



Founded 1971

Patron: Paddy O'Brien TD DL MA FRSA Chairman: David Smith  
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## ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The past twelve months have seen much progress within the Society and also a lot of hard work by our various office holders, appointees and committees all of whom, uncomplainingly, month after month, advance the cause of our organisation. It is a great privilege as Chairman to be able to thank these women and men who keep the wheels turning and maintain our presence in Finchley and Friern Barnet.

It is certainly a fact that we have increasingly espoused electronic communication and are now gaining members in this way. Our website has had a complete overhaul too. I do hope that members have had a look at this major improvement ([www.finchleysociety.org.uk](http://www.finchleysociety.org.uk))

Our Planning Committee has continued its scrutiny of the many planning applications for our area of benefit and we are fortunate to have such talent within our ranks. The re-formed Environment and Transport Committee is tackling the many problems facing the population whether members or not. The Administration Committee continues to deal with the everyday running of the Society, the programme of monthly meetings, the smooth delivery of the Newsletter, the erection of information panels and plaques, and other events. (It is still looking for a Secretary to help run this important group. Surely there is someone out there from amongst our hundreds of members who could step forward?)

Our Archive Team continues to care for our impressive collection kept at Avenue House. It is always a pleasure to pop in on a Monday morning to see the latest acquisitions or to puzzle over an untitled photograph. Beavering away somewhere in Finchley is the team who will soon give birth to "Finchley Remembered Part Two". And of course I must pay tribute to the members of the Executive Committee who steer the Society in the right direction and make sure your money is spent in the right way.

I am pleased to see that the numbers attending our monthly meetings have been maintained, but do please remember that the cost of our accommodation is increasing all the time - a meeting at Avenue House now costs £100 - so do support as many meetings as you can. We have maintained the new style programme by including two "discussion" events. These have been productive and enjoyable and have enabled many members to contribute. Please remember that we rely on our members for ideas about future topics to be covered. If you have heard a good speaker elsewhere please tell us.

One thought: to be environmentally aware is quite a heavy burden. Every time we leave our homes we start seeing something that needs putting right: the carelessly discarded can or wrapper, a tree that appears to be dying, a missing road nameplate, a tipped kerbstone, an uneven pavement, a dead squirrel, a .... the list goes on. So what do you do about it? I hope that all our members know how to contact the appropriate agency. Usually it will be the local authority on [firstcontact@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:firstcontact@barnet.gov.uk) or else [fixmystreet.com](http://fixmystreet.com) or try the Council switchboard on 020 8359 2000. If you report a problem make sure you are given a reference number so that you can follow up if no progress appears to have been made. If you still have a problem let us know.

That burden is carried right through our daily lives: my current worries are (1) whether I should be using so much water to rinse cans and jars for recycling, (b) how many litres of water do I waste every time I run the hot tap and wait ages for it to reach the right temperature? and (c) how many more mobile phone cabinets are going to be erected outside "The Five Bells". At the latest count we have fifteen - and eight wheelie bins as well. Help!

To all our members I say "thank you" for your support for all that we are doing, and hope to do, for Finchley and Friern Barnet. I hope you think that we are delivering on our promises to "Conserve and Enhance, Inform and Educate".

*David Smith, Chairman*

## **REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**

During the last year our Media Co-ordinator, Karine Barsam, resigned and the position has been taken over by Mick Crick. The Society's Membership Secretary, David Coates, has also joined us so the fresh faces we were looking for a year ago have appeared although we still remain a small committee without a minute secretary. This role continues to be "temporarily" filled by Rosemary Coates to whom we are extremely grateful. Once again can we appeal to any of our members who might be able to spare time to take committee minutes just six times a year?

**Meetings:** Harriet Copperman, our Programme Organiser, continues to produce speakers on a variety of topics, the majority of which have a local theme. In addition, on two occasions, the meetings have an open discussion basis on local topics the subject of which is not selected until two or three months beforehand. Two of the meetings were held in North and East Finchley. With the agreement of the speakers these meetings are recorded and made available on our website. Harriet also arranged an outing to the London Archaeological & Research Centre as a follow-up to one of the talks.

**Projects:** "Finchley Remembered Part Two" is currently being edited by Lindsay Bamfield and Lynn Bresler. There were design delays which set back the publishing date but the book should be available this summer.

The Finchley Society holds funds donated by Peggy Wells' bequest to be used for the purpose of informing the public of significant buildings, sites or people within Finchley and Friern Barnet. Two years ago we approached Friern Barnet and District Local History Society and the Friends of Friary Park to join us in erecting a plaque explaining the significance of the statue in the park. Since that time we have had discussions with Barnet Council regarding plans which included the restoration of the statue but this project has now been extended to incorporate the whole park so rather than delay installing the information panel any further we will be unveiling the panel on 18th June 2016.

