

OCTOBER 2007

Avenue House, 17 East End Road, Finchley N3 3QE www.finchleysociety.org.uk

President: Bill Tyler AADipl, ARIBA, IHBC

Founded 1971

OCTOBER MEETING - TURN AGAIN WHITTINGTON

The October meeting will take place at 8 pm on 25 October 2007 in the Drawing Room at Avenue House. A talk will be given by Brenda Cole, City of London Guide Lecturer, on one of the legendary characters of the City of London.

Most British children grow up with the story of Dick Whittington and his Cat, which they often encounter initially through the traditional pantomime, but Sir Richard Whittington was a real person and he really was Lord Mayor of London several times around 1400. Brenda will link the traditional story with the truth behind it and will answer such questions as: "Was he a poor apprentice who made good?" and "Did his cat really make his fortune for him?" The talk is fully illustrated with slides.

UNVEILING THE LA DÉLIVRANCE INFORMATION PLAQUE

"It is important to inform the public about local history and The Finchley Society is to be congratulated on their initiative, which is an asset to the local community" said the Mayor of Barnet, Cllr Maureen Braun, as she unveiled the information plaque adjacent to the statue of La Délivrance given by Lord Rothermere in 1927, then the proprietor of the Daily Mail in 1927. Her address was followed by the Representative Deputy Lieutenant for Barnet, Martin Russell. He outlined the importance of the first battle of the Marne, which the original statue commemorates, when the British and French armies saved Paris from German occupation at the start of the First World War in 1914. The French reservists arrived at the battle in taxi cabs, he said.

The ceremony on September 9, the 80th anniversary of the battle was a great day for our Society, with some 70 attending, including Mike Freer, leader of Barnet Council, a representative of the Daily Mail and of the Rothermere family, and cadets from the Air Training Corps Finchley Squadron and the Christ College Cadet Force. Our Chairman and Vice President, David Smith, welcomed the guests and introduced the speakers. He ended the ceremony by thanking Robert Winton who put so much work into the Society's History Group's project to erect the plaque.

But I must add that there were others, who contributed, notably Peter Marsh who designed the stand and created the drawings for planning permission, Lynn Bresler who finalised the text, Paddy O'Brien, the immediate past Representative Deputy Lieutenant and John Rickard for his long and continuing work on the history of the statue.

A final sideline: I identified a small piece of metal, found in the earth dug out to make the hole for the plaque, as the screw cap from a petrol can used in the 1920's to fill cars. I believe that this must have been there since the statue was installed in 1927 - a remarkable link with the statue's inauguration.

Robert Winton, Hon. Secretary

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Further to the article in last month's Newsletter, this further extract from St Mary's Parish Magazine of May 1906 dates from the period when Victoria Avenue was about to be built, the playing fields of Christ's College were about to slide down the hill ending up by Dollis Brook and many people voiced strong objections to the loss of the Church Fields. The writer is clearly trying to smooth over the rather shocking public protests and to defend the Rector from the suggestion that he was selling off the fields for his own benefit. I find myself wondering what happened at earlier Finchley Vestries and exactly what the Rector's predecessors had to endure!

"The state of affairs at St Mary's as shown at the Easter Vestry was very satisfactory and encouraging.... The business was conducted in the peaceful and unanimous spirit that has marked the proceedings now for several years. But at its close, unfortunately, the old bad traditions of Finchley Vestries were revived, the room being packed with all sorts of persons--very many from outside the limits of St Mary's and without interest in its worship and spiritual work--and the Rector experienced what his predecessors have had to endure. The incident has furnished much copy for the local Press but in these pages is best passed over with the simple contempt which it has produced in the minds of those whose opinion is worth having, as shown by many letters and personal expressions of sympathy of the most gratifying kind. The position with regard to the Church Fields is as follows.

While we all realize and regret the change which has passed over the fields adjoining the Church, it may be well to state simply the circumstances under which it has come about. Just as those who are responsible for the material well-being of the suburbs, rightly strive to secure open spaces, so the problem which has for long especially exercised the minds of those charged with the spiritual needs of our ever-increasing London is how to keep pace with the growing population in the matter of religious ministrations. One source of income which has presented itself in this as many other parishes has been the development of Church lands.

