



**The Friends  
of Highgate Library**

## **NEWSLETTER**

**March 2013**

### **FRIENDS NEWS**

#### **FORMER CHILDREN'S LIBRARY**

It has been a pleasure to see the former Children's Library in regular use again over the past few months for such a variety of events. These have included the Friends' highly enjoyable Winter Celebration in December and Paul Barker's fascinating talk in January, as well as the Neighbourhood Forum meeting. These have shown its great possibilities as a civic and cultural space, being just the right size for many local activities.

At the last Working Group meeting we discussed the draft of the council's 'expressions of interest' document for those who would like to manage the space over the next eighteen months. The Friends decided, with the assistance of the Highgate Newtown Community Centre (HNCC), to enter a bid. FOHL will lead the partnership but the HNCC will provide the necessary management skills. We believe that the space's potential as a venue for music, film and other cultural events needs to be thoroughly explored over this period in order to reinforce the role of the library and contribute to the sustainable community use of the building as a whole in the future.

It was therefore a very pleasant surprise to receive a generous donation to help with our work from a former local resident who now lives overseas. His memories of using our building when he was younger show how important libraries are and that they are well worth fighting for.

**Fabian Watkinson, Chairman**

**Keep up to date through our website at [www.dartmouthpark.org/FOHL](http://www.dartmouthpark.org/FOHL). See our current newsletter and the poster for our next event on our website. You can see the latest news and photos of past events and lots more. You can also link to other community groups and follow us on Facebook!**

## **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL 2013**

Your membership fee is due if a renewal form in this Newsletter. Current subscription is £5 (concessions are £2). You can pay by cash or cheque made payable to Friends of Highgate Library. Donations are welcome and help us to campaign to keep library services. Thank you for your continuing support.

You can bring your subscription to the AGM on March 21st, or follow the instructions on the form. 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.

Our main expenditure is on our activities: the quarterly newsletters, hiring the library for events and giving annual prizes at Brookfield School for the children who have made most progress in reading. Tell your friends and neighbours about FOHL and encourage them to join. Our library is a unique public space with a proud history of providing a local public service for the whole community.

Membership forms are also in the library entrance area, or to download from our website.

## **RECENT EVENTS**

### **December Festive event**

The former children's library was transformed with Chinese lanterns and fairy lights into a magic place for a festive evening of storytelling, music and poetry. The big audience drank mulled wine and ate mince pies as they really enjoyed all the performances by Ginny Clee, Danny Scheinmann, Sarah Sutcliffe, Nikita Lalwani, Nina Miranda, Jehane Markham, Dinah Livingstone, Nicolette Moonen and their friends. Many, many thanks to Danny for organising the evening, and to all the artists for taking part.

### **Paul Barker On "Hebden Bridge – A Sense of Belonging"**

The book is a social history of the town and comprises interviews with residents (including farmers). Paul read excerpts from some of the interviews who were 'characters'. He told how the town had changed from a working class, chapel town to a place with coffee shops, bookshops and more middle class people. One got the feeling that the earlier town had a more sense of community than now. Many questions followed the talk, including some from former Yorkshiremen!

## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

*We are planning a series of events looking at our Camden heritage, including meetings about the Cemetery, Angela Burdett Coutts and the Konstam Nursery.*

## **Thursday March 21<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting**

### **Your Local heritage is Important!**

Malcolm Holmes was responsible for the Camden Local Studies Centre when it was housed in Highgate and after its move to Holborn. His talk will describe material and sources of interest to local people and explain how the resources of Camden Local Studies Centre are of value to us.

Before Malcolm's talk there will be a short business meeting with brief reports on the year's work. This meeting includes elections to the Committee. Current officers and committee are listed below. Nominations to the Committee are welcome. You can do this beforehand by sending a nomination to the secretary of FOHL c/o Highgate Library, emailing us at [FOHL@dartmouthpark.org](mailto:FOHL@dartmouthpark.org) or in person at the AGM.

### **April 18<sup>th</sup>**

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

This is the latest words and music creation by Sounds Like, featuring Jan North, Edward Lee and Frances Lee. The group take an original approach to their subject, using words, song and music, in scenes which move easily between seriousness and humour. This show celebrates the pioneering work of the Eighteenth Century feminist writer Mary Wollstonecraft. In preparing the performance all the members were struck again and again by the enduring insight and relevance of the author's ideas.

The show has three phases. First you will hear extracts from the "Original Stories for Children" and meet one of the great, though lesser known characters of English literature, Mrs Mason. The scene then moves to Paris, during Mary's stay in France, and introduces you to another outstanding, though perhaps less widely known feminist writer, Olympe de Gouges.

Finally we see Mary at her birthday tea, formulating ideas for her "Vindication of the Rights of Woman", despite some hindrance from a male visitor. Nearly all the script consists of the words actually written by the two women, but presented in dramatic form. Most of the music dates from the period.

### **LIBRARY NEWS**

We are improving provision for young people in all Camden libraries, including Highgate. The existing rather cramped corner area with teenage books and study guides will move closer to the entrance. We'll be able to make a more

welcoming space for young people with computers, books, CDs and DVDs on display in the same area. We are currently investing in extra study guides in response to demand and will ask young people for their ideas on other stock improvements.

To do this, we will reduce the size of the library counter and the space used by staff. This is possible because most transactions can now be carried out by customers using self-service. There will also be some changes in the children's library, with improved use of space and a computer set aside for study. We welcome your views on the library service. If you have any comments about stock, computers, furnishing or any other aspect, please let library staff know, post a note on the comments board or email. Saul Letourneau

## **READING GROUP**

We meet monthly, in Highgate Library on a Tuesday afternoon. We read a wide range of books, from classic and contemporary fiction to biography and, occasionally, poetry. The books are provided by Camden Library Service. At our next meeting we will be discussing 'The Moonstone' by Wilkie Collins and after that we will be looking at Gillian Slovo's latest book 'An Honourable Man'. From time to time exciting projects come up to do with literature and we may shortly be involved with one concerning translated fiction. A prize will be awarded - the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize 2013 - and, as a group, we would be reading and reviewing at least two of the short-listed books as well as attending a 'Readers' Day' about translated fiction.

Our meetings are friendly, yet serious, (we do read the books!) and differences of opinion are discussed amicably. Towards the end of our sessions, we relax with tea and biscuits. At the moment we have ten members but we will be keeping a waiting list - with a view to possibly forming a second group - so if you think you might be interested please contact us for more details.

Margot Kafno: 020 7267 5565

Ann Lewis: 020 7272 1722

### **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