

50p FREE TO MEMBERS APRIL 1995 NO. 4/95

APRIL MONTHLY MEETING

The meeting on Thursday, 27th April, 1995 at Avenue House will start at 7.45 p.m. Dr. Michael Essex-Lopresti will be speaking about the Regent's Canal, plans for which can be traced back to the early years of the 19th century, nearly 200 years ago. Dr. Essex-Lopresti, who is a Trustee of the London Canal Museum, is an experienced speaker and many members will recall his interesting talk to the Society on "The New River" in... wait for it... June 1989. He tells us that he will speak on "The Regent's Canal, when it was built, how it fared and what it is like today. An unusual cargo carried was imported ice for the catering trade delivered to ice wells in the building now occupied by the London Canal Museum of which I am a Trustee. I have been leading guided walks along the Regent's Canal for 19 years, am the author of Exploring the Regent's Canal and am Vice-President of the London Region of the Inland Waterways Association."

It should be a fascinating and enjoyable lecture. The days are lengthening and brightening, so let us have your support and there will, of course, be the usual raffle. (Offers of prizes to Eileen Cox please)

Dr. Essex-Lopresti has arranged a boat trip on the canal for Saturday, 3rd June. This will start at 2.15 p.m. at the lock at Camden just beyond the Chalk Farm Road bridge, arriving back around 5.15 p.m. The trip includes a one-hour conducted visit to the London Canal Museum.

Numbers are limited to 12, but if sufficient wish to take part another trip will be arranged in the morning. Those wishing to come please advise Robert Winton, 224 Creighton Avenue, N2 9BD, sending their name, address, telephone number and a cheque for £8.50 (payable to The Finchley Society) which includes entry to the Museum.

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We send best wishes to Joe Ingall and Bill Williams for a speedy return to health after their recent illnesses.

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REMINISCENCES

Cyril Pentecost has sent us a cutting from the Finchley Press printed over 70 years ago on the 25th August 1922. The cutting is of an interview with two elderly Finchley residents whose memories went back some 50 years to about the 1860s. Readers may find extracts from the interview interesting and we propose printing them over coming months as space permits.

The cutting is headed: A Peep into the Past
FINCHLEY AS A RURAL DISTRICT
REMINISCENCES OF MR. EDWIN FOX

We read that "A PRESS representative visited Ballards Lodge, North Finchley, the home of Mr. Edwin Fox, J.P., recently, and that gentleman and his brother, drawing upon a fund of reminiscences, were able to impart much information that to old residents will bring fragrant memories of the past and which, to the newcomers and younger generation, will give an idea of the neighbourhood about half a century ago."

"Going back to the sixties the district was of a particularly rural character, with the Vestry as the governing authority. At that time there were three Finchleys - Church End, East Finchley, and Finchley Common, that part of the district now known as North Finchley, a title apparently given by the Post Office during comparatively recent years. Means of communication with London were very limited and in the early sixties there was only the railway station at Colney Hatch, now New Southgate, where passengers travelled to King's Cross, and the horse omnibuses. There were three such 'buses that plied between Barnet and London, carrying mails to St. Martin le Grand. These proceeded via the Great North-road, reaching Finchley between 8 and 9 o'clock and midday. The journey took about an hour, and one 'bus returned at 11 o'clock in the morning and two in the evening. On the road were three turnpikes and tolls for carriages amounted to 1s 6d. There was one turnpike near Archway Tavern, the fee for passing this being 6d. for a carriage and a 1d. for every foot passenger."

"There was also another road to London now known as Ballards-lane and Regents Park-road, but the Great North-road had a hard surface, whilst the Regents Park-road had a soft one, hence the former was preferred for travelling purposes. Over the Regents Park-road, however, there used to be a 'bus service to the West End, run by a Mr. Leighton, but to travel over it at night was considered to be dangerous as it was believed that footpads laid in waiting for the unwary traveller. The road was a lonely one, being flanked mostly by grassland, but here and there were big houses and a few scattered cottages until St. John's Wood was reached."

Ed. As a matter of interest, in the latter years of the 19th Century, August Hare, in his book of London Walks, describes St. John 's Wood as an area of "second rate villas". Ho, ho!!