A blue plaque affixed to Finchley Memorial Hospital by the London Borough of Barnet and unveiled by Spike Milligan in 1984, was subsequently lost during rebuilding work. The plaque stated that the famous clown, Joseph Grimaldi had lived in a cottage nearby. The Society intends to replace this plaque and also erect an information panel in the vicinity, hopefully later this year. A similar tale concerns a plaque commemorating the Toll Road, lost from The Queen's Head public house. Enquiries are underway regarding reinstalling this plaque.

**Annual Dinner:** The 2015 annual dinner took place at South Herts Golf Club and was a very enjoyable event. Catherine Loveday up-dated us on her progress and success in getting the names of men and women from the local area who died in both World Wars named on war memorials in Barnet.

**Newsletter:** The newsletter is produced six times a year. It looks attractive in appearance and is informative and very professionally laid out. Rosemary and David Coates are to be congratulated on all the hard work which goes into its production. Some members now receive their copy electronically thus reducing deliveries by hand and post. The distribution of hard copies of the newsletter continues to be ably managed by Martin Summers and the team of postmen and women.

**Publicity:** The new sign at East Finchley Station has, we know, encouraged new members to join. We were unable to have a presence at East Finchley Festival in 2015 but plan to be there in the summer of 2016 and at Stephens House & Gardens. Other publicity is achieved via the social media sites.

**Membership:** Corporate membership has declined but we have gained more individual members. David Coates took over as Membership Secretary from Stephen Yeo and under his urging a new membership form was designed and printed. Stephen had served as Membership Secretary for many years bringing us into the electronic age. We have not lost his skills as he has taken up the post of webmaster.

**Media Group:** Mick Crick has taken over as Publicity Officer and is working closely with the Society's webmaster Stephen Yeo to promote the Society via Twitter, Facebook and keeping in touch with the local press. The use of *Mailchimp*, an IT communication system, is being used to remind members of forthcoming events.

**Fund Raising:** The 100 Club will be continuing to raise funds for the seventh year. Thanks to the generosity of some winners we have achieved our target of £600. This initiative raises funds to offset the rent rise for the archive room in Avenue House. The raffle at our monthly meetings organised by Harriet Copperman and Rosemary Coates with members donating the prizes has also continued this year.

**Conclusion:** The Administration Committee recognises the changes taking place around us and the importance of social media to a younger generation. If we want the Society to continue then we have to use any opportunities open to us, and with the help of a few technophile members we are slowly changing, bringing The Finchley Society to the attention of the next generation. We still need people to sit around a committee table to make things happen. So come and join us!

*Peter Marsh, Chairman*

## **REPORT OF THE ARCHIVE TEAM**

The archive team consisting of Tony Roberts, Barbara and Derek Warren Margaret Cullen and Jane Mitchell have continued throughout the year to catalogue items in the archive and this process is finally drawing to a close. The Society has approximately 4,800 images (not all different as some are duplicated). This is in addition to our many books, maps, brochures, street photo surveys, minute books and artefacts.

It is hoped to reinstate copies of the lists on our web site for the benefit of anyone researching people and places in Finchley.

The next major step is to digitise items of interest and discussions are in hand with the Executive Committee to determine the best way forward.

The archives have received a steady trickle of new items this year, including notably the weigh scales and documentation of Loomes the Pork Butchers on the Broadway in Edwardian times, some unique photos of Old Ballards Lane and Tally Ho Corner at the time Kingsway was constructed, more photos of the Gaumont including the interior and some reference books such as Kelly's directories and material on Finchley Catholic Grammar School from the late Robert Hogan.

The team have continued to respond to queries about former Finchley residents and former places in Finchley although the number of such queries has dwindled this year.

We supplied a long list of items to Avenue/Stephens' House for their exhibition on the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War.

*Tony Roberts, Archive Manager*

## **REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

We have welcomed two new members during this last year, but we still need to find a chairman and a secretary for the committee to run smoothly. We meet 6 times a year and when dealing with some projects we communicate by email. This was particularly necessary when we were putting together a response to Barnet's Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.

Legislation requires all footpaths and alleyways to be on a public register by 2026 so we are compiling a list of these, which in any case would be a useful addition to our archives. Being an urban area most of our routes are paved but we may find surprises.

A detailed report was prepared on the Pedestrian Environment and a site meeting arranged with a local councillor and two members of the Highways Department. This is an important project that is likely to run for ever. This is also the case with Street Trees, where we have been trying to list those that are missing or damaged, but we do need members' participation.

