



The Friends of Highgate Library

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2019

Highgate Library News

We still have treats in store for you before our summer break. This month, Ian Dungavell will give us a view of the Victorians' ideas of what a cemetery should be, a garden so attractive it would be a good place for a day out. Many current visitors would agree that Highgate Cemetery still is. In July, John Massey Stewart takes us much further to Kazakhstan, again seen through the eyes of a Victorian, through his wonderful watercolours. Details of both events are inside. We take a break in August but already have exciting plans for the autumn.

Our library was the first in Camden to benefit from major investment in its computers and IT systems. This month sees our library being the first to explore all kinds of innovative technology. On **Wednesday 12th June** we will be hosting a launch event from 2-6pm to showcase innovative technology such as Virtual Reality headsets, 3D printing, Tablets, e-newspaper, Macbook, Chromebook and more. Councillor Jonathan Simpson, Cabinet Member for Promoting Culture and Communities, will be there to launch the showcase. Following that there will be drop-in sessions every day (except Saturday 15th) up to June 22nd. For full details please ask in the library.

When you visit the library please look at the wonderful Four Seasons Art Project now part of the children's library. It adds so much interest and excitement. The work was created by over a hundred local children. It includes some fascinating pieces in the form of elaborate signs made by our generous sponsor Stephen Blyth, who now lives in the USA but once went to Brookfield School and used Highgate Library. We greatly appreciate his continuing interest and were delighted he joined us for the launch.

Thank you to all members who have renewed their membership and made generous donations. Please renew your membership if you have not already. You can now renew online and pay by bank transfer, details on the website, <http://www.dartmouthpark.org/FOHL>.

As always, we welcome you to join us as volunteers to work in the library, to manage the hall or to join our committee to plan and run events. Just come and talk to any committee member at an event or contact us by email or through our website. We also welcome your suggestions for speakers and events.

Linda Lefevre, Chair

Things to Come

Thursday June 13th 7.30pm Ian Dungavell Highgate Cemetery *A great garden of death*

It's difficult today, when many Victorian cemeteries are old and crumbling, to imagine how new-fangled they were in the early 19th century. Until the 1850s most burials took place in church graveyards, but these were not secure and space was limited. The bodies of the dead were subjected to appalling indignities.

Something had to be done, but the government did nothing and the Church very little. The idea of civic improvement combined with the opportunity to make a profit led to the establishment of private cemetery companies. The earliest were outside London, but Highgate Cemetery is now one of the best known. Highgate Cemetery promised burial in a sepulchral garden, so attractive that it would be a good place for a day out. It was so popular that ways had to be found to limit the number of visitors on Sundays, and it was enormously successful as a burial ground. Come and see many illustrations from Camden's and other archives.

Dr Ian Dungavell is an architectural historian, and Chief Executive of the Friends of Highgate Cemetery Trust, the charity which runs Highgate Cemetery

Friday 28th June 7pm The Live Literature Company *A Midsummer Night's Dream* On the Tea Lawn at Lauderdale House, Waterlow Park.

This is the latest of Valerie Doulton's productions with students from Niagara University USA. It is a free event and Friends are very welcome. Most of the collection taken on the night is donated to the Friends.

Thursday July 11th 7.30pm John Massey Stewart "Thomas, Lucy and Alatau; The Atkinsons' Adventures in Siberia and Kazakhstan"

John has written the first full biography of an unjustly forgotten man, **Thomas Witlam Atkinson** (1799 - 1861), architect, artist, traveller extraordinaire, author – and bigamist. Famous in his lifetime as 'the Siberian traveller', he spent seven years travelling nearly 40,000 miles through the Urals, Kazakhstan and Siberia with special authorisation from the Tsar, producing 560 watercolour sketches of the dramatic scenery and exotic peoples. This is also the story of Lucy, his intrepid wife and their son Alatau Tamchiboulac. They both shared Thomas' adventures: horseback up and down precipices and across dangerous rivers, escaping a murder plot atop a great cliff, and many more.

