

Founded 1971

www.finchleysociety.org.uk

President: Bill Tyler AADipl.ARIBA.IHBC

SEPTEMBER 2003

MONTHLY MEETING

Members are cordially invited to the **September 25th** meeting in the Drawing Room of Avenue House, East End Road, N3 at **7.30 for 8.00pm**. Our speaker this month is Miss Christine Wagg of the Peabody Trust. She became Legal Assistant to the Trust, London's largest charitable housing association, in 1992 having previously worked for over twenty years as a conveyancer in two major London firms of solicitors. She regularly deals with enquiries from the general public about the history and archives of the Peabody Trust, and gives talks to organisations, such as local history societies, about the Trust's origins and the life of its founder.

FROM MARGARET THATCHER

In response to the letter of condolence sent from The Finchley Society on the death of Sir Denis Thatcher, Lady Thatcher has replied –

“Thank you so much for your kind letter. For over 50 years Denis was the most loving and supportive husband, and his death leaves an emptiness in my life which can never be filled.

I have been deeply touched by all the warm tributes to him, and the thoughtful messages of sympathy. They are a great comfort at this sad time.

Please convey my thanks to your members,

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Thatcher.

ENVIRONMENT and TRANSPORT – Chairman, Miranda Dunn, 8371 9744.

Next meeting at Avenue House 8.00pm is on September 15th.

Dollis Brook

It is hoped that a further survey of the Brook will take place next Spring. If you would like to assist, or have any suggestions, please contact Derek Warren 8346 5258 or barwar@waitrose.com

Green Spaces

If you have any news about the green space near you, please let us know. It was good to see so many butterflies during the hot weather, but the birds seemed to be taking a sensible siesta.

Vehicle Speeds

A member has been checking speeds along the High Road.N2, and generally these have been between 18 – 43 mph, but with the motor-cycle going much faster, reading between 65 – 75 mph. This was done by timing the vehicle over a 200 yard or 400 yard stretch of road. This is not very accurate but it does give a good guide. Would you like to try this over a stretch of road near you, and let us have your conclusions.

Graffiti

There is now a free kit available from the Council for graffiti treatment from a firm called Nordic UK. Some of our members attended the graffiti launch, but the product was so in demand that they came away with just a promise. Ring Rob Russell on 8350 7499 for yours.

Street signs

Member Frank Kelsall has written to tell me that in the English Heritage publication "Streets for All: A Guide to the Management of London's Streets" there is an illustration of the sign Woodlands Avenue as an example of the sort of signage that ought to be kept. Please let the Council know if the iron sign near you needs to be repaired, as once they start falling away from their posts they soon disappear. He is not happy about Barnet's enthusiasm for turquoise.

Derek and Barbara Warren were invited to the official opening of the Nursery wildlife garden at St Mary's School. It is a delightful area for small children and the Environment Committee are delighted to have been involved in the early stages.

THE FINCHLEY MARATHON – Norman Burgess.

150 years ago in October 1853 Octavia Hill walked over the Finchley area she had known and loved in her childhood when she lived in a cottage at Brownswells on the edge of Finchley Common, and is fully documented in her writings.

The walk has been dubbed 'the Finchley Marathon' by our friend Peter Clayton, Chairman of The Octavia Hill Society, who will be the narrator. Members of FinSoc are invited to join a party coming from Wisbech on **Sunday, September 28th**. Approximate times are as follows –

- 10.30am Meet at East Finchley Station...coffee at The Bald Faced Stag.
- 11.00am Continuing by minibus or car assisted.
- 11.00am Brownswell site, just off High Road, N2
- 11.20am Bow Lane site of 'Cobbley's Farm' plaque in Queens Avenue.
Granville Road, Summers Lane, Legion Way to Glebelands with Dr Oliver Natelson describing the flora and fauna of last remains of Finchley Common.
- 12.00 noon North Finchley area...Woodside Park, LullingtonGarth, Partingdale Lane to Burtonhole Farm, as described in a letter.
- 1.00pm Lunch at 'Adam and Eve' pub on the Ridgeway...packed or pub lunch.
- 2.00pm Mill Hill Almshouses and then down Milesplit Hill to where Ashley Walk comes out into Devonshire Road.
(If time allows Windsor Open Space and St Mary's Finchley Parish church.)
- 3.00pm Avenue House and Grounds for tea.
- 4.00pm Departure of Wisbech party.

