



# The Friends of Highgate Library

## NEWSLETTER Winter 2021

### Highgate Library News

We are at last able to use the Civic and Cultural Centre and look forward to filling the hall with community activities. We have Pilates back and a new choir rehearsing, plus many individual bookings for meetings and family events. We look forward to the return of the Film Club. The issue of our licence remains unresolved but negotiations continue. See our website if you want to book <https://www.fohl.org.uk/hlccc-childrens-corner/>.

In November we held our first library talk in the Civic and Cultural Centre hall with a Zoom audience able to join in. There were teething problems and the audience feedback will help us improve, so will additional equipment! It was a real pleasure to see how much the audience in the hall enjoyed being back together, able to chat over a glass of wine.

In September the York Rise Street Party returned and our stall allowed us to meet and chat with our many supporters and give out copies of our events programme, and even recruit a new volunteer.

Our library is slowly adding to available services and it is good to see families enjoying our children's library, the new toy library and the morning under-fives sessions. More exciting developments are in Sarah's report.

Our November talk by George Prochnik on his book "In Pursuit of Silence" made it clear to us that a quiet, if not silent space, available to all, is a vital part of life especially in our busy, noisy city. This is a service we had not realised that libraries provide alongside all the others.

Our exciting programme of talks continues now both in our hall and on Zoom - see our new Winter/Spring Programme.

We continue to send our monthly emails and advertise events on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Eventbrite. Remember there is more information and an extended newsletter on our website, <http://www.fohl.org.uk>. Please contact us by email [FOHL@dartmouthpark.org.uk](mailto: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*

## News from the Library

It has been a pleasure to see the library coming back to life this autumn. Numbers of users are increasing, with more loans, more use of the computers and people beginning to use the space as a peaceful place in which to read or study. Children are back in growing numbers, now allowed to explore the books and use the computers, although not yet able to play with the toys.

Several activities for children have re-started, all currently taking place in the hall for reasons of Covid safety. There have been singing and story sessions for the youngest on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings and the Chess Club for the older children on Thursday evenings. The numbers at each activity are growing steadily.

Our great excitement is that it has finally been possible to launch the toy library. Rosanna who did the preparatory work and runs the weekly sessions writes: "The Toy Library has enjoyed many visitors since it started in mid-September, and although numbers have varied weekly, on our best days the Children's Library has been lively and joyful with grandparents, child minders, nannies and parents, many of whom are 'regulars', exploring what we have on offer. On our most successful week yet 13 toys were borrowed. Favourites so far seem to be the magnetic letter board which allows children to practice tracing the outline of upper and lower case letters; the classic Fisher Price vintage replica 'Chatterphone' with moving eyes; the tactile and colourful magnetic dinosaur set, and a set of rubber (covid safe!) finger puppets".

A few years ago Camden released its vision for its libraries, that saw them developing into community hubs offering space for a wider range of activities than was traditional. This posed a problem for Highgate: it has no separate room in which people can talk without disturbing the much valued quiet of the library, or where necessary have the privacy to discuss sensitive issues. To meet this challenge the Highgate Library Management Group, supported by Cllr Anna Wright, have raised the money to finance the creation of a new room for use by library users and other members of the local community. The building work to divide the existing back office into two separate rooms has just begun. One will become the new "community hub", the other an office for staff and volunteers. It will be ready for use by the New Year. Already people are coming forward to inquire about using it for training and advice sessions, councillors' surgeries, discussion and other activity sessions. "The Friends Room" will allow Highgate to broaden what it has to offer to the local community, in line with Camden Council's vision.

As always I will end with my usual plea that all supporters of FOHL make full use of everything that the library has to offer, and if you have time and energy please consider joining the great group of volunteers who run the library together with Camden Libraries.

