

Founded: February 1971
Avenue House, 17 East End Road, Finchley, London N3 3QE
www.finchleysociety.org.uk

President: Bill Tyler AADipl ARIBA IHBC

February 2006

MONTHLY MEETINGS

On Thursday, 23 February, Brenda Cole will talk to us on 'Blitz! London during World War II'. Brenda Cole has been a City of London Guide lecturer since 1992 and has a lifelong enthusiasm for history and a love of London. Her talk, fully illustrated with slides, will be on how the City of London and its people prepared for, coped with and survived the extensive damage done by enemy action during the 1939–45 War. This will be a nostalgia trip for those who are prepared to admit to being old enough to remember the Second World War. For younger members of the audience Brenda hopes to give a flavour of what it was like to live in London at that time. **Note** that the meeting will commence at 2.30 p.m. And a warm welcome is extended to everyone.

Earlier in the month on Thursday, 9 February, at 8 p.m., Ollie Natelson will be talking on the subject of 'How to research your favourite spot in Finchley'. This meeting has been arranged by the History Group. At the end of the meeting, there will be an opportunity to discuss other aspects of historical research – so do come and join in the discussion.

REPORT OF MONTHLY MEETING, 26 JANUARY

Robert Winton

'High' said Dr Natelson, means 'important' or 'principal'. The Finchley High Road originated on the ridge in the present Ballards Lane, with ground falling away on the east, and on the west towards Dollis Brook which forms the western side of Finchley. It was uninhabited up to the start of the Roman occupation, AD43–410, and some flint tools have been found from this period, although there is no evidence that the Romans came through Finchley. The High Road was developed little before 1840. The Romans built on a grid pattern, which has influenced town layouts up to the present day.

At first tradesmen carried their goods with them. The next step was the use of carts, and then town markets developed under strict control which prevented their being so close together that they competed; they were separated by distances which prevented a walking man from visiting more than two markets in a day. In 1199 King John granted St Albans the right to have a market in Barnet. During the reign of Elizabeth I some markets also had a fair which attracted large crowds. Later on there were also horse racing tracks; High Barnet Underground station is now on the site of the Barnet track. Markets were sometimes held in the open spaces in cemeteries.

In 1780 soldiers were stationed in North Finchley; there were still very few buildings on the High Road and little in the way of development until the 1860s when it increased rapidly – and received a boost in 1906 when public transport gave steady access. Now the High Road consists mainly of shops, restaurants and offices.

VACANCY – NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Barbara Warren has told us that she would like to cease being editor of the newsletter – by the end of the year at the latest. Would anyone interested in taking on this role please contact her on 8346 5258. The new editor could then shadow Barbara for a month or so, before taking over.

VACANCY – ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

The Administration Committee, which deals, among other things, with publicity, talks and events, would like to recruit a new member. The Committee usually meets six times a year but the duties aren't particularly onerous. If you would be interested in joining please contact either David Smith (8883 4154) or Maggie Ferguson (8349 4283) to discuss the matter more fully.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

We were delighted to receive a letter from Miss Minney – the Mayor and Members' Support Services Manager – in which she said:

'The Mayor, Cllr Andreas Tambourides, has asked me to thank you for inviting him to the

Christmas Party on 15 December 2005. He and the Mayoress had a wonderful time.

'Mayor and Mayoress much appreciated your kind hospitality and asked me to pass on their thanks and very best wishes for the New Year to all members of the Finchley Society.'

FROM THE WEBSITE

We have received a request for information, via the website, from Jim Corbett:

'I am a researcher based in Northumberland. As a local historian I am currently collating material regarding historical aircraft accidents in North Tynedale and Redesdale, Northumberland. On 1 March 1943 a Vickers Wellington bomber took off from Oxfordshire on a cross-country exercise. The pilot on this flight was Sgt David Llewellyn Barley, a 20-year-old airman from Finchley. At 1100 hours his machine crashed on to remote moorland near a village called Greenhaugh, killing Sgt Barley and his five fellow crewmen. The crash site has recently been rediscovered; the moor where the aircraft crashed now forms part of Kielder Forest. We are planning a memorial to the six crew and hope to unveil this in the village of Greenhaugh, the closest village to the crash site. This is located in remote open country, which now forms part of Kielder Forest.

'As part of my research I am hoping to trace any surviving relatives of Sgt Barley. He was the son of Lewellyn P Barley and Dorothy Margaret Barley of Finchley and he is buried at St Marylebone Cemetery. He had sisters named Sorrel and Olivia, and an address of 64 Brim Hill, London, N2 is given in the deaths column of *The Times* newspaper.

'Is it possible that any of your members may know the whereabouts of Sgt Barley's relatives?'

If anyone can help him in his research, could they please contact him direct. Jim Corbett's email address is jim.corbett@acia.co.uk; he can also be contacted at 6 Fox Court, Bellingham, Hexham, Northumberland NE48 2JW.

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Photographic survey

Derek Warren, 8346 5258

Since our millennium photo survey, buildings have changed or disappeared. At the time we tried to record every road in Finchley and Friern Barnet resulting in 2,000 photographs being taken. We also have about 2,000 postcards recording local views, especially of the High Roads and parks, some being a hundred years old. I feel we should now start recording in more detail, especially interiors that have been neglected in the past, and special subjects, such as stained glass, currently being studied by Helene Davidian.

