

Founded 1971  
www.finchleysociety.org

Patron: Spike Milligan KBE.  
President: Bill Tyler AADipl.ARIBA, IHBC

**APRIL 2002**

no.4/02

**MONTHLY MEETING – APRIL 25<sup>th</sup>.2002**

Members are cordially invited to the April meeting in the Drawing Room of Avenue House, East End Road, N3 on Thursday, April 25<sup>th</sup>. at 7.45pm.for 8.00pm. The speaker will be Mr David Ruddom (Friends of London Transport Museum.)and his talk is entitled “After the Stagecoach had left – development of public transport in Finchley.” He will cover the story of the growth of public transport since the demise of the stagecoach, paying particular attention to Finchley.

Steve Presland gave us many facts and figures in his talk at the end of February, including details of the Neighbourhood Wardens. They are able to give instant fines for dog fouling and for littering, and if you see the wardens do tell them of your concerns in the area. The Borough are aiming to recycle at least 18% of the waste we produce – remember- reduce, re-use, ,recycle, repair. At the Summers Lane dump, 50% of what goes through the gates is recycled – Derek Warren

**JUBILEE JAUNT -on Saturday evening 29<sup>th</sup>. June , 2002**

As part of the FinSoc’s celebration of the Queen’s Jubilee we are driving through the countryside to Jemima’s Restaurant in Finchingfield, Essex. This is a very pretty village featuring as the English village on the Festival of Britain calendar – with village green, thatched cottages, windmill etc. There will be time to explore after enjoying the carvery at the restaurant.

See you there – Shirley Avery 8346 8484

**ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE – David Smith, 8883 4154, Chairman**

Next meeting on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. 8.00pm at 224 Creighton Avenue, N2 Please ring Robert Winton 8883 2633 if you are coming to observe.

*East Finchley Station Board*

Members are invited to drop into East Finchley Station on Saturday, **April 13<sup>th</sup>**. just before 11.00pm to cheer on Dr. Rudi Vis, MP Finchley and Golders Green, as he unveils our Environmental Information Panel at the main entrance to the station. We shall then retire to The Old White Lion nearby for a celebratory drink.

The panel has taken over 2 years to create and install. Amongst other things, the Society had to apply for planning permission to erect it as the station is listed. We are deeply indebted to Peter Marsh for his creative talents and sheer tenacity throughout this project, so we do hope members will take a look at the panel when passing. It lists all the local places of interest and open spaces and links them to each Underground station in the area. We hope that this example of fruitful co-operation between London Underground and a local amenity society will inspire similar projects elsewhere.

#### *Coffee mornings-have they a future?*

The Admin. Committee was asked to consider this question. We suggest that they do have a role in the life of the Society but might be re-titled, such as "Open House at ....." If you would like to help raise funds for us by offering your home on a Saturday for a couple of hours then please let us know. There are always volunteers available to help. These events are enjoyable so do support the next one which is to be held at the home of Pat and Peter Marsh on **April 27<sup>th</sup>** at 94, Queens Avenue, N3 between 10-12.00. there will be a Bring and Buy stall.

**ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT.-** Miranda Dunn, 8371 9744, Chairman  
Next meeting on May 13<sup>th</sup> at 83, Wentworth Avenue at 8.00pm. Please ring Derek if you will be attending as an observer....8346 5258

#### *Walks*

- ♦ On Saturday **25<sup>th</sup> May** the birds will probably start singing at 4am but by 7am they should be in fine voice and that is when I will lead a walk to listen to their chorus. Meeting at the Scout campsite in Frith Lane we will stroll for about an hour, including a stretch along the Dollis Brook, before returning to the site for refreshment. Let me know if you want to join us for breakfast.
- ♦ On our walk along the Dollis Brook on 13<sup>th</sup>. March we saw some frogspawn in Rocklands Pond but far less than in past years.
- ♦ To celebrate the Victoria Park Centenary we will be walking to explore the hidden corners of the park at 2.30pm on **May 11<sup>th</sup>** meeting at the main gate. Bring a picnic if the weather is fine and hopefully other events will be taking place during the afternoon.

#### *Wildlife.*

There is a disease killing off frogs, but one member has 83 of them in her garden pond! Footprints of muntjac deer have been seen in the Spinney at the edge of the Finchley Golf Course. Siskins have been visiting some garden seed feeders and 14 house sparrows congregate near the north east corner of Avenue House Grounds.

#### *Recycling*

An interesting building near Bath, the Wessex Water Operation Centre, is the winner of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors Building of the Year Award for 2001. This was constructed with recycled and locally sourced material as much as possible, and over 70% of the waste material produced was recycled. The rainwater is collected for use in irrigation and waste management, and porous paving in the car park allow the water to filter through to the ground instead of into drains.

