

Friern Barnet *Newsletter*

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TAKING STOCK

We have now nearly completed our first full year in existence and we have to say that our progress has exceeded our wildest dreams.

When John Donovan was toying with the idea of starting a Local History Society to cover the Friern Barnet area, he confidently thought that perhaps, in a year or two, he might have attracted a couple of dozen members. In fact, the Society has grown so fast that earlier this year we had to pause, take stock and consider what to do next.

The surprising, and delightful, thing is that there is so much interest in the history of the area, and we have had people almost begging us to listen to their reminiscences. The responses to our House Survey in December was very encouraging, and we were amazed how much information you had about your homes.

Back in December we asked Colin Barratt if he would like to join the Committee and we are delighted that he accepted. Already his knowledge of the New Southgate area and his experience of local archives and genealogy have proved invaluable.

So, here we are with six people on the Committee, over 100 members, and applications from others who

want to join us. But perhaps the one thing that has made us happiest is that everyone has joined in to make our meetings fun to attend. Our older members love to recall the way things were in Friern Barnet, and the younger ones are keen to learn how things used to be, but everyone is treating it as a social occasion.

We on the Committee are working a number of projects. David Berguer is writing a history of transport in the area and Ollie is researching the life of Sydney Simmonds and assembling material on Friern Hospital. We are busy compiling a database on the shops in Friern Barnet and we are also investigating their history. We hope to have some interesting things to tell you at our Shopping Around meeting on 12 June.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

March 31 sees the end of our financial year, and your subscriptions become due for renewal from the first of April.

We are making a small increase in the subscription charges; the new rates will be **£5** for a single person and **£8** for a couple living at the same address. This increase will, among other things, help to cover the costs of employing outside speakers at our Meetings.

We believe that, even at the new rates, the subscription offers good value. Where else can you have a good evening's entertainment, meet such nice people, and have a cup of tea and a biscuit for such a small sum?

We are enclosing a subscription renewal form with this Newsletter. You can either mail this back to us or, if you want to save postage, hand it to us at our Meeting on 10 April.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

You will find with this Newsletter an official letter advising you of the date of the Annual General Meeting, (Tuesday 8 May) together with a form asking for you nominations for officers and Committee Members of the Society.

We would welcome more members on the Committee, so if you would like to join us, please fill out the form. We are especially keen for someone with a little financial experience (you don't have to be Gordon Brown!) to take on the role of Treasurer. This is not a mammoth job as, alas, our finances do not yet run into thousands - all you need is a head for figures, and a pocket calculator.

MEETINGS

Our first two Meetings of 2001 proved to be as successful as we had hoped. John Heathfield's Walk Down Oakleigh Road on 9 Jan was not only fascinating and educational but humorous as well. Charles and Joan Smith were delighted to see that their house featured in one of John's slides!

On 13 Feb David Bevan gave us a wonderful look at London's Wild

Flowers, with some superb slides that he had taken over the years. David told us that the day after his lecture to us, he was going to give evidence at the enquiry into the proposed Terminal 5 at Heathrow. He ended his talk with a lovely description of his visit to this site, where he was busy with head down looking for a rare plant, while everyone else was looking up at a flypast by the Red Arrows.

Ollie's contribution to the Meeting was a 10 foot high example of Giant Hogweed, which he had picked up on The Glebelands only two days prior. The more observant members of the audience noticed that this was held together with tape but was authentic nonetheless!

DELVING INTO THE PAST

by David Berguer

On her daily rounds, Janet Liversidge heard that a local shopkeeper had rescued a whole year's issues of the Finchley Press from a skip. The year in question was 1927 and the finder very kindly offered to lend this file to us. We have been gingerly turning the yellowing and fragile pages and have been transported into a world where trams, steam wagons and horses plied the streets, men's Stout Waterproofs were 17/8d and central heating consisted of a Valor oil stove (cost 13/11d) in the middle of the room.

I thought it might be a nice idea to see what was happening week by week during that 1927 (the year the first talking film "The Jazz Singer" came out). The results are to be found on the following pages, and I hope you have as much enjoyment reading it, as I did compiling it.

Finchley Press Jan - Jun 1927

Jan 7: Removal Expenses. Friern Barnet Council have agreed to pay the removal expenses, £30, of the Engineer and Surveyor, Mr J.M. Gameson from Ilkley to Friern Barnet.

