

Avenue House

The weeping beech has been propped up with steel bars, so that it will be with us for a few more years

Green Spaces

We are as alert to the problems of development of green spaces in Finchley and Friern Barnet as are the Mill Hill Preservation Society (see below). I understand that Barnet Council have selected a builder for the development of Long Lane Pasture. When the planning application is made we will study the proposal carefully, and continue to fight for the retention of this green field site.

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE – David Smith, 8883 4154, Chairman

30 years old

Yes, The Finchley Society will 30 years old on 11th February 2001. We hope to have a celebration dinner somewhere near this date, so please let me know if you are interested- Derek Warren.

Web site

We are advancing at last into the age of technology and a small committee is planning a web site for the Society. After a slow start we are advancing rapidly under the expert guidance of our assistant editor, Stephen Yeo. Stephen is designing the site and the rest of the committee are making sure that we have the right sort of information on it. It will be regularly updated..

PLANNING COMMITTEE - Dorothy Fox , 8346 0331, Chairman.

Brent Cross – Peter Pickering – pe.pickering@virgin.net

I went along to the High Court on 23rd October to listen to the appeal by the developers of Brent Cross, supported by Barnet Council, against the decision by the Secretary of State (Mr Prescott) not to permit the expansion of the Brent Cross Shopping Centre. The case was listed for the morning, but when I got to the scheduled court a friendly official told me that it had been postponed to the afternoon. At 2.15pm. the barristers and their entourage filed in; the judge appeared; we all stood and bowed; and the case began. Five minutes later it finished. The barrister acting for the Secretary of State admitted that the decision had been erroneous, and we all filed out again.

It seems that the Secretary of State has been legally wrong in saying that Brent Cross Shopping Centre was not a Town Centre in the terms of the planning guidance ('RPGP') that has the force of law in London, and that some expansion of the centre is acceptable under the guidance. What the Secretary of State must now determine is how much that expansion should be. Unless he decides to allow the original application in full he will have to hold another public inquiry under a different inspector.

Our President, Bill Tyler, has already written to Mr Prescott deploring the outcome of the court case and urging him to hold such a public inquiry, at which the Society can once more argue in the interests of the hard-pressed town centres of Finchley.

The suggestion in the leader of The Hendon and Finchley Times for 26th October that coffee bars in building society branches will save our high streets can only be described as pathetic; coffee bars are not what high streets lack – they lack a healthy and vibrant variety of good shops.

Hertford Lodge –Derek Warren.

You may have seen in the local press that an application has been made for a four storey extension and alteration to Hertford Lodge, which is next door to Avenue House. This is to be a resource centre for families with children with autism. It will be nice to see this building

being used again, but a careful watch will be made to see that all the works are in keeping with the surroundings. You may go and look at the plans in Barnet House between 12 noon – 5.00pm Monday – Friday

NEWS of THE FAMILY

We are sorry to hear that member Herbert Norman suffered a severe stroke last April and is now in long-term nursing care. He gave us many of his drawings for the archives some months ago, and he recently celebrated his 97th birthday

Our sincere condolences to the family of Philip Brown, a stalwart member of the stewarding team at College Farm, who died this week.

Bill Tyler, our President, has been re-appointed as a Trustee of the Civic Trust for a further year.

OTHER SOCIETIES

Mill Hill Preservation Society have been fighting a developer for Green Belt Land at the Belmont Riding Stables for several years, and they were pleased that at long last the High Court turned down the developer's appeal against the decision of the public inquiry. Another piece of Green Belt has been saved and the MHPS are certainly busy keeping an eye on it.

The Whetstone Society is thinking of Christmas lights. They have to pay quite a lot of money for their high street to be illuminated. Unfortunately last year's lights have mysteriously disappeared, and they are seeking compensation from the contractor.

Phoenix Cinema Trust.

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport decided that the Phoenix Cinema should be listed as a Grade 2 building of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. It was added to the list on October 5th.

