER  
Norman Burgess

The rich cultural and social diversity of Finchley was on show when 60 community groups got together for the third annual Forum Open Day at Finchley Methodist Church in Ballards Lane. Seen as an information exchange where groups involved in Finchley life can spread the word on their activities, this year's focus was on Arts, Education and Health. The Mayor was represented by Cllr. Barbara Langstone who visited all the stalls (and who subsequently wrote to each of the participating organisations expressing her interest in their work and what she learned from the day). Refreshments, including international food, was available all day and a creche was also organised.

Participating groups ranged from the Philatelic Society to a Poetry Group. There was a strong presence from ethnic minorities within the area, from the London Museum of Jewish Life, to Khawateen, the Moslem Women's Cultural Group. A whole room was set aside for Council services and Barnet Videotex staff presented their latest developments in the Council's information project. The Park Rangers had a colourful display of their areas within the Borough.

Outside the main building, activities included the Drug and Alcohol Service information van, Aids Education service, and Dr. Bike of the London Cycling Campaign who provided free bicycle checks and post-coding of cycles. Our striking display trailer was also there but it was regrettable that no volunteers could be found to man it through the occasion.

The event attracted approximately 500 visitors and the organisers hope to plan for a much larger Community and Arts Festival in 1992, perhaps in the rebuilt and refurbished Avenue House.

Ed's footnote: The next meeting of Finchley Community Forum (in which Fin.Soc. is represented by Norman Burgess and Pat Dunnill), will be one of the occasional and valuable meetings with Ward Councillors. The agenda as usual is long and varied - including such subjects as Christ's College Site, Avenue House, St. Mary's School site, Manor House site, Parking zones, Libraries, Citizens Advice Bureaux, Lavatories, Smith's Field, the Open Air Swimming Pool, charges for hire of Council premises and Community Work development.

In due course we hope to outline some of the resulting discussions, when Forum publish their minutes.

SEPTEMBER MEETING: MUSWELL HILL      David Smith

Ken Gay's illustrated talk began with two slides of the view down Muswell Hill, one from 1822 and the other a contemporary shot. As with our own area, the view is recognisable only because of the lie of the land, while trees and buildings have changed or gone. The grand residences, such as "The Grove" and "The Priory" with their fine rooms and ornamental gardens have gone, their place taken by the villas and the terraces of the Victorian and Edwardian era. Some of course remain, in the conservation area and beyond. The house in Colney Hatch Lane (next to the Catholic Church) and North Bank in Pages Lane (the latter with its 350 year-old chestnut tree) are two fine examples.

The "Crystal Palace of North London" as its architect described the Alexandra Palace, was first conceived in 1859 but it was not until 1873 that Queen Victoria declared it open. It seated 12,000 and although billed as a "Palace of Entertainment" the facilities were arranged so that "the people could have lectures". The Palace's vicissitudes were described by Ken in detail, concluding with today's rebuilding programme. Emerging magnificence is hinted at, and the eventual outpouring of sound by the Willis organ is an event to anticipate, but it is sad to hear that the world's first television studios (1936) are in a sorry state of repair and may disappear for ever.

Ken took us on a slide tour of the area: the Athenaeum pulled down in 1915, Muswell Hill Police Station, a fine building of 1904, St. James's Church and Church Hall, also fine. The Public Library in Queens Avenue, designed in a hurry by the Borough Engineer, and consequently not fine. The Odeon Cinema - a listed building with a wonderful 1930s interior, opened in 1936. 1936? Yes, you remembered! The cinema opened in the same year as the T.V. studios at Alexandra Palace. Ironic! But one feature of the area survives - the buses in the circus in the middle of the road at the top of the hill! Dare one suggest that this is a unique feature? They have been there since 1902 and look like staying. Long live characteristics like that! Long live Muswell Hill! Thank you, Ken, for a lively evening.

DIDN'T WE HAVE A LOVELY DAY?      Timothy Johnson

Cold, wet and windy was the weather forecast. There seemed little chance of anyone escaping the rain and

gales about to lash the country on Saturday, 28th September.

9.15 a.m. The sun shone kindly in a translucent blue sky as we boarded the coach at Tally Ho and was still shining as we picked up the rest of the party at Church End.

