

# Friern Barnet *Newsletter*

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## **MEMORIES OF THE FREEHOLD**

*by John Blackmore*

I was born in 1923 and my childhood was spent largely on the Freehold, that area south of the North Circular Road that was officially known as South Friern. My dad was a blacksmith and by the time I was a year old I had a sister, Lily Amelia. Although my father was always in employment, money was short and I have vivid memories of early morning trips to Muswell Hill, queuing every day before school with other poor children outside Monickendam Bakeries for yesterday's left over bread and cakes and better still outside Wylie's Bakery, a much better choice of stale bread etc. Sometimes, much to mum's delight, I would get a bag of meat pies. Bread was 3d a bag full and 2d for cakes, all tipped in at random (no Health & Safety regulations then!). Then I would go across the road to Pulham's the butchers for 3d worth of chops or 6d worth of mixed meat of some kind. I was not expected to go home with less than 10 sausages in addition! My trips were made on very old roller skates and I had to get home in time for school.



*Martyn's is the oldest business in Muswell Hill and the aroma of freshly ground coffee still permeates the Broadway to this day*

*David Berguer*

We were fortunate enough to have a council house, with a bath and hot water) in Albion Avenue, next door to Halliwick Park. To earn a few extra pennies mum cleaned the Mission Hall in Pembroke Road, from which could be heard the beautiful singing voice of my Aunt Nell. In 1933 my second sister was born, Joyce Evelyn and in 1936 we moved to Cromwell Road which was very handy for my school and my passion for the football field.

Then in 1939, the War – a dark time for all of us. I was unable to enlist in any of the armed forces due to the fact that I had polio as a youngster and it was very galling to watch all my friends going away and some not coming back. I was employed on munitions and I remember after an eleven hour shift I was cycling down Colney Hatch Lane on my way home and encountered a German landmine hanging from a tree.

In 1946 Cromwell Road Football Club was formed, with some of those returning from the War, and I played for them until 1950. In 1948 I met the girl who was to become my wife. We met at a dance at the Railway Hotel (the Turrets) in New Southgate – very romantic. I still remember the pretty green silk dress she wore. We walked home down the Line Path to the North Circular Road but our relationship did not survive 1948 and in March 1949 I emigrated to the States, my sister, having married a GI, lived on Long Island, New York. Whilst I was there I helped them to build a house, which was to shape and inspire the next few years of my life.

I returned from the States at the end of 1949 to find that Joyce was still free and we decided that we wanted to marry, which we did in June 1950. In 1951 I was lucky enough to join a Self Build Group, which had been started by a few employees at Standard Telephones, for whom I worked at the time.

The next few years were to be hard. We formed a group of 66 men, all from North London, and after a long search found a piece of land in New Haw, a village between Weybridge and Woking in Surrey. The work was hard because none of us were builders by trade and we had to learn, and to satisfy the local Building Inspector's very high standard. The land was 30 miles away (few of us had cars) and we had to maintain our jobs in London and build houses at weekends (8am Saturday until dark and all day Sunday the same). I volunteered to become a bricklayer and meanwhile I had persuaded our friends Terry Smith from Cromwell Road and his wife Nellie Bull from Stanley Road to join the scheme and he also became a bricklayer. After about two years we moved into our house in July 1955 and our son was born in October 1955. Terry and Nellie moved in with us so that he could be on site and not have to travel every week and their house was ready in January 1956. They later had two children – Alan and Ann.

I am now 86 years old (and hope to be 96!) and still play golf two to three times a week. My kind regards and all good wishes to those who recognise the characters and places in my ramblings and I hope I have invoked a few memories for fellow memories of the Society.

## **GIVE ME A NUMBER**

*by Colin Barratt*

We are so familiar with numbers, using them every day, that we don't usually give them a second thought. Adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing are

easy processes once you have learnt the techniques. However, the very earliest numbers, developed by the ancient Greeks, Romans and Hebrews were simply letters ascribed to each number. This was cumbersome and only suitable for recording numerals. For instance, the number 1887 in Roman numerals is MDCCCLXXXVII. Making calculations with a system like this was virtually impossible, so for working with numbers an abacus was used which, in skilled hands, is fast and accurate and is still used today in some parts of Africa, China, India and Japan.

It wasn't until the Crusades that a new form of numbers was brought to Western Europe by the armies returning from the Middle East. These were the so-called Arabic Numerals (which actually originated in India and were brought to the Arab countries by the Persians). These numerals, which were in common use here by the 14th century, introduced the revolutionary concept of a symbol for zero. Numbers became a language, which allowed communication between accountants, builders, mathematicians and scientists, and enabled the enormous progress in science and industry over the following 500 years. These are the familiar ones used by most of the world today.

