



# The Friends of Highgate Library

## NEWSLETTER Winter 2020

### Highgate Library News

As we cope with shorter darker days, escaping into a good book seems better than ever. Whether it is a real book, electronic or an audio book, all have their place in our lives. You can download many digital books, magazines and newspapers. Look at the Camden Libraries website for more information.

The library will resume its pre lockdown restricted service with a chance to enter, choose your books and use the computers from December 8th. Sarah Harrison describes what has been happening and future plans in her piece.

We have continued our events on Zoom and attract a wide audience from near and far. Our talk about Freda Bedi by Andrew Whitehead was joined by his colleagues and friends in India, although for them it was in the early hours of the morning. One hundred people were attracted by the conversation between Lucy Mangan and Dan Carrier about favourite childhood books.

We have an exciting and varied programme to look forward to, just browse our new programme. We can't offer mince pies and mulled wine at our December event but hope you will join us to hear from Nicolette Moonen about the wonderful Bach Players.

Please encourage neighbours with smart phones, tablets and computers with cameras and microphones who may be nervous of using Zoom that it is easy to use. Our Zoom events are recorded and you can now enjoy them when it suits you or watch them again. Full details on our website and with the enclosed programme.

Please use our website, <http://www.dartmouthpark.org/FOHL>, to keep in touch. We continue to send our monthly emails and advertise events on our Facebook, Twitter and now Instagram sites.

We have been campaigning for some time for the gates to Highgate Cemetery opposite the library in Chester Road to be opened and we are delighted that The Friends of Highgate Cemetery Trust are making that happen. It will encourage visitors to visit our historic library and use the local history collection which is full of donated material about the cemetery.

The Trust is launching two competitions. One to find the best practitioners in landscape design to develop a landscape masterplan. The second is to find a design team to investigate projects to preserve and enhance the historic structures and improve facilities. Find out more at [highgatecemetery.org/competitions](http://highgatecemetery.org/competitions). Watch the video at (<https://vimeo.com/483086155>).

*Linda Lefevre, Chair*

# Things to Come

See the attached Winter/Spring Events Programme for full details

You can register for all of these events on <https://fohl.eventbrite.co.uk> or <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofHighgateLibrary/events>

**Thursday December 10<sup>th</sup> 7 for 7.30pm** Nicolette Moonen, founder & artistic director of the Bach Players in conversation with Paul Kafno

**Thursday January 14<sup>th</sup> 7pm for 7.30pm** Nadia Ragozhina talks to David Drake about *Worlds Apart: The journeys of my Jewish Family in 20th century Europe*

Two brothers grow up on the Jewish streets of Warsaw. At the turn of the twentieth century, Adolphe leaves to seek work and start a family in Switzerland. Marcus moves east, inspired by his Communist beliefs. In Moscow, he is arrested and exiled. They would never see each other again. A hundred years later, Marcus' great-granddaughter, Nadia Ragozhina, a BBC producer, rediscovers the missing part of her broken family. Love and separation, hope and paranoia – the lives of the patriarchs, their daughters and granddaughters are set against the Russian Revolution, Stalin's repressions, the persecution of Jews across Europe and the Second World War. This book is a rare portrayal of the tumultuous events of twentieth century Europe, seen through the eyes of six women who fought for the survival and happiness of their families.

**Thursday February 11<sup>th</sup> 7pm for 7.30pm.** Professor Sir Michael Marmot *Health equity in England The Marmot Review 10 years on*

Taking action to reduce health inequalities is a matter of social justice. There is clear evidence that national policies make a difference. But policies and interventions must not be confined to the health care system; they must address the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. The pandemic has exposed and amplified underlying inequalities that lead to inequalities in health. Join us to hear from Sir Michael Marmot, Director of the Institute of Health Equity (UCL). Michael has been Professor of Epidemiology at UCL since 1985. He is the Advisor to the WHO Director-General on social determinants of health and is the recipient of the WHO Global Hero Award.

**Thursday March 11<sup>th</sup> 7pm for 7.30pm** An Evening of Poetry with Dinah Livingstone and Jehane Markham.

Two of our favourite poets will share their recent work with us, Dinah from her new collection *Embodiment* and Jehane from her own vast range. If you can't wait, try Jehane's website with hundreds of poems [www.jehanemarkham.co.uk](http://www.jehanemarkham.co.uk)

## Recent Events

Watch events again or catchup <https://vimeo.com/friendsofhighgatelibrary> or <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofHighgateLibrary/videos>

**Thursday September 10<sup>th</sup> Joanna Briscoe *The Seduction***

Joanna fascinated us with accounts of how the ideas and characters in her book had developed and the inspiration for the story. She also happily gave us an insight in the life of an author. She also teaches others the skill of writing and shared some of that too. A really interesting evening.