During the walk there will be readings from Octavia's writings on the area.

Walk devised by Ollie Natelson and Betty and Norman Burgess, and fully detailed maps of the route are available at £2.00...proceeds to the Octavia Hill Society.

Please contact Betty and Norman on 8346 6337 if you intend to take part in this unique experience.

(Chairman and Editor.....I hope many of you will take part in this walk, in recognition of a woman who is a national figure of whom we are proud to acknowledge once lived in Finchley and was inspired by the place in which we now live.)

PLANNING COMMITTEE – Chairman, Stephen Cooper, 8445 2685

Next meetings, September 8th and November 10th at Avenue House 8.00pm. Why not visit and see what goes on. Let Stephen know so that the right number of coffee cups are available!

Brent Cross/Cricklewood

Our concern with this initiative stems from the increased threat this imposes on our 'town centres' and their vitality, and retailers' livelihoods. We have been to public meetings and

seen the promotional literature, from which it is evident that Brent Cross retailing expansion is being down-played. We expect this to resurface in September.

Waitrose, EastFinchley.

This imposes a more immediate threat to local retailing, and to traffic. The site is almost opposite the East Finchley Underground Station, and it will be interesting to see how the Waitrose car park avoids being filled by commuters.

It is also proposed that the local library be resited there, largely because the present one is not central and not suitable for upgrading for the disabled.

Planning Committee membership.

The Finchley Society is nothing if it does not keep an eye on the local built environment. We are in need of more members, to help us consider the more contentious planning issues. Any Finchley Society member, with or without experience of the planning system, who can afford a little time to look at and give an opinion on local applications, is most welcome to join us on our committee.

Stephen Cooper - stephetherc@waitrose.com

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE – Chairman, David Smith, 8883 4154

Coffee morning

The Finchley Society Chairman invites you to her home for coffee 10.00 – 12.00am on Saturday morning October 18th, where there will also be a bookstall and paintings by local artists for sale 83 Wentworth Avenue, N3. 020 8346 5258

Barbara C Warren

Finchley Remembered.

The book is still available. Copies for sale at our monthly meetings, or ring David Smith 8883 4154.

Mr Beck's Underground Map

Members who were present at the unveiling of the plaque to Harry Beck will remember Ken Garland's contribution to a memorable event. Mr Garland has now sent the Society a copy of his 1994 book 'Mr Beck's Underground Map.' The book is meticulously written and beautifully produced – as can only be expected of its author, who has been a leading graphic designer and design commentator for half a century, famous particularly for his 'Aldermaston to London' Easter poster, with its huge, marching CND symbol.

It is fascinating to read how the map of the London's tube lines has developed since the first one which showed all the lines of 1906. The defining moment in this development occurred in 1933, when London Underground adopted and published the 'Diagram' on which Harry Beck had been working since 1931. It has never ceased to evolve since then, in response to changes in the network (stations closing, new ones opening, and plans, not always carried out, for new lines); to attempt to improve the clarity of the information provided to the public (how, for instance, to depict interchanges); and for aesthetic reasons or indeed the whim of the designer (changes in the tightness of the curves) or of higher powers in London Transport. Harry Beck himself left the employment of London Transport in 1947, but continued to work freelance for them until the late 1950s; his services were no longer used after 1960. This caused him distress, but did not stop him trying to improve the design of the map to incorporate the new Victoria Line.

Ken Garland gives a full and fair account of the arguments between Harry Beck and London Transport, though not disguising that his sympathies lie with the man, not the corporation. His book is obtainable from bookshops or from Capital Transport Publishing, 38, Long Elms, Harrow Weald, Middlesex HA3 5JL, price £12.95 post free. I think a number of Finchley

Society members will want to buy it as a memorial to a man who lived in our midst, from 1936 – 1960, at 60, Courthouse Road.

Peter Pickering

AVENUE HOUSE – 8346 7812 for bookings e-mail: info@avenuehouse.org.uk

Janett has written to ask me to convey to our members her gratitude for all the support and help they have given to her, the staff and, most importantly to the Estate. It is only by their support that makes all the work worthwhile. She is very pleased to report that Avenue House has made more profit during the last 6 months than was made by the London Borough of Barnet in their last year of management. Tea and biscuits alone have paid for the external painting of the rear. Roz's Raffle made £27.50 for Avenue House, and she urges you to bring money along to the September meeting for some interesting prizes and to support a worthy cause.

