

## The Finchley Society Archive Report 2013-14

*This is the first annual report issued and is therefore longer than normal as it explains some of the principles under which the archive is being maintained*

### Database/Cataloguing

Of prime importance is a means to enable archive items to be readily located. At the start no comprehensive index was available. The team decided to create a series of data tables (spreadsheets) in XL, which could be combined into a relational database such as Access at some future time. Many members own XL so use of XL ensures maximum portability and usability. It has good search facilities. These tables will include a master index, photo index, book list, map list and press cutting list. The book list and map list have already been completed and are on the web site.

Every shelf, drawer and alcove has been allocated a location reference to aid location.

**Master index:** The master index was almost complete when a large acquisition required us to relocate many of the Society's project items in order to create space. This has delayed the completion of the index but it should be ready by April/May.

**Photo index:** We inherited a card file index of photos which I computerised. It contained a lot of photos in albums stowed away in various locations and these have been brought together and into the system. The photos and index did not have cross reference numbers so it then became necessary to go through the index, identify the photos and add a serial number. On commencement significant discrepancies including dates and locations were found between the descriptions in the index, on the photos and on their wrappers, all of which require sorting and it would seem many photos are missing or, more likely, were added to the card index several times. The activity is a slow process and even spending an extra morning a week on it we anticipate it will take to the end of the year. The Andrew Forsyth postcards are not presently in the scope of this work.

**Projects index:** This has come out of the work in relocating the project files and should be finalised by April/May.

**Press cuttings index:** The team feels this is low priority. We have inherited collections/albums sorted variously by date, by author and by subject such that one overall system is not feasible. No attempt will be made as yet to catalogue the individual cuttings. So the loose packets of cuttings have been put into indexed wallets and the large number of unsorted cuttings will be allocated to the subject wallets.

### Society records

It is noted that the Society does not keep correspondence files, so Society records are necessarily limited. Some correspondence is kept with project files.

It was reported on 6 Sept 2013 that the following minutes were missing:

- Executive Committee: last minute received 21 -4- 2011;
- Admin: last received 11/2011;
- Environment & Transport: with the exception of 30-1-2012 the last received 20-7-2009;
- Planning: last received 14-3-2011 (17-1-2011 also missing);

- Spike Milligan Statue Fund Committee: all minutes missing.

Since then we have started to receive (electronic versions only) of some minutes:

- Admin 6 Sept 2012 to 7 Nov 2013;
- E&T Minutes 2014-01-06;
- Planning 4 Nov 2013 and 13 Jan 2014

It is noted that many minutes relating to the period 2011-2013 remain missing from the archive despite reminders.

Electronic copies of the minutes (those that are received) are now being stored and are available to members on request from the Archive Manager.

The minutes and Society Newsletters have been sorted into date order and put in consistent folders.

### **Acquisitions**

The Society received 9 large boxes of unsorted planning documentation from Bill Tyler. In order to accommodate these it has been necessary to move around existing planning documentation to combine it with the new and remove duplication.

There have been a few small acquisitions, including Barbara Phillipson diaries 1922, 1935, 1942 and a photo album of Aerofilm photos of the Simms/CAV factory in 1975, 1977 and 1978

### **Visitors/Enquiries**

Visitors of note have included:

- Jessica Gaudino of Objectif, a graphic design studio based in London wanting info on Finchley Common, Tallyho Corner and North Finchley's architectural heritage.
- Frank Kelsall regarding Hawthorn Dene and Jean Scott's involvement.
- Hannah Moeller of MUF regarding historical material for the improving of Tally Ho.
- Magnus Copps researching Avenue House history for a funding application.
- Sarah Richie of Museum of London projects investigating Stanley Field on behalf of English Heritage to consider whether a dig was required before Academy is built.

Enquiries have been responded to about: Samuel Jackson, Finchley resident 1844-1883; Mrs Leach's Nursing Home; Express Dairy tea shops; pre-1964 road signs; old photos of Woodside Avenue; The Old School House, Hendon Lane; a war time Day Nursery in Torrington Park Road; 1940s newspapers in North Finchley; historical information and photographs on the history of College Farm; Henry Westbury Simpson and the founding of the Finchley Press; a small painting by Mrs. B. Lucas, (framed by Henry A. Green, Shop Fitter, & c., Electric Framing Works, The Mall, Finchley); old photos of Red Lion Hill; the history of Finchley Cottage and Belle Vue.

We have also provided David Pentecost with scans to assist his book about Torrington Cottage and surroundings, which he is hoping to expand with the Society's involvement with Lodge Lane

## **Unwanted items**

Initially unwanted items were offered to Members at monthly meetings in return for a donation. However it has been suggested we should try to maximise the return for such items. These items are being retained until someone decides how to dispose of them.

## **Equipment**

There have been two equipment problems. The computer's internal battery required replacement and this was speedily organised by David Smith after a quote was obtained by Tony Roberts.

The printing part of the Kodak multifunction printer fails to print black ink and the colour cartridge is indicated as out of ink despite being recently replaced.

The shelves containing other equipment, although not archive responsibility, have been sorted and ordered, places for certain of these items labelled. The bottles stored in the cupboard have been returned to Martin Bolton, freeing up the cupboard so its rental can be terminated.

## **Security**

On 22 July 2013 the key to the archive room went astray and there was no spare. The key did reappear momentarily but since then has not been found. At present the only way to gain access to the archive room or to lock it after a visit is to get Dave or Stawek to unlock/lock it with their master key.

## **Terms of reference**

These have been updated in discussion with the Administration Committee.

## **Archive Team**

In addition to the manager, the archive team currently consists of Margaret Cullen (deputy), Jane Mitchell and Derek and Barbara Warren. Stuart Baines is providing assistance on sorting the photos on 'unofficial' days.

Tony Roberts 07 March 2014