Jan 14: Whetstone Developments. We understand that a scheme has been proposed for the widening of High-road, Whetstone, near Friern-lane, by 25ft. for the erection of shops.

Jan : 21: Elementary Education Rate. It is suggested that the County Education rate should be 1s 10d in the £, the same amount prevailing since April 1st, 1925.

Jan 28: Library Activities. The success that has attended the activities of the Friern Barnet Public Library has encouraged the Committee to inaugurate a series of lectures, the first of which will be "Historic Friern Barnet."

Feb 4: Fire Station Roofed. The new Fire Station at Friern Barnet has now been roofed.

Feb 11: Oakleigh Road ReSurfacing. A tender for £1,500 has been accepted for the re-surfacing of Oakleigh-road.

Feb 18: Spilt Milk. On Tuesday morning an Overground 'bus and a milk chariot, owned by the Manor Farm Dairy, collided at Tally Ho! Corner, both being damaged. Eggs were broken and milk spilt.

Feb 25: Ballards Lane. A sum of £8,714 is to be spent on wood-paving of Ballards-lane between Granville-road and Nether-street.

Mar 4: Wheel off. The wheel of a coal cart owned by Messrs Booth Bros., New Southgate, came off in Friern Barnet-road on Tuesday morning. Traffic was delayed for about 10 minutes.

Mar 11: More Houses. Plans have been approved for a house in Oakleigh-avenue, one in Church-way, two at Whetstone and four bungalows in Oakleigh-road.

Mar 18: Invitation to the Prince. A meeting in connection with Friern Barnet Fete and Fair was held on Tuesday, when it was stated that in reply to an invitation, the Prince of Wales would be unable to open the function, as his summer engagements were too numerous. He is to be asked to do so next year.

Mar 25: Articles for Sale: Canaries for Sale, good singers, from 20/-; also hens, 7/6 each. - 80 Woodlands-avenue

Apr 1: North Circular Road. The cost of the North Circular-road, between Great North-road and Colney Hatch-lane, and Bounds Green-road and Bowes-road is now estimated to cost £105,647, as against a former estimate of £102,000.

Apr 8: Domestic Servants. Wanted. House Parlourmaid, age about 30; two in family; cook-general kept; separate bedroom; laundry sent out; usual outings; good wages paid to competent maid. - Apply Mrs Bain, The Hill, Totteridge, N20.

Apr 15: Rates. The Friern Barnet system of estimating the Poor Rate by the half-year is a bit puzzling. A Poor Rate of 3/8 for the half-year, or 7/4 for the year, plus a General District rate of 5/2, makes up the formidable total of 12/6 in the pound.

Apr 22: Easter Services. All the Easter Services at All Saints', Friern Barnet, were well attended. The church looked very beautiful by reason of the decorative scheme of flowers, carried out by Mrs Wood (wife of Cr. A.S. Wood) and other ladies of the congregation.

Apr 29: A Windy Excuse. Summoned for exceeding the speed limit, a motor cyclist wrote to the Highgate magistrates stating that the reason was the force of the wind, which blowed him along, hence it was impossible to avoid excessive speed. He suggested it was an Act of God. The magistrates, however, found the defendant guilty and fined him.

May 6: Damage. Near Tally Ho! Corner on Friday, a motor car driven by Mr H.R. Sommerfield of High-road, Whetstone, was in a collision with a tramcar, some damage resulting.

May 13: Situations Vacant. Youths. - Groceries, Provisions & Butchers. - J. Sainsbury has further vacancies for tall, well educated youths (aged about 16) as learners for the trade. Commencing salary 25/ per week, increasing after six months to 30/, and then progressive. - Applicants or parents are invited to write Staff Manager, Stamford House, Blackfriars, London SE.

May 20: Friern Strollers. A large audience at the Woodside Hall on Saturday evening witnessed a successful production by Miss M Waight of the ever popular "All-of-a-Sudden Peggy" by the Friern Strollers. This comedy by Ernest Denny is always refreshing, and a great deal of laughter is always got out of it. This proved to be the case on Saturday night, when the audience were highly pleased with all that they saw and heard. It was unfortunate that the stage was so steeply inclined, for the scenery, designed for another hall, caused the officials many anxious moments.

