

Friern Barnet *Newsletter*

Published by Friern Barnet & District Local History Society

Number 62

September 2015

C F DAY

by David Berguer

During the early years of the twentieth century speculative developers would purchase parcels of land and erect houses upon them. The results of this piecemeal development can be seen in the older streets of Finchley and Friern Barnet which contain a variety of architectural styles. By contrast, in the nineteen thirties large developers had got involved and whole streets were created with almost identical dwellings.

One of the pioneer developers in the area was Charles Frederick Day who was born in 1859 and spent his early years in Stoke Newington where he had a successful ironmongery business. In the 1890s he began operations by building the row of shops on the western side of Ballards Lane, known as Regents Parade (numbers 321-371) He also developed the Derby Lodge estate at the rear. This was followed by the Etchingham Park Estate, and Claverley Grove and Princes Avenue at Church End, Finchley.

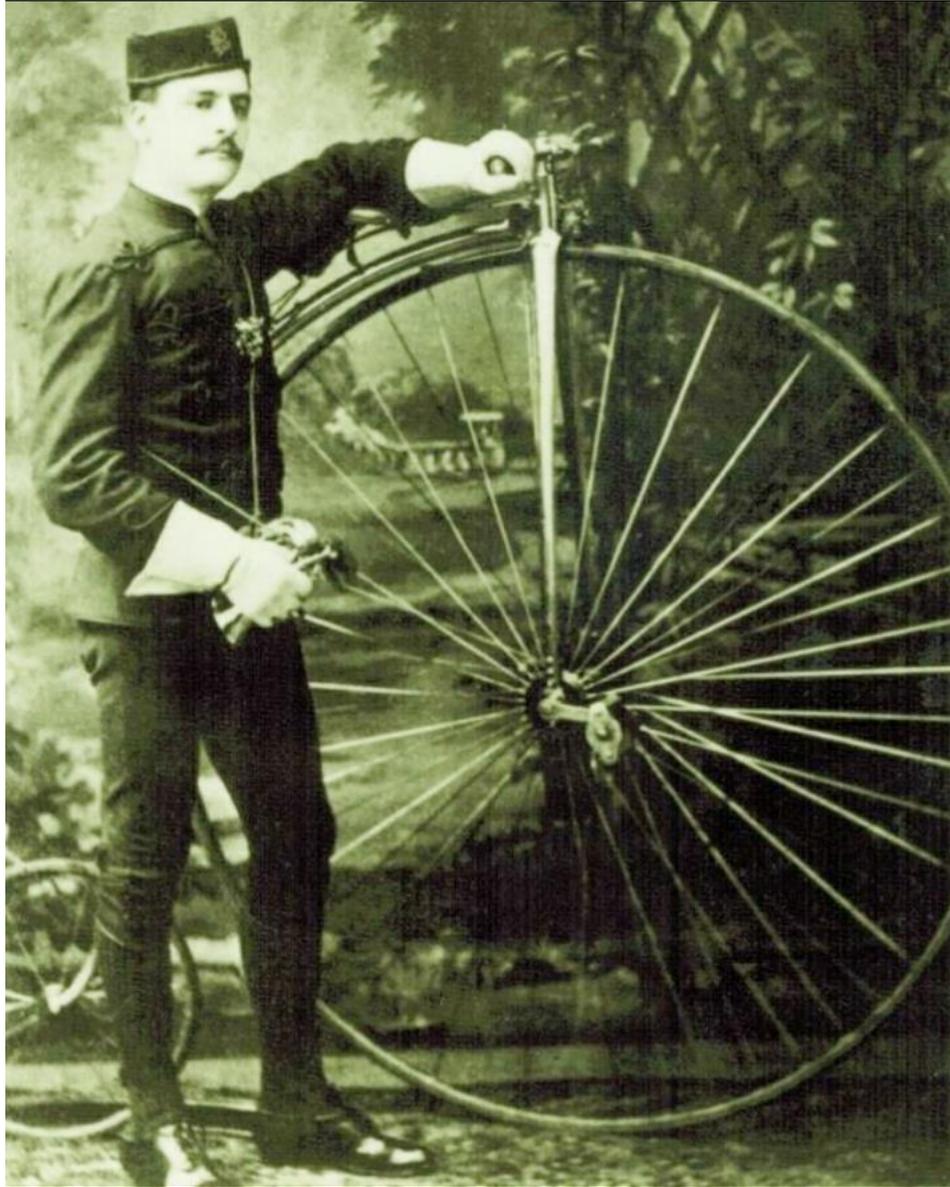
By 1904 he had moved to Etchingham Lodge in Etchingham Park Road, North Finchley and eventually had an office at 21 Regents Parade and latterly at 750 High Road, North Finchley. Among C F Day's projects were houses in Friern Barnet Road (1907 and 1909), St John's Avenue (1908), Hillside Avenue and Hollyfield Avenue (1909), Colney Hatch Lane (1910) and Halliwick Road (1925-26). Developments in Whetstone included Buckingham Avenue (1929), Friern Mount Drive and Langton Avenue (1931), St Margarets Avenue (1932) and Netherlands Road (1952).