11.30 a.m. Cups and assorted biscuits were already set out on tables to welcome us at the Thomas Paine Hotel in Thetford. "What a lovely day. Aren't you lucky?" said one of the ladies filling the cups with coffee. "You've a lovely day for your tour" said another member of the staff as she filled the cups again.

On the site of this hotel, in 1737, was born Thomas Paine himself, Quaker, social reformer and revolutionary. He failed in a bid to topple the British Monarchy, but had better luck in America where he inspired the colonists to revolt, helped to write The Declaration of Independence and invented the name of "The United States of America". Returning to England as a kind of unofficial American Ambassador he chanced his luck again by publishing his work "The Rights of Man" before leaving (perhaps just in time) for France, where he was welcomed as a hero to play an active part in the French Revolution. But revolutionaries are not always kind to one another and only by a hairsbreadth did he escape death by the guillotine. The rise to power of the Emperor Napoleon I indicated that it was time to move on again, so he returned to America where he died in 1809. He had been an honoured citizen in France and America. In Britain his writings were banned, effigies of him were burned in many towns and until recently his native town of Thetford disowned him completely. His statue there was provided in 1964 by the Thomas Paine Foundation of America and a commemorative plaque on his birthplace was the gift of an American Air Force Group. But time, as they say, heals all wounds, and Thetford now seems quite happy to attract tourist dollars, and perhaps a few francs.

The town dates back to Roman times and, apart from a bit of "redevelopment" (circa 1960), the shopping district wears its age gracefully. It is a pleasant area of pedestrian ways on the banks of the Little Ouse river. While Thomas Paine failed to incite political revolution in England, his home town was materially responsible for another revolution which actually happened. The local firm of Burrell designed and produced the steam engines which powered new agricultural machinery, and this set in motion the Great Agricultural Revolution of the 19th Century. The name Burrell was seen on traction engines, steam rollers and the fairground machinery that made

roundabouts revolve. It (and Thetford) became world famous.

12.30 p.m. As we boarded the coach again someone claimed to have been hit by a raindrop. 1.30 p.m. Arrival at Norwich to picnic in the Cathedral gardens, eat packed lunches in the cloisters or patronise the cathedral buffet. 2.30 p.m. Start of a walking tour in the town in three groups, each one conducted by a well-informed lady guide.

There is so much to see in Norwich that one could make an endless series of visits without losing interest. Romans, Saxons, Normans and waves of refugees from the Continent have all added to the rich pattern, but the Industrial Revolution passed Norwich by. Perhaps that is why so much of its splendid heritage was spared. The Norman Cathedral, built of Caen stone, is one of the few English cathedrals still substantially intact in the original Norman Romanesque style. Outside its east end is the grave of Nurse Edith Cavell, heroine of the First World War who was shot by German occupying forces in Belgium, and finally laid to rest here in 1919.

Norwich was said to have more churches than any other city North of the Alps. This is easy to believe. The old town is a forest of towers and steeples with a church on almost every street corner. It would be impossible to support them all in these days and many have been secularized to serve useful community purposes; social, charitable, educational and artistic. (Think of the desperate quest for arts centre premises in the Borough of Barnet! - compare and contrast!).

The old houses of Norwich, in stone, flint, brick or timber-framed lath and plaster encapsulate the architectural history of many centuries. We saw them lining picturesque old streets or in secret alleyways or courtyards. Some are already restored while others are still shrouded in plastic sheets. "Proper restoration takes a long time and costs a lot of money" said our guide, and she explained some of the technicalities to illustrate the point. Particularly interesting is the recent history of a highly photogenic little street called Elm Hill. In the years between the wars it was a dreadful place, ripe for slum clearance, and was saved from demolition by just one vote. So it seems that one single city father was primarily responsible for the fact that Elm Hill must now be one of the most architecturally interesting streets in Europe. (It makes one think). The actual elm, incidentally, was killed by the Dutch disease, and has been temporarily replaced by a plane tree.

Our guide had a fund of local stories. This is one of them. Long, long ago, when the Flemish weavers arrived in Norwich they brought canaries with them to provide music while they wove, and that is why the Norwich Football team is known as "The Canaries".

