



The Friends of Highgate Library

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2021

Highgate Library News

It is good to see the library able to offer more services at last.

Having missed it last year, we were able to offer book prizes at Brookfield School - see the report below.

The York Rise Street Party is back too and is always an exciting community festival. Volunteers are welcome with all kinds of jobs to do. We will have our stall to promote our library our events and the work of the Friends.

Sadly as I write this we are still not able to use the Civic and Cultural Centre for live events or to fill the hall with community activities. We have been battling for several years to agree a new licence, promised when we added our charity arm in 2015. We have taken out insurance, employed specialist solicitors but Camden Council have still not agreed the new licence. This is a great disappointment as it is a vital community hub - and we were raising £10,000 a year in hire fees to pay rent and any surplus went to support the library. We are concerned that the longer the delay the less likely many former users will return.

Meanwhile our exciting programme of talks continues on Zoom - see our new autumn programme brochure or go to the events page of our website.

All seventeen of our Zoom events were recorded and can be seen on our Vimeo site, see further inside.

We continue to send our monthly emails and advertise events on our Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Eventbrite sites. Remember there is always more information and a copy of this and the extended electronic newsletter on our website, recently redesigned and updated www.fohl.org.uk please contact us by email FOHL@dartmouthpark.org.uk. We welcome your suggestions for future events.

*You can make donations and pay subscriptions (normally £6) by bank transfer to FOHL at RBS **Sort Code: 16 00 23 Account number: 10008322**. If you haven't previously done so or your details have changed you should complete our online membership form at <https://goo.gl/7e6VrW>.*

Linda Lefevre, Chair

Brookfield School Book Presentation

On Thursday 22 July, I went to Brookfield Primary School to partake in the reading prize giving. At the end of each school year the Friends of Highgate Library offer book prizes to

the children whose teachers identify as having made the most progress as readers.

The event took place in the sunny yard, parents on one side, children on a bench on the other. The Headmistress, Laurel Robin, introduced me and asked me to talk about the library and the reading challenge. I then handed out the book each child had chosen, with my congratulations on their effort. Laurel then asked each child to say why they had chosen that particular book. It was a lovely event; the children clearly enjoyed the occasion and felt much pride in their achievement. We were all invited to enjoy a strawberry tea and cake.

News from the Library

I am delighted to announce that many activities for children will definitely be starting in the second week in September. There will be special activities for pre-school children every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning in Highgate Library. For the older children the popular Chess Club is also starting again on Thursday 16th. Some of these sessions may initially take place in the hall.

The new Toy Library for pre-school children will finally open on Thursday 16th. It will be operating every Thursday morning during term times to allow children to borrow toys and games on the same basis as they currently borrow books. Knowledgeable staff will be on hand to help children and adults with their selection.

It is now confirmed that weekly sessions of Singing Stories and Rhyme Time will also start again on 14th and 15th. The June re-launch of these activities which I announced in good faith in the last newsletter, did not happen. This was in large part due to the time Camden Council takes to check that activities and venues will be Covid safe. Despite this disappointment we were delighted to be able to welcome larger numbers of children back into the Library. It was a joy to have them there reading books and choosing more to take home with them. The large number of children (over 70) who have signed up for the Summer Reading Challenge this year shows that children's appetite for reading has not diminished during the lockdowns!

For adults, browsing the book stocks is again possible and the public PCs are available, together with printing and photocopying services. During lockdown we received a significant number of new titles so do come in and explore our refreshed stock. The extended digital service which now includes Borrowbox and Newsbank as well as Libby and Pressreader gives readers access many more publications and is well worth checking out. If you are unsure of how to use these services just come in to the library with your computer, tablet or smart phone (and your log on and password details) and learn how to download these services to your device.

And finally a plea - FOHL library volunteers are crucial to the continued existence of the Library; without them Camden would be unable to afford to keep it open. We have welcomed several new volunteers recently but we do need more. Please think about joining us. After you are trained, even working only one morning or afternoon a month would really help preserve this valuable resource for the community. If you are interested in finding out more about being a library volunteer please email himg.chair@fohllcf.com.

Sarah Harrison, Chair of Highgate Library Management Group

Things to Come

Events on Zoom only until the position with regard to the hall is sorted,
register in advance <https://fohl.eventbrite.co.uk>

Thursday September 9th 7.15pm *Writing together is an Adventure* **Nicci Gerrard and Sean French** Nicci French is the pseudonym of husband-and wife-team Sean French and Nicci Gerrard. They have written many seamless psychological thrillers while pursuing their own writing careers. They wrote the very successful series featuring psychotherapist Freida Klein. Camden Libraries have multiple copies of their 22 books to borrow. They will discuss their writing in conversation with Dan Carrier.

Sunday September 12th **York Rise Street Party 12 noon until late** It is back with music, food, stalls, films and all kinds of fun. We will have a stall - please come and say hello. The event now includes Dartmouth Park Road so there is plenty of space.