**Sarah Harrison, Chair of Highgate Library Management Group**

## Things to Come

Events on Zoom and in the Hall with limited Covid aware seating. Advance registration is absolutely essential: <https://fohl.eventbrite.co.uk>

**Thursday December 9<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm *Caitlin Davies Queens of the Underworld***

See the insert.

**Thursday January 13<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm *Samuel Taylor Coleridge Local Poet and Sage of Highgate*** Re-enact Samuel Taylor Coleridge's life of radicalism, love and poetic rivalry in our fourth pop-up play on local and topical themes. Coleridge, author of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and (with William Wordsworth) *Lyrical Ballads*, lived the last decades of his life as a well-known literary figure in Highgate, receiving treatment for his laudanum addiction.

Come and take part – we give you the script, there's no rehearsal and no learning lines – or join us as audience.

**Thursday February 10<sup>th</sup> Ann Oakley *Forgotten Wives*** Throughout history, records of women's lives and work have been lost. Wives disappear as supporters of their husbands' work. *Forgotten Wives* examines the ways in which marriage has contributed to the active 'disremembering' of women's achievements. Drawing on archives, biographies, autobiographies and historical accounts, best-selling author and academic Ann Oakley interrogates conventions of history and biography-writing using case studies of four women married to well-known men – Charlotte Shaw, Mary Booth, Jeannette Tawney and Janet Beveridge. Asking critical questions about the mechanisms that maintain gender inequality, she contributes a fresh vision of how the welfare state developed.

**Thursday March 10<sup>th</sup> Tamar Swade *The Touch Taboo*** Touch has been a taboo in mainstream Western talking therapies since their inception. This book examines the effects on us of touch, and of touch deprivation – what we feel when we are touched, what it means to us, and the fact that some individuals and cultures are more tactile than others. The author traces the development and perpetuation of the touch taboo, puts forward counterarguments to it, outlines criteria for the safe and effective use of touch in therapy, and suggests ways of dismantling the touch taboo. This book will be essential reading for therapists and for any general reader interested in the crucial issue of touch in everyday life.

**Thursday April 14<sup>th</sup> Hunter Davies *Hampstead Heath*** Hunter has lived close to Hampstead Heath for more than 60 years and has walked on it nearly every day he was in London. In this book he visits all parts from Kenwood to the Vale of Health, from Parliament Hill to Boudicca's mound. As he walks he talks to the diverse array of individuals he meets to create this affectionate portrait of an iconic urban green space.

**Please keep the Winter Spring 22 Event Programme for future reference.**

## Recent Events

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

### **September 9<sup>th</sup> *Writing together is an Adventure* Nicci Gerrard and Sean French**

Nicci Gerrard and Sean French gave us a spirited and fascinating insight into how they write their exciting novels in conversation with Dan Carrier. There were many laughs and much information about their careful research and what events in life inspire a new book.

### **October 14<sup>th</sup> Kenneth Olumuyiwa Tharp CBE in conversation with Virginia Kerridge**

Kenneth Tharp, a key figure in the UK arts and culture scene, spoke with Virginia about his career as a dancer. He began as a performer with London Contemporary Theatre and worked with other leading companies in the field such as The Place, where he became Chief Executive. Later, he was director of the Africa Centre - a home for contemporary African culture and heritage. He is currently working with the Eclipse Theatre which is based in Leeds. Kenneth spoke passionately about the importance of, not only dance, but theatre and music – especially when it came to children and young people.

### **November 11<sup>th</sup> *In Pursuit of Silence* George Prochnik talks to Dr Simon Lewis**

On 11 November we had a special evening as this was the first hybrid event with audiences both in person and on Zoom. George Prochnik was in conversation with consultant psychiatrist Dr Simon Lewis about his book. During the evening we heard about the therapeutic effect of silence offering rest and self-awareness when the world envelops us with noise pollution. The evening discussion touched on a wide range of topics of Trappist monks, Shamans in prehistoric caves, super stereo boom cars and fight against Muzak just to name a few. It was a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

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#### **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

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