The conducted tour over, we had a spare hour - tourist brochures would describe it as "at leisure" - for tea, private exploration or shopping, and only towards the end of it did the rain begin.

6.45 p.m. We boarded the coach outside the City Hall within sight of armies of policemen returning to base. They had been controlling "Canary" fans, Leeds supporters, and the traffic generated by both. Rain beat on the windscreen for most of the return journey.

8.30 p.m. Return to Finchley. It stopped raining. What a lovely day we had!

For 20 years now your Society has been taking members to interesting places and building a fine reputation for the quality and value of its excursions. Vice President David Smith was one of the pioneer organizers. The late Paddy Musgrove brought his precise military mind to the task too, and the essential ingredient of precise planning still paramount for the smooth running enjoyment of today's outings. The ground for the Norwich Tour was spied out months ago by Ted and Shirley Avery. Kurt Weinberg went over the ground again. Then all three got down to working out the final details - there is much more to all this than most of our happy travellers would imagine. So thank you Kurt, and thank you Ted and Shirley.

Book for the next adventure as soon as it is announced - or you could be one of the unlucky ones!

HISTORICAL NOTE FROM THE MIDDLESEX SOCIETY L. D.  
Jarvis J.P., F.R.Hist.S.

Ed's note: This most interesting article was published in The Middlesex Society Newsletter earlier this year.

Members who have joined The Middlesex Society since 1965 may like to know something of the efforts we made to preserve the ancient name and traditions of "Middlesex", when the administrative County became absorbed into the Greater London Council. First rumours of the G.L.C. "take-over" were heard in 1962, and as your then Chairman I became involved in quite voluminous correspondence and not a few interviews with personages of influence and standing who were all interested in preserving the name "Middlesex".

One of my earliest contacts was with the late Sir Harry Brittain who had been the first M.P. for Acton when it was formed into a separate Parliamentary Division from Ealing. He gave his full support to our efforts. Then one of our former Vice-Presidents, the late Sir John Betjeman, came on the scene as a staunch champion of "Middlesex". He asked me to go over and see him and I shall long remember the very interesting talk we had over the historic associations of the county

The late Mr. Charles Curran, then M.P. for Uxbridge, also gave us his full support and encouragement, and was able to arrange for me to see Sir Keith Joseph, who was at that time the Minister responsible for Local Government. At that meeting I stressed with Sir Keith the importance of retaining the name "Middlesex in postal addresses and while I was with him he 'phoned direct to the (then) Postmaster General and got an assurance that this would be retained. If I had not pressed the point I think it likely that all Middlesex addresses would have been submerged with a London postal district number only.

Another aspect with which I became involved on behalf of the Society was the re-organisation of the administration of justice in 1965. The proposal was to abolish the name "Middlesex" from the Quarter Sessions (as they then were, now the Crown Court) but I took the matter up with Lord Merthyr (then Chairman of the Magistrates' Association) and through his good offices I got the ear of the Lord Chancellor. When the Bill came before the House of Lords on its second reading I was invited to a special seat at the Bar of the House to hear the Lord Chancellor recommend the retention of the name "Middlesex" for the Sessions in view of the presentations which had been made to him, mainly by our Society. This change from the original proposals of the Bill to name the whole area "North-West Greater London" met with no opposition from the Lords and was duly written into the Bill and confirmed by the House of Commons.

About this time HRH Prince Philip spoke at a dinner of the Middlesex Cricket Club about the importance of retaining the historic name of Middlesex in their title, so I wrote to his Private Secretary pointing out that this was exactly what we were doing. I quote the reply which I received from Buckingham Palace, dated 13th August 1964:

Dear Mr. Jarvis,

Thank you for your letter of 6th August. His Royal Highness has seen it and has asked me to say that he was most interested and wishes your Society well.

(signed) Christopher Bonham-Carter

I also made some representations about the Lord Lieutenancy and the Shrievalty of Middlesex with the result that the Lieutenant for the Middlesex Area (of Greater London) was given the title of "Assistant Lieutenant" - as distinct from a number of Deputy Lieutenants.