Thursday October 14th 7.30pm **Kenneth Olumuyiwa Tharp CBE in conversation with Virginia Kerridge** Kenneth is a key figure in the UK arts and culture scene. He began his career as a dancer, performing with London Contemporary Dance Theatre and then with leading companies during a 25-year period as performer, choreographer, teacher and director. He was Chief Executive of The Place, and from 2018 to 2020 was director of The Africa Centre, a home for contemporary African culture. He is currently interim CEO of Eclipse Theatre, a Black-led touring theatre company.

Drawing on his rich and varied experience as an artist and a cultural leader, Kenneth will share some of his insights into the most valuable things he learned from dance; his commitment to championing equality and diversity in the arts, and how the conversation on racial equity has changed since May 2020; and his enduring passions for music, theatre, dance, sea-kayaking, outdoor swimming and tennis.

Thursday November 11th 7.30pm *In Pursuit of Silence* **George Prochnik talks to Dr Simon Lewis** Between iPods, music-blasting restaurants and endless traffic noise, the place for quiet grows ever smaller. *In Pursuit of Silence* gives context to our increasing sense that noise pollution is an environmental catastrophe. Travelling and listening to a host of incredible characters, including doctors, neuroscientists, acoustical engineers, monks and aggrieved citizens, **George Prochnik** examines why we began to be so loud as a society and what it is that gets lost when we can no longer find quiet. He will be in conversation with consultant psychiatrist **Simon Lewis**.

George Prochnik is a Current Fellow of the Guggenheim Foundation. Among his earlier publications, his book *The Impossible Exile: Stefan Zweig at the End of the World*, received the National Jewish Book Award for Biography/Memoir in 2014.

Thursday December 9th 7.30pm **Caitlin Davies** *Queens of the Underworld* Popular culture is littered with famous criminal men. from Robin Hood to Ronnie Biggs they've become folk heroes. But what about all the criminal women? Where are the highwaywomen, jewel thieves, bank robbers and gold smugglers? The Queens of the Underworld broke down barriers in their pursuit of crime, whether wearing trousers, driving racing cars or running illegal empires. But female criminals have been dismissed and their stories have been lost. Come and hear Caitlin tell their stories.

Recent Events

Watch events again or catchup <https://vimeo.com/friendsofhighgatelibrary>

Thursday June 10th Christian Wolmar *Cathedrals of Steam*: Christian Wolmar, incomparable historian of railways, entertained us with snippets from his book, *Cathedrals of Steam: how London's great stations were built - and how they transformed the city*. Ever ask yourself why the stations were built where they are? To avoid too much demolition, the stations had to be built outside the circle of the Circle Line. The main driver (no pun intended) was not, as one might suppose, Planning, but Competition between the private companies, all of which wanted to be as close as possible to the West End. Another aim was to build beautiful. The first proper station was Euston, which, his illustrations showed, had a beautiful entrance and an amazing staircase; Brunel designed Paddington as a Cathedral, with a transept, Bishopsgate had an Italianate balustrade, Charing Cross was built in the French Beaux Arts Style. He praised Betjeman for saving St Pancras. The talk was so stimulating I am going to go and have a look.

Thursday July 15th Elizabeth Wilson *Love Game* Elizabeth's talk was not just for sports fans. She showed us many art works inspired by the enthusiasm for tennis and gave a real insight into how we have responded to the changing place of tennis in our lives since the end of the 19th century. A fascinating evening followed by some interesting questions including a poetic contribution from Betjeman's A Subaltern's Love Song:

*Love-thirty, love-forty, oh! weakness of joy,
The speed of a swallow, the grace of a boy
With carefulest carefulness, gaily you won,
I am weak from your loveliness, Joan Hunter Dunn.*

Thursday August 12th Toby Faber *Fabergé's eggs* We went on a journey with the guidance of Toby Faber. This led us back to 1885 when Tsar Alexander III gave his wife Maria Feodorovna a Fabergé egg as an Easter present. When Alexander III died his son Tsar Nicolas II carried on with the tradition. Some of the Fabergé eggs showed pictures of historical events and each of them contained a surprise. While we were admiring the photos of the intricately adorned eggs we learnt a lot about the turbulent years of the imperial family until they met their death in 1918. Juxtaposing events of Russian history with beautiful objects resulted in a fascinating evening.

FRIENDS OF HIGHGATE LIBRARY

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

Chair: Linda Lefevre

Vice Chair & Membership: Sarah Carrier

Events & Hon. Secretary: Margot Kafno, Ann Cheyne

Hon. Treasurer: Patrick Lefevre

Committee: Michele Cohen, Agnes Stewart, Paul Harris

Sarah Harrison & Virginia Kerridge

President: Toby Faber

Patrons: Julian Barnes, Joanna Briscoe, Tracy Chevalier, Hunter Davies, Caitlin Davies, John Harvey, & Charlotte Mendelson