A new leaflet is now available.

She will be concentrating more on the grounds and will need money for litter bins and benches, please. I am very pleased to report that at the Sunday morning work party advertised for August 17th in "The Friends" newsletter, the 5 people who turned up were all FinSoc members. We weeded and trimmed the paths, sweeping away dozens of cigarette ends from the terrace, and watered the thirsty plants

The Grounds have now been classified officially as an Arboretum.

STEPHENS COLLECTION

The Finchley Society members will know that Henry Charles Stephens who died in 1918, developed the internationally renowned blue/black ink. He bequeathed his home and laboratory at Avenue House together with its extensive grounds to the people of Finchley, who continue to this day to enjoy and benefit from his largesse.

In Avenue House the Stephens Collection Committee exhibits for public interest, historical writing materials, also artifacts and documents dedicated to the life and achievements of Henry Charles. Bearing in mind the debt we and the wider community owe him, the Collection Committee believe that this is another way that his memory should be preserved and enhanced.

ARCHIVES – Maggie Ferguson – Archive Custodian, 8349 4283
Archive work mornings on most **Mondays 10.30 – 12.30am.**

The Finchley Charter Exhibition – October 4th..

We are arranging a display of books, photos and artifacts from our archives to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the granting of the Royal Charter to the Borough of Finchley, which took place in Avenue House on October 5th in 1933.

This exhibition will be at Avenue House on **Saturday , October 4th** 4.00 - 7 .00pm. It is hoped that you will pop in and if anyone has memories of that day, please contact Norman Burgess on 020 8346 6337, as he was there with his mother.

WHATS ON

- *Friern Barnet and District Local History Society*
Sunday 14th September. Friern Barnet Hospital Tour with Dr Oliver Natelson. Meet New Southgate Station 2pm £1.
- *The Stephens Collection*

will be launching their museum Support Group at the inaugural meeting at Avenue House , East End Road, N3 **on Friday, October 10th 5.00 – 7.00pm**. Everyone is invited to this meeting where procedural matters, steering committee, members' benefits and future plans will be discussed. This "one of the best small museums in England" is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons 2.00 – 4.30pm and is run entirely by volunteers, and relies on donations and fund-raising for its income.

- *The New End Theatre, Hampstead Village.*

9th September – 11th October. "This Story of Yours" by John Hopkins, who created Z Cars.

Established in 1974 this 84 seat theatre has just undergone a theatre refurbishment to include new and comfortable individual seats with improved leg space.

- *Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association*

Wednesday, November 26th...Historical postcards of Hornsey and Muswell Hill – Hugh Garnsworthy. Friends Meeting House , Church Crescent, 8.00pm

The Bothy at Avenue House Estate - FACT

Garden Party on September 14th 3-5pm Admission £5 – under 16 free. Music and refreshments.

MEMBERS

Membership Secretary...Lynn Bresler, 30, Birkbeck Road, N Finchley, N12 8DZ...020 8446 6249, e-mail :lynnbresler@aol.com

We welcome the following members to our society and ask them to make themselves known at a monthly meeting.

Hazel Hill,N3

Loretta Cowen,N12

DONATIONS

Treasurer...Nigel Doe, 020 8445 1278...e-mail: nigel@trakka.co.uk

We thank the following for their generous donations –

Ruth Lea, N3

Mr and Mrs Kelsall,N3

Andrew Forsyth, East Barnet

Margaret Evans, N12

Mrs Hatchett,N3

Robert and Heather Winton,N2

Andrea Whittaker, N3

Mr T P Frewin,N3

Mr and Mrs D Tofield,N12

We urge members who have not yet completed a Gift Aid form to do so . Forms are available from Charlotte Hume at 62, Church Crescent, Finchley, N3 IBJ. This way we can increase our funds and it does not cost you anything.

EDITOR – Barbara C Warren, 83 Wentworth Avenue, Finchley, London N3 1YN...020 8346 5258...e-mail: barwar@waitrose.com

Copy for **October** newsletter to reach me by **September 15th**

We care for Finchley and Friern Barnet