

Avenue House, 17, East End Road, Finchley, N3 3QE.

www.finchleysociety.org.uk

President: Bill Tyler AADipl. ARIBA. IHBC

Founded 1971

September 2006

MONTHLY MEETINGS

The meeting on **Thursday, September 14th** in the drawing room of Avenue House at **8.00pm.** is a History Group meeting, but all members are invited to this exciting talk.. The speaker will be Hugh Petrie and he will talk about **Finchley Common, 1500-1900**, the crimes committed of murder and robbery, gibbets, highwaymen and The Black Gang. Oh dear!

Members are warmly invited to the monthly meeting on Thursday, **September 28th** at 8.00pm in the drawing room of Avenue House, when the speaker will be John Heathfield and his talk is entitled **“I Told You Whetstone was Wonderful.”** And it will include stories of people, field names, and archaeological explorations. Please note change of speaker.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

In presenting her report (circulated with the June newsletter) Barbara Warren said that she should have mentioned the success of the Society web-site, thanks to the work of Tony Roberts and others. She also acknowledged the past efforts of Timothy Johnson in the great deal of artwork he contributed in the days long before personal computers. The following were selected for service in 2006/7

Vice Chairman	Maggie Ferguson	
Treasurer	Aziz Jetha	
Secretary	Robert Winton	
Executive members	Roz Avery	Lynn Bresler
	Stephen Cooper	Harry Branchdale

All these become ex officio Society Trustees.

Mike Dawson suggested starting a collection of World War II memorabilia and mementoes and Ollie Natelson referred to the blitz museum which it is hoped will be established in the basement of the former Friern Barnet Town Hall. Bill Tyler ended the meeting with thanks to those who had worked for the Society over the past year.

Robert Winton

SIR JOHN BETJEMAN

Due to the influence of our founder, Jean Scott, Sir John became the first patron of The Finchley Society in 1971 and remained so until his death in 1984. This is his centenary year, and many national events will be celebrating this. Visit www.johnbetjemam.com

STAINED GLASS OUTING TO ELY – OCTOBER 7TH

Helen Davidian will be guiding an outing to the Stained Glass Museum in the Cathedral at Ely. It will be a full day outing with lunch available in the Cathedral Refectory. It will be by shared car so please let Helen know immediately whether you will be going on this outing and whether you require a lift or whether you can offer one. She needs to know at once so that all this can be organised and bookings made. Ring her on **020 8444 3669**

NEWS of the FAMILY Not a member but a sadness for the Spike Milligan Fund Committee members and the Milligan girls is the early death of Michael Sellers, the son of Peter.

Our grateful thanks to one of our honoured postmen, or in this case woman, Mrs Gladys Willson, who with her husband Ron served as a postman for over 20 years, and who continued with her own round after his death, but has now decided to retire.

It is with great regret that we record the death of Simon Dimont. He was a former member of the Planning Committee and we shall miss his special interest in the affairs of the Society. Our deepest sympathy goes to Christa, his widow

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Barbara Warren Society Chairman 2002 – 2005

An appreciation by Robert Winton, Secretary

Very few in the Society worked more closely with Barbara than I did, and I found her one of the best Chairman I have ever served in my 60 years or so of volunteering. Our disagreements were infrequent but invariably friendly. I always knew where I was. If she were undecided she would consider other points of view before making up her mind but, once her mind was made up, we could act on her decision without fear that she would change it. In dealing with people she was quick to give thanks, but also quick with constructive criticism. She never hesitated to speak her mind. We should all give her our thanks for devoting so much time and energy to her work as Chairman, and be grateful to her for continuing to support the Society in many ways.

Bill Tyler, Carol Halls and David Smith have been asked to consider an appointment.

Vice Chairman

Representing The Finchley Society, because of our connection with Octavia Hill, I attended the Grand Opening of RED CROSS GARDEN (off Marshalsea Road, Borough) in the presence of The Princess Royal on June 1st 2005. The garden was originally created by Octavia Hill – an environmental and social scheme for the poor of Southwark. The Bankside Open Spaces Trust have re-designed and replanted the garden, which is now an oasis of calm. The garden is linked to the British Association and College of Occupational Therapists, which was founded by Elizabeth Casson – Octavia Hill's colleague.