AVENUE HOUSE and ESTATE

The Charity Commissioners are raising technical legal questions about the propriety of the existing charity (Avenue House Estate which owns the house and grounds and is controlled by LBB) transferring the management of the Estate to the new charity (Avenue House Estate Management.) These negotiations are delaying LBB from withdrawing from management, and at present the Council is still fully in control of the Estate. The Trustees are-

- Appointed by LBB

Cll Kathy McGuirk(L) Cll Susette Palmer, Treasurer (LD) Cll Leslie Sussman (C)

- Elected by the leaseholders

Frances Geekie, Barnet Care Attendant Scheme. Mollie Harris, Finchley Arts Centre Trust

- Elected by the casual users

Joyce Dale Joe Spalter

- Appointed by Barnet Voluntary Service Council

Julie Hawkins

- Appointed by The Finchley Society

Bill Tyler, Chair

- Appointed by the Friends of Avenue House Estate

Janett Durrant, Deputy Chair

INVITATIONS

The Muswell Hill Society

Wed. Nov. 15 - "Managing Alexander Palace" – Martin King – Friends Meeting House, Church Crescent. All at 8.00pm

Friends of Barnet Libraries

Monday 20th November “The Secret Power of a Sacred Treasure” .Local author on aspects of his book ‘Web of Gold’.

MEMBERS

Membership Secretary...Lyn Bresler, 30, Birkbeck Road , N. Finchley, London N12 8DZ...8446 6249

GIFT AID DECLARATION

If you pay tax then please complete the Gift Aid Declaration attached to the last newsletter. This only has to be done once, and if you have not done so already we would be most grateful if you would do so as soon as possible. At the moment we get back 28p for every £1 you give to the Society.

DONATIONS

Treasurer...Nigel Doe, 020 8445 1278 (Please note new Treasurer)

Many thanks to the following members who have given a donation:

Simon and Christa Dimont,N3

Denys Pegg,N3

Peter Marsh,N3

Misses J and M Canning, N3

Mr Laurie Heatherington,N3

Mr A J Gorrett,N20

Mrs J A Ingall. N12

EDUCATION

Secretary...Mollie Harris ACIS, 17, Finchley Lodge, Gainsborough Road, Finchley, London N12 8AL...8445 4175

Please note that we have a long list of speakers who know Finchley past and present, and lots of archive material.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Events Secretary...Josie Robinson, 46 Burleigh Gardens, Southgate, N14 5AG...8368 4387...020 7917 0474 (w)

ARCHIVIST

Norman Burgess, 8346 6337

At our October meeting Tony Rook gave us a fascinating lecture on the archaeological importance of hedges and fields, and educated us on the history of ploughing and land maps. Norman suddenly arose from his seat and brought up from the archives in the basement the ‘List of Enclosure Lands in the Parish of Finchley 1839.’ It is written on parchment in the most beautiful handwriting, and is enclosed in a copper case especially designed for it, which has ensured that the contents are still clear and surprisingly easy to read. This is one of our recent acquisitions being from the archives of Fred Davis, mentioned in the last newsletter, and was eagerly perused by the members present. We have such treasures! and all in the process of being organised by the team under Norman.

EDITOR – Barbara C Warren

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Copy for the **JANUARY** newsletter to reach me by **DECEMBER 25TH !**

This newsletter, as it must, reviews some very serious work undertaken by members, but some light relief to scatter through its two pages would be welcome. One of the interesting features in the past has been some refreshing items relating to members` past and their interests. I await my snail-mail and e-mail!!

PHILIP BROWN
26. 8. 1920 - 28. 10. 2000

In the early days of The Finchley Society becoming involved in saving College Farm 1980 – 81 Philip was the first to offer his services as a Steward in the little hut where, with his unassuming charm, he took the entrance money from visitors. He loved the farm, and only gave up his duties last year owing to his battle against cancer.

He was a postman for Carol Halls, delivering The Finchley Society newsletter.

Philip Brown was born in Bath. His main hobbies were the cinema and railways, and he was a keen golfer and rugby player.

He became a clerk in the ticket office in Luton before enlisting in the Royal Navy in 1941. He saw active service in the Mediterranean and the North Atlantic and was commissioned as a sub-lieutenant in 1944. After serving his country he returned to Luton to take up a position in the Scottish Amicable Insurance Company working in the City of London.

In 1947 he married Naneen who was in the W.R.N.S. and went to live in Park Avenue, Finchley.

He played rugby for Finchley during 1947 – 52, and then became a referee.

He and Naneen had three sons, David now in Dunstable, Stephen now in Welwyn and Andrew now in Inverness.

After the death of his wife 20 years ago, Philip kept up his great passion for steam railways and I well remember him recounting his train excursions all over the British Isles. He was keenly interested in arts and music attending classes in painting and places of interest in London.

Philip was a quiet man, but loved Finchley and served the Society well. He will be sorely missed, especially at College Farm.

I am indebted to David Brown, his eldest son, for providing the details of his life, and we extend to his three sons, who were the absolute pivot of his life, and his grandsons, our deepest sympathy. He was a man of unswerving sincerity who never uttered a word against his fellows.

Norman Burgess