John Massey Stewart, noted for his own travels, is a Russian specialist: writer, lecturer, photographer and environmental activist. He has visited the USSR/Russia 30 times and has lectured in the UK, USA, France, Israel, Canada and Siberia, which is his particular interest.

Thursday September 12th 7.30pm Fabian Watkinson *The Golden Age of Camden Housing*

Fabian proudly opens his flat on the Whittington Estate every year for Open House

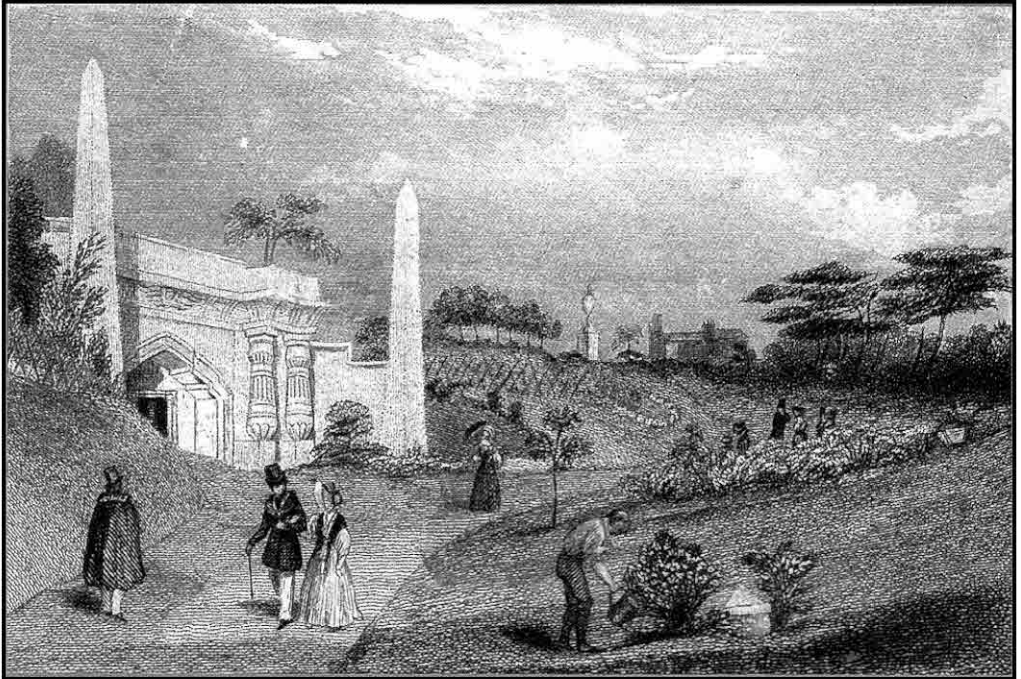
The Friends of Highgate Library present

Thursday 13th June 2019

7.15 for 7.30pm

A great garden of death

Ian Dungavell



Highgate Cemetery in Archive Images

Highgate Cemetery promised burial in a sepulchral garden, so attractive that it would be a good place for a day out. Drawing from the collections of Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre, the cemetery's own archive and pictures from other collections, Ian will try to recapture how the Victorians saw Highgate Cemetery.