At the time of the late rector of Finchley's death, there was one new church ready to be given a parish but without any provision for the payment of a clergyman. The then Bishop of London in offering the living of Finchley to the present Rector therefore asked him to agree to a temporary diminution of £250 a year of its income, assuring him at the same time that the amount would be returned very soon through the further development of the glebe property. Now

after more than 5 years that development has taken place. The interest on this sum derived does not therefore go to increase the value of the living- the popular idea of the amount of which is fabulous- but only towards restoring what it suffered a loss of for a time. The Ecclesiastical Authorities could not have dealt with the property otherwise than they have done without being unfaithful to their trust; for the land was originally given not for the general benefit of Finchley, but for *Church* purposes and in particular the maintenance of clergy. It was their duty to make the best use of it to that end"

Margaret Cullen

FINCHLEY CHARTER CARNIVAL

Were you there? While putting "Finchley Remembered" back together for a possible second edition there was one photo we were unable to trace. It is the photo on page 78 entitled *Finchley Charter Carnival, 1933 - entry by Austin House (2nd Prize)* and shows two lady contestants in front of a white, decorated motor car. We would love to locate the photo again and scan it. If you know who owns it do please contact Maggie Ferguson.

THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Planning Committee plays an important role in preserving the character of Finchley from inappropriate development. If you are interested in the character of your area and Finchley at large, why not join our committee? This could be as a member of the committee or one of the representatives who checks new planning applications in each of five wards.

Please call Mike Dawson on: 020-8346-4232 for more information.

ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

The next meeting of the committee will be on Monday 22nd October and this will be preceded by a talk on recycling, given by a member of Barnet's recycling department.

There will be 6 places available for other members to attend, so if you wish to attend please give your name to me as numbers are strictly limited.

Derek Warren, 020 8346 5258

GiGL

This stands for "Greenspace Information for Greater London" and is hosted by the London Wildlife Trust. It is a records centre that collates, manages and makes available detailed information on London's wildlife, parks, nature reserves, gardens and other open spaces. It has a newsletter that can be downloaded from their website www.GiGL.org.uk. Many of the London Boroughs are partners, including Barnet, and I hope FINSOC will be able to supply them with details of our green spaces.

SPIKE MILLIGAN STATUE FUND

On November 10th H & S Productions are performing "ON THE HOME FRONT" - a look at life in wartime Britain in story & song. Song sheets provided! This will be

held at the East Finchley Constitutional Club, The Walks, East Finchley, N2 8DE at 8pm. Tickets £8.00 including light refreshment during the interval, from Barbara 020 8346 5258. Licensed bar and coffee available. This is a very entertaining evening given by a local group, so please come and give them your support." At this same venue we will be holding another Quiz night on November 24th. Tickets from Barbara.

LONG LANE PASTURE

A large pond has been constructed but landscaping is now required and shrubs and trees have to be planted. Further ditches have to be dug and two bridges built, and there are always brambles to cut back. A work party is held every other Saturday starting at 10am and new volunteers would be very welcome. Contact me for further information.

Derek Warren 020 8346 5258. derwar@waitrose.com

BALLARDS LANE

Although I am not a Finchley historian; I have always been intrigued by Ballards Lane.

In 1323, Gilbert Pratt of Whetstone was found "not guilty" of robbing Henry Ballard at Finchley. This is the only record I have found of that family name.

In 1431 "The Lord is to scour four perches at the corner of Ballards Lane". A little later, a similar entry refers to "Ballards Reddynges Gate". Redding is used for a piece of grassland, presumably enclosed from Finchley Common.

In 1540, Ballards Redding was on lease to Thomas Sherle and Richard Lechmore as "all those meadows or closes abutting Fayre Cross on the parte of the south and two parts abutting the Lords Common on the north and west, late in the tenure of John Nele of Barnet. Later Thomas Andrew of Moss Hall had a lease of "four old enclosures called Hither Reddings of 4 acres, the Middle Reddings of 5 acres, Further Reddings of 4 acres and Hides Field or Shepherds Field.

Ballards Reding was freehold of the Bishop of London and remained so during the nineteenth Century. Samuel Joshua and Henry Wimbush of 315 Oxford Street, job masters, converted their estate from leasehold to freehold in 1853, by paying £2582. Job masters hired out horses and wagons by the day or job and would have needed grazing for their horses. The fact that Thomas Andrew of Moss Hall held the land suggests that it may have been somewhere near Moss Hall. My guess is that it was near what is now Granville Road and may have run as far as Fallow Corner. At the time of writing I believe that Ballards Lane originally ran from Church End to Ballards Redding where the way north was blocked by Moss Hall estate. The road then turned east about where Granville Road now stands.