The local school children performed a Maypole Dance for Princess Anne and she unveiled a mosaic made by them, the texts being "The wilderness shall blossom as the rose." and " A new life for Red Cross garden 2005." It is a remarkable achievement.

Maggie Ferguson.

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE – Chairman, David Smith, 17,Abbotts Gardens, N2 OJG 8883 4154 joda@fsmail.net

Annual Dinner – Thursday July 6th.

This took place in the splendour of the drawing Room of Avenue House and was a great success. The food was good and our guest , Mr Richard Selby , accompanied by his wife, was an excellent speaker. He talked of his trials and tribulations at the Registration Services at the London Borough of Barnet with great humour and an understanding of human nature at times of stress. We look forward to seeing you all again next year for our 4th dinner.

The Spike Milligan Statue Fund

If you want your money to go into the Spike Milligan Statue Fund please mark your cheque accordingly. If you just put The Finchley Society it will not get to the Fund. The Fund shares

th Society's charity number and the Fund Treasurer will report at the Executive Committee on its financial position and activities.

There will be a quiz on **September 9th** at Utopia, a Scout Hall at 104 Grove Road, N12. **7.30pm for 8.00pm** The road by the side of Woolworth's called Stanhope Road leads directly to it..The Quizmaster will be Terry McLoughlin. There will be tables of six, individual or parties. Tickets £5, including tea and coffee and nibbles, but bring your own wine and more nibbles, from David Smith 8883 4154 , or Barbara Warren 8346 5258

It is a long time since June 18th on a hot sunny day, when several hundred people descended on Avenue House to enjoy the entertainment provided for the Spike Milligan Statue Fund. We received many words of appreciation about the quality of the entertainment, and we were well supported by our specially invited guests, including the Mayor Councillor Eva Greenspan, the Chairman of the Greater London assembly, Councillor Brian Coleman, Mr Jono Coleman from BBC Radio London and Mr John Repsch , Chairman of the Goon Show Preservation Society.

But above all, we must thank our many volunteer helpers who gave sterling service during the event. Others turned up on the Saturday evening to erect the stage, and , yes, they turned up on the Sunday evening to take it down again! We are fortunate to have so many helpful and talented people in our midst.

Barry Cryer was unfortunately prevented from joining us because of work commitments, but he compensated by writing "An Ode to Spike" for the occasion. It was read to us by Julia Breck who has starred in many of the "Q" series with Spike on Television, and who, last year undertook to paint two portraits of Spike, one to hang inside Avenue House and the other to be copied for sale. This poster is a unique biographical account of all that Spike achieved in his lifetime and is available from David Smith, 17, Abbots Gardens, London N2 OJG at a cost of £7.00 by post or £5.00 if hand delivered at a meeting. Julia has signed all the remaining posters and these probably will become a collector's item in years to come. The postcards of the poster are 25p.

Our grateful thanks to the Avenue House Estate Management for their every encouragement

Educational Visit to the Avenue House Estate

On July 18th The Finchley Society, The Stephens Collection and Avenue House were hosts to the pupils of Year 3 from St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Dollis Park.

In small groups the children were shown around the Stephens Museum and introduced to the art of writing with a quill pen. Downstairs they visited the Society Archives and shared the thrill of sitting in the former ARP HQ, whilst listening to the wail of the air raid siren. Out in the grounds meanwhile other groups were exploring The Bothy and learning about the tree collection and the wildlife pond. Despite this being one of the hottest days of the heatwave, the children behaved impeccably and certainly deserved their long-awaited picnic and games in the grounds.

We were delighted to receive individual letters of thanks from all the children. They seemed to have enjoyed their visit. We do hope that other schools will take up this idea as an annual event and learn a lot about our local cultural heritage.

The Society is indebted to Dot Lindsay, Gary Pearce, Janett Durrant, Maggie Ferguson, Pat and Peter Marsh, Betty Burgess and Percy Rebol for having animated this day, and sharing their enthusiasm with the children . (Ed. and for David who organised the day)

David Smith

The Blitz

If you have a first-hand memory of the Blitz (1940 – 41) in London and have not yet committed to paper or tape, then could you please find the time to do so between now and the end of November.