DEATH OF MEMBER

It is with regret we have to announce the death of member, Charles Ballard, who up to a few months ago was a regular attender at our monthly meetings. He always carried a small notebook and made copious notes. We express our sympathy to his family which includes eight grand-children.

INVITATIONS

WHEN WOODHOUSE WENT TO WAR - Revue with Supper. 25th June, 1995 5.30 - 9 p.m.

Just over 50 years ago, Woodhouse School, Finchley (today's Woodhouse College) became embroiled in World War II. How did it affect them? What happened and when? These questions and many more are the theme of a specially written revue called "When Woodhouse Went to War" - all of it against a background of songs, words and music of the times performed by a professional Company and talent from today's College. Written by FinSoc member Percy Reboul, there will be something for all tastes from the light-hearted to the more serious.

It is essentially an evening of fun and entertainment with a theatre supper included. No Spam fritters or Woolton pie, we are assured! A cordial invitation is extended to FinSoc members but book now, seats are strictly limited. The price is £10 (including dinner) and tickets are obtainable from Mrs Pam Costello, Woodhouse College, Woodhouse Road, Finchley, N12 9EY (Tel:0181 445 1210).

THE FINCHLEY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY invite members to an illustrated talk on "The History of the English Garden" by Lona Price at Moss Hall Junior School, Nether Street on Tuesday 2nd May at 8 p.m.

FINCHLEY AND BARNET FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY invite members to a talk on Monday 24th April, 1995 at 8 p.m. for 8.15 p.m. given by Mr. Martin Gladman who will speak about THE WORLD OF SECONDHAND BOOKS.

Mr. Gladman has been a Secondhand Bookseller for 18 years based in Friern Barnet and Finchley, but has also been as far as Western Canada to buy stock. He suggests that those attending the meeting might like to bring along any ONE item as on the "Antiques Roadshow".

The meeting is held upstairs at Church End Library, Finchley, N3 and light refreshments are served during the meeting.

HADAS Saturday, 17th June there will be an outing to Malmesbury and Compton Bassett with Micky Watkins and Micky Cohen. Details from Hon. Secretary Liz Holliday, Gorse Cottage, The Common, Chipperfield, WD4 9BL (01923 267483)

CHURCH END FESTIVAL, 7th May, 1995, 2 - 6 p.m. in the grounds of Avenue House. This is an opportunity to find out more about the many charities who will have display stalls. Over 50 have been booked covering all ages and interests from the Scouts to Age Concern. Thomas the Tank will be there and a bouncy castle will be in place. There will be a "roll bar" and the proceeds will go to cover insurance for the day. Each charity will keep any monies raised so it will be a good opportunity to enjoy yourselves and help swell their coffers.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

AVENUE HOUSE FESTIVAL. Norman and Betty Burgess would like firm offers of help with the FinSoc Bric-a-Brac stall on Sunday 7th May. Help is required at the following times:

12 noon - 2 p.m.	for setting up of stall and pricing of items
2 - 3 p.m.	at least three persons for selling items
3 - 4 p.m.	another set of three persons for selling
4 - 5 p.m.	another set of three persons for selling
5 - 6 p.m.	four persons required for clearing stall, etc.

Please telephone the Burgesses if you can offer your help and beforehand if you have been able to turn out saleable items that we shall be able to collect. (0181 346 6337)

CHOLDERTON VISIT. 20th May. See enclosed booking form for full details.

FINCHLEY ARTS CENTRE TRUST (FACT)

The Carlos Opera Group presents the music of Bellini, Flotow, Lehar, Mozart, Puccini, Strauss and Verdi on Saturday, 29th April, 1995 in the Victorian Drawing Room at Avenue House, East End Road, Church End, Finchley, N3 at 7.30 p.m. Tickets £7.50 each (including refreshments). Further details from FACT 0181 445 4175.

FACT news. Norman Burgess reports that Joan Sturdy has made the magnificent gift of her concert grand piano, a Broadwood, to the Finchley Arts Centre Trust. At the time of writing FACT is awaiting the legal documents from Barnet Council which has undertaken to carry out vital repairs to the sewers and electricity services and to provide additional external lighting to 'The Bothy'. Once these have been carried out, applications will be made to Grant awarding trusts for the conversion of the building into an Arts Centre. Remember, The Finchley Society prevented the demolition of this part of the Henry Stephens bequest

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Report by Barbara Warren, Chair

We have sent to Technical Services -

* A list of 9 street nameplates to be replaced or repaired, some, I am very pleased to report, coming from sightings from members. However they are slow in being dealt with.