### **Thursday October 8th Andrew Whitehead *The Lives of Freda***

This event took us on an adventure thanks to Andrew, a historian and journalist. He introduced his new book about Freda Bedi who married a Sikh fellow student at Oxford university. We followed Freda's journey from England to Lahore, from Christianity to Buddhism. Andrew gave us a picture of a bright, compassionate woman who through her life as a political activist, a writer, translator, journalist and mother of three, left her mark whether it was supporting the nationalist cause of Kashmir, helping refugees from Tibet or running the Young Lamas Home School. Freda's amazing journey led to her ordination as a Buddhist nun, the first western woman to do so. We were all grateful to Andrew for introducing Freda Bedi who touched so many people's lives.

### **Thursday November 12th Lucy Mangan *Bookworm a memoir of childhood reading***

We had a wonderful evening with Lucy Mangan, journalist and author talking about her book of childhood reading, *Bookworm*. Dan Carrier was in conversation with Lucy and we found out how the inspiration came from Lucy's columns in the Family Section of the Guardian. It was most enjoyable to follow the evolution of children's literature from Sunday School books to Alice in Wonderland, the magic of Narnia and the horror of *Struwwelpeter*, and how the aunts of Maurice Sendak had a role in the creation of *Where The Wilds Things Are*. The unadulterated trip down memory lane finished with a cleverly devised quiz by Dan.

## **News from the Library**

Since lockdown in March we have focused on delivering the best possible library service while adapting to meet the Government's changing rules. From March 23 all libraries were closed, but on August 15th Highgate Library became the first in Camden to open, launching its 'mini service'. This enabled people to return library items that had been cluttering up their homes and most importantly to choose more books.

On September 19, with the relaxation of the Covid safety rules and with the library staffed again by the old team of Fahd Toor and FOHL volunteers, Highgate was able to welcome people back into the library to select their own books and to use the PCs. Safety was maintained by controlling numbers, the use of hand sanitisers and masks, and having a cleaner on site to maintain hygiene at the PCs. While it was sad that opening hours were restricted, that the children's library had to remain closed, that newspapers were not available and there was no chairs or tables to encourage reading or studying, it was an important step towards a resumption of normality and was appreciated by those who came to the library.

On November 2 the second lockdown began, bringing new restrictions. To meet the revised safety levels each library was able to provide access either to books or to PCs. With seven of the Camden's libraries maintaining computer access, Swiss Cottage and Highgate Library provided access to books. The public have not been allowed into the library but have returned or requested books at the front door. On November 26, the Government announced that when lockdown ends, London will be in Tier 2. As before there were no clear statements about Libraries, leaving Libraries Collected to negotiate the details with DCMS. It seems that Camden Libraries will be able to return to their early

autumn service level, with limited access to browse and select books and to use the PCs. It is likely that these arrangements will continue into the New Year.

Since August, our Library volunteers have taken advantage of the reduced activity to carry out a stock check, clean the bookshelves and the play equipment. Many new books, funded by FOHL and including the entire Booker shortlist, have been purchased for the library. Meanwhile Camden's IT staff have completed the work of upgrading the WiFi network, and the library PCs now have Windows 10. A new colour printer from which users can print directly from their own devices has been installed. The Library Management Group is working to resume as many children's activities as possible once restrictions are eased. We are also looking to move forward with setting up a Toy library and a computer club for 8 to 11-year olds. Both projects received CIL funding last year but have been put on hold since March.

**Sarah Harrison, Chair of Highgate Library Management Group**

## **Highgate Library Civic and Cultural Centre**

Back when lockdown began Camden Council forbade entry to the library buildings. We hope to negotiate a safe return soon for our regular users.

### **Keeping in touch effectively**

Making sure [FOHL@dartmouthpark.org](mailto:FOHL@dartmouthpark.org) is in your address book helps to ensure our emails reach you. We normally send one email a month, the next will be in early December. **Let us know if you simply can't find our emails.** We have to pack in more than one message per email so please open them and read beyond the headlines.

One failsafe way of getting our emails if all else fails is to go to <http://www.dartmouthpark.org/FOHL/newsletter>. There you will find back numbers of all our Newsletters and, at the bottom of the page, a link to all our Emails and e-Newsletters.

We have a strong presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Many Friends aren't but if you are please 'like' and/or follow us

The absolute fail safes are the News and Events Pages on our Website:  
[www.dartmouthpark.org/FOHL/events](http://www.dartmouthpark.org/FOHL/events) or [news](http://www.dartmouthpark.org/FOHL/news)

*You can make donations and pay subscriptions by bank transfer to FOHL at RBS Sort Code: 16 00 23 Account number: 10008322.* You can complete our online membership form at <https://goo.gl/7e6VrW>

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#### **FRIENDS OF HIGHGATE LIBRARY**

c/o Highgate Library, Chester Road, N19 5DH

Chair: Linda Lefevre

Vice Chair & Membership: Sarah Carrier

Hon. Secretary: Margot Kafno

Hon. Treasurer: Patrick Lefevre

Committee: Michele Cohen, Agnes Stewart, Paul Harris

Sarah Harrison, Ann Cheyne & Virginia Kerridge

President: Toby Faber

Patrons: Julian Barnes, Joanna Briscoe, Tracy Chevalier, Hunter Davies, Caitlin Davies, John Harvey, & Charlotte Mendelson

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