Helen Fletcher has sent us her graphic account of the damage done by the landmine outside the Mansion House on January 11th 1941. You are invited to follow her example and add to our collection of primary source material so that we can pass this on to others too young to have lived through these dangerous times themselves.

Please send contributions to David Smith at 17 Abbots Gardens, Finchley, London, N2 OJG

Christmas party

This will be held at Avenue House on December 14th at 7.30pm . If you can provide prizes for our Christmas Raffle please contact Mari I'Anson . Please do not send her anything, but let her know what you can offer, by writing to her at 5, The Grove, Finchley, N3 1QN or telephone her on 020 8346 7011. The offer will be greatly appreciated. *Robert Winton*

ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE - Chairman: Harry Branchdale

harry@branchdale.co.uk

Please use the following numbers for your problems –

Barnet Customer Care – 020 8359 4600

Environment Agency - 0800 8070 60

Trees – Ann Gallon020 8346 8533

Bird Reports and wildlife – Derek Warren....020 8346 5258....derwar@waitrose.com

Recycling – Stan Spinks...8346 9811

Be a smart shopper and follow the advice of the council in these five ways to reduce unnecessary packaging.

1. Use re-usable shopping bags.
2. Buy products with little or no packaging.
3. Use refills.
4. Choose loose fruit and vegetables or have them delivered package-free . See www.barnet.gov.uk/smartshopping.
5. Buy energy efficient light bulbs .For further tips visit www.barnet.gov.uk/recycling.

Stan Spinks

Built Environment – Barbara Warren....020 8346 5258....barwar@waitrose.com

Traffic and transport –Pat Dunnill020 8349 9825, Harry Branchdale020 8445 4281

Front garden paving -David Hollingworth....020 8446 9693-

A letter to the editor bemoaned the fact of gardens, especially where he lives, being paved over to provide much needed parking. Those of you who look at The One Show on BBC 1 will have seen the delectable Charlie Dimmock beseeching the nation to at least plant some flowers in the desert created by concrete, and to be aware of the environmental damage. The former well kept gardens , the vandalising of which so upset my letter writer, created wildlife corridors, prevented flash flooding and did not lead to global warming. Ken Livingstone has evidently warned that there could be legislation in the future. Contact 020 8445 6321 for advice.

Barbara Warren

PLANNING COMMITTEE - Chairman, Stephen Cooper, 32, Cardrew Avenue, N12 9LD, 020 8445 2685....stephetherc@waitrose .com

The committee reported that there is concern about the preservation of trees at the Sternberg Centre. Developments in the expansion of Tesco's at Coppett's Wood are delayed due to the Inspector adjourning the enquiry until 2007.

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP – Secretary Margaret Cullen, 21 Lyndhurst Gardens N3 1TA, 020 8346 2091 or bcullen@onetel.com. The History Group is keen to expand its activities, so if you have some time to spare, please contact Margaret to see how you can help.

Projects

The next meeting arranged for those involved in Finchley history projects to get together takes place on 21 September. Please contact Margaret for details.

What's in a Street Name?

In the June newsletter we invited readers to write in and tell us about their street. Helen Rance wrote in to tell us about Wickliffe Avenue N3 where she has lived for 53 years. The road was a private one built by Kensit College Church. As a private road it was closed for one day a year (Good Friday) by means of a white gate at the top. The Protestant Truth Society founded by John Kensit seeks to promote Biblical truth and so it was natural for them to name the street after the former master of Baliol and inspirational protestant John Wycliffe, who was posthumously burned at the stake in 1428 for his teachings.

Most of the houses were owned by Kensit but the last four were built later and owned privately. The road remained unmade until Kensit sold land on the north side and Cranmer Court was built. Street lights were added, then town houses, some of which were named Latimer Gardens (continuing the protestant martyr theme). Before the development the land opposite was made up of old orchards and Mrs Rance's boys had a lovely time there. A big thank you to Helen Rance for taking the trouble to respond.