* Notification of litter, bad pavings, tree replacement and vandal damage, most of which was dealt with very quickly.

* Concern about parking on corners, potholes and traffic light sequencing, most of which has been dealt with.

The Committee has indicated to the Council its concern about the condition of the Tower at Pardes School, and the area around the old "Fabrizi" shop in Regents Park Road, all of which are in a conservation area. The Council is certainly aware of the problem. We are pooling information with the Planning Committee.

Please plant the tree outside your house with annuals. We spotted a few last year, hopefully there will be more this year. The bulbs you planted last year should be coming through now!!

Please watch out for paving replacement not using the familiar Finchley red edging.

With regard to Avenue House and its grounds, we are concerned that the Estate is in grave danger. There has been a quiet time while the Action Group waited for the proposal documents to sink in, but, so far we have had no replies from anybody.

In despair, The Finchley Society set up a meeting with Bill Montgomery, and asked the Friends and a resident to come along as well. The paper admitted that as far as they were concerned the Council is being very tight-lipped.

The Estate is in grave danger of being taken over by the Council. There is a pending application to the Charity Commissioners to alter the scheme affecting the Estate. The application was made in November 1994 and we are unaware of any prior widespread public consultation about this major matter. It was only by pure chance that the Avenue House Action Group discovered that the application had been made. The Council is moving in to Avenue House and has stated that the Estate should be self-financing. A petition is being prepared and is a useful reminder that this is not just the concern of a few residents, for we have signatories from outraged people from all over the Borough. The latest move on the part of the managers of the kitchen is to lock up the kitchens and thus deny, not only access to these rooms, but to drinking water.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Friern and Halliwick Hospital Inquiry. The Inspector's report is awaited. Since the Inquiry we can hardly keep track of the number of reports and articles about the deleterious effects on town centres of retail parks and the closure of shops as a result. Such deleterious effects, denied categorically by the commercial developer and its experts at the Inquiry, seem to be accepted as axiomatic. Extraordinary.

Civic Trust. We heard that the Trust has a committee which is trying to ascertain how many councils do not take up appeals on planning applications because of the cost, i.e. they are worried about the cost and so reluctant to oppose appeals by unsuccessful applicants. Not opposing appeals must materially increase the changes of the appeals being successful of course.

T.V. Cable Laying. We discussed the potential damage, e.g. to trees, arising out of T.V. cable laying, which was drawn to our attention by a non-member. Clearly vigilance by the public is necessary and if members of the public apprehend damage they might wish to inform the Council's Technical Services Dept by phone and letter asking for urgent action and continuing to keep a weather eye open.

FRIENDS OF AVENUE HOUSE GROUNDS

A letter was sent to Engineering Services asking for certain matters to be dealt with -

- * Maintenance traffic in the Gardens travelling at speed, and users traffic becoming dangerous.
- * A sudden influx of signs
- * Our concern about a marquee being offered to wedding parties, and thus denying access to the lawn.
- * A defined parking place for the disabled

Letters have been received and most of these concerns, among others, are being dealt with. Instead of bread being thrown to the ducks, Janett, at the kiosk, has undertaken to supply bags of grain.

FINSOC AUDITOR

We are sorry to report the resignation of Eric Jenkins as FinSoc Auditor. The Society URGENTLY requires an Auditor for the three sets of accounts. Is there, e.g. a retired Bank Manager or accountant who can help out? PLEASE.

NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The meeting on 25th May, 1995 will be the AGM as well as an ordinary meeting of the Society. You will find with this Newsletter the formal notice of the AGM, agenda and nomination paper for posts open for election. If you wish to nominate a candidate for one of the electable positions (as indicated on the form) please complete and detach the nomination paper (signed by a seconder and the nominee) and send it to Eileen Cox or give it to her at the April or May meeting. You can of course submit more than one nomination paper.

LOCAL FACTS AND CURIOSITIES

(Reprinted with permission and thanks from St. Mary's Church Magazine)

Regents Park Road is an extension of Finchley Road which came into being after an Act of Parliament was passed in 1827 to construct a road to gain access to Barnet from London avoiding the heights of Highgate and Hampstead. One of the great drawbacks of the old Great North Road was

having to scale Highgate Hill, which was a formidable climb in the days of horse-drawn traffic.

