

Friern Barnet *Newsletter*

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BIG BLAZE AT NORTH FINCHLEY

The *Barnet Press* of 6 May 1915 carried the following report:

“A fire broke out at Mr Geary’s timber yard, adjacent to the Stephens Memorial Hall and the Grand Hall Cinema, on Saturday afternoon and extended to the Grand Hall where about 150 children had assembled for the matinee. The Stephens Memorial Hall was badly damaged by intense heat and the timber yard was totally destroyed, whilst considerable damage was done to the cinema. The children were got out quietly and without anything in the nature of panic.

For some little time only volunteers with buckets were available to fight the flames, which spread rapidly because of the strong breeze blowing at the time. By the time the Finchley fire brigade had arrived, the flames in the timber yard were shooting skywards in great sheets, and the huge volume of smoke was suffocating.

Four hose lengths were quickly got into service. Cr. Pateman and a wounded soldier with only one arm available were among the volunteer assistants. For



The Grand Hall Cinema

some time, the flames continued to hold the mastery, and occasionally the wind swept them in blinding sheets right across the road, sending spectators in headlong flight. Albion-cottages were caught in one of these gusts, and for a time there was an additional blaze under the eaves, which gradually died out and left a thin spiral of smoke. Meanwhile, the fire had got a hold both in the cinema and in the Stephens Memorial Hall, despite the desperate efforts of the brigade. The little steeples on the hall stood out a red glow in a seething mass of opaque clouds of smoke.

There was a thrill of excitement when a fireman was seen to be crawling cautiously on the roof of the hall, and very quickly he was joined by another, and together they fought the flames. The hall was played upon both inside and out, but no sooner did the flames seem to be quelled in one portion than they asserted themselves in another.

The fire raging in the back part of the cinema was more quickly handled. After a strenuous battle it was subdued sufficiently to allow of practically the whole attention of the fire fighters being devoted to the Memorial Hall, though huge holes in the roof and a wrecked screen were evidence of the swift ravages. Tram traffic was stopped for an hour, and all other traffic was deflected alongside the Cricketer's Arms. A huge crowd was kept back by mounted and other police, with special constables and Boy Scouts leaving a clear working space of about a hundred yards.

Victory came to the brigade after two hours of strenuous work. The firemen were called at 2.57; Chief Officer Hanson and 16 men had the upper hand of the fire by 4, and they had their motor-engine home again by 7.

The total damage is estimated at about £3000. All the wood and machinery in the timber yard was destroyed; and the redecorated cinema suffered severely from the intense heat. A rough estimate of the damage is: - Stephens Memorial hall £300; Mr Geary's timber yard £1200; Grand Hall cinema £1500.

The fire brigades are to be congratulated on the fact that Stephens Memorial Hall and the cinema were not destroyed, but the flames had got such a firm hold of the timber yard that, at one time it seemed that both the adjoining buildings must inevitably be reduced to ruins. The cinema is closed."

A SCHOOL IN WARTIME

Manorside Senior School kept a log book during the Second World War and some of the entries help to give us a picture of what conditions were like:

1939

3 Sep

War Declared. Notice has been received that Schools in the Borough are closed until further orders. Appropriate notices have been posted at the gates. Teachers are engaged in various forms of ARP work

1940

- 27 Aug Owing to lengthy night raids only 40% of the children attended this morning
- 29 Aug In consequence of a 7 hour night raid the attendance was again only 40%. Instructions have been received that on occasions when the All-clear signal is not given until after midnight, school will not open till 10am
- 3 Sep In view of night raids school opened at 10.00 am. Classes were in shelters from 10.30 to 11.40 and again in the afternoon from 2.55 to 4.10
- 9 Sep After a 9½ hours night raid school opened at 10.00 am. In such cases Registers are now to be closed at the end of the session and will be marked "Incomplete Session"
- 20 Sep Incomplete session am owing to all-night raids on London area. Men teachers are being released for duty in connection with billeting of evacuees from the Docks area
- 26 Sep Incomplete session am owing to night air-raids. Attendance is exceptionally low owing to three bombs falling in the school area and damaging many houses
- 14 Oct The following official instructions for school sessions during the winter months came into effect this morning. Whether night raids occur or not, school will open at 9.00 am each morning and a double session will be held, terminating at 1.30 pm. There will be a 15 mins break between these two sessions. The timetable has been adjusted to meet this arrangement
- 1941
- 14 Mar Gas-mask drill in classrooms was started this week. Without previous warning, children were required to wear their masks for 5 minutes and to obey simple orders while doing so. The time will be extended on further occasions
- 1942
- 12 May The Chairman of the Parks and Open Spaces Committee addressed the school regarding the preservation of local amenities now that all iron railings have been removed for war purposes (the school railings are in course of removal)
- 18 Sep An "Aid to Russia" effort raised £29
- 1943
- 9 Sep Mr Wilkins HMI set an illiteracy test to several classes
- 1944
- 19 Jun Owing to further raids – which were found to be by pilotless planes – no children attended school this morning, the Alert still being in force. The All-Clear sounded at 10.51 and finally 116 children were present at 11.20 am. Registers were not marked. In the afternoon 186 were present
- 8 Sep 15 more evacuations

- 15 Sep Recurrence of flying bombs but several evacuees have returned
- 1945
- 5 Mar For the first time since last July alerts occurred during the day and shelters again came into use
- 13 Mar An alert at 9.15 am
- 7 May Official instructions have been received as to procedure when VE Day is announced
- 8 & 9 May School closed for VE-Day celebrations

TELEVISION MEMORIES

by David Berguer

Nowadays, of course, television plays an important part in our lives, but it was not always so. The first public high-definition television broadcast in the world was made from Alexandra Palace on 2 November 1936. The daily broadcasts only lasted four hours and only 15,000 homes in the London area were able to receive them.

