



**The Friends  
of Highgate Library  
NEWSLETTER  
DECEMBER 2013**

## **Friends' news**

Following the council's commitment to keeping our library open and run by them for three days a week, at the last Working Group meeting we were given more specific details. From April 2015 we have been allocated thirty staff hours per week plus an additional £8,000 for 2015-16 to help with the transition.

The Friends have decided that for the library to remain a viable and vibrant part of the community it needs to be open for at least four days a week and that this is a realistic goal. So our plan is to spread these hours over four days. But in order to achieve this we will need to recruit a large group of volunteers to work with Camden's staff. We also think it very important to find out the times and days when the library can best serve the needs of the area, so we will be speaking to as many people as we can as well as looking at whatever figures Camden has available.

The Friends are also going to set up a small management group which will meet for the first time early in the new year. But if we are to cope with this, the running of the Civic and Cultural Centre (which is proving a great success) and maintain our programme of talks, we do need to expand the Friends' committee with fresh blood. If you are interested in helping in any way, do speak to a member of the committee or e-mail us at [FOHL@dartmouthpark.org](mailto:FOHL@dartmouthpark.org).

After April 2016 there are, I'm afraid, no guarantees. The council will then be facing more massive cuts imposed by the government so the stronger the roots we can put down before then the more difficult it will be to uproot us.

**Fabian Watkinson, Chairman**

## RECENT EVENTS

### ***19 September*                      **Madeleine Bunting - Inspired by Grief: how bereavement in the 1st World War laid the foundations for the Konstam Nursery****

This moving talk by Madeleine Bunting, the Guardian journalist, traced the origins of the Konstam Nursery. We heard the story of a wealthy, cultured Jewish family whose two sons, Madeleine's great uncles, both went to fight in the First World War. Madeleine read from their letters to each other and their parents. Tragically, both sons were killed. Their parents built the Highgate Newtown Clinic in Chester Road in their memory. The area was poor, in fact deprived, and long before the NHS was founded, this clinic helped local children. Much later, the clinic was turned into the Konstam Nursery for young children, which continues to this day. Accompanying the talk were slides of the family and their home before and during the First World War, and of the clinic in the twenties and thirties. Two rooms are still named after the two young men. In questions after the talk, a member of the audience said he had been treated at the clinic in the **1950s**.

### ***18 October*                      **Ian Dungavell - Highgate Cemetery, a local history****

Ian Dungavell, the new Chief Executive of the Friends of Highgate Cemetery Trust, put the internationally famous cemetery on our doorstep into its local context. We were also privileged to be the first to be told of new information resulting from Ian's recent research. Perhaps the most exciting of these 'scoops' was the discovery that the Egyptian Avenue, the west cemetery's most striking feature, was originally a tunnel.

### ***21 November*                      **Andrew Whitehead - London Fictions****

London Fictions is a collection of 26 essays about books in which London plays a significant part. Andrew Whitehead, local author and head of News at the BBC 'World Service, gave us a fascinating talk about this collection which he compiled with the historian Gerry White. The essays are by many different people - academics, authors, historians. Andrew gave us glimpses into 'some of the novels covered in the book, mentioning particularly *The Nether World* by George Gissing, John Summerfield's *May Day*, Colin Machines' *Absolute Beginners* and Zadie Smith's *NW*. Many of us were adding books to our reading lists. There is even more information on the website: [www.londonfictions.com](http://www.londonfictions.com). A very enjoyable evening.

## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS - everyone welcome., all free**

All on Thursday at 7.15 for 7.30pm

### ***12 December A festive evening of storytelling, music and poetry***

With Danny Scheinmann, Filhos de Bimba,.Simon Edwards, Jan North, Alex Kingsbury, Nina Miranda, Jehane: Markham, `Sue Toogood and more.

### ***23 January Paul Cox - A Journey Through His Art***



Paul Cox, son of our own Oliver Cox, was born in London in 1957, and studied illustration at Camberwell School of Art and the Royal College of Art. Since his graduation in 1982, he has worked as a freelance illustrator and painter, involving himself in an extraordinary number and variety of projects. He has recently completed fifteen very large watercolours for the St Charles Hospital in West London, and is currently working on a children's book, *The Elevator Man* and comic wine stories *Absolute Corkers*.

***27 February (date to be confirmed) Berry Mayle - You Can Help Your Country; English children's work during the Second World War***

***27 March***      **AGM - Speaker to be announced**

## Library News

After the hugely successful Summer Reading Challenge, when more than 150 children enrolled to read six books over the summer holidays, the library is now running a Children's Reading Group with seven girls from Brookfield School's Years 4 and 6 choosing to use their Wednesday lunchtime to discuss books and keep a reading diary. Rhyme Time 11.00-11.30 am on Tuesdays for small children and Baby Bounce at 10.00-10.30 on Thursdays for babies up to. 18 months old are still very popular.

The library staff plan to hold craft activities in the Christmas holidays - probably on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve - look out for the notices about these.

## Highgate Library Civic and Cultural Centre

Now that work on the boiler and alarm controls is complete, the use of our great hall is increasing and we have some regular bookings. The civic aspect has really taken off with the Neighbourhood Forum, Conservation Area Advisory Committee, Labour Party and Transition Dartmouth Park running meetings and events. Soon we have the Highgate Area Action Group meeting, and will be a polling station for the election next May! We are keen to develop the cultural side and need bookings for film, drama, music and art events. As it takes off managing the bookings is taking more time and we could use some extra volunteer help.

### Keep in touch with developments

<http://www.dartmouthpark.org/FOHL/news>

#### **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:	Julian Barnes, Tracy Chevalier, Hunter Davies and June Rose