



The Friends of Highgate Library

NEWSLETTER

June 2017

Highgate Library News

Our planned June 8th event was overtaken by the announcement of the General Election, with our hall being used as a polling station. The speaker and topic will now be our September event. Whatever your political views I do hope you will use your vote to support a candidate who values and supports public libraries. Check their manifestos or ask the party representatives. You may remember our warm and supportive message from our ex MP Glenda Jackson for our 110th anniversary celebration reported in our March newsletter.

I am concerned that the other Highgate Library on Shepherd's Hill, run by Haringey Council, is threatened with being moved into Jackson's Lane Community Centre. You can read more about it in the Ham and High. Like our library, it is in a characterful building and has a proud history. A Haringey Council spokeswoman said: "We support the essential role that libraries play at the heart of our communities. The proposals are still in the early stages, but we're clear that they will only go ahead if we're confident they can deliver an improved library for residents." Ham and High May 24th 2017.

In this Newsletter, there are interesting statistics on how our library is used. There is encouragement in that the service has been maintained and in some respects improved under our joint management with Camden. The decline in loans is almost universal as libraries are increasingly places to access computers and books can be downloaded rather than carried away. Your ideas about how to improve our library service are always welcome. See the improved lay out of the Children's Library.

Elizabeth Dormandy has been our membership secretary for the last year and we thank her for her work. She has now taken on other community work and has stepped down. Thanks to Sarah Carrier who has taken on the task.

We look forward in July to the annual assembly at Brookfield School when FOHL gives prizes for the children making the most progress in reading. This year and for some years to come these book prizes have been donated by a loyal friend of Highgate Library.

Come and meet us at our stall in the York Rise Street Party on September 10th - read more inside! Last year the Street Party raised £750 for books and children's toys for the Library.

Linda Lefevre, Chair

News from Highgate Library

Volunteers' News

After two years of staffing and managing the Library with Camden Library Services, the library volunteers have really grown into their role, dealing very competently with the routine work and increasingly exploring improvements that could be made to the service offered. The children's library has recently been rearranged to provide more space for the younger children to read and play with more and quieter space for the older children to use the computers, read and study. We are now asking for donations of good quality children's toys, - soft toys, puzzles, hard plastic toys – also any dolls' house furniture so that we can renew and extend what is available for the children. We have already received many donations of books, for which we are very grateful. Please do keep these donations coming: we are particularly keen to receive recent publications, especially those that have been reviewed in the press or are on literary prize shortlists. **Sarah Harrison Library Volunteer Coordinator**

So, how are we doing?

We've just had a look at the latest statistics for usage of Highgate Library and found some interesting and encouraging data. In 2016, we've seen:

65,000 visits; 14,000 issues; 400 enrolments and 7,000 PC sessions

Statistics are always open to interpretation so we will be careful to see if there are particular factors affecting the data e.g. our computer use went down between October and December last year and we had to remember that the PCs were largely out of use during this time! We will also be compiling our statistics over time and comparing these with other Camden libraries.

Between 2014/15 and 2015/16, we have seen a drop-in usage across all Camden libraries. This is measured by number of visits; the number of issues; enrolments and computer usage. The reductions at Highgate were similar to other libraries and would have been affected by the reduction in opening hours in April 2015, when FoHL went into partnership with Camden.

The latest statistics, for 2016/17, are encouraging with a small increase in visits and a large increase in enrolments.

Many thanks to all our volunteers for encouraging enrolments and usage. We will continue to work proactively with parents and schools to encourage enrolment and loans by local children and would welcome any suggestions from volunteers on how we could improve the position further for all our local residents.

Thanos Morphitis with statistics from Camden Libraries

Keep in touch with events <http://www.dartmouthpark.org/FOHL/events>

Things to Come

Wednesday June 28th at 8pm The Live Literature Company have invited us to their “**Much Ado About Nothing**” in one hour. The US students are performing on the tea lawn by **Lauderdale House**. You are welcome to bring a chair a blanket and a picnic!

Sunday 10th September York Rise Street Party from noon. As usual the Friends will have a stall to promote the Library and recruit volunteers. Help running the stall would be appreciated. Anyone who would like to help run the Party should contact Dan Carrier dcarrier@camdennewjournal.co.uk Phone 07786394210. They are particularly looking for people to help coordinate children’s activities and stewarding.

Thursday September 14th Jane Austen “At Home” We have all heard of Jane Austen, and perhaps have read her novels or seen the films, but what do we think she was really like? Maureen Stiller, secretary of the Jane Austen Society, will describe, in a fully illustrated talk, Jane Austen's life, as a woman in Georgian times and the influences and development of her career as an author. Of course, we are commemorating the 200th anniversary of the death of Jane Austen.

Thursday October 12th To Be Arranged - see our September newsletter!

Thursday November 9th John Harvey, winner of the CWA (Crime Writers’ Association) Diamond Dagger lifetime achievement award for "sustained excellence in the genre", is our guest speaker. He has created a series of memorable protagonists, most notably the jazz-loving, Nottingham-based Pole Charlie Resnick, but also retired footballer Jack Kiley and weary Frank Elder emerging out of his Cornish fastness to return to Nottingham and his own past. He will talk about crime writing and his latest book.

Recent Events

On **March 9th** after our brief AGM, Danny Nissim fascinated a large audience with **film clips showing scenes shot in Camden in the 1950s** and how the area looks today. The mix of local history, well-chosen film clips and photos and Danny’s detailed knowledge made a memorable evening.

On **13th April**, Michael Newman presented his new book **Six Authors in Search of Justice**. He explained to a rapt audience how he came to think about the difficulties associated with ‘truth and reconciliation’ for 6 novelists (Victor Serge, Albert Camus, Jorge Seprun, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Ariel Dorfman and Nadine Gordimer). He then explored the very different ways in which their opposition to the injustices and repressions of their societies is reflected in their books, giving a fascinating analysis of the complex issues of justice.

On **May 11th John Withington** returned to Highgate Library to entertain us with his talk based on his latest book **Storm: Nature and Culture**. With many illustrations, we learned about storms in history, the worst ever storms, storms in religion, in literature and drama. He ended with statistics about our current climate – more severe storms since 2000. An interesting and thought provoking event.

Highgate Library Civic and Cultural Centre

The hall continues to be busy with a variety of users old and new. The Dartmouth Park Film Club is now well established and shows a wide variety of films with interesting discussions with film makers. They are branching out to show a children's film to develop a new audience with proceeds going to Brookfield School.

We have three hardworking volunteers looking after hall users, opening and locking up and keeping an eye on the building. If you are interested in helping, please let us know.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL 2017: thank you

Thank you to all those members who have renewed their annual subscriptions. We are also grateful for many generous donations. We are trying to develop the use of the Civic and Cultural Centre and work with volunteers to keep our library open. Keep up to date via our website www.dartmouthpark.org.uk/FOHL.

We would like you to renew your membership for 2017! Subscriptions are £6 and concessions £3. You can pay by bank transfer to FOHL at RBS 189-191 Camden High Street NW1 7BP, Sort Code: 16 00 23 Account number: 10008322 OR leave it at the library in a sealed envelope for Sarah Carrier, Membership Secretary FOHL, OR you can post it to 37 Dartmouth Park Rd London NW5 1SU, OR hand your subscription to the Treasurer at any event. Please encourage your friends and neighbours to join us.

Cityread London is an annual celebration of the power of reading to bring communities together. Throughout April our library was promoting it. Copies of the chosen books are given away and events and activities linked with the theme happen across the city. This year's book was *Prophecy* by S J Parris, a Tudor thriller featuring Giordano Bruno, renegade monk, philosopher and heretic. The London of Elizabeth 1st comes vividly to life. I loved it. There are four other books in this series to enjoy. You might also like C J Sansom's series about Matthew Shardlake, a lawyer working for Thomas Cromwell set in the London of Henry VIII. Try them. We need you to borrow our books! *Linda Lefevre*

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, Alice Gutkind, Agnes Stewart,
Sarah Harrison, Ann Cheyne

Patrons: Julian Barnes, Joanna Briscoe, Tracy Chevalier, Hunter Davies, Charlotte Mendelson, Andrew Motion, June Rose
