



The Friends of Highgate Library

NEWSLETTER December 2014

Helping secure the future of the library

Sarah Harrison reports:

Members of the FoHL committee are making good progress with the Council to establish the basis on which we share the running of the library from April 2015. The present plan is for opening hours to be similar to those at present apart from late opening being restricted to Thursdays.

We are going to set-up a Charitable Incorporated Organisation which will make us eligible to apply for charitable funds. The new body will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Council in which roles and responsibilities will be defined.

The Council will ensure that there is at least one member of staff on duty apart from lunch hours. The most crucial responsibility the FoHL are taking on is the provision of enough volunteers to ensure that the Council's staff have the support of at least one volunteer. Without sufficient volunteers, the library will be forced to close.

FoHL has worked closely with Rachel Brignall and Caroline Spencer of Camden Council to develop a training scheme for the volunteers. The training starts with an introductory session, a meeting followed by time for questions and discussion. The first two were held on 25 and 26 November with much useful two-way discussion. People who decided to train completed a short application form. This will be followed by training in four areas, which volunteers will need to master so they can work effectively in the library. Each will consist of a taught session, followed by practice sessions, during which the trainee volunteers will shadow trained staff. The training will initially be led by Camden staff, with the aim of this being taken over by FOHL in due course.

If you are interested in volunteering, please e-mail FOHL and we will let you know when the next introductory sessions are. Even if you think you have already offered, if you have not received the recent e-mails about the first introductory sessions, please contact us again so as we do not miss anyone. Forms can be obtained from the library or can be downloaded from the FOHL website. The more people we have, the more creative things we can do, as well as helping to keep the library open.

Reaching out

This year the FOHL committee have been out and about promoting our library and recruiting volunteers. Apart from our own meeting and festival day back in July, we have had stalls at the Highgate Fair in the Square, Brookfield School summer fair, the Highgate Newtown Community Centre Fun Day and the York Rise Street Party in September. (The York Rise Street Party helped raise the money for a replacement horse for Kentish Town City Farm - now bought and called Winston.)

All these gave us opportunities to talk about the library and gain new members. To appeal to a wider audience we use our Facebook and Twitter sites to promote events and we now email information to twice as many people as our actual membership. Please help by encouraging your friends and neighbours to

The Civic and Cultural Centre

Our beautiful hall continues to attract a wide variety of users — apart from regular dance and exercise classes we have had rehearsals, youth projects, meetings, conferences, health screening and family celebrations of all kinds. The income is growing slowly. We have added folding tables and a new noticeboard for hall users.

Recent evening events

In September, we were lucky enough to have a very well-received poetry evening with Dinah Livingstone reading from her latest collection *The Vision Splendid*. *Acumen* magazine said of this: 'One of the most remarkable things in this fine, ambitious collection is Livingstone's ability to locate both the here and now and the visionary in a single arc of movement'. As with her earlier collections, many of the poems are about London life. Dinah has read for us several times, both at our evening meetings and at our Winter Celebrations. She always reads in a way that takes the listener with her, making it easy to visualise a scene or a person, which really adds to the enjoyment of the poems.

In October, local author Joanna Briscoe was interviewed by Andy Edwards about her life as a writer. They explored her most recent novel, *Touched*, an eerie tale about a family who have moved to the country only to be faced with one disaster after another as their 'dream' cottage appears to have a life of its own and her children start to go missing. Joanna also touched on the subject of the effect of childhood experiences and how her own upbringing in a small Hertfordshire village led from being a voracious reader, to a desire to write books herself.

www.dartmouthpark.org/fohl

At our November meeting, Anna Bentinck gave us some intimate insights into the world of audio books. Anna began her talk by telling us how in her role as an audio reader she was sometimes cast as an evil person. She dramatically demonstrated the voice to match. Sometimes it can be difficult having an audience of only one (the director), with some directors helpful and sympathetic but others more critical, stopping her in order to redo bits not to their liking. We heard how much time she spends preparing for a recording, reading the text aloud and marking places where she makes a mistake so that it won't happen again.

We heard her recording of Tess of the d'Urbervilles, which illustrated her skill in using dialect. She brought author Julia Jones with her, and read a moving passage from Julia's book, The Salt-Stained Book. It was about a little boy and an unsympathetic policeman and again Anna captured the atmosphere and the voices brilliantly.

The evening ended with her recording of a passage from Silas Marner, which required several different voices, and was extremely moving. Listening to a well-read story must have reminded many of us of the evenings before television, when, for example, in my family, we would sit round the fire and one of us would read aloud to us all.

Forthcoming events - all free

All on Thursdays at 7.15 for 7.30pm



11 December - Winter Celebration

With poetry and jazz from the Jehane Markham Trio, storytelling from Danny Scheinmann and a sing-along of seasonal songs with mulled wine and mince pies.

15 January - The architecture of the comprehensive health centre

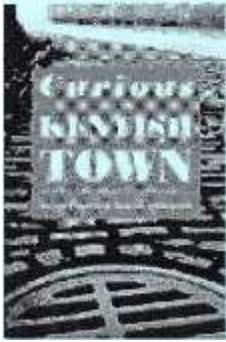
Justin de Syllas is a retired architect who lives in Dartmouth Park, and practiced until two years ago. He has worked on a range of architectural projects including buildings for the National Health Service. He now writes on architecture. His first book, Integrating Care, The architecture of the comprehensive health centre will be published by Routledge in 2015 and he will talk to us about two pioneering health centres in the 1930s, Peckham and Finsbury.

Keep in touch with developments

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

11 February - Shell Shocked Britain: The First World War's Legacy for Britain's Mental Health

Suzie Grogan will talk about her recently published book. Although she is based in Somerset, Suzie is originally from Dartmouth Park and the main inspiration for her book, Alf Hardiman, was from the Hornsey/Holloway/Kentish Town area.



12 March - Curious Kentish Town and Annual General Meeting

Do you know which Kentish Town rent strike inspired a Peggy Seeger song? Have you visited the 'craziest of London's parish churches or followed in the tracks of the piano industry? Do you know about the African revolutionary who made his home near Tufnell Park?

Andrew Whitehead's new book, written with Martin Plaut, is a fascinating insight into some of our local monuments, nooks and crannies with historical significance. Come and

listen and enjoy a well-illustrated talk by Andrew.

Library News

Caroline Spencer writes:

Highgate Library is preparing for the festive season with themed displays on cooking and craft. The cooking display offers inspiration for those looking for new and tempting dinner time treats as the days get shorter and the nights get colder. The craft display covers a range of activities and should inspire everyone to get crafting and create unique Christmas gifts.

The library has recently finished reorganising the fiction sections of the library and we hope that it is now easier to find your favourite authors.

Everyone at Highgate Library wishes you all a Happy Christmas!

FRIENDS OF HIGHGATE LIBRARY

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

Chair: Sarah Harrison

Vice Chair: Sarah Carrier

Hon. Secretary: Margot Kafno

Hon. Treasurer: Linda Lefevre

Committee: Michele Cohen, Andy Edwards, Alice Gutkind,
Agnes Stewart, Sally Thompson

Patrons: Julian Barnes, Tracy Chevalier, Hunter Davies, Andrew Motion, June Rose