Charles Day was elected on Finchley Urban District Council for the North Ward in 1911

An example from 1890 of C F Day's business acumen

and served until 1920 when he gave up the seat; he was also an Overseer for the parish for some years. He was a founder member of Finchley Rotary Club and a Freemason at the Duke of Cornwall Lodge for 40 years. He was also associated with Finchley Football Club, Finchley Bowling Club and the Horticultural Society. He retired from the business in 1919 by which time the company of Chrysanthemum C F Day Ltd had been created. He died in August 1933 and left £119,074 gross, equivalent to £5,960,000 today, so he could be considered as a successful local businessman.

In the early days Day had as a partner James Edmondson who had a son (who became Sir James Edmondson) and a daughter Arabella, who Day married. Sir James had one daughter, Margaret, who was involved in an unusual and fatal accident.



James Edmondson senior in 1880

On 14 September 1934 20 year-old Peggy, as she was known, was on Sir James's motor launch at Swanage watching her friends surfing when she slipped overboard. A newspaper report at the time described what happened:

“Sir James was driving the boat, and I was in the after cockpit looking after the surf board. Miss Pinching came off the board, and Sir James slowed the boat down and was turning to pick her up when there was a distinct bump forward. At the same moment there was a violent bump under my feet. I looked over the stern expecting to find the mooring buoy, but I saw the figure of a girl. Sir James stopped, and he and the mechanic came out and helped get her in. When we were bringing her ashore at Studland we recognised that it was Miss Edmondson.”

Apparently Peggy had been severely cut on the arms and legs by the propeller. She was rushed to hospital but died two weeks later on 28 September.

A SAD STORY

The following appeared in *Barnet Press* of 20 February 1909:

“MYTHICAL LOVER. A daughter’s extraordinary farewell letter to her parents was read at the inquiry at New Southgate into the death of Lilian May Bartlett, aged 19, who was found drowned in the New River, Palmers Green. She had been a servant at the Vicarage, Lower Edmonton.

She had told her mother, Mrs Ellen Bartlett that she had a lover whom she met while cycling at Enfield. When asked about him, she replied that he was in France, that she received letters from him, and that he signed himself “Your loving husband that is to be”. A letter – received from her by her mother on Tuesday – ran:

“My darling mother and father – It is breaking my heart that this should be my farewell letter to you. I cannot bear the world any longer. Do not try to find out where the letters are, for they are now in safe keeping. I gave you the wrong address. George’s name is not Amhurst, but is the Hon George -- and his mother is Lady ---

We met one day about two years ago under strange circumstances. I was going over to France to stay with his aunt and his uncle, Sir General and Lady ---, because he is so much higher than we are, and has been used to living in almost a palace. I have sent him my farewell letter, which has almost split my heart in two.

All arrangements were being made and necessaries provided, but there was a great secret attached to our future wedded life, which I cannot tell you. I cannot tell you this secret, because it does not concern me alone. Oh, darling mother, I should have been much happier if my love had fallen on one of my own station in life. I feel I cannot take my dear love home.

Good-bye, my darling parents and brothers and sisters, until we meet on one day high above this dragging world. With kindest love, your heartbroken daughter, Lilian”

Another letter was found addressed to Miss G Amhurst, Holly House, Enfield, in which the phrase “I am going to drown myself” occurred. The address to which it was sent was, however, false, said the coroner’s officer. The coroner said there was no evidence of the existence of a wealthy lover in high station of life, and he had come to the

conclusion that the outcome was the result of delusions. The jury returned a verdict of: "Suicide while insane."

"SHOVER" – A WOODHOUSE LEGEND

by John Heathfield

During a lifelong career in education, I suppose I've met about 10,000 teachers. One of the most remarkable was Shover. Laura Shore was born in Rochdale on 27 August 1891. The family lived at 66 Molesworth Street, a terrace of working class houses. Her father was a wool warehouseman. She won a scholarship to Rochdale Secondary School and in 1910 went to Whitelands Teacher Training College, at that time in Chelsea where she trained to teach French and English.

In 1910 there were two types of school staffed by two kinds of teacher. Secondary Schools, usually charging fees, offered a five-year course up to the age of 16 and leading to School Certificate. Elementary Schools catered for all other pupils up to the leaving age of 12, raised to 14 in 1918. One of the lessons learned in the 1914-1918 war was how inadequate is the English education system. A new type of school aimed at providing a new kind of technical and/or scientific education was created. These were to be called Central Schools and offered an extended course beyond the age of 14. Woodhouse School was one of these new schools. The staff at Secondary Schools were University graduates, usually untrained, who learned on the job. Elementary School teachers went to Teacher Training College for two years. Their final exam was about the same standard as today's A levels.

Miss Shore began teaching at North Haringay Junior School in 1912. In 1920 she transferred to the newly created Finchley Central School. Woodhouse School grew out of the Central School and was moved to Woodhouse Road in December 1922. Laura was Senior Mistress in a brand new school and was largely responsible for setting up the ethos of the school. A working class girl herself, she saw education as a way for such children to better themselves. The new school had a house system, (Gordon, Livingstone, Nightingale and Scott) prefects, school clubs and societies, white gloves for the girls, and even a school song, in fact all the attributes of a public school.

There was a strong emphasis on personal values and what used to be called "tone" – a vanished concept these days. In a letter to *The Times* in 1946, she wrote "I teach my girls that it is their right to take a seat for which they have paid, but that it is their privilege to offer it to an older person." Most children regarded it as a privilege to receive an education, indeed they were proud of their school. One result of this pride was the very successful Old Woodhouseians Association.

She was a teacher with a firm command of discipline, which she exerted simply by her presence. Her explanations were clear and simple and her comments constructive. It was her ability as a teacher that earned her the nickname "Shover" because she was so successful in preparing pupils for School Certificate exam. I wonder however how many pupils worked out of fear. A deeply religious lady, she encouraged Woodhouse pupils to fund a bed at the Wright Kingsford Home for Orphans.

Her approach is crystallised in this memory by Betty Waite "One day, just before I was 14, I committed the unforgivable sin of taking a hockey ball out for a knockabout during the lunch hour, and had to report to Shover. I got a good talking to, no games for a week and three hours extra homework. Finally I was told that Shover wanted to see my mother. I thought I was going to be expelled. Much later I realised that she had

been skillfully finding out about my home circumstances. As a result to this visit, my name was put forward for the Junior Award. This was a grant to help with expenses.



Laura Shore in 1929

Obviously this was a great help to my mother as there were three children to bring up in what is now called a “one parent family.”

Looking back, in a letter to the Chairman of Governors on the occasion of the school’s 25th anniversary, Laura wrote, “It was while we were at Finchley Central School that we started the house system with the same names we know so well. The Parents’ Guild was started with Miss Miles and myself as secretaries. They were splendid days, fraught with much difficulty but I think I am right in saying that the spirit of Woodhouse with its happy, homely atmosphere was born in the years 1920–1923. In those years the foundations of the school were laid so that when we moved to Woodhouse, we moved as a school and could begin to build on our foundations.” (It is a sign of those times that the letter was written with a fountain pen.)

“Happy and homely” is a phrase sadly lacking in today’s education system with its emphasis on ticking boxes and measurement by exam results. A better measure of success would be the strength of the Old Woodhouseians and the number of Old Woods who married each other.

“SHOVER” – PERSONAL MEMORY

by John Philpott

A deeply religious person, after her retirement in 1953, Laura served as Clerk to the Governors at St John's School, Whetstone. She died in 1979 at the St Mary's Convent. John Phillips writes: “ Miss Shore seems to have acquired the nickname “Shover” in the earliest days of Woodhouse School. My father was one of its earliest pupils. Moving with the Central School from East Finchley in 1922 to its new home in Woodhouse; my mother joined from Christchurch School, aged 11 the following year. To both she was “Shover”, both looked back on her with fondness and respect. For all her firmness, she took a kindly personal interest in her pupils. My mother recalled an occasion when, during “free” time following exams, she was playing tennis with a friend, disobeying a teacher who wanted them for another purpose. She developed a nosebleed and was taken to Miss Shore's room for treatment. While she was recovering there under Miss Shore's care, the teacher came in saying indignantly “Oh, there you are!” Miss Shore (not knowing the full story) sent the teacher away.

I have a note of sympathy, which Miss Shore sent to my mother on the death of her father, some years after she had left school. In it she shows the interest she had maintained in her former pupil, being aware not only of her bereavement but also of her engagement to my father.

When I came to Woodhouse in 1946, “Shover” of course was still there, still Deputy Head and Senior Mistress. She was one of those teachers to whom discipline seemingly required no effort. I remember saying something, not rude, but perhaps not appropriate; her response, not really a reproof, made me feel very crestfallen. She took a special interest in me, understandably as the first “thoroughbred” Woodhouseian, perhaps not to my disadvantage. When I dropped an easy catch in a game of cricket, one of my classmates commented, “You may be Shover's favourite, but you're no good at cricket”.

My brother David, four years after me, remembers that sick children were taken into her room to recuperate and be given hot milk, My cousin, Alice Lovell, (nee Woods) a year ahead of me, confirms this. She also remembers returning to school after suffering from a swollen ankle, Miss Shore decided that it would be unwise for her to play hockey. Anne accepted with alacrity and spent games lessons in the warmth of the school library. Marty Feldman was in Anne's class, where he was the bane of the teachers' lives. He and Miss Shore did not get on. Nevertheless she published writing of his in the School log.

Anne also tells me that Mrs Pollard, the cook at the school, was Miss Shore's housekeeper. They lived in Sandringham Gardens and Anne would see them walking along Woodgrange Avenue (where Anne lived) on the way to Woodhouse, considerably earlier than she left for school. Miss Shore spent the last years of her life at St Mary's Convent, Chiswick. Anne visited her there and remembers her saying it was not too far to journey to get to church. When she died, aged 87, my parents and I attended her funeral in the chapel there.

WE SHALL REMEMBER THEM

by John Philpott

In 1958 a young Territorial Army officer was in St James's Church, Friern Barnet, for the wedding of a friend. She happened to be sitting beneath the memorial to a soldier, like her a 2nd Lieutenant, killed in action in the First World War. She was moved by

the thought of his death, aged only 20, even younger than she was, which led her to thinking of her own life, what she had done with it so far and what she would do in the future. The memory has remained with her ever since.

Ivor Theophilus Davies, the soldier remembered, was born 4 October 1894, the youngest child of Thomas Alexander and Kate Gardner Davies. He had three brothers and three sisters. At the time of their marriage his parents were living in Stepney, where Thomas was landlord of *The Kettle Drum*. The family moved subsequently to Chigwell, then Hampstead, where Ivor was born. After Ivor's birth came a move to Friern Barnet, where their home was Brook House in Friern Barnet Lane, near to *The Orange Tree* (now Tesco's), on the present site of Windsor Court. By this time, Thomas was established as a wine merchant, with his first son (15 years older than Ivor) working as his assistant. It was a large household: as well as the parents and their children, there was a cook, housemaid and nursemaid, with the coachman and his wife in Brook House stables. By 1911 there had been a further move, to Woodside Park Road in Finchley, but it is clear that the family maintained a close connection with Friern Barnet Parish.

In September 1905 Ivor, following his brother John, three years his senior, went as a boarder to Oundle School in Northamptonshire. There he sang in the chapel choir and with the choral society, was a member of the debating society, and showed considerable sporting prowess, playing fives, rugby and cricket and rowing for Laxton House (his boarding house) and representing the School in the first teams for fives and cricket. By the time he left in July 1913, he was a school prefect, Head of Laxton House, and House Section Commander in the school cadet corps. The Oundle School archives say little of his academic achievements or interests. Some obscure, humorous references in the school magazine suggest an interest in science and mathematics; perhaps, had he lived long enough, he would have followed his brother John and become a civil engineer.

Ivor's mother, Kate, died in January 1914, aged 57. She is buried in Friern Barnet Churchyard. There is a stained glass window in her memory in St James's Church, above the memorial to her youngest son. The lectern in the nave of St John the Evangelist, Friern Barnet Road, is also in her memory. The parish magazine for July 1914 records the donation of a brass lectern "in memory Mrs Davies, formerly of Brook House". The lectern is inscribed "A.M.D.G. IN MEMORIAM K.G.D OBt A.D. 1914. M.E.H." we may surmise that the donor was Margaret Elizabeth Hall, sister of the Rector.

Just a few months after the death of his wife, Thomas Davies was faced with the departure of his sons John and Ivor, both of whom enlisted in the army almost immediately after the outbreak of war. By 1915, both were at the front, John with the Monmouthshire Regiment in the Balkans, Ivor in Flanders with the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. On 22 June 1915, Ivor was killed in action "leading an attack on a German redoubt near Hooge". He was buried by the Germans. He is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial in Ypres, which bears the names of 54,397 British and Commonwealth soldiers (including 451 from Ivor's regiment), who died in the Ypres Salient, and whose graves are unknown. In Friern Barnet, as well as the plaque in St James's Church, Ivor is remembered in an inscription on his mother's grave in the churchyard, where his father, too, was buried after his death in 1924. John survived the War, was married, and returned to live in Woodside Park Road.

In August 2000, Marian Werner, the wedding guest at St James's in 1958, returned to the church and found again the memorial to Ivor Davies which had so moved her forty-two years earlier. She resolved that, if it were possible, he would be remembered in this church on the centenary of his death. Later, learning that he had been a pupil at Oundle, she contacted the school, who provided the information about his schooldays, and assured her that he would also be remembered at the school on that date. They also provided photographs, so for the first time Marian saw the face of the young man who had inspired her for more than half a century.



As the date of the centenary drew near, she approached Father Damien Konstantinou, priest of the Greek Orthodox Community of St Katherine, which now worships in St James's church, and the Rector of Friern Barnet, Father Paul Walmsley-Mcleod. Both received warmly her suggestion about holding a memorial service.

On 22 June 2015, Ivor Davies was remembered in St James's church, by a service composed and led by Father Paul, and attended by Marian Werner, Martin Russell, Deputy Lieutenant of Barnet, members of the Barnet War Memorials Association, members of St John's (now the Parish Church of Friern Barnet) and children from St John's School.

Marian had an eventful life. She played at Wimbledon in both doubles and singles and represented Middlesex at tennis. After study at Bristol University she emigrated to Canada for a time. After her return, she joined the staff of John Lewis, where she worked in management for twenty-five years. In 1968 she married her husband Karel. He had been a university professor in Czechoslovakia, but following the communist coup, not being a Party member, was denied employment in any academic field. He managed to leave for Britain in 1968, walking across the border into Germany. They now live in Finchley.

Postscript:

Buried in Friern Barnet Churchyard is another soldier of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, Corporal Frank Thompson, who died during the Second World War. He was a member of the 2nd Battalion of the regiment, assigned to the 1st Airlanding Brigade, which was to achieve fame in 1944 on D-Day with the capture of Pegasus Bridge. Frank, however, was killed in 1942 at Netheravon airfield in Wiltshire during training. He was the son of George and Rose Thompson of High Road, Whetstone, in the parish of All Saints', Friern Barnet.

HONORARY MEMBERS

At a Committee meeting in May it was decided unanimously that Mel and Helen Hooper should be elected as Honorary members of the Society. This is recognition of Mel's long service on the Committee and of Helen's many years of helping out on the welcome desk at our meetings. Mel joined the Committee in May 2001 as Treasurer and after his resignation in 2012 he continued to act as Independent Examiner of our Accounts. Mel also researched and wrote *The Friary Park Story* which we published in 2010 to coincide with the centenary of the park.

The Committee has also decided that Colin and Janet Liversidge should be appointed Honorary members, again in recognition of their long service and invaluable help ever since the Society was first formed back in 1999.

Mel and Helan and Colin and Janet join our five other Honorary Members - our President, John Heathfield; the distinguished local historian Percy Reboul; Yasmine Webb, the former Archivist at Barnet Local Studies; and Linda Donovan, daughter of our founder John Donovan daughter and his grandson, Alex Boxall.

THE RAILWAY HOTEL

In his article on the Clock & Watchmakers' Asylum in the last issue Colin Barratt said it was difficult to visualise *The Railway Hotel (The Turrets)* as having beautiful grounds. Well, here is a picture of the said grounds as they were in 1859:



Note that the actual turrets are missing from this picture. They were not added to the west of the original *Railway Hotel* building until 1887.

A CAN OF WORMS

by David Berguer

There seems to be some confusion regarding the correct spelling of one of the roads in Whetstone. Official signs in the road have different spellings. The top two signs below have been in place for many years whereas the bottom one (with the apostrophe) has been more recently erected.

Issues of *Kelly's Directory of Finchley & Friern Barnet* up to 1939 have it as "Queen's" whereas the recent *Collins Greater London Street Atlas*; "Big London A-Z" and "AA Street by Street London" all have it as "Queens"

This may be part of an ongoing "tidying up" of the English language where punctuation and grammar is considered to be less important than before (not by me, I hasten to add).



On Barnet Council's own website, planning applications cite "Queens Avenue". If that is correct why have the Council suddenly introduced (or re-introduced) "Queen's"? On the question of tidying up the English language I am reminded of a spoof Press release from the European Union:

"Agreement has been reached to adopt English as the preferred language for European communications, rather than German, which was the other possibility. As part of the negotiations, Her Majesty's Government conceded that English spelling had some room for improvement and has accepted a five-year phased plan for what will be known as EuroEnglish.

In the first year, "s" will be used instead of the soft "c". Certainly sivil servants will reseive this news with joy.

Also the hard "c" will be replaced with "k". Not only will this klear up konfusion, but keyboards kan have one less letter.

There will be growing publik enthusiasm in the second year when the troublesome "ph" will be replaced by "f". This will make words like "fotograf" 20% shorter.

In the third year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling kan be expekted to reach the stage where more komplikated changes are possible. Governments will enkourage the removal of double letters, which have always been a deterrent to akurate spelling. Also al wil agre that the horrible mes of silent "e's" in the language is disgrasful, and they would go.

By the fourth year, people will be reseptiv to steps such as replacing "th" by "z" and "w" by "v". During ze fifz year, ze unecesary "o" kan be droped from words kontaining "ou" and similar changes vud of kors be aplid to ozer kombinations of leters. After zis fifz yer, ve vil hav a sensibl riten styl. Zer vil be no more trubils or difikultis and everivun vil find it ezi tu understand ech ozer. Ze drem vil finali kum tru."

SAFETY FIRST?

The *Sunderland Echo* of 18 May 1933 reported that:

"Alfred George Hindle (65), of Ballards Lane, North Finchley, who was the driver of the first Finchley horse-drawn bus 45 years ago (i.e. 1888) was knocked down by a motor-van on the Great North Road at Finchley. At the inquest at Friern Barnet today, a verdict of Accidental Death was recorded and the driver of the motor-van was exonerated from blame."

His death occurred on the first day of National Safety Week.

THE TURRETS REPLACEMENT

Motorists and pedestrians heading north up Station Road, New Southgate now have a new landmark in Friern Barnet Road to look at. The block of flats ('Observatory Court') that have replaced *The Turrets* pub comprise thirty six flats with a Co-operative supermarket on the ground floor.



Photographed in June 2015

This is now the third Co-operative store between Landers Corner and Tally Ho, the others being at 45-51 (which opened in August 2015) and 308 Woodhouse Road.

LOCAL GROUPS

Does anyone remember Elsie Chamberlain who used to run the Friern Barnet Girls' Club or Thelma Harris who was leader of the 4th Friern Barnet Guide Company? If you do, could you please let us know as we are in the process of compiling details of local club and scout groups.

We have recently posted some photographs of the 4th on our photographic website www.friern-barnet.com (they come under the 'Groups' album). If you recognise anyone, you can either add a comments to any of the photographs or contact us.

AGM

For those who were unable to attend our AGM on 27 May we are enclosing a copy of the Report and Accounts for 2014-15. You will see that we retain a healthy balance so barring any unforeseen circumstances there will be no increase in our subscription rates for 2016-2017

**Friern Barnet & District
Local History Society**[©]
President: John Heathfield

Chairman: David Berguer
46 Raleigh Drive, N20 0UU
Phone 020 8368 8314

email: friernbarnethistory@hotmail.co.uk

Website: www.friernbarnethistory.org.uk

Photographic website: www.friern-barnet.com