Even with Arabic numerals, very large or very small numbers become unwieldy, and the concept of expressing them as 10 to the power of a number was developed. One million (1,000,000) can be shown as  $10^6$ . If you had 1 million x 1 million x 1 million, this would have to be written as 1 followed by 24 zeros. Or it can be shown as  $10^{24}$ , much neater! If instead, the number was 1 divided by all these millions, it could be written as  $10^{-24}$ .

Multiples of numbers have been given their own names. These are familiar ones such as *kilo* for 1000 times (e.g. kilogram) and *centi* for one hundredth (e.g. centimetre). There are, in fact, names for every power of ten between  $10^{-24}$  and  $10^{24}$ .  $10^9$  is a *giga* (as in gigabyte),  $10^{-24}$  is *yocto* and  $10^{21}$  is *zeta*, although these are not numbers you come across very often! To confuse things, the terms *billion* and *trillion* have different values in Europe and America. In Britain and Europe, a *billion* is a million times a million ( $10^{12}$ ); in America it's a thousand times a million ( $10^9$ ). Here a *trillion* is a million times a billion ( $10^{18}$ ); in America it's a million times a million ( $10^{12}$ ). In India, a commonly used term is *lakh*, meaning 100,000 ( $10^5$ ).

Some commodities in the commercial world were in such constant use that special names and standard quantities were applied such as a brace of pheasants, a dozen eggs, or a ream of paper. Here are a few more unusual ones:

Fish                      1 warp = 4 fish  
                              1 last = 13,200 fish  
                              1 stick = 25 eels

Furs and pelts        1 scordik = 24 skins  
                              1 kipp = 30 lamb skins or 50 goat skins

Thatching materials 1 kiver = 12 sheaves or bundles

Building materials   1 load = 500 bricks  
                              1 sum = 10,000 nails or tacks

Onions and garlic 1 rope = 15 heads

Counting sheep 2 = tana  
4 = pethra  
15 = bumfit  
17 = tana-bumfit (i.e. 2 plus 15)  
20 = gigit

Perhaps you'll give numbers a bit more respect now. The world we live in today would be very different without them!

### **MY LIFE AND TIMES – PART THREE**

*by Hetty Case*

My married life was very busy as I had two stepchildren to care for and later on, two of my own. There were problems bringing up two families, but I got by. With the commencement of the Second World War my two step children had children who often came to stay with me, particularly whenever their parents were in trouble. There always seemed to be children in the house of whom the most welcome member was my niece who was brought to me when she was only three weeks old.

With the War over, life became very quiet. My husband and I went to Ireland to visit my stepdaughter who had settled there. After a time, my daughter married and had a son, whom I adore, and had him staying with me quite a lot. When he was two and a half years old, my daughter, son-in-law and grandson went to live in Canada. I missed them very much, especially since they had been living with me for some time. Fortunately for me, we had a green grocer's shop which kept me busy. It was hard work but I met some interesting people. During this time my son had married and had three daughters, so once again I had children in the house.

When my daughter had been in Canada for ten years, she wrote to say she was coming home with her husband and three sons. We were so excited. It was lovely to see them all and we had a great welcome-home party. It was a glorious June day and the house was full of people – all so happy.

Two days later my husband collapsed and died. It was a sad ending to what should have been a happy time. I felt sorry for my daughter; as for me, I was stunned. I could not believe that such a thing could happen after nearly forty years of marriage.

I have been to Canada six times; there is always something different to see on each visit and I never tire of looking at the magnificence of the Niagara Falls. The first wonderful experience was by boat, especially when we went up on deck one morning and saw in the distance huge icebergs. The journey up the St Lawrence River past the Heights of Abraham (which we had learnt about in school) and on to Quebec and Montreal, was wonderful. I have been to New York and the top of the Empire State Building - by boat to the Statue of Liberty and to the top of the CNN Tower in Toronto.

In 1980 my daughter took me on a coach tour of Virginia State, starting at the Buffalo Bridge. We stood on the spot in Jamestown where the English landed in 1607 and saw the replicas of the boats in which they sailed; also the

encampment in which they lived. We went to Williamsburg, a typical old English town where the English settled after leaving Jamestown, then on to Washington and into the White House, which was not so large as I had imagined. We saw the grave of President Kennedy with extracts of some of his speeches carved in the surrounding wall. The most impressive thing was the huge white marble statue of Abraham Lincoln with his famous Gettysburg speech carved in the wall. The tour took a week through the most wonderful scenery.

I went back in 1984 for the wedding of one of my three grandsons and had a marvellous time, but the highlight of it was when my new grand daughter-in-law said: "Do you know the nicest wedding present I had, Gran? It was you coming all the way here."

Yes, it has been good to stand and stare.

### **MORE MEMORIES OF MISS KIND**

*by Mabel Hammett (nee Humber)*

I and many of my family and friends attended Holly Park School in the late 1940s and early 1950s, We all have memories of Miss Kind and copies of the Newsletter have been sent far and wide; it had brought back many happy memories of this wonderful teacher who passed on so many skills. Here are a few of my memories:

1. First make the traditional gingham apron, all hand sewn,
2. That flat iron! Heat it on the gas cooker, then slide it up and down the wooden chute with the gritty bits like sand paper to clean the bottom before starting ironing. Holding the hot handle with the small cloth holder.
3. Making meringues. We did not have an electric whisk, or even a hand one. Take a large flat plate and a sharp carving knife (we were eleven years old!). Put the egg white on the plate and holding the knife horizontally, slice towards you through the egg white, lifting it so that air went into the mixture. Many years after I could afford to own an electric whisk, I was still making meringues Miss Kind's Way.
4. I still have a homework book with an example of how to mend a hole with a patch, sewn by myself. Red and white floral pattern, and the flowers all match up at the end of the patch.

The highlight of the final year was a visit to the school flat. Two or three girls would go at a time and we were taught to make beds, wash up and clean the sink, light the coal fire with two sheets of twisted newspaper and six pieces of fire lighting wood. We also had to make lunch for a visiting teacher – I was nearly sick with worry as I cooked, but it all turned out fine.

These are just my memories, but each friend I speak to tells me more. Miss Kind - a really great lady.

### **CHILDHOOD MEMORIES**

*by Pam Brown*

Miss Kind was quite a formidable lady and certainly would not have accepted the behaviour of today's kids, although none of us in the 50s would have dreamt of behaving badly, would we?

At Holly Park School I loved Cooking (Miss Kind), Needlework (Mrs Evans), History (Mrs Eastwood), PE & Games (Miss Purdue and Mrs Watson), Maths (Mr

Goundry), Science (Mr Crisp) and Music (Dr Popjoy). We used to have to walk from Holly Park to the games field at the top of Friern Barnet Lane on a Friday afternoon for tennis, netball or hockey (how I hated that) or, as a treat, rounders. The boys walked separately and we used to try and beat them.



*Holly Park School in 1961, complete with prefabricated buildings*

*Phyllis Kind*

The new school, Friern Barnet County, was going to be our new school from my very first year and many times we were told we couldn't have certain things until the new school. My cousin was 2½ years younger than me and was a third or fourth year student before she moved to the new school.

I lived in Holly Park Road and I walked down Glenthorne Road on the way to my dad's allotments and on the way back he would give me money to spend on sweets at the shop in Glenthorne Road. There was also a shop in Holly Park Road, opposite Carlton Road, which was used by everyone. It was owned by Mr Atkins and later it was run by his daughter. It was a converted house with the ground floor as a shop selling groceries with the greengrocery in the hallway and hardware items (brooms, tin baths etc) out the front on what would have been the front garden. I have sat on the wall with a lolly many a time!

## **THE HOSPITALLERS**

*by John Heathfield*

I find it hard not to accept that in the thirteenth century, the Knights Hospitallers did not regard Friern Barnet as being the crux of their organisation.

The Order of the Knights Hospitallers of St John of Jerusalem came into existence when Jerusalem was still under Muslim control. Some twenty years later, in 1099, the city changed hands during the First Crusade. The Knights

became a military order but it retained its duty to look after the poor, the sick and the insane. Their main activity took place in the Middle East and the function of their English estates was to provide money for activities elsewhere.

The Priory began to receive gifts of land in England from about 1130 including Clerkenwell, which was to become the headquarters in England. It seems that the monks did not usually cultivate land themselves, preferring to lease their property and employ laymen to collect the rents.

The highest rank was held by the Knights Brothers who fought riding their own war horses (which were very expensive) and using their own sword or lance. Armour was of chain mail with a full face metal helmet. In 1159, John of Salisbury described how each knight's sword was laid upon the altar while the knight kept a full night's vigil. Only the richest families could afford to endow such a man and often the knight's were younger sons of Dukes or other nobles. Many were French.

Below the Brother Knights were the Brother Sergeants who used equipment supplied by the Order. They were aided by the Brother Esquires, sometimes young men in training, but more usually fully-armed infantrymen. Full armour was very heavy and long hours were spent practising. The Order differentiated between Knights of Justice who had noble birth or in recognition of outstanding military service, and Knights of Grace, who could not hold high office. They were assisted by serving brothers who worked as carpenters, shepherds and blacksmiths. The Knights were sometimes brutalised by military service, but had a high reputation for honour and honesty and this led to some of them being appointed as chief servants to the King, their salaries going to the Order. The Hospitallers' houses in England did not normally contain weapons and were not built as fortresses. All the Brothers wore a black mantle with a white cross.

The main hospital in Jerusalem was supplemented by others in other countries. And there is a good example at Ansty in Wiltshire where the parish church of St James doubled as the Order's chapel and there was a separate building which was used by the Brothers as a hospice and as the courthouse and dwelling for the Commander. The nearby lake was a fishpond – fish was an important part of the monks' diet. It is reasonable to suppose that our church of St James and house looked similar. Did the pond in Friary Park originate as a fishpond?

The Sisters of the Hospital lived either in convents of their own or in houses with the men. At Buckland in Somerset in 1338 there were 50 Sisters in a house with an attached house for six men. In Clerkenwell the nuns had their own convent and some of their property became part of Clerkenwell Detached. Married couples could become "Donati" – they gave their money to the Order and continued to live in their own homes and could only become members of the Order at death, thus ensuring eternal life. "Confratres" also lived in their own homes and made an annual donation and were guaranteed care in their old age and a Christian burial. Muslims captured in battle were made slaves of the Order, but could redeem their slavery by becoming Christian. The Turkish slaves on Malta had their own Imam or priest.

The Order was suppressed in England by an Act of Parliament and William Weston, the last resident Grand Prior died on 7 May 1540, the very day the Act came into force.

## **FROM THE ARCHIVES**

The Clerk submitted a letter from the Secretary of the National Equine Defence League, drawing attention to the pollution of the horse trough opposite the Railway Hotel by persons using the coffee stall stationed there and asking the Council to use their endeavours with a view to this pollution being ended. The Council recommend that the coffee stall keeper be written to calling his attention to the complaint (*Friern Barnet UDC Minutes 30 Sep 1927*)

## **FRIARY PARK CENTENARY**

Next year Friary Park will be a hundred years old and local organisations are planning a number of events to mark the occasion. The Friends of Friary Park, Friern Barnet & Whetstone Residents Association, North Finchley Local Agenda 21, The Incognito Theatre and ourselves are hoping to involve all sections of the community, from children upwards.

Our own Mel Hooper will be writing a history of Friary Park and its benefactor Sydney Simmons, whose grant of money made the creation of the Park possible. Mel would love to see any photographs that you may have taken either in or of the park and he also plans to include personal reminiscences involving Friary Park. So please contact Mel on 020 8445 3118 and let him know how you can help.

## **LOVE AND MARRIAGE**

*by John Heathfield*

During the eighteenth century it was common practice for priests to add a comment in the marriage registers – usually something like “*Daniel Boom the one-legged baker from Whetstone*” or “*Frances Bradshaw , a young widow woman.*”

The best I have discovered comes from the archives of Canterbury Cathedral, where I was researching my mother’s ancestors. It reads: “*Henry Philpot, a young gape mouthed lazy fellow and Hannah Matthews, an old toothless wriggling hag, were trammelled at the Cathedral 24 June 1744.*” Trammelled is a farming term and is used when a young horse is tied to an old horse in order to teach it how to pull a plough.

## **CROSS WORDS AT THE CROSSROADS**

*by David Berguer*

The Friern Barnet UDC Minutes for 29 May 1925 record the following:

“The Clerk reported that in consequence of a series of accidents having occurred during April at the junction of Colney Hatch Lane, Friern Barnet Road and Woodhouse Road he had repeated the Council’s application for a Point Duty Officer to be stationed there on Saturdays and Sundays to the Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis and submitted a reply from which it appeared that certain of these accidents had not been notified to the Police and that traffic conditions at this spot were not such as induce the Commissioner to make any change in the opinion expressed in his letter of 8 August 1924 conveying the



intimation that it was not possible to station a Police Officer on Point Duty at the cross roads.

