



# The Friends of Highgate Library NEWSLETTER

## September 2014

### Helping secure the future of the library

Camden Council have agreed to keep our much-loved library open and within Camden's public library service with the support of FOHL despite the next round of cuts which further reduce the Council budget from next Spring. This groundbreaking agreement means that from April the Library will be jointly managed and staffed by Camden's Library Services and FOHL volunteers.

The process of engaging volunteers began with a public meeting on 3 July. Speakers from FOHL and the Council, including Cllr Abdul Hai, the new Cabinet Member for Customers, Community and Culture, explained the broad outline of the proposals for the future structure of the library. Ian Dungavell from the Friends of Highgate Cemetery Trust, gave his support to the initiative and offered to start building a local history resource about the Cemetery for the Library: for details go to <http://goo.gl/2rnj8t>. Marijke Good from Primrose Hill Community Library shared her pleasure in volunteering. A positive discussion followed with useful ideas about how to develop the library and the role of volunteers.

On Saturday, 5 July, FOHL and the library held an open day with speakers, children's events and information stalls to promote the library as a dynamic social and cultural hub for our community.

Our former Chair, Fabian Watkinson, has generously donated his piano to the library, and the event began with him playing Elgar's 'Salut d'amour'. Eileen Shaw enthused about being a volunteer at the very successful Keats Community Library and with Stephen Bobash gave us useful detailed information about what's involved. Caitlin Davies, a local author from a literary family, talked about her latest novel "Family Likeness" about Belle at Kenwood House. Gerry Harrison, formerly a local resident and Camden Councillor, talked about his book on the First World War, featuring the letters and diary of his uncle, Charlie May. Nicolette Moonen gave a delightful violin recital of early music, comparing it to Jazz. She was accompanied by Zoe Shevlin on a baroque bassoon, and they both described the attributes of their early instruments.

As well as these delights we had representatives from Woodcraft Folk, Brookfield School and the Ceramic Circle who run the pottery at the Community Centre. Emma Jolly, a genealogist, helped people trace their family history and

use the Ancestry website and there were events for children. The Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Consultative Committee sold local history books and postcards; we had a book stall (see below) and provided homemade cakes and drink. All our Highgate Councillors (and ex councillors) supported our events, as well as Camden library officers. Most encouragingly, several people pledged to become FOHL library volunteers, and we gained some new members.

### **Volunteering at our library**

FOHL will continue to publicise the arrangements for the future of the library, with the wide range of options open to volunteers. Besides day-to-day support in the library these may include becoming involved in stock selection, engaging in outreach work to attract new library users and setting up new activities - such as homework classes, oral history sessions and storytelling. The Council's library staff will provide training sessions for all those interested in becoming volunteers.

Volunteers are crucial to the success of this new venture. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please sign the list in the library or get in touch by email at [FOHL@dartmouthpark.org](mailto:FOHL@dartmouthpark.org) and we will keep you informed.

**Sarah Carrier, Acting Chair, and Sarah Harrison**

### **The Friends' bookstall**

*Michele Cohen writes:* The bookstall consisted of two tables, one with used books, the other a donation of new books from Orion book publishers. In addition, there were boxes of used children's books. The pricing was very attractive - only 20p each for adults' or kids' books, with a special deal of £1.00 for 7 books. The bookshop donations were charged at £1.00 each.

The fun part for me was interacting with people who asked for my opinion or advice! I can get very enthusiastic and am pleased to say I succeeded in encouraging several people to splurge on the £1.00 for 7 deal. It was also lovely to see kids' surprised delight at being able to get an armful of books rather than hearing 'choose, choose, choose' from their cash strapped parents. The bookstall collected £28.00.