Transmissions resumed after the War on 7 June 1946 and certainly as far as our family were concerned, we had no interest in such modern technology. Radio was our means of entertainment and such programmes as *Dick Barton Special Agent*, *Journey into Space*, *Workers' Playtime*, *Life with the Lyons*, *Take it From Here* and *The Goon Show* kept me amused and entertained. I particular remember *Sports Report* which was broadcast at 5 pm on Saturday when the football results would be read out and my Dad and I would sit, with his Littlewoods coupon at the ready, waiting to see firstly if Spurs had won away and secondly whether he had managed to correctly forecast eight draws. He never did manage it and we remained in relative penury. I remember that my Mum and Dad had friends who *did* have a television in those days and we would be invited round to watch *What's My Line*, and, on a Sunday evening, to see *Café Continental*, which seemed ever so glamorous.

Like many families we bought our first television in time to see the Coronation in June 1953. We invited neighbours round and we spent all day watching the proceedings, fuelled by my mother's sandwiches and numerous cups of tea. I remember that first television well, It was on a stand with splayed legs (like the kind of thing you saw at the Festival of Britain) and on the day it was installed my dog, Mick, on seeing a head and shoulders picture of a man, sniffed along the floor to try and find his feet. Thereafter he completely ignored the TV, presumably because there was a complete lack of canine entertainment available.

In those days televisions were notoriously unreliable and my Dad rationed our viewing so that we would not 'burn out the tube.' We also had to wait for what seemed like ages for the set to warm up. At the end of the evening's viewing we would sit, after having heard the National Anthem, and watch a tiny white dot gradually disappear when the set was turned off. My Dad's fear of damaging the cathode ray tube was eventually overcome when we started to rent our televisions and these would gradually be increased in size. In 1958 a 17" set would cost 10/6d a week from Radio Rentals.

Television programmes did not begin until the evening but, for the benefit of installers trying to tune in the sets, Test Card C was shown, accompanied by music. I would

often watch this, hoping against hope that a real programme might suddenly appear, but it never did.

Technology in those early days was somewhat unreliable and the BBC would often flash up a “Normal service will be resumed as soon as possible” notice. If after several minutes the technical problems were not resolved, we would be treated to an ‘Interlude’ film, either of a potter’s wheel, a windmill in Suffolk slowly turning against an angry sky, a kitten playing with a ball of wool, a lady at a spinning wheel or, my favourite, ‘London to Brighton in four minutes’ – a speeded up film taken from the driver’s cab of a Southern Railways train. I think many people preferred the Interludes to some of the programmes.



Two of the Interludes



In this immediate post war photo, men in long macs stride purposefully across Piccadilly Circus. The ad on the bus reads “Looking in? You’ll want The Star”. The phrase “Will you be looking in tonight?” was commonplace

News bulletins were initially read off-screen by a rather plummy Richard Baker but the first appearance of a newsreader on-screen was on 4 September 1955 when Kenneth Kendall read the news. ITN's first bulletin appeared eighteen days later on 22 September and they had a rota of presenters including Christopher Chataway, Reginald Bosanquet and the legendary Robin Day.

In the days long before colour came along I remember our next door neighbour, Alec, had bought a strange plastic device that fitted over the front of the screen and was shaded in various hues – blue at the top and graduating down to green. This was fine for scenic views but hopeless for close up shots of faces; men would have blue hair and green chins. It was, along with those little plastic screens that people used to fit on top of the radiators of their cars to deflect flying insects, one of the most pointless inventions of mankind.

I can vividly recall the first transmission from across the Channel – it seemed like a miracle that we could actually see live pictures from France. Later on, of course, we had live sports broadcasts from abroad and the dreaded Eurovision Song Contest (“Royaume Uni nil points”). Perhaps the highlight of televisual experience was when Neil Armstrong set foot on the moon. I had waited up until 3 o'clock in the morning to see this and the tension was almost unbearable. It seems incredible to think that the computing power that put him there and brought him back was less than can be found on one of today's mobile phones.

Commercial television started in London on the evening of 22 September 1955 with programmes being provided by Associated-Rediffusion and the first commercial on British television was for Gibbs SR toothpaste. Either by coincidence or design the BBC had arranged for that evening's episode of *The Archers* to feature the death in a fire at the stables at Brookfield farm of Grace Archer, much to the horror and disbelief of the listening millions. Despite this, ITV continued to be successfully rolled out region by region, with ATV (covering the Midlands) and Granada (covering the North) coming in January 1956. By 1962 the whole country was covered by small stations such as Border Television, Tyne-Tees Television, Anglia Television, Television Wales & the West and Scottish Television.

My interest in commercial television was not just as a viewer. I was working for the advertising agency that produced the Brