



The Friends of Highgate Library

NEWSLETTER

March 2015

A new future for our library

Sarah Harrison, Chair, writes: Arrangements have now been agreed between FOHL and Camden Council library services for the joint management and staffing of the Library - the culmination of all the meetings and work undertaken over several years by members of the FOHL Committee and representatives from other local groups. Central to the agreement is that Highgate Library will remain one of Camden's Libraries; it will continue to offer all the services of a public library, and will continue to be open 4 days a week. To make this possible FOHL library volunteers will work alongside Camden Library staff.

To ensure that volunteers are familiar with the operation of the library, a training programme has been developed. While the programme got off to an enthusiastic start **we do need to be ready to go by April 7th**. All those who have committed to becoming volunteers but have not yet completed their training are encouraged to complete their training ASAP. **We are still looking for more people wishing to train as volunteers**; anyone interested is asked to contact us through our website or leave their details with the staff in the Library.

The structure of FOHL is also changing. The current FOHL Committee will continue to run our monthly meetings and produce the newsletter. But we have submitted an application to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, which will assume the legal and financial responsibility for running the Highgate Library Civic and Cultural Centre and for the joint management and staffing of Highgate Library itself. These are not developments that any of us would have sought, but in the world of today's massive public service cuts when the library was seriously threatened with closure, it is a huge achievement to have secured an agreement with Camden Council to keep our library open and still in the public sector.

Now is the time, more than ever, for us to support our library by making good use of all that it offers: borrow or download its books and other materials; make use of its computer, printing and photocopying facilities; enjoy its friendly space to read the newspapers and keep up with what's happening locally; join in its children's activities and make use of its free phone to the Council. **And do please become a volunteer to help keep our library open.**

Recent events

Winter Celebration - 11 December

A packed hall enjoyed mulled wine while listening to a fun evening of poetry, jazz and story-telling and some folks later enjoyed singing Christmas songs, accompanied by Fabian Watkinson. Many thanks to him, Jehane Markham and her brilliant musicians and the always highly entertaining Danny Scheinmann.

Designing for health - Justin de Syllas - 15 January

For those of us who have grown up with the NHS it can come as a bit of a shock to realise how appalling the state of general health was even as recently as the 1930s. Justin de Syllas is a retired architect who specialised in designing for health and has just finished a book on the subject. His excellent talk focussed on two pioneering health centres of the 30s in poor parts of London, very different both architecturally and in their aims.

Owen Williams's chunky concrete building in Peckham provided open recreational spaces designed to maintain health, whereas Berthold Lubetkin's sleek Modernist one in Finsbury was precisely zoned, almost like a mini-version of a modern hospital. But both grew out of the view that nothing was too good for ordinary people, providing light-filled spaces of high architectural quality. We could learn a lot from them today. FW

Shell Shocked Britain by Suzie Grogan - 12 February

The term 'shell shock' was first used in an article in The Lancet in 1915. However, as Suzy said, it existed long before the First World War. In fact, the symptoms were described in ancient Greece, and in later conflicts. The impact of such anguish lasted for the victims nearly all their lives. They would have nightmares reliving what they had gone through in the battle. The treatment for these men varied and was different for the officers and foot soldiers - it was class based. Families often felt the impact of their fathers' illness, and it was particularly hard on children.

After the end of the First World War, other difficulties compounded the effects of war such as unemployment, the massive flu outbreak in 1919 and the economic depression in 1929 and after. Examples taken from our local area made this talk particularly poignant.

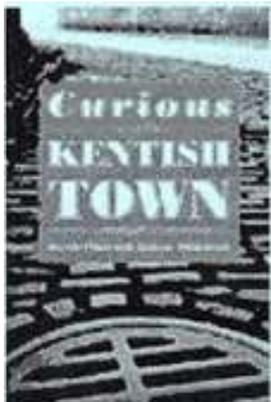
Keep in touch with developments

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

Dates for your Diary

All on Thursdays at 7.15 for 7.30pm

12 March - Annual General Meeting and Curious Kentish Town



Before the talk by Andrew Whitehead on Curious Kentish Town, 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, in person at the AGM or emailing us at FOHL@dartmouthpark.org.

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 recent 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.

16 April - Question Time on Inequality

In the run-up to the General Election on 7 May, come and see a short film from the Equality Trust and ask our parliamentary candidates (or their representatives) about their approach to the crucial issue of inequality.

Thursday 14 May - The High-Heeled Gardener - Debbie Bourne

Debbie Bourne, a local landscape designer, talks about her light-hearted book which tells the story of how she fell in love with gardening and moved from fashion design to gardens. This is a joint meeting with Transition Dartmouth Park.

Thursday 25 June - Twelfth Night in One Hour

Valerie Doulton's Live Literature Company will present an Open Dress Rehearsal of their production 'Twelfth Night in One Hour' performed by Drama students from Niagara University USA. A free performance before The Live Literature Company's tour to Hall's Croft garden, Stratford-upon-Avon.

Keep in touch with events

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

Library News from Caroline Spencer

All change! As Sarah Harrison says, by the time Easter rolls around in April Highgate Library will be running with a new model partnership. This will be a winning combination of FOHL volunteers and Camden library staff. Library volunteers will be bringing their experience, skills and energy to the day to day running of Highgate Library, keeping the local library open for the residents of Highgate. The Easter holidays will offer a staff led craft session for children, with volunteers invited to get involved and offer their expertise with decorating eggs and colouring in bunnies! Watch out for notices in the library.

Membership renewal 2015

If you find a membership renewal form in this Newsletter then your membership fee is due. Current subscription is £5 (concessions are £2). You can pay by cash or cheque, cheques made payable to Friends of Highgate Library. Donations are always 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 12th, OR follow the instructions on the form. We use email to send urgent messages and reminders of events so please ensure that we have your up to date email address. Ours is FOHL@dartmouthpark.org and you can email us with comments too. We keep our current newsletter and poster for our next event on our website: www.dartmouthpark.org/FOHL. You can also link to other community groups. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter!

Please 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. FOHL members receive a quarterly newsletter with news about the library and notice of our events. Membership forms are also in the library entrance area on the FOHL notice board, or download from our website.

We hope to expand our newsletter and would be very grateful if anyone with desktop publishing skills would help design and put it together.

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