The location of the "Fayre Cross" is a mystery. It may have stood near Fallow Corner. There was another "Fayre Cross" north of Whetstone.

The relevant entry is very long. In brief it refers to Hornsey Great Park — it will be remembered that the boundary between Finchley Common and Hornsey was not fixed until the 1800s. In 1674 John Oldbury held the herbage, pannage and pasture of a meadow called Oxlees lying within the Park, and a barn lying near the gate thereof and all those meadows called Ballards Redding abutting against

the ffaire cross on the south side (i.e. the cross was on the south side of the land).

Fayre Crosses seem to have been used as boundary markers, possibly in this case between Finchley Common and enclosed land.

John Heathfield

THE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO – THE WAY OF ST JAMES

It didn't start too well – a mass fire evacuation of the main Stansted terminal meant I and many others almost missed our flights, airlines having to keep pretty strictly to their 'slots,' though at times you would hardly know it! The train from Bayonne climbed steadily through the foothills of the Pyrenees to St Jean Pied de Port, a meeting point for centuries-old pilgrimage routes from northern France to Santiago de Compostela, but it was a wet and heavily overcast scene that greeted me. Thick, lowering cloud obscured the mountain tops and the forecast was bad, so a start the next day seemed unlikely. However, the weather improved overnight and the local tourist office gave the thumbs up for 'Go'. So off set a straggle of walkers, each going at their own or their companion's pace and variously loaded with backpacks hung with the scallop shell symbol of St James, the tomb of whom we were heading for nearly 500 miles away.

The route of the Camino is generally well marked throughout but what no one told me was how tough some of the terrain is, even for a pretty fit walker. There are some really rough and steep sections that badly punish feet and legs (annoyingly, not all at the same time) and I suffered with bad blisters where I'd never had them before, several toes were quite severely bruised and muscles screamed achingly from time to time, too. All this meant I had to have days off when I couldn't walk comfortably and either had to rest or take a bus or train to keep on schedule. Another hiatus was the loss of my wallet, or more likely its theft, and that's no joke in a small town where no one seemed to speak English and a very basic few words of Spanish are quite inadequate for that sort of situation! Amazingly, I was lent enough money to keep me going for a few days while my wife Diana and Western Union came to the rescue with transferred funds.

The attempt to do 490 miles in a month was over-optimistic, although beforehand two veterans of the Camino had said it was quite feasible. I managed only 250 on the route itself and another 20 or so with various diversions and I did that in 18 days of actual walking. After 23 days of moving on almost continually I felt completely 'walked out', so arrived in Santiago de Compostela six days before my booked return flight but then couldn't get an earlier one back home. It gave me the chance to go to Finisterre, the very end of the Camino, to have a dip in the Atlantic off the westernmost point of Europe and to get to know Santiago pretty well. There can be few nicer places in which to have to spend four or five days.

Almost all the hostels and pensions I stayed in were spotlessly clean, inexpensive and provided wonderful meals of local produce, especially fish, were incredibly good value. Along the way I passed the time of day and some evenings with German, Austrian, Scandinavian, Canadian and Dutch walkers, only the French and Spanish keeping rather to themselves. Most people,

including a few families with children, were serious pilgrims but others were doing it for the experience and some, like me, raising money for charities. A good number had started at Pau, in France, another traditional meeting point of pilgrimage routes, and were walking for only a week or two. Most impressive was a group of Austrian students who had walked all the way from Vienna. A sense of camaraderie develops through shared experiences, even though walkers become strung out over many miles and may not meet again for perhaps several days, if at all when forced to give up through strains and blisters!

From rough - at times very rough - track to stony path, boggy morass, farm track to asphalt road, the Camino passes through hugely varied landscapes - the cloud covered Pyrenees (1450m/4760ft), rolling arable farmland, flat plains, forests, pastureland and valleys with rushing rivers. Many of the villages are semi-ruinous and populated almost entirely by the elderly as highly mechanised farming has driven younger families to the towns and cities. Pamplona, Burgos and Leon are the major cities en route but there are also many quite large towns and all incredibly clean and beautifully paved, as are some of the more important villages. The magnificent cathedrals - Burgos, Leon and Santiago - and the many fine churches and ancient buildings along the way are truly remarkable but particularly memorable was, for mile after mile, the complete lack of man-made noise - just the hum of insects savouring the myriad wild flowers along the path verge and, above it all, the trill of skylarks.