Electric trams of the Metropolitan Electric Tramway Co. (absorbed by London Transport in 1933) began to run along Regents Park Road and Ballards Lane in December 1909. These lasted until August 1936 when trolleybuses of route numbers 645 and 660 took over the old tram routes 45 and 60. There was also a very short-lived route No. 651 from Barnet to Golders Green which ran from March 1938 to May of the same year. These swift clean and silent vehicles continued until January 1962 when they were replaced by diesel engined motor buses. Electric traction lasted just over half a century through Finchley. Twentyseven years of trams and twentysix of trolleybuses, making a total of fiftythree years.

NORTH FINCHLEY CONSULTATIVE FORUM

Members will be aware that Carol Halls is our representative on the Forum. On the 15th February, members of the public were invited to be present at a meeting of the Forum. We welcome this openness. The meeting at North Finchley Library was well attended. It was also lively.

Among the items discussed:

TRAFFIC OPTIONS. There was an update on what were called the three traffic options for North Finchley, namely :

- Pedestrianisation of High Road at the Tally Ho Triangle
- Pedestrianisation of Ballards Lane at the Tally Ho Triangle
- Reduced width of traffic both sides of the Tally Ho Triangle

Bad parking and right turning traffic caused major problems north of the Tally Ho Pub and it was likely that right hand turns would have to be banned to alleviate the situation. However, a number of possible solutions were being examined with the intention of keeping inconvenience to residents in adjoining roads to a minimum. Options would be brought before the Forum before public consultation was carried out.

A representative from the Council confirmed that the traffic calculations had taken account of any development of the Gaumont or bus depot sites. Similarly, if pedestrianisation was carried out, then deliveries to businesses would be controlled so that pedestrians would not be affected.

NATIONAL LOTTERY FUNDS. There was discussion on the possibility of obtaining lottery funds for the North Finchley Town Centre. Barry Turner informed the Forum that, on the launch of the National Lottery, the Secretary of State for Heritage had issued general guidelines about suitable projects for lottery funding. Preference would be given to projects with an emphasis on reciprocal funding, of benefit to the general public or charitable projects. Five funds could be assessed.

FRIERN AND HALLIWICK HOSPITALS INQUIRY. There was an oral report by a Council Officer who had not been present. We did not consider the report to be as balanced as might have been expected.

Members of the public had some opportunity to ask questions and comment on the various topics discussed. We took the view that the time available for this was grossly inadequate; the Friern and Halliwick Hospitals Inquiry - perhaps the most important topic of all in terms of the likely effect on the Town Centre of the proposed Retail Park - was left till last, when there was barely 5 minutes available. The meeting ended in some disarray.

In relation to the future of North Finchley, the Director of Technical Services and the Chief Executive have prepared a joint report headed "PROVISIONAL PROPOSALS FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION." Among other things they state :

2. What has been agreed by the Forum so far?
 - i. Options for street furniture style.
 - ii. Three options for controlling traffic around the Tally Ho" island and giving more space to pedestrians.
 - iii. That the public's views be sought on the future of the Lodge Lane car park site.
3. What other issues need to be consulted upon?
 - i. A broad strategy statement for the improvement of the town centre setting out a programme of action.
 - ii. Traffic measures in the High Road between the Tally Ho! and Sainsbury's. These have not yet been reported to the Forum.
 - iii. Priorities for spending S106 money that might be available from the Friern Hospital development. This must await the outcome of the recent Planning Inquiry and options will then be reported to the Forum.
 - iv. Any specific proposals for new and improved street furniture.
4. How might consultation be undertaken?
 - i. A leaflet summarising the proposals and options distributed to every household and business in the area.
 - ii. A poster and press coverage, including 'Community News'.

iii. A general questionnaire on the proposals and options. This would identify the specific interest (and general location) of the respondent, e.g. local resident, shopkeeper, visiting shopper.

iv. Small local meetings with various groups and organisations representing a wide range of interests.

v. A display in a vacant shop - staffed by Council officers. It could comprise written descriptions, plans, examples of street furniture, visual displays and the video of improvements elsewhere.

vi. Presentations in schools/colleges.

