



The Friends of Highgate Library

NEWSLETTER December 2012

FRIENDS' NEWS

CUTS POSTPONED

The excellent news is that the funding cut of £110,000 per year which was to take effect from April 2013 has now been postponed for two years. Although this needs to be ratified by the full council, it was announced by Councillor Valerie Leach at the second Working Group meeting on 14 November. This means that we will continue with our current level of funding until April 2015. Our local councillors are to be congratulated for all their hard work in persuading their colleagues to adopt what was requested at the Community Engagement Meeting in July. This now gives the Working Group a decent amount of time to plan for the library's future.

Organised by the Friends with support from council staff, the Working Group has successfully brought together our local community and the council. It includes representatives from Brookfield School, Highgate Newtown Community Centre, Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Advisory Committee and Highgate Cemetery, as well as our local councillors and Camden's head of libraries, Mike Clarke.

The second Working Group meeting was held in the former Children's Library, built in the 1930s, and it was also the venue for the Conservation Area AGM. It is great to see this space being used by the public again for the first time since the 1970s. Early in the New Year the council will be advertising for expressions of interest for its use over the next two years. It will be interesting to see who is successful as they will open a new chapter in our library's history.

Fabian Watkinson, Chairman

RECENT EVENTS

A Historic Heritage Moment

The former Children's Library in Croftdown Road, store for the mobile library service for the last 40 years, was the venue for our 2012 Annual General Meeting. Its parquet floor was admired and the space offered seating, exhibition and refreshment space. The Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Advisory Committee is delighted to be the first to use this historic and important civic resource. We look forward to seeing it in use by the local community from now on.

Patrick Lefevre, chair of DPCAAC

Taking the Waters

On Thursday 18 October, Caitlin Davies and Ruth Corney came to talk and show slides about their recent book - **Taking the Waters - A Swim Around The Heath**. Caitlin told us about the fascinating history of the various swimming ponds and the lido and how popular they had been. Before the First World War, there were many swimming events and competitions, as well as diving displays in the men's pond which attracted huge audiences. We heard from Ruth the joys and pitfalls of researching old photos and the hard task of deciding which ones to leave out, as well as advice on how to take new ones. It was altogether a very enjoyable evening.

Review of "The Thousand Autumns of Jacob De Zoet" by David Mitchell

At its heart is the story of Jacob de Zoet's tenure in the Dutch trading post at Dejima in Nagasaki Bay at the end of the 17th century. The island is a heavily restricted "point of entry" into the country for foreign merchants built to protect the traditional, secretive society of Japan. The tension between the two cultures creates a fascinating chronicle full of period detail, which captures the relationship between the traders and their Japanese hosts. The book opens dramatically with a Japanese midwife Orito Aibagawa struggling to safely deliver a baby. She is another of the strong characters in a book full of exciting incident, love, treachery and power politics

There are a range of key plots, not least the role of a very strange convent, the trajectory of Jacob as a character, the despicable Lord Abbot Enomoto and the introduction of the British, represented here by a bad tempered

sailor and his crew. It is a substantial book, beautifully written, it is never predictable and satisfyingly complete. I intend to read more by David Mitchell. (This book is available in the library on CDs for those who want to listen to something great while driving or doing chores!) *Linda Lefevre*

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Winter celebration

Thursday December 13th at 7.30pm

Join us for a festive evening of storytelling, music and poetry, mulled wine and mince pies. Performers include Ginny Clee, Danny Scheinmann, Sarah Sutcliffe, Nikita Lalwani, Nina Miranda, Jehane Markham, Nicolette Moonen and Diana Livingstone. Those who remember last year 's event will be first in the queue for this seasonal break from our popular speaker evenings!

Read more on our website www.dartmouthpark.org/FOHL

Paul Barker “HEBDEN BRIDGE A Sense of Belonging”

Thursday 31 January 2013 at 7.30pm

Social historian Paul Barker will be talking about his book Paul was brought up in Hebden Bridge, a small town in West Yorkshire. His book, a personal memoir, is a colourful portrayal of what it was like to live there. He mixes personal and family memories with interviews, investigation and criticism and includes amusing vignettes about many of the people living there. He describes the changes that took place in the town, for example, when the textile mills, which had been thriving, closed down. Until this happened, there was a strong, tightly-knit local culture. The result was a different sort of Hebden Bridge as, eventually, the town thrived once again. He will talk about these changes and about how the town is viewed today. Although Paul left to pursue his career he nonetheless feels he still 'belongs' to Hebden Bridge.

LIBRARY NEWS

We now have a self service issuing machine which is proving particularly popular with the children. It is very useful when staff are involved in long enquiries.

We are currently running Parent Gym. This is a series of classes which is a trial being funded by the Department for Education. Thanks to sterling work by Folora, we recruited 14 parents. Although the numbers fluctuate each week, the feedback has been excellent and the funding will also be financially beneficial to the library.

We would like to wish everybody a very happy Christmas and we look forward to what will undoubtedly be a challenging but successful year ahead.

Gloria Lavery

Keep In Touch

Please keep in touch through our website at www.dartmouthpark.org/FOHL and email us at FOHL@dartmouthpark.org. Our emails allow you to choose whether you want them or not – just see the notes at the bottom of the next reminder we send.

Any outstanding subscriptions (£5, concessions £2) can be sent to the Hon Treasurer at 35, Dartmouth Park Road NW5 1SU or left at the library in a sealed addressed envelope. Cheques made payable to FOHL. Please encourage your friends and neighbours to join us. Membership forms are in the Library porch on the FOHL notice board or via our website .

Friends of Highgate Library AGM

This meeting is planned for late March and we are thinking of having a speaker to lead a discussion about the future of libraries.

FRIENDS OF HIGHGATE LIBRARY

President: Roger Lloyd Pack

Chairman:	Fabian Watkinson
Hon. Secretary:	Margot Kafno
Hon. Treasurer:	Linda Lefevre
Committee:	Sarah Carrier, Andy Edwards, Alice Gutkind, Sarah Harrison, Agnes Stewart and Sally Thompson
Patrons:	Hunter Davies and June Rose