



# The Friends of Highgate Library

## NEWSLETTER June 2013

### FRIENDS NEWS

#### **Future of the Working Group**

The Working Group, which includes representatives from nearly all the Highgate New Town institutions, was intended by the Friends to provide an opportunity for the local community to work openly with the council, being given access to all relevant information, so that we could together explore every option for the future of the Library.

It was not set up to rubber-stamp documents already decided by the council. And we wanted to avoid at all costs resource-wasting 'consultations' on *fait accompli*, as happened with the Chester/Baltimore project, where nearly every assurance given by the council at the beginning had been broken by the end. It was therefore very disappointing that at the meeting in March the council provided almost none of the information requested by the Working Group, who therefore felt strongly that unless there was a change in attitude there was no point in continuing.

The Friends have since had a meeting in the town hall with Tulip Siddiq (Cabinet Member for Culture), Mike Clarke (Head of Libraries), Fiona Dean (Assistant Director of Culture) and two of our ward councillors to discuss the future of the Working Group. We were assured that the council is willing to be open with us and this will be put to the test at our next meeting later this month.

Fabian Watkinson, Chairman

**Keep in touch with developments**

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

## **Progress on leasing the Former Children’s Library –“The Children’s Corner”**

After our own joint discussions with Highgate Newtown Community Centre (HNCC will provide insurance and practical support on letting arrangements), we submitted our expression of interest. This was accepted by Council officers with several queries and requests for information; we responded with queries of our own. Subject to a couple of minor issues, we hope to start our licence from June 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Come and use our new space!**

The “Children’s Corner” will be familiar to you as the venue for recent events. Freshly painted, cleaned and polished it is available for hire. We want to use it for civic and cultural purposes – performances, workshops, rehearsals, exhibitions, classes and community meetings.

The purpose is to see how its use can enhance and extend what our library can offer – and help financially to support library services in the future. Your ideas are welcome –email us at [FOHL@dartmouthpark.org](mailto:FOHL@dartmouthpark.org)

### **RECENT EVENTS**

#### **Our AGM was on 21 March this year.**

Malcolm Holmes, librarian and archivist, gave a wide-ranging, very informative talk on the importance of local archives for understanding our local history. Sources for such archives were photos, maps, directories, census returns and could include school records. He also spoke about the importance of oral history.

#### **A Brave Woman There Was ....An Encounter with Mary Wollstonecraft**

Some 50 people made an appreciative audience on 18<sup>th</sup> April when ‘Sounds Like’ brought their production to the “Children’s Corner” as part of the FoHL series of meetings on history.

A trio of sketches focused on different aspects of Wollstonecraft’s life, with the three performers taking on the various roles with great gusto. The first sketch brought to life a less well-known aspect of her work: her writing for children. Wollstonecraft’s fictional character Mrs Mason took centre stage providing an amusing if to today’s ears a somewhat shocking insight into 18<sup>th</sup> century views on child rearing. The second placed Wollstonecraft in her historical context as she and a French feminist shared their thoughts during her visit to Paris then in the grips of the Revolution. The final sketch used an

exchange with a pompous and antagonistic man to explore the ideas Wollstonecraft set out her great work 'The Vindication of the Rights of Women'. This culminated in a well-timed piece of traditional slapstick.

The lively performance with music and words, many of them Wollstonecraft's own, made for a most enjoyable and informative evening.

### **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

#### **6 June Angela Burdett Coutts: Empress of Holly Lodge**

This will be an original and entertaining evening. It is a pop-up play about the great 19<sup>th</sup> century philanthropist who owned the original Holly Lodge estate. Come and take a part if you wish, or simply enjoy the dramatic events of her life unfolding. The event will be led by local founders of 'domestic theatre,' Beth Shaw and Martin Bould.

#### **25<sup>th</sup> July Waterlow Park**

An illustrated talk on the history of our delightful local park, its houses and gardens and associated personalities, with some intriguing recent findings. The speaker is Pam Cooper, local author of 'Waterlow Park, a garden for the gardenless.'

#### **Brookfield School Prize-giving**

Every year the Friends provide a prize for the pupil in each class that has made the most progress in reading. The children go to the Owl Bookshop with their teachers and members of the Committee to choose their books and then they tell the whole school, at a special assembly, why they chose their books.

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**19 September** *Lest We Forget: The Founding of Konstam Nursery*

**17 October** *The History of Highgate Cemetery in its Local Context*

**21 November** *London Fiction*

**12 December** *Christmas Extravaganza*

**All at 7.30 pm**

**ENTRANCE FREE**

### **BOOK REVIEW**

#### **Memoirs of a Fox-hunting Man, by Siegfried Sassoon, 1928.**

This beautiful book dated from the childhood of the main character, who was really Sassoon, until and including the beginning of the First World War. Sassoon was one of the war poets of that era, who also came to feel the war and its carnage was wrong. He evokes its horror as well as the beauty of

nature during that time and before the war. "... my fellow troopers were kind and helpful, and there was something almost idyllic about those early weeks of the War. ....stupendous events were developing across the Channel. Never before had I looked at the living world with any degree of intensity." **by Alice Gutkind.**

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL: thank you from Linda Lefevre**

Thank you to all those members who renewed their subscriptions promptly. We are also grateful for the many generous donations. Our interesting speakers give their time, but we do pay Camden for the use of the library for our meetings. Otherwise our costs are minimal, the production of the newsletter and postage, the refreshments at meetings, for which you add donations and the book prizes at Brookfield School.

You may have had an email about outstanding subscriptions ( £5, concessions £2) for this year which can be sent to me, the Hon Treasurer at 35, Dartmouth Park Road NW5 1SU or left at the library in a sealed addressed envelope. Cheques payable to FOHL please. If we do not have an email address for you, you will find a further renewal form with this Newsletter. Please encourage your friends and neighbours to join us. Keep up to date via our website [www.dartmouthpark.org.uk/FOHL](http://www.dartmouthpark.org.uk/FOHL) .

If you wish to keep up with last minute changes and campaigning activities please ensure that we have your up to date email address. Ours is [FOHL@dartmouthpark.org](mailto:FOHL@dartmouthpark.org) so you can email us with comments too.

**Highgate Library Opening Hours** Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 10-7pm Saturday 10-5pm You can renew items borrowed at any Camden library, by telephone (020 7974 4001) or online.

**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