One final touch was when the G.L.C. took over the Middlesex Guildhall they abolished the flag which had always flown from the central tower when the Courts were in session. I made strong protests about this, at first without avail; but by continual insistence I finally got the flag restored and you can see it at any time if you look up from Parliament Square - indicating that the Middlesex Crown Court is sitting.

LESLIE'S REALLY BOASTING NOW!

It would be reasonable to suppose that our admiration for the "have society will travel" dedication of amenity-minded residents of Sussex, as revealed to us recently by Leslie Martin, has been plumbed to its capacity - but no, Leslie is now leaving us gasping, or "for dead" as they say, with his own "Month-in-the-life-of" or "The everyday story of a Sussex...Society Member". It reads as follows -

1. The August Barbecue didn't quite make its financial target but 45 people turned out and had a good time.
2. A week later I attended an all-day class (Sussex Arch.Soc.) at Michelham Priory.
3. The next day I went by coach with another society to Chatham Dockyard to the living museum of naval sailing ship days.
4. The Tuesday next, with our Methodist Church group, we coached to Southsea and took in some history regarding Richard II and Henry VIII.
5. The third Sunday of September saw me on duty at the Coultershaw Water Wheel and Beam Pump for the final open-day of the year.

Any of us who by now have reached down the road atlas will know that this is a saga not just of dedication but sheer old fashioned stamina! Leslie though, is generous

to a fault, for he closes by mentioning four other people he knows who, studying botany, last winter attended 20 classes each involving a 50 mile round trip. What DO they feed-em on down there?

P.S. Leslie sends his best wishes to all friends in The Finchley Society, until he finds time midst all that to-ing and fro-ing to write again.

#### FROM HERITAGE OUTLOOK

Government sources recently and, rather quietly, conceded that London needs some sort of over-seeing body that can co-ordinate for the good of the whole community certain matters that are now dealt with by individual councils.

In June that precise view emerged from a seminar at the Barbican and which was reported in the July/August edition of Heritage Outlook, the journal of the Civic Trust. That report is extracted here in full -

"London needs an official voice and some kind of strategic authority to provide integrated transport and land-use planning for its whole region - but the two are not necessarily the same. This was the consensus view at a seminar on the theme Who Shapes London? held at the Barbican Centre in June. The event was organised by Gresham College and chaired by architect Sir Andrew Derbyshire, who currently enjoys the title of Gresham Professor of Rhetoric.

Those taking part included representatives of local planning authorities, including the City of London and London Docklands Development Corporation, the London School of Economics, the Town & Country Planning Association, several leading developers, and the London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC) which is the present statutory body charged with advising on London planning. Various civil servants had been invited but felt unable to attend, said Sir Andrew.

Ronald Spinney, chairman of Greycoat PLC, said developers despaired of the present system, under which a development as large as the King's Cross scheme with profound impact on London as a whole was statutorily the responsibility of a single borough - Camden - to decide. "Is that really the right framework?" he asked.

Sir Alfred Sherman proposed a strategic planning authority covering the London Metropolitan Region - more than Greater London but less than the South East planning region. He and other speakers rejected the recreation of anything akin to the GLC.

Representing London Forum, Tony Aldous said local amenity groups in London had come to regard integration of land-use and planning as crucial, they also wanted a representative organisation for London; this would also serve as a "one-stop" point of inquiry for overseas investors. It was also time to re-examine the nature of the London boroughs, which were too small for some functions, too large for others, and had boundaries which ran through the middle of many local communities.

Sir Andrew said that there was general agreement that all was not well with London. "Inadequate transport, housing shortages, a lack of co-ordinated strategic planning, poor environmental quality, social distress, not much vision and not enough voice are some of the perceived symptoms". Michael Heseltine's proposal to set up a commission to review local government boundaries and functions provided an opportunity to examine and lobby for improvements."

TAILPIECE (with acknowledgment to "Greenpeace")

"Planet Earth is 4,600 million years old. We can liken earth to a person of 46 years. Dinosaurs did not appear until one year ago, when the planet was 45. Mammals arrived only 8 months ago. Modern man has been around for 4 hours. During the last hour man discovered agriculture. The industrial revolution began a minute ago. During those 60 seconds, modern man has made a rubbish tip of Paradise".

For The Finchley Society

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