



**The Friends
of Highgate Library**

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2024

Friends' News

It has been good to see so many of you at our events as we tour around using other venues. We have also attracted new audiences. Our next two events are at the Highgate Society and then we look forward to sharing our December event about Angela Burdett Coutts with the Holly Lodge community centre as they celebrate the Holly Lodge Estate's centenary. Note that the December event is on a Thursday.

We are also looking forward to 2025 and a return to our own hall when the library reopens. We have planned events in the Spring to celebrate public libraries, looking at the history of books and the architecture of public libraries.

2025 is also the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the Friends and we plan to celebrate it. The Friends have often fought to keep the library open and functioning as well as offering regular talks on a wide variety of subjects.

News of the library, building progress and the future are in Sarah's report.

Donations and Subscriptions

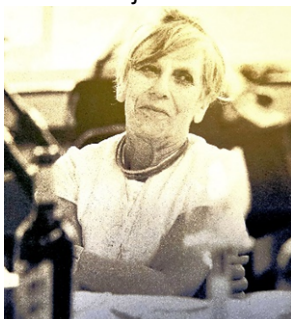
As always, we are grateful for your generous donations. You can make donations and pay subscriptions by bank transfer to FOHL at RBS Sort Code: 16 00 23 Account number: 10008322. You can make cash donations at our events. Apologies from the Treasurer for his slowness in acknowledging these. We have been able to cover our additional premises costs comfortably.

We continue to advertise events on Facebook and X (Twitter). There is more information on our website, www.FOHL.org.uk.

Linda Lefevre, Chair

Jehane Markham

The Friends were represented at the moving memorial and tribute to Jehane arranged by her family. Jehane was one of the founding members of the Friends, present at the inaugural meeting in 1995 and serving on its committee for many years. She was involved in the many campaigns to protect the library, including most recently in 2012. She served on the community committee working out a new future in which the Friends become partners in managing the library and provided a team of volunteers. With Roger Lloyd Pack, her son Hartley and musician friends she has brought pleasure and entertained us many times. She has presented her poetry with fellow poets, including tackling the major challenge of presenting poems on Zoom during the pandemic without being able to see or hear the audience's reaction with her friend and fellow poet Dinah Livingstone. She made a major contribution to the life and work of the library and will be much missed.



Recent events

June Andrew Martin *The Night in Venice*. Andrew as the author of over thirty books, gave a very interesting talk about his writing. He has often written crime novels and explained how these books develop. He talked about using his knowledge and experience of growing up in Yorkshire as background for his novels and his recent memoir. He introduced his latest book, '*The Night in Venice*', a dark and irresistible historical novel set in 1911

July Christian Wolmar *The Liberation Line*. Christian entertained and informed us with his words and pictures about the important role that railways played in Northern France as part of the liberation. A fascinated audience were impressed, perhaps especially by how fast the builders and railway workers repaired and replaced railway lines bring essential supplies and transporting troops and the injured.

September Camden Lock has been a part of **Judith Morrison's** life since the 1970s. What made her presentation fascinating was her historical perspective - from the market's past as an artisan craft and second-hand clothes market to the transformations which many of us lament - illustrated with her wonderful collection of photographs of nostalgia-stirring views of the Lock in its early days. Judy also

chatted to people. Some had been working in the market for many years and recounted memories that jogged our own, others were more recent recruits, such as a pub employee 'resplendent in full sparkling pink attire whose job on a Friday evening is to get everyone drunk'. While the market has changed a lot, not all has been lost, Judy assured us, highlighting the Boom Cat vintage bookshop, Finn's Open Air Gallery, inspiring the amazing art forms on housefronts in the High Street, the world food and still above all, the fun.

Coming events

Tuesday October 15th at 7.30pm Alexandra Dold on *Intertextuality*

Alexandra Dold is currently finishing her Ph.D. research. Her thesis is concerned with *Outlander* as public history. Are you curious about how stories connect with one another? Find out about intertextuality — a concept that explores how books, movies, and other works of art echo, reference, or transform each other. Simply put, intertextuality is about how all stories are linked, whether through familiar plots, characters, or subtle nods to past works. Alex will share examples that bring this idea to life. Find out how *Outlander* draws from history, mythology, and literature to create its rich world and learn about how you can recognise intertextuality in your next reading adventure.

Tuesday November 12th at 7.30pm Jessica Hepburn *Save me from the Waves*

This is a welcome return for Jessica who gave a talk to describe her successful attempt to swim the Channel in 2019. Since then she has run the London marathon and climbed Everest so expect a very exciting evening hearing all about her fantastic achievements and her love of Desert Island Discs.

Thursday December 5th at 7.30pm *Angela Burdett Coutts pop up play with Martin Bould and Beth Shaw* Angela Burdett Coutts was the force behind much of Highgate's development. She provided the site for our library as well as the land for the Holly Lodge Estate. Her life is fascinating, she was a great philanthropist but also a rebel. Beth and Martin brought us this play in 2013. It celebrated the time that the Friends became partners in managing the library. Now it celebrates the major building improvements and our proud history of supporting Highgate Library. Come and join in or sit back and watch.

News from Highgate Library

While Highgate Library has been closed for the major refurbishment works a mobile bus has provided a very limited service three afternoons a week. Thanks to Highgate Cemetery, the bus been able to park placed outside the Chester Road gates. Despite many losses there has been a silver lining to the Library closure - the blossoming of working relations with Brookfield School. Since the launch of the Summer Reading Challenge (SRC) Brookfield invited the mobile to park in the school playgroup one afternoon a week. As a result Highgate Library enrolled more children for the SRC than ever before (and more than any other Camden library), with children becoming library members for the first time. The library mobile has been invited to continue to park in the school playground like this until the Library reopens. Both parties intend this closer working relationship to continue when the Library re-opens with the school children making regular visits to the library.

The intention is for the Library and the Hall to reopen towards the end of November. Everything that was there will still be there – the Children’s Library, the Adult Computer Centre, books to borrow and space to read, study or relax. The Meeting Room, ideal for small groups or one-to-one sessions, will be available free of charge. As the Hall has become part of the library again it will be used for activities for children and adults while the Library is open. These will be provided free of charge. The Hall will continue be available for hire at low cost for meetings, classes and other activities seven days a week, 10am to 10pm when it is not required for library activities. FoHL will continue the run the bookings for the Hall.

However there the similarity ends. The building has been transformed. It is now full of light, warm and free of draughts and freshly decorated throughout. The hall now has its own heating system and new facilities – an accessible WC and a food preparation area and wi-fi will be available throughout the entire library.

The Library will be in a much stronger position to fulfil the Council’s intention that its libraries should become real neighbourhood resources, delivering a wide range of services and activities to all parts of the community, working in partnership with local organisations. The staff and volunteers at Highgate Library will be working to make this intention a reality. Suggestions and ideas about these would be welcomed. When the doors re-open there is no need to wait till you have a purpose. Do just come in and enjoy what will be an outstanding beautiful building, one that is a testament to the Council’s commitment both to its Library services and to its policy of decarbonisation.

Sarah Harrison, Chair of Highgate Library Management Group