**Keep in touch with developments**

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

### **Forthcoming talks and readings**

**All on Thursdays at 7.15 for 7.30pm**

#### ***11 September - Dinah Livingstone - The Vision Splendid***

Last time Dinah Livingstone came to us she read from her book Poems of Hampstead Heath and Regent's Park. Now that her new book *The Vision Splendid* is published Dinah is returning to us. Dinah is a delightful presenter and it is going to be an entertaining evening. *'Dinah is a London Crier, ringing her bell of warning,*

*ringing her bell of exultation... Kindness, work, love, these are the things that matter to her, matter to us all.'-- Camden New Journal*

### **9 October - Joanna Briscoe - Touched**

Local author Joanne Briscoe will be interviewed about her work and her new novel 'Touched'. This highly praised book from the author of the thriller 'Sleep with Me' tells the creepy tale of a house that seems to have secrets and a life of its own. Set in 1963, it is about a family who have moved from London to a country cottage in a small English village. Hopes are high for a healthier and happier existence but as strange and upsetting events keep happening, the situation becomes quite frightening - especially for the mother, Rowena.

### **13 November - prose and poems from the First World War**

In the week of the commemoration of the armistice, come and listen to actor Anna Cragg and friends read from the moving literature inspired by the 1914 -18 War.

### **11 December - Christmas celebration**

An evening of Poetry and Jazz from Jehane Markham and musician friends plus some storytelling and a winter sing along for you to enjoy. Mulled wine and mince pies will add traditional cheer!

**Keep in touch with developments**

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

## **Recent events**

### **26 June - Gillian Tindall - Three Houses, Many Lives**

We were fortunate to have respected local author Gillian Tindall give a talk on her book 'Three Houses, Many Lives'. She briefly described two of the houses, but concentrated on the nearest and most local, Stapleton Hall, in Crouch End. As always, she made the history of both the buildings and people come alive.

### **17 July - The Rivals Game by Douglas Beattie**

*Andy Edwards writes:* Douglas Beattie, writer, and recently elected Camden Councillor, talked about the re-issue of his latest book, 'The Rivals Game'. It deals with club rivalries including those which have spilled over into violence. Doug gave a fascinating insight into football gangs, including Birmingham City's The Zulus, a multi-cultural unit which grew in parallel with the 2-Tone Music style in the 1980s, and explained how Arsenal are considered by Tottenham fans to be latecomers since they moved from Woolwich in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The talk provoked interesting questions from the audience who were by no means rabid football fans and perhaps wondered if it would catch their attention. That it did, is a tribute to the

speaker and book. Sports journalism, at its best, can say something about our lives in general.

## **Library News**

It is great to see so many children using the library, borrowing books and taking part in activities. Highgate Library is once again taking part in the national Summer Reading Challenge. This year the theme is Mythical Maze and 100 children have joined up to the challenge. Each child is asked to read six books over the summer and write reviews of what they have read for display in library.

The challenge kicked off with a visit to Brookfield school assembly by Gloria Lavery. Gloria revealed this year's theme to the assembled children and encouraged all of the children to come along and join. It's great to see so many of them have taken her up on the challenge!

This year the challenge has been run alongside the Arts Award. This is a national scheme run by the Arts Council to encourage children to write, draw and be creative. The library runs a weekly craft session to compliment the mythical maze theme and we will have a great display of work and reviews by the end of the summer.

## **Brookfield Reading Progress Prize Assembly, 17 July**

*Sarah Carrier writes:* This has become an annual event thanks to the inspiration of a former Committee member, Ann Lewis. The Friends give a prize to the child in each class who has made the most progress in reading during the year. Committee members accompanied the children to the Owl Bookshop to choose their books and the shop gave us a generous discount. Two of us attended the special assembly at which the prizes were presented and the children said why they had chosen their books. Our thanks to Brookfield and especially to Laurel Fleck for organising this happy occasion.

## **FRIENDS OF HIGHGATE LIBRARY**

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

**Acting Chair:** Sarah Carrier

**Hon. Secretary:** Margot Kafno

**Hon. Treasurer:** Linda Lefevre

**Committee:** Michele Cohen, Andy Edwards, Alice Gutkind, Sarah Harrison, Agnes Stewart and Sally Thompson

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