



The Friends of Highgate Library

NEWSLETTER Autumn 2023

Friends' News

I usually leave information about the running of the library to Sarah, but this time I need to express my delight and amazement in the appearance and organisation of the library. Along with the smart and comfortable new furniture, the books are spread over new shelves and are easily accessible and no longer crowded. This has been the work of a small group of volunteers lead by Sarah while the library was closed. They seem to have moved every book in this process! Please go in and admire the bright and welcoming library which is the result of their hard work.

Glenda Jackson, who died in June, was a great supporter of Highgate Library when she was MP for the area (1992 -2010). She made a substantial financial contribution which allowed us to develop the garden in front of the library. In October 2016 when we celebrated the library's 110th birthday, despite having returned to a very busy and successful dramatic career, Glenda took the trouble to send us a card.

"Dear friends, Unfortunately I'm not free to attend the anniversary celebrations, and how wonderful as anniversary, 110 years, which could not have been reached given the vagaries of politics, finance, I.T, had it not been for you, true loving Friends. Without your commitment and dedication, imagination and sheer hard work, Highgate and all its residents would have been much poorer. Thank you for all you have done and I know will continue to do, Love, Glenda."

Glenda's words are fitting tribute our volunteers and supporters.

Included with this newsletter is our Autumn/Winter Programme with an exciting mix of topics. I hope you can come and enjoy them.

Linda Lefevre, Chair

We continue to send monthly emails, including an extended newsletter, and advertise events on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Eventbrite. Remember there is more information on our website, www.FOHL.org.uk. Please contact us by email FOHL@dartmouthpark.org.uk

News from Highgate Library

Linda's report in this newsletter has made me think that it was perhaps time to let our supporters know more about the contribution made by FoHL volunteers to the running of the Library.

Central to the role of the volunteers is working with Camden staff to assist the library users of all ages whether they are looking for a book, wanting help using a PC or photocopying or looking for information about Council and local services. Volunteers also take a lead role in managing the stock. Returned books are re-shelved and those requested by other libraries found and despatched; new and donated books are catalogued; books no longer in demand are weeded out and books that would enhance the library bought. The entire stock is checked regularly to ensure that all the books are in the right library and the right place – the librarian's mantra "a book mis-shelved is a book lost" is a crucial reminder to us here. This can be quite a challenge in the children's library where eager children often "help" by rearranging the books as they see fit.

Volunteers also set up displays on themes such as a particular author, subject or event and help to run various library activities such as the Summer Reading Challenge and Saturday's Computer Console Club. In addition, many volunteers have taken on particular responsibilities: mending and recovering those books that need it; organising the sale of redundant stock; creating posters; and looking after the garden.

The volunteers' contribution is co-ordinated by a Management Group of five. This group is responsible for ensuring that FoHL meets its obligations as set out in the legal agreement signed with Camden Council. These include organising the rota of volunteers to co-staff the library, recruiting and training new volunteers and meeting regularly with Camden Library staff to discuss and take decisions on many of the issues involved in running a public library. The Management Group also ensures that FoHL funds are spent in the most effective way to enhance the service offered by the library. This has included such diverse things as funding the popular Toy Library, buying new furniture to increase the study/reading space available and installing temporary secondary glazing to keep the library warmer during last winter.

There are at present 24 volunteers, 21 fully trained and 3 trainees who work with the Camden Library staff to maintain this public service. Some have been working in the library for many years, others have just joined. All play a crucial part in maintaining the library as an invaluable local resource.

Sarah Harrison, Chair of Highgate Library Management Group

Things to Come –

Please register in advance with Eventbrite via the links on our website www.fohl.org.uk/events

Sunday September 10th 12 noon till late York Rise Street Party

The Friends will have a stall at this great community event. There will be live music, food and drink, films, children's activities and a wide variety of stalls. Michael Rosen will be there too. Come and see us (or stay and help!)

Tuesday September 19th 7.30pm *African and Caribbean People in Britain* Professor Hakim Adi

"His latest book, *African and Caribbean People in Britain*, is his crowning achievement; a meticulously researched tour de force that charts black presence on the British Isles from Cheddar Man through the African Roman legions and Black Tudors and into the present day. In the age of Black Lives Matter, and following books such as David Olusoga's *Black and British*, the Windrush story has been under increasing strain. Adi's work should represent the final nail in the coffin for those who think that Britain was ever truly white and should be kept that way." *Kehinde Andrews Guardian 2022*

Tuesday October 17th 7.30pm *The Jewel Box* Tim Blackburn

Every morning, ecologist Tim Blackburn is inspired by the diversity contained within the moth trap he runs on the roof of his London flat. Beautiful, ineffably mysterious organisms, these moths offer a glimpse into a larger order that extends into a hidden landscape. In *The Jewel Box*, Tim reflects on what he has learned in the last thirty years of work as a scientist studying ecosystems and demonstrates how the contents of one small box can illuminate the workings of all nature.

Tuesday November 21st 7.30pm Poetry and prose: reading by John Richmond

John will read a selection of his poems, original and translated, and autobiographical prose, taken from his three books, *My Proper Life*, *Bring Me the Sunflower* and *Another Kind of Seeing*. His work is variously personal, descriptive and narrative. Numerous poems are set in London, and these will be well represented. John has been an English teacher, an adviser of teachers, and an educational broadcaster. He says that poetry has been a constant preoccupation all his life. Copies of his books will be available for sale on the evening.

Tuesday December 12th 7.30pm Keats and the seven women

Beth Shaw and Martin Bould's latest pop-up play follows Keats' journey through life. Come and join in or sit back and watch. More information in the next newsletter.

Recent Events

Tuesday June 20th Spinning Stories Esther Freud

When Esther, a brilliantly successful novelist, told us with charming modesty how she came to writing, she was so artlessly personal that she created an atmosphere of intimacy with us. There is no romance about writing, she stressed, the naked reality is hard work and discipline. Her insights about the creative process were utterly absorbing. Her first book was not deliberately written as if she was a child, it was just how she remembered. Writing fiction about family relationships, children, lovers is also about remembering but, she has come to understand, it is mainly about getting to the core of feeling.

Tuesday July 18th *The Peckham Experiment* Guy Ware

Guy Ware began by showing part of a film made in 1948 about the original Peckham Health Centre which was the starting point for his fascinating novel. He explained how this social experiment influenced the lives of his protagonist, charged with writing a eulogy for his twin brother's funeral in 2017, on the eve of the general election. His talk and subsequent discussion brought out much recent social history and gave insight into the writing process. A worthwhile and enjoyable evening.

Many of our Zoom events are recorded. Full details are on our website.

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 are a new member or your details have changed, please complete our online membership form at www.fohl.org.uk/membership

FRIENDS OF HIGHGATE LIBRARY

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

Chair: Linda Lefevre

Vice Chair & Membership: Sarah Carrier

Events Margot Kafno 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