The Council unanimously recommended that, having regard to the undoubted danger which does arise at this spot and to the fact that accidents known to certain individual Councillors and Officers of the Council have occurred, which accidents do not appear to have been officially reported to the Police, a further application be made to the Commissioner asking that he will again give very careful consideration to the Council's application, with a view to arranging for an officer to be appointed on Saturdays and Sundays at this spot. The Council recommended that in the event of the Commissioner again refusing to comply with the Council's application, that application be made to the AA for posting a patrol on this spot."

The Commissioner (this time probably with a heavy sigh) again dismissed the appeal and, to make matters worse, on 26 June 1925 the AA advised that "*it was not their practice to post patrols in the Metropolitan area.*"

The Council arranged for a danger sign to be erected at the junction and in September 1925 conducted a traffic survey which showed that Friern Barnet Road carried 4,492 vehicles a day, Friern Barnet Lane 1,874, and Colney Hatch Lane 2,226. There is no further reference in the Council minutes to this matter, so it looks as though it was all a storm in a tea cup and you can't help wondering whether this was all prompted by one of the Councillor's cars having been involved in an accident. In any event, relief was more than nine years away when, in 1934, traffic lights were installed at the junction.

## **JOHN JONES**

*by John Philpott*

In 1860 work began on the building of Isamard Kingdom Brunel's Paddington Station. That same year, in Star Street, just a few yards away, John Jones was born, youngest of the four sons of William and Mary Jones.

John seems to have seen little of his father. In the 1841 census, the household contains William, whose occupation is given as "manservant", Mary and the first two sons, William (3) and Charles (6 months). By the next census, when John was 8 months old, William senior is no longer present. Mary is now the head of the household, with four the boys, the third son, Henry having been born in 1843. She gives her occupation as "butler's wife"; does she mean "widow", or does William perhaps have to live apart from his family with the household he serves?

Very early in John Jones' life, Mary and the boys moved to Colney Hatch, the Friern Barnet hamlet around the cross roads by the *Orange Tree*. Their home was actually just outside the parish boundary in Dunger Place, off Summers Lane near *The Triumph*, but their parish church, Holy Trinity, East Finchley, was far off across fields and Finchley Common (the remnants of which you still cross if you follow that path today), so they would have been more part of the Friern Barnet community.

The family arrived at about the time that the Rector of Friern Barnet, Robert Morris, was rebuilding St James's Church and building the new school nearby in Friern Barnet Lane. It was here, at the age of five, that John began his education. The school was to play an important part in the rest of his short life; the Parochial

Schools Committee minutes for 25 November 1864, when he had turned fourteen, have the entry: *“The indentures of John Jones as pupil teacher in the Boys School were produced and signed by the managers present.”*

The school (later known as St James’s School was at that time run as two schools, for boys and girls respectively, both on the same site. For almost the whole of John’s time there the boys’ school was in the care of one master, Joseph Lockwood, assisted by pupil teachers He was appointed in 1856, together with his daughter, who was to have charge of the girls’ school, at a joint salary of £80 per annum, together with the school house and a supply of coal (later, when gas was installed, this too was included). In addition to his duties as schoolmaster, he was required, after each school day, to lead prayer at the almshouses next door. When Mr Lockwood resigned in 1869, after over twelve years at the school and forty years teaching, he was presented with “a handsome timepiece “.

On 5 April 1870, John Jones died of pneumonia, aged nineteen, at his home in Dunger Place. He was buried four days later in the churchyard by Robert Morris. His gravestone, by the variegated holly tree, beside the path that passes west of the church bears the inscription:

ERECTED BY HIS PASTOR AND THE TEACHERS  
AND CHILDREN OF FRIERN BARNET SCHOOL  
WITH WHICH HE HAD BEEN CONNECTED AS SCHOLAR  
AND PUPIL TEACHER FOR 14 YEARS.

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Our Annual General Meeting will take place on Wednesday 27 May 2009 prior to the talk by David Keen on the subject of the RAF Museum. With this Newsletter is the official invitation to attend, along with a Nomination Form and a copy of last year’s Minutes.

The last increase in our subscription rates was in April 2005, and fortunately since then our healthy financial position has enabled us to absorb the rising costs of running the Society, particularly postage, printing and speakers’ expenses. However, we are now seeing further increases in costs (postage rates went up from 6 April this year, this time by 10%), so we are proposing a modest increase in subscriptions from 1 April 2010. The proposed new rate will be £7 for single members and £12 for couples and, in accordance with our Constitution, members will be asked to approve this increase at the AGM.

If you have any item that you wish to raise under Any Other Business please notify Patricia Richardson by Wednesday 20 May 2009.

**Friern Barnet & District  
Local History Society ©**

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