May 27: St John's Whetstone. After interesting lessons on Empire Day the scholars of St John's School marched into the playground, and held an entertainment. An address was given by the Vicar, the Rev. A. Newns.

Jun 3: New Hall. The New Hall adjoining the New Southgate Liberal Club is to be called Betstyle Hall. It is expected to be finished about the end of next month at a cost of £4,000.

Jun 10: Repairs. Wood block paving repairs at Friern Barnet-road are to cost £632. 10s.

Jun 17: Athenaeum Road. Residents of Whetstone appreciate the very great improvement to the Athenaeum-road caused by the recent operations caused by the Friern Barnet District Council. In addition to an excellent roadway, with a delightfully smooth surface, substantial footpaths have been constructed.

Jun 24: Houses for Sale. For Sale £975 Freehold. No road charges, semi-detached houses, Oakleigh-road Whetstone. 3 bed, 2 reception, kitchenette, electric light and gas, large garden, room for garage, Finch, builder, 126 High Street, North Finchley.

We will include extracts from the Finchley Press for the second half of 1927 in the next Newsletter, but in the meantime here is a reminder of how Whetstone looked in the 1920s. Note the overhead tram wires and the tram-lines in the centre of the road. The policeman in the centre of the picture is on point duty (he is wearing white gauntlets), but there is a complete absence of traffic.



KEEP US POSTED

Post boxes are one of those of items of street furniture that we all take for granted, but they can tell an interesting tale. There are of course many examples with ER or GR on them, but do you know of any with that go back to Queen Victoria's time? These will carry the inscription VR and will, of course, be over a hundred years old. Even rarer are those erected at the time of Edward VIII, who reigned for only 325 days. There is apparently one in Southgate, but we don't know of any in Friern Barnet.

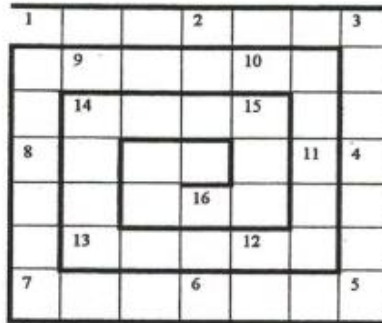
Next time you post a letter, take a close look at the pillar box, and give John Donovan or Ollie Natelson a ring if you have found a rare one. They will nip round and photograph it, or you may like to take a photograph yourself!

DID YOU KNOW?

- * The shortest lived trolleybus route in London was the 651 (Barnet Church - Golders Green via North Finchley). It ran from 6 Mar to 31 May 1938 - a mere 77 days.
- * There are 260 streets in Friern Barnet, and 21 of these have been built since 1999 on the Friern Hospital site.
- * Before telephone numbers became entirely numeric, the exchange covering Friern Barnet was called FINchley and the New Southgate area was PALmers Green, while the area south of the North Circular came under the MOUNT View exchange.
- * According to the 1841 census, the population of the Parish of Friern Barnet was only 849.

QUIZZTIME

How well do you know Friern Barnet ? See if you can answer this word spiral.
Begin at square number 1 and write each four letter word in a clockwise
direction. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next word.



1. The 'ardware shop in the 'igh Road
2. The late environmentally aware councillor of Woodhouse Ward was
---- Cross
3. Amphibian in ponds in the Glebelands comes as either Smooth or Crested
4. This ran along Friern Barnet Road until March 1938
5. Louis ---- , N10 makes sounds like a cat
6. In Summers Lane, The Civic Amenity ---- is due to reopen this year
7. This Close is a new road on the Friern Hospital Site
8. This species of tree was commonly planted in streets in the early 1900s
9. ---- Crescent, N11 has an Oriental feel about it
10. This Hall is at the corner of Friern Barnet Road and Friern Barnet Lane
11. A bird's home commonly found in Coppetts Wood
12. Lovingly look after plants in your garden
13. Sidoli ---- in Friern Barnet Road sells a wonderful range of Continental
foods
14. You can use a wood or an ---- at this sporting centre in Friern Barnet
Lane
15. The Great ---- hern Cemetery is on Brunswick Park Road
16. There are many examples of this in Friary Park

**Friern Barnet & District
Local History Society**



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by Barnet Council*

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