They propose that the consultation programme should take place in November/December 1995 and thereafter -

6. After the Consultation

i. Analysis and report to the Forum on outcomes for agreement of specific proposals and preferred options - February/March 1996

ii. Detailed schemes to be worked up and presented to Committee, subject to prior identification of funding - May 1996

iii. Work towards implementation.

Contact Officers are Barry Turner, Head of Planning (0181 446 8511 ext. 4611) John May, Corporate Consultation Officer (0181 202 8282 ext. 2027)

We urge the Council to ensure :

a. Consultation is genuine and not a cosmetic and P.R. orientated exercise.

b. That comprehensible, adequate, comprehensive and timely information is made individually available to members of the public.

We wonder will the councillors and council officers listen to and take on board what the public says?

AVENUE HOUSE ESTATE

A meeting took place following two reports by the Avenue House Action Committee concerned about the plans for Avenue House and fearful that there has hitherto been insufficient public consultation about those plans, worried that precipitate steps are being or may be taken behind the backs and away from the scrutiny of the people of Finchley who will be most affected by them.

At the meeting it was agreed that an Avenue House Estate Management Committee be formed, made up as follows :-

Councillors	Total of 5	2 from Finchley Ward 1 from St. Paul's Ward 2 others at discretion of the Council
Representatives	Total of 5	1 The Finchley Society 1 The Friends of Avenue House Grounds 1 Finchley Arts Centre Trust 1 A Resident of the Borough

Representative of the main resident users of Avenue House, e.g. Barnet Care, C.R.A.B.

The Chair to be taken by one of the Councillors with power of casting vote.
Meetings to be held once every six weeks.

The proposal is to go as an urgent item to the next Policy & Resources Committee on 21st June, 1995. Mr. Caller, the Chief Executive stated that re HERTFORD LODGE, the two buildings at the rear, Civil Defence Building, Training Centre were to be demolished to create additional car parking spaces. Additional parking would be required when the Arts Centre is established in "The Bothy" by FACT.

He could NOT recommend a zebra-type crossing across East End Road.

He did promise another traffic survey in the near future so that possible recommendations could be made to the Public Works Committee.

The result of the recent public consultative survey in local press recorded 72% of replies AGAINST the proposal to install the main Registry Office in Hertford Lodge.

The Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council did NOT accept that geographically Hertford Lodge is more inaccessible to the residents who wish to register Births, Deaths and Marriages.

The Chief Executive strongly maintained that the only way to save this building was redecoration and refurbishment by the selling of the Burnt Oak Office Registry site.

The Avenue House Action Committee representatives were still strongly opposed to this relocation as has been clearly stated in their documents.

AVENUE HOUSE. There was also discussion about Avenue House. Members may be aware that we no longer have access to the kitchen facilities as hitherto and will have to pay for catering services, a heavy burden.

The D.S.O. Catering Officer has a four year contract form 1994.

There is no service charge for this occupation as £14,000 had been spent on bringing the Servery up to EEC regulations.

One member raised the high cost (additional to normal letting) of using the servery at £15 per hour with a minimum of three hours.

The Chief Executive looked optimistically towards the time when the House would be self-supporting with maximum letting of the various rooms available, thus reducing the subsidy levied against Council accounts for the running of the Estate.

The Leader of the Council confidently supported this view and stated that it would be future policy to publicise the attractions of the House and the Estate.

We have to wonder whether, if put into effect, the plans for Avenue House will result in the same freedom of access to members of the public to Avenue House and its gardens as was envisaged in the Stephens Will of 1918 and the subsequent High Court proceedings 60 odd years ago. We also wonder whether the Council has it in mind to alter the provisions for access and change the terms governing the Stephens Trust and, if so, what public consultation will take place.

LIFTS

Please contact Eileen Cox (445 8422) if you require a lift to or from the monthly meeting.

REQUESTS FOR REPORTS

If members have attended meetings of interest to the Society could they consider submitting short reports for consideration for publication in the Newsletter (up to 200 words please). Please contact the editor who will be happy to discuss the matter if you are shy.

DONATIONS

The Society is most grateful to Miss M. Banks, Norman & Betty Burgess, Pat Dunnill and Dennis Evans for their donations to the Society's funds.

THE FINCHLEY SOCIETY

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PRESIDENT	Bill Tyler
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