

50p FREE TO MEMBERS MAY 1995 NO. 5/95

MAY MONTHLY MEETING

Members are cordially invited to the May monthly meeting at Avenue House, East End Road, Finchley, N3 on Thursday, 25th May at 7.30 p.m. for a prompt 7.45 start. As well as being the AGM (the formal Notice and Agenda went out with the April newsletter), after the formal business of the AGM (including elections) there will be a break for refreshments (Avenue House catering) followed by 'An Incredible Journey to Australia and New Zealand' a talk to be given by Kurt Weinberg, illustrated with his own slides.

There will be a suggestion box for ideas on speakers and topics for our 25th Anniversary Year 1996. The Programme Committee will be meeting in June.

Enclosed with this Newsletter are the Chairman's report and three Statements of Accounts. These were approved at a Special Meeting of the Executive Committee on 25th April but are awaiting formal audit. We are pleased that we have just found a replacement qualified auditor at very short notice.

Offers of help at this particularly important meeting to Norman and Betty Burgess at 0181 346 6337.

And of course....there will be a raffle.

FURTHER REMINISCENCES FROM 1922

A Peep into the Past (continued)
FINCHLEY AS A RURAL DISTRICT
REMINISCENCES OF MR. EDWIN FOX

We continue extracts from the cutting from the Finchley Press of the 25th August, 1922. Last month had us reaching St. John's Wood. The reminiscences then continue - remember, we seem still to be in the 1860s, 130 to 140 years ago.

"At Golders Green were the cross roads, and close by lived Lord Grenville. In those days gipsies used to camp in the neighbourhood in large numbers. On the Great North-road on leaving North Finchley there were one or two big residences, but the country was very open, and mainly glebe land. On the left were "The Pits," known to all and sundry now as the Rough Lots. These used to be farmed by Mr. Fox, Senr., and (were) a rare haunt of the bird-catchers, who prowled over the land with their nets. Then there was Strawberry Vale Farm, occupied by Mr. Redhouse, and the "Green Man" public-house. The cemeteries were in existence, as also were the two houses between the cemetery gates. Oak Lodge was a well-known landmark, and there were at that time in being, the "White Lion" public-house, the "Bald-Faced Stag," and the "Wellington." Market-place, East Finchley, of to-day was then called "Hogs Market." There were a number of nice residential houses at East Finchley like

"Knights". The road passed under the old Highgate Archway, built in 1821, and then considered a wonderful engineering feat. The roadway beneath the Arch was very narrow, and few drivers cared to pass another vehicle beneath it.

There were only three Churches in the district - St. Mary's, Holy Trinity, considered a high ritualistic Church, and St. John's, Whetstone. Church End was then, as now, the centre of government, and Mr. William Hammond was the Vestry Clerk. At the Vestry Meetings some big arguments arose, and the subjects discussed were often amusing as well as controversial. The Rector was the Rev. T. R. White, who was largely instrumental in formulating the scheme for a school for the sons of professional people. That school was built as a secondary school, and is now known as Christ's College. The present offices of the Finchley Urban District Council were then a private dwelling, situate in Ballards-lane, which extended from St. Mary's Church to the "Cricketers" at North Finchley, reported at one time to have lost its license (sic) because footpads congregated there. Nether-street then joined Ballards-lane by the "Cricketers". With the newer road joining Tally Ho! Corner from near the Baptist Church there was created the present triangle."

Ed. As a matter of interest, Walford's Greater London written in about the mid 1870s states that "Golder's Green consists of a few decent cottages and villa residences fringing the roadside, the larger part of the 'green' proper being now enclosed. The 'White Swan' tavern, with its tea-gardens, is a favourite resort of London holiday-makers in the summer-time, the various walks by rural lanes and field-paths in the immediate neighbourhood adding much to the charm of the locality". Close your eyes, stop up your ears and put a bunch of freesias under your nose and it's the same today, we always find.

APRIL MONTHLY MEETING REPORT

Robert Winton

How does the Regents Canal get its water? What have Marylebone Road, Euston Road and Pentonville Road to do with the Canal? And what is the secret of the building which houses the London Canal Museum? All this and much more was revealed in the talk on 27th April by Dr. Essex-Lopresti on "The Regents Canal System", illustrated by slides and a film.

The Regents Canal was built in 1812, and ended at Paddington; the "New Road" was then constructed to carry goods onward to the Thames docks, and today it consists of Marylebone Road, Euston Road and Pentonville Road. There were many problems in supplying water for the Canal, with the Welsh Harp created to act as a reservoir; today water is pumped back from the Thames.

John Nash wished to extend the Canal through the middle of Regents Park, but protests at seeing barges and at children possibly viewing what they did in bed forced the Canal into a cutting on the north side of the Park. The canals were killed off in the 1840s by the railways, and today the Regents Canal is used for recreation and no longer for commercial traffic.

The London Canal Museum, which lies on the Regents Canal in Islington, is in a building formerly used by Carlo Gatti as an ice house to supply ice to the catering trade. The Museum opened there in 1992 and displays canal developments, crafts and cargoes.

INVITATIONS FROM OTHER GROUPS AND SOCIETIES

HADAS : Saturday, 15th July there will be an outing to Colchester with Tessa Smith and Sheila Woodward.

Saturday, 19th August, the outing is to Silchester with Bill Bass and Vicki O'Connor.

For both outings, details from Hon. Secretary Liz Holliday, Gorse Cottage, The Common, Chipperfield, WD4 9BL (01923 267483)

THE MIDDLESEX SOCIETY : Wednesday, 24 May. Visit to the Chelsea Physic Garden. This is the second oldest Botanic Garden in the country, founded in 1673. It includes a notable collection of medicinal plants, many rare and unusual. This garden may be described as botanic (not botanical) owing to its being an old one. Admission £3.50. Teas and home-made cake. Meet Miss Maureen Hamilton in the booking hall at Sloane Square Underground at 2 p.m. (Circle and District Lines).

Saturday, 17 June. A visit to Harefield. Meet Dulce Green at Northwood Station (Metropolitan Line) punctually at 2 p.m. We will catch the bus at 2.15 to Harefield. We will see a little of this little town, then walk slowly down to the Aquadrome and along the Canal. The walk itself is not more than some 3 miles; on the way back there is a not very difficult or long climb to a bus stop to catch a bus which will take us via a different route to Uxbridge where the walk will end. In Uxbridge there are plenty of nice places for tea. There is splendid scenery, bring your cameras. We will also see two old pubs and some nice houses (old and new). Buses and train are free for the over 60/65.

Saturday/Sunday, 24/25 June. The Middlesex County Show at the Showground opposite Uxbridge Common, Park Road, Uxbridge. Open from 9 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. At Uxbridge Underground Station (Metropolitan Line) there is a free bus service (three times an hour) from adjoining bus station to take visitors to the Showground entrance. Concession rate for senior citizens to the Show.

NORTH LONDON HOSPICE : June 3/4th Sunflower Collections at local garden centres. Volunteers Welcome! (ring Hospice 0181 343 8841).
June 11th, 2 - 6 p.m. Open Garden Southwood Lodge, 33 Kingsley Place, N6. Admission £1.000. Plants for sale (Call Susan Whittington 0181 348 2785 for more details).

June 24th to July 1st. Proms at St. Judes. Full week's programme including Humphrey Lyttelton & his band, Walton's Facade, Ebony Steel Orchestra. (Full details from Vivienne Bently 0181 203 5131).

A full list of forthcoming events for 1995 can be obtained from Hospice Office 0181 343 8841.

A SCHOOL CELEBRATES V.E. DAY ANNIVERSARY

Norman Burgess

St. Theresa's R.C. School, East End Road, N3 celebrated the anniversary of VE Day by inviting me as the Chairman of The Finchley Society to address the whole school on Friday, 5th May on my memories of war-torn Finchley. I was able to use exhibits from The Finchley Society's archives, two tin hats, one a Warden's, a gas mask, ration books, clothing books, motor fuel coupons and the warning issued to all householders 'Beating the Invader'.

I told of the time when my father, being in the R.A.F. Reserve, was called up again at the outbreak of War. Arthur J. W. Burgess had served in the First World War also in the Royal Flying Corps. I recounted the bombing of this area and of the time the land-mine exploded in Ossulton Way close to Neal Close where my mother and I were living. I described the whole destruction of Aveton Road and Chapel Street, East Finchley and recollected 'black market' ghastly-tasting chocolate being sold on the corner of Manor Park Road; the breaking of cream cracker biscuits in half, so that no more than the correct weight was given; the black-out - 'Put that Light out' call by the wardens at night, and Avenue House as the centre of the A.R.P./Civil Defence for Finchley.

The morning ended in a moving prayer time for Peace as all the children exhibited a Peace Chain of triangular flags of actual prayers written by the children aged from 4 years to 11, and this 'chain' encircled the hall. The Headteacher, Mr. Dennis Carey, thanked me warmly for my contribution to the school's V E Anniversary 1945 - 1995.

THANKS FOR HELP AT THE CHURCH END FESTIVAL

Eileen Cox wishes to place on record the tremendous hard work put in by Betty and Norman Burgess to The Finchley Society's Stall at the Church End Festival on Sunday, 7 May, 1995, that raised £124.25 for the Society's funds.

Norman and Betty wish to thank Kurt, Carol, Neil, Mari, Peter and Pat, Marjorie, Sheila, Dorothy, Lynn and Kenneth for all their help on the day.

STOP PRESS - URGENT

Norman Burgess writes: The Friends of Avenue House are appealing to all Finchley Society members to send actual items of household needs for a Relief Ambulance that is going, by ferry, to war-torn Bosnia. Bandages, pens, plasters, sealed first-aid packages, pins, cotton wool, envelopes, stationery, combs, bars of soap, boxes of tissues, toothpaste, toothbrushes. Please take them to Janett Durrant, The Pond Tea Kiosk, Avenue House Grounds or to 13 Cavendish Avenue, N3 NOW, IMMEDIATELY, URGENT. We who have so much can help those whose lives have been torn apart by the war in Bosnia. Everyone of us can give something from our stock at home - NOT money.

CHOLDERTON VISIT 20TH MAY. REMINDER

Have you booked for Cholderton, the trip that includes a visit to the Home Farm set up by Henry C. Stephens that made him famous for the pedigree breeding of horses, sheep and pigs? It was his second love after Avenue House. The booking form was enclosed with the April Newsletter.

REGENTS CANAL TRIP 3RD JUNE, 1995 REMINDER

Robert Winton still has places available for the afternoon canal trip on the Regents Park Canal. Call him on 0181 883 2633 to reserve your place.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - IMPORTANT

Our National Trust Centenary meeting on 29 June, 1995 at Christ Church Secondary School. Peter Clayton - 'Octavia Hill's Childhood in Finchley' with readers of the fascinating account of 'the little girls' (Octavia Hill and her sisters) enacting 'Midsummer Night's Dream' by the Strawberry Vale Brook.

15 July, 1995. All-day visit to Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum, Wimbledon Windmill, and the Wimbledon Society's Museum. Full details in the June Newsletter.

THE STEPHENS COLLECTION

See the enclosed handbill re stewards for The Stephens Collection, now registered with the Museum & Galleries Commission. As one press report put it 'Museum is Tops'.

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Environment "Week" 19th to 29th May, 1995

Yes, Environment "week" has arrived again. It hardly seems 5 minutes since last year. But that's life for you. You hit 25 and then the days just fly past. By popular demand the "week" has again been extended to a generous 11 days.

Now that spring is here (and at the time of writing it's jolly warm) can we again remind members to do that little bit extra in their gardens and window boxes, especially the front ones, to increase that riot of colour and general joie de vivre.

Barbara Warren, Chair, writes: various members of the Environment Committee (including Barbara Warren, Pat Marsh and Timothy Johnson) will be visiting a number of schools and talking to the children.

Visits to school assemblies -

Monday, 22nd May Martin School, East Finchley 10 a.m.

Tuesday, 23rd May Frith Manor, Woodside Park, 9 a.m.

Wednesday, 24th May Coppetts Wood, Friern Barnet 9 a.m.

The Committee will be looking at the progress of the Summerside School wild garden at North Finchley.

Sunday May 28th. Clive Mayhew, Tree Officer for the Borough of Barnet, will be leading a walk in the Grounds of the Avenue House Estate, 2 - 4 p.m. Janett Durrant will be serving a cuppa in the kiosk. All are invited.

FRIENDS OF AVENUE HOUSE GROUNDS

Barbara Warren, Secretary, writes:

1. The Constitution has been approved by the Civic Trust. Our thanks to Robert Winton for a "text book" document.
2. Membership cards (thanks to Carol Halls) and headed notepaper (thanks to Peter Marsh) have been printed and 25 new members have signed up. Please get your membership card from Janett Durrant at the kiosk in Avenue House Grounds.
3. The Avenue House Trees book is being reprinted.
4. We have been asked to visit local schools and talk about the Estate, and also to suggest a plant layout for the waterfall. Any suggestions please to members of the committee.
5. Janett has been given a lease of the kiosk for another 3 years.

AVENUE HOUSE ESTATE

As many members may have seen in the local press recently, on 24th April the Lands and Buildings Executive Committee approved the use of Avenue House for weddings. There had been a good deal of objection from local residents.

The Council also applied to the Charity Commissioners at the end of last year for a Scheme increasing its powers under the charity. The Charity Commissioners are proposing to make a Scheme permitting the Council as trustee of the Avenue House Charity, to let out part of the charity's property (including Avenue House of course) which is not for the time being required for the objects of the charity, provided that the use of the remainder of the property is not unduly interfered with. (We quote from a recent Charity Commissioner's letter). The letting would not have to be for charitable purposes.

We are unaware of any public consultation being initiated by the Council either before or after the application to the Commissioners was made. It was only by chance that it was discovered that the application had been made, and that information was not volunteered by the Council itself. We ask when and to what extent were all the Councillors aware of the plans for Avenue House. Did Councillors seek information from residents? We weren't asked, that's for sure.

The Charity Commissioners require that the draft Scheme be publicised but their usual requirements hardly ensure widespread publicity. For a local charity they (and we quote) "usually require that:

notices are displayed on public notice boards in the area in which the charity operates and in some cases that a notice is published in a local newspaper;

a copy of the draft Scheme is made available for public inspection at some suitable place in the locality."

Representations about the proposed Scheme must be made within ONE MONTH.

However, the Commissioners say that they cannot allow members of the public to see the correspondence between the Council and the Commissioners even though the public will be affected by any decision, particularly in the case of this charity which is intended to benefit the residents of Finchley. One would also expect a Council allegedly dedicated to public consultation (and which has indeed, and to its credit, taken some welcome first steps in making meetings much more accessible to the public, in marked contrast to its predecessors, Planning for example)... as we say, one would expect such a Council to treat the Commissioners' extremely modest requirements as to publicity as an absolute minimum not a grudging maximum.

In fact, the Charity Commissioners envisage discussion between themselves and a charity's trustees, even before the Scheme is submitted, so perhaps that happened in this case, which would mean that the Council (through one or more of its senior officers perhaps?) had been in contact with the Commissioners for some time before the end of last year, months perhaps? Without the public being informed.

We should like to know and believe we are entitled to know which Councillors and/or officers are the driving force behind these plans.

As the proposals stand at present it seems that the Council could under the proposed new Scheme let part of Avenue House to e.g. ICI for 10 years provided that at the time of the letting that room was not required for the objects of the charity, which would effectively remove that room from the members of the public who were supposed to be able to use it. At present the Council as trustee can grant tenancies or licences of any part of the Avenue House to or for the use of local organisations for charitable, philanthropic or public purposes. Of course such local organisations may not be able to pay as much for the use as a commercial organisation, very attractive to a Council in the current business-oriented climate.

The Commissioners' booklet on making a Scheme states that they have to consider any representations made to them about the proposed Scheme. If as

a result of the representations made to them they consider that changes should be made they will tell the trustees, i.e. the Council, to enable them to make any final comments. Provided that the ONE MONTH for comments has elapsed and the Council has returned certain papers the Scheme will then be sealed.

So while the Council may have been considering the matter for months and while the public can not obtain copies of the Council's correspondence from the Commissioners, members of the public have one month to put their case - and that is not one month from when they see the notice but one month from when the notice is given. So if you see the notice on the 23rd day you have about a week to contact the Council, find out what you can about the Scheme, marshal your thoughts, speak to other residents and put in your representations to the Commissioners. Not exactly a level playing field. And remember, the trustee Council is YOUR representative, so it's not as though you and it should really be on opposite sides in a matter of this importance. The Council should be doing all it can to ascertain your views beforehand. This is not the way for representatives to look after the locality and the best interests of the residents. It is not too late for a radical change of approach by the Councillors.

We ask members to contact their Councillors to urge that this matter be properly publicised and that there be real consultation. We are talking about Avenue House, intended for the benefit of local residents. The Council seems to have lost sight of this.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

1. Avenue House was discussed and an item about the House appears above.
2. Finchley Forum. We understand that the Forum (not of course to be confused with the North Finchley Forum) is being re-constituted. We hope to report further at a later date.
3. Studio Cole in Whetstone. Observers will be pleased to note that the appearance of the building is improving and work continues to be carried out.

NORTH FINCHLEY CONSULTATIVE FORUM

Minutes of the meeting on 6th April are not yet available.

LIFTS

Lifts to the monthly meetings can nearly always be arranged, so if you would like to attend but are daunted by the thought of actually getting to Avenue House or of returning home afterwards, get in touch with Eileen Cox (445 8422) and she will see what arrangements can be made.

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.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE

Membership Secretary, June Saffer, would like help from one person to deal with the additional administration of contacting all members after the A.G.M. Please contact her on 445 1480.

NEW MEMBERS

The Society is delighted to welcome new members Ms Chloe Gardner, Hadley Common, Mrs Gladys Powis, N3 and Esther & Stephen Cooper, N12.

DONATIONS

Thanks are due to Ms Chloe Gardner, Mr G. Johnson, Mrs J. Nattress, Ms Gladys Powis and Mr. G. Wren for their donations to the Society's funds.

THE FINCHLEY SOCIETY

PATRON	Spike Milligan
PRESIDENT	Bill Tyler
VICE-PRESIDENTS	Carol Halls: David Smith
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