In co-operation with the Planning Committee we have made representations to Barnet Council in connection with a plot of green land that is good for wildlife, behind No. 71 Holden Road, where redevelopment is proposed, and made comments on the work to Avenue House Grounds, in both cases having meetings with the developers or their experts.

It has been encouraging to see a group of local residents reviving the rose beds at Northway Gardens and we gave them £200 towards their endeavours. We hope others will help keep Finchley and Friern Barnet looking good and to encourage this we are going to present an Environment Aware Certificate to those who, in our minds, improve the appearance of Finchley. Suggestions welcome.

There have been many other smaller tasks and there is still much to do, including keeping an eye on green and open spaces. But we will only progress with the support of members, so do please help us, even if you just answer some of our queries by email or over the phone. However we do need more boots on the ground.

Members of the committee have acted with great enthusiasm, so a big thank you to all of them.

*Derek Warren, Acting Chairman.*

## **REPORT OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The Planning Committee has been stable in the past year. Peter Pickering is Chairman, Avra Archer Secretary, and every other month Pat Dunnill makes us welcome in Cornwall Avenue, centrally placed for our meetings.

We have monitors for each ward - Mary Hogben for East Finchley, Avra Archer for Church End, Sheila Shannon for West Finchley and Jacques Astruc for Woodhouse, while Peter Pickering looks at that part of Totteridge ward that is within the old Borough of Finchley. Other members of the Society and people from Residents' Associations and the like keep us informed. We are represented on the Conservation Area Advisory Committee for the three conservation areas in Finchley.

Our objective is to preserve the local, heritage, and conservation character of Finchley, and to support local people in efforts to resist inappropriate development. We are particularly vigilant to prevent the loss of family houses to flats in the quintessentially suburban areas of Finchley. Neither we nor the Council, under the present law, can control the continuing conversion of offices to residential, which continues apace.

We receive by email from the Planning Department of Barnet Council, a list of planning and tree works applications each week, and the monitors study them. Comments are submitted on behalf of the Society either by email, letter or direct comment on the Barnet website, and may be followed up with a speaking appearance before the Council committee and by representations to an Inspector if there is an appeal. We also press the Council to enforce when planning rules have been broken - they often seem reluctant to take the trouble due to the expense involved.

During 2015/16, the Committee has had reported to it well over a hundred cases. The most contentious has been the redevelopment of Brookdene, including an area going down to the Dollis Brook of great value for wildlife; we objected strongly to this, and it was refused by the Council; a new application has now been made and will be dealt with in 2016. Another is a proposal to redevelop the old Finchley Police Station, which again will drag on well into 2016.

The Society's monthly meeting on 31st March was devoted to planning, and provoked a lively and informative discussion.

*Peter Pickering, Chairman*

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND APPOINTEES

### **Executive Committee**

Vice President and Chair; David Smith  
Vice President: Peter Pickering  
Vice Chair: Harry Branchdale  
Hon. Treasurer: Rosemary Crampton  
Hon. Secretary: Rosemary Coates  
Lynn Bresler  
Harriet Copperman OBE  
Mick Crick  
Peter Marsh  
Mike Walsh  
Brian Watkins

### **Administration Committee**

Chair: Peter Marsh  
Secretary: Rosemary Coates  
Shirley Avery  
David Coates  
Harriet Copperman OBE  
Mick Crick  
David Smith  
Vacancies:  
*Committee Secretary*  
*Committee Members*

### **Environment and Transport Committee**

Acting Chair: Derek Warren  
Jenny Brown  
Mick Crick  
Peter Hale  
Peter Pickering  
Brian Plen  
*Vacancies:-*  
*Chairman*  
*Committee Members*

### **Planning Committee**

Chair: Peter Pickering  
Secretary: Avra Ploumi-Archer  
Jacques Astruc  
Pat Dunnill  
Mary Hogben  
Sheila Shannon

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### **Appointees Ex-Committee**

Archives Manager:  
Book Sales Co-ordinator:  
Distribution Manager:  
Education Secretary:  
Equipment Officer:  
“Finchley Remembered Part Two”:  
Insurance Adviser:  
Legal Adviser:  
Local History Secretary:  
Media Co-ordinator:  
Membership Secretary:  
Minute Secretary (Executive Committee)  
Newsletter Editor:  
Programme Secretary:  
Webmaster:

Tony Roberts  
Guy Nevill  
Martin Summers  
Lynne Ashley  
Mick Crick  
Lindsay Bamfield  
Bill Lethorn  
Cheryl Rudden  
Martin Ellman  
Mick Crick  
David Coates  
Lynn Bresler  
Rosemary Coates  
Harriet Copperman OBE  
Stephen Yeo