If anyone is interested in helping, please give me a call. We should consider going digital so the photos can be kept on disc, or should it be memory stick; or, as Hugh Petrie said at one of our meetings, 'who knows what the future holds'.

Plane trees

Derek Warren

Thanks to those who reported on the whereabouts of plane trees. They are mainly found in roads built at the beginning of the last century. There are even some in Plane Tree Walk, N2! The road with the most is Christchurch Avenue, N12 where there are 67, but it is rather sad that a few have been replaced by different species. At the end of this Avenue, just in High Road, there is one of the largest that I have yet found, with an average thickness of 92cm (or just over 3ft). There are many in the High Road from East Finchley to Whetstone. Another common street tree is the lime.

Trees in your Ground by the Tree Council is a very interesting book for members of their Tree Warden Scheme but is also very informative for organisations such as ours. It aims to encourage people everywhere to value the trees growing in their neighbourhood and to help them to choose the right tree for their patch. So if you are thinking about planting a tree in your garden, this book will tell you the type of tree to get and give good details on how to plant and care for it. The book is available from The Tree Council, 72 Newcomen Street, London SE1 1YT at a price of £7.99 plus £1 p&p.

The birds in my garden

Mrs Evelyn Hiscocks, Petworth Road, North Finchley

I wondered if Finchley Society members would be at all interested in the different birds that

come to my garden to eat from the eight feeders I have in my trees, plus various bits of fruit and bread I put on the lawn and on two feeding tables.

Apart from the usual wood pigeons, crows (that I don't like), magpies and squirrels, during this cold weather I have had a pair of glorious green ring-necked parakeets eating peanuts (there are flocks of them in the London parks); normally three pairs of collared doves, one has learned how to balance on the peanut feeder; and a very distinctive blackcap (male) eating the berries from one of the bushes. Every day there are greenfinches – they eat the sunflower seeds, plus balance on the dead evening primroses, which I have left with the seed heads on, because with luck I'll get goldfinches eating these seeds (they did last year).

A regular visitor is a single grey wagtail who eats fruit, seed and bread from the lawn and patio. It's so pretty, grey above and yellow underneath, its long tail bobbing up and down. A joy to watch!

When we had the snow a couple of weeks ago I saw two redwings (Thrush family) eating red berries from the pyracantha bush, and apples on the lawn. A regular visitor is a great spotted woodpecker, plus robins and little wrens. They do fight though: two robins had a race with a female last week all round the place. The blue tits are looking into nest boxes (I have several) already. Last year a pair of long-tailed tits made a very beautiful nest, in a bush, but the next-door's cat tore it to bits. They have been back to feed, so I'm crossing my fingers.

Regulars are thrushes and blackbirds, great tits plus very noisy sparrows (they love seeds and nuts). A dunnock comes every so often, going through the dead leaves. Plus, yesterday, a pair of jays, and a female chaffinch, and every day a horde of starlings on the bird tables.

You can tell I love my garden and its visitors.

ANNUAL DINNER

Although there will be more details about the Annual Dinner in the next newsletter, please make a note now in your diaries that the event will be held in Avenue House on 6 July, and tickets will be £25.00.

PLANNING REFUSAL

We were delighted that Barnet Council turned down the application from Tesco for a Tesco Express convenience store on Ballards Lane, almost next-door to Finchley Delight Food & Wine, which serves the local area well. The reason for the refusal was that it would damage other local businesses.

SPIKE MILLIGAN STATUE FUND

Our thanks again to Dr Rudi Vis who has donated to the Fund the fee of £50 he received recently for participating in the November Parliamentary Panel survey.

Dates for your diary

Every Wednesday, 11 a.m.– 4 p.m. (except 29 March), there will be a book stall and coffee at 83 Wentworth Avenue to raise funds.

Quiz Evening on 8 April at a private hall, 100 Grove Road, North Finchley, N12 (the hall faces the bottom of Stanhope Road which runs alongside Woolworths). The quizmaster will be Terry McLoughlin. Refreshments will be available and there will be a raffle. Tickets cost £5 and can be purchased from David Smith (8883 4154), Barbara Warren (8346 5258) or Grace Fensome (8445 1808).

A reminder of the date of 25 February when H & S Productions will perform 'Simply Spike', a concert of Spike's words and music at Avenue House starting at 8 p.m. Tickets cost £7 and are obtainable from David Smith (8883 4154) or Barbara Warren (8346 5258).

NEW MEMBERS

We are delighted to welcome new members: Theresa Villiers, MP and Beverly Sokel, N2.

DONATIONS

We'd like to thank the following members who made donations when renewing their subscriptions recently: Mr S F Fassett, N20; Mr A Gotlop, N3; Mr A Roberts, N2; Mr Richard Tayler, N6; and Mr & Mrs W Tyler, N2.

EDITORS

Lynn Bresler and Carol Halls.

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Contributions for the **March** newsletter should be sent by **15 February** to Barbara Warren, 83 Wentworth Avenue, Finchley, London N3 1YN, tel. 020 8346 5258, email barwar@waitrose.com.