#### *Trees and plants.*

There are 36,000 highway trees in the Borough and we are hoping that you are keeping an eye on those in Finchley and Friern Barnet. A new replacement tree has been planted in Avenue House Grounds in memory of Paddy Musgrove who did so much for the Society. It is a *Fagus Sylvatica Quercifolia* or an Oak Leafed Beech.

Have you seen the colourful triangle at the top of Gravel Hill?

### **POST BOX SURVEY.**

In October the Post Office (Consignia) is issuing a set of five stamps to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup>.anniversary of the Pillar Box. One of the stamps will feature the fairly short-lived pre-WW2 blue airmail box, which had an aerodynamically designed blue van to match, but in general boxes have remained red and cylindrical. In connection with the anniversary the Greater London Industrial Archaeological Society is running a survey of post boxes throughout Greater London . This is particularly aimed at the older boxes, which in Barnet are likely to be found in the older settlements before the onrush of suburbia.

Most FinSoc members must post mail in a box from time to time. It would be a great help if, when you post a letter , you could note the location, single cylindrical or double elliptical box, the Royal cipher, and the maker's name which is generally legible on the black base. If you find a box with a sign pointing to the post office please record this too.

I would be pleased to have this information. Do not worry that someone has already recorded a box. I would rather have several sightings than to miss a box.

Bill Firth of HADAS

49, Woodstock Avenue, NW11 9RG 020 8455 7164

### **WHAT'S ON?**

*Friern Barnet and District Local History Society*

All meetings on Tuesdays at The Old Fire Station, next to the Town Hall

April 23<sup>rd</sup>. "800 years of St. John's."

### **ARCHIVES**

It is always a moment to treasure when a piece of the jigsaw that is Finchley's past turns up and is put into place. One such moment occurred in January when, through the Hendon and Finchley Times, a letter came my way from 82- year-old Roger Cobley, a one-time Devon farmer now living in Westward Ho!. Roger's ancestors came from Finchley where they had farmed Cobley's farm (later called Fallow Farm) since the time of Charles 11. Originally a small farm at the northern corner (Fallow Corner) of Finchley Common, it grew much larger as a result of the Enclosures Act of 1814. When it was finally broken up and the farmhouse located in Bow Lane demolished in 1902 it stretched from the High Road to Ballards Lane and south to Long Lane.

Roger was kind enough to send copies of historical documents of exceptional interest. Among these were the original 1857 prospectus of Finchley Hall School ( the precursor of Christ's College) – possibly the only copy in existence. His grandfather Richard Cobley (1844 – 1929) was one of the three original pupils at the school, and we now have in our archives copies of some letters that he wrote home to his parents – remarkable examples of beautiful calligraphy, good grammar illustrating the much more formal relationships between children and their parents in Victorian times. One letter is written in such good French from a 13 year old boy that I am tempted to believe that it must have been copied from the blackboard.

To these treasures must be added another – a coloured print of a painting of Cobley's Farm by the talented water-colourist W.H.Hunt (1790 – 1864) . The original was donated to the Reference Library in Hendon Lane and can be seen in the Borough Archives in Egerton Gardens.

Roger has done considerable research into his family history . What a remarkable history it is! His grandfather's brother William went off to join the gold rush in Australia and was never heard of again, and another started a wine growing business in the Barossa Valley in that country and became most successful. To take the story into our own times, Roger himself was a RAFVR fighter pilot in the last war and his brother was a Japanese POW on the notorious Burma railway.

Space precludes me from dealing in more depth with this fascinating story but we must mention that Roger and his wife Ailsa Day were married in 1941 at the North Finchley Congregational Church by R. Angel Wakely. Ailsa's grandfather was the builder C.F.Day who is yet another part of the history and development of Finchley that awaits investigation.

Percy Reboul

#### **MEMBERS**

Membership Secretary...Lynn Bresler, 30, Birkbeck Road , N. Finchley, London N12 8DZ...8446 6249, e-mail: LynnBressler@aol.com

#### **DONATIONS**

Treasurer...Nigel Doe, 020 8445 1278 e-mail: [Nigel@Trakka.co.uk](mailto:Nigel@Trakka.co.uk)

Many thanks to Mrs Leslie for her donation, and also for a very interesting programme for the Lyric Theatre where Spike performed in 1982 with his friends. There is a lot of biographical information within its pages.

#### **MONTHLY MEETINGS**

Events Secretary...Josie Robinson, 46 Burleigh Gardens, Southgate, N14 5AG  
020 8368 4387

#### **EDITOR – Barbara C Warren**

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Copy for the May newsletter to reach me by **April 15th.**

***We care for Finchley and Friern Barnet***