Tony Roberts

The Group is looking for anyone prepared to work on a history project, either a project of their choice or one of the projects which the Group has already thought of, which are: a booklet about each of our libraries; updating the current book on the history of the Finchley Charities after 1988; preparing information about listed buildings for display to the public; photographing buildings at risk; creating a data base of all the sources of information about Finchley and Friern Barnet; investigating the feasibility of a Museum; finding out the part played by Finchley companies in the manufacture of motorised sledges for Scott's Antarctic Expedition. Would anyone interested please contact Mrs Margaret Cullen.

Robert Winton

ARCHIVES

Maggie Ferguson – Archive Custodian, 36, Oakfield Road, Finchley, N3 2HT
8349 4283...emfmr@hotmail.co.uk.

The archive team meet on most Monday mornings between 10.00am and 1.00pm. with coffee at 11.30am.

- One of the delights in working on the archives is coming across little gems which we know nothing about – some unfortunately not related to us in any way. Such is an item I picked up and read to see if it had any relevance to Finchley or Friern Barnet. It is an 11 page document entitled “A Story of Nine Days Leave in Cairo,” and is written by one of five named members of His Majesty's Armed Forces based in Palestine and dated January 20th 1918. The five named are Sergeants Lees, Whitney and Tooley, Corporal McKirgan and Farrier Sergeant Mc Guire. Does any of this ring a bell with someone? It is such a fine piece of writing it would be a shame just to throw it away.

Barbara Warren

- Where is the highest point in Finchley? This caused some discussion in the archives one Monday morning when Jane said East Finchley is at a higher level than Church End, but Maggie disagreed, and Derek thought it must be North Finchley. Who was right do you think? To give you time to think about this the answer will be in next month's newsletter.

Derek Warren

- We are grateful to Mr Robert Payne for his gift to the library of his book “For The Record” the story of his life from 1919 – 2004.

EVENTS SECRETARY

Mrs Sakina Jetha, 2, Templars Crescent, Finchley, London , N3 3QS 020 8346 2286

e-mail: jetha@uk2.net

If you hear of good and interesting speakers please let her know. The list of speakers for 2007 has been approved .

TREASURER

Aziz Jetha, 2, Templars Crescent, N3 3QS 020 8346 2286.

MEMBERS

Membership Secretary, Tony Roberts, 32a, Sedgemere Avenue, East Finchley, London, N2 0SX 020 8883 5954 e-mail: membership@finchleysociety.org.uk.

New members

We are very pleased to welcome Doris Manning N12, Carole & Ken McPherson N2, Richard Robeson N12 and Mrs Catherine Weston N3

Donations

We would like to thank the following members for their recent donations:

Ros Avery N3	Mr N. Bar N12	Mrs Marjorie D. Bridges NW11
Mrs B. Coffey N20	Mr R.R. Fantoni N2	Philip Harris N3
Mr F & Mrs D Kelsall N3	Ruth Jane Lea N3	Doris Manning N12
Mr E. Morgan NW2	Mr P.E. Pickering N12	Mrs M.D. Randall N3
Mr & Mrs D. Tofield N12	Mr K.W. Weinberg NW11	

We are supported entirely by subscription and without our membership and their generosity the aims of the society could not be met. Some donations are quite substantial and on a regular basis. Gift Aid this year produced £820 paid to us by the Government, thanks to the work done by Charlotte Hume who applies for our payment each April.

EDITOR –Please note.....contributions to the October newsletter to **Barbara Warren** by **September 15th** please, to 83, Wentworth Avenue, Finchley, N3 1YN ...020 8346 5258....barwar@waitrose.com

There will be no newsletter in December

As yet no one has applied to be the next editor when I give up in November, after ten years, and having given a year’s notice. The newsletter practically writes itself and all that is needed is a few hours at the keyboard each month, except July, August and December. Each Committee Chairman sends in their report, Sakina sends in details of the next month’s meeting, Tony sends in membership details , other Societies send in advertising, and members send in articles according to their interests. The typed copy goes to Tony Gossett to be printed at the Ballards Lane Methodist Church at the junction with Essex Park., and Helene Davidian and her team takes over at this point for delivery. Your work is done. There is an Assistant Editor for when you are ill or on holiday, and others who will be prepared to have a go if Stephen is not available.