**Highgate Library Civic and Cultural Centre
in The Children's Corner, Croftdown Road, NW5 1HB**

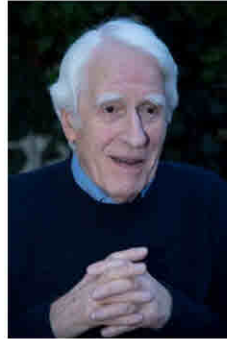
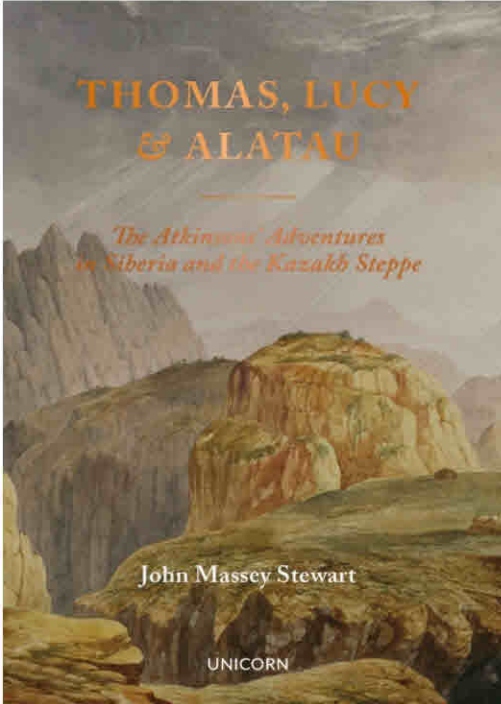
www.dartmouthpark.org/FOHL/events

Admission Free

The Friends of Highgate Library present
Thursday 11th July 2019
7.15 for 7.30pm

Thomas, Lucy and Alatau;

The Atkinsons' Adventures in Siberia and Kazakhstan
John Massey Stewart



Atkinson's portrait of Sultan Souk, a Kazakh leader

John Massey Stewart, who has visited the USSR/Russia 30 times and written on different aspects of its past and present, talks about his new triple biography on the 'Siberian traveller', a British watercolourist who spent seven years travelling with his wife and newborn son through remote parts of the Russian Empire in the mid-1850s.

Highgate Library Civic and Cultural Centre
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weekend, which celebrates architecture and offers free entry to our best buildings. This year it is the 21st and 22nd September. The Whittington Estate was one of many projects led by Camden Council to provide high quality social housing for its citizens. Come and hear the fascinating story of its development.

Thursday October 10th 7.30pm. An evening of poetry. Three local poets will present their work and there will be an open mic session for other poets. Details in our autumn newsletter.

Recent Events

Thursday March 14th Jessica Hepburn 21 Miles

Jessica told us how she decided to swim the English Channel when her attempts at motherhood didn't materialise. We found out some of the strict rules of the race, for example you can swim only in the style you began. The crowning of the evening was the film showing Jessica reaching the French coast after more than 17 hours of swimming. An amazing achievement for someone who wasn't a good swimmer. Jessica has shown courage and strength by completing the gruelling cross channel race. Her lasting achievement is talking openly about the taboo subject of infertility and co-founding the annual Fertility Fest.

Tuesday March 19th Film *Nae Pasaran!*

A huge audience enjoyed this fascinating film telling the incredible impact made by Scottish factory workers 40 years after their defiant protest against Pinochet's Air Force in Chile. We saw the Scottish pensioners discover the dramatic consequences of their solidarity. The evening was made special by the exhibition of memorial embroideries each dedicated to a victim of the regime. We heard from Jimena Castro, herself a victim of torture, who fled to Britain and now meets regularly with other Chileans determined to record each victim in this way.

Thursday April 11th AGM and Martin Wilkinson How inequality harms our health, our society, and the Earth

Our AGM heard a report on the Friends' development over the last year. Then Martin Wilkinson gave a presentation about Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett's book "The Inner Level". This follows "The Spirit Level" (2009) about the cost of inequality and dysfunctional societies. It has been proven that the rich live longer and poverty leads to anxiety, stress, health problems and ultimately violence. In "The Inner Level" the graphs based on statistical data show how mental illness is more common in unequal societies. All the data supported the idea unequivocally that "more equal societies reduce stress, restore sanity and improve everyone's wellbeing". It was a thoroughly absorbing evening.

Thursday May 9th Salley Vickers *The Librarian* David Drake was in conversation with local author Salley Vickers. Asking gentle but thoughtful questions, David made it possible for the audience to gain a deep and almost intimate insight into Salley's life as a woman as well as an author. Children's books *continued*