The amount I've raised, and to be equally split between the North London Hospice and TreeHouse, is now over £11,500 - a fantastic response from my many very kind sponsors.

I do hope this gives some flavour of what I was up to.

Bill Tyler

E BAY EXPERT

If any member is conversant with buying and selling on EBay, please could they contact Maggie Ferguson on 8349 4283, as the Society's Archive Department needs advice on selling some items they have which are not connected with Finchley.

OTHER LOCAL EVENTS

ST. MARGARET'S UNITED REFORM CHURCH, VICTORIA AVENUE N3 will be celebrating the centenary of the building in Victoria Avenue on Sunday 21 October with a thanksgiving service at 11 am and a concert at 2.30 pm, which will include "a hymn of St. Margaret's" by David Sutton Anderson, B. Mus.

A small exhibition is being prepared to illustrate the building of the church and some past and present activities. This will be open from 11 am to 3 pm on Wednesday to Saturday October 17 – 20. All welcome.

FRIERN BARNET LIBRARY: local history in Friern Barnet a talk by the Friern Barnet local history society 10.30 am to 11.30 am on Wednesday 10 October at Friern Barnet library. all welcome – coffee/tea 35p.

CHURCH END LIBRARY: Awareness and understanding of age related macular disease of the eye – a talk by Barbara Hogg – Monday 15 October 8 pm for 8.15 pm (now on 1st floor – lift available)

EAST FINCHLEY LIBRARY: The Archer Newspaper – an illustrated talk by Diana Cormack – Friday 5 October 10.45 for 11 am to Noon

MANOR LIGHT OPERA presents LIFE UPON THE WICKED STAGE – Saturday 20 October at 7.30 pm at St. Mary's church Hall, Hendon Lane N3

DR. E G V BARRETT

I am sorry to have to report the death of one of our members. Dr E G V Barrett died after a very short illness on 30 August at Lister Hospital, Stevenage. Dr Barrett joined the Society in 1974, which made him one of our longest-serving members.

Tony Roberts

MEMBERSHIP

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

We extend a warm welcome to our new members:

Andy Astle and Billie Hylton N3	Elizabeth Davies N3
Roger Enskat N3	Alan T and Mrs Barbara Hill N12
Joe Livingstone N12	Rachael Macdonald N22
Janet Maitland N2	Kiran Singh and Aditya Singh N3
Elisabeth Vandyk N3	

DONATIONS

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

Ros Avery KT17	Mr. N. Bar N12
Mrs. Marjorie D. Bridges NW11	Mr. Richard S. Buchanan N3
Miss Josephine Canning N3	Christa Dimont N3
Roger Enskat N3	Mrs. M.E. Goodes N20
Mr. & Mrs. I. Lyall N3	Mr. P.E. Pickering N12
Mrs. M.D. Randall N3	Ms Rosanna Taylor N3
Mr. & Mrs. D. Tofield N12	Mr. K.W. Weinberg NW11
Mr. & Mrs. R.C. Winton N2	

Tony Roberts

WEB SITE (WWW.FINCHLEYSOCIETY.ORG.UK)

Members who have visited our web site recently will have noticed an extra page in the information sources section entitled *Photos*. This page provides access to 30 photos of places in Finchley and Friern Barnet. Many of these originate from the work we are doing to list and photograph memorable buildings in the area.

Also available on the web site (Archive section) are lists of the books and maps that are available for view at our Archives at Avenue House

Tony Roberts

CONTACTS

Admin. Committee

David Smith (Chairman) joda@fsmail.net
17 Abbots Gardens N2 OJG 020 8883 4154

Planning Committee:

Vacant (Chairman)

Local History Group:

Margaret Cullen (Secretary) margaretcullen@f2s.com
21 Lyndhurst Gardens, N3 1TA 020 8346 2091

Archives:

Maggie Ferguson (Custodian) emfmr@hotmail.co.uk
36 Oakfield Road, Finchley N3 2HT 020 8349 4283

Treasurer:

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

Distribution Manager:

Helene Davidian 020 8444 3669

Membership Secretary:

Tony Roberts membership@finchleysociety.org.uk
32a Sedgemere Avenue, 020 8883 5954
East Finchley, London N2 0SX

If there are any changes to your membership or contact details
please let Tony know

ARTICLES FOR NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER TO THE EDITOR BY

15 OCTOBER 2007

Rosemary Coates (Editor) Rosemary.finsoc@waitrose.com
38 Lyndhurst Avenue, London N12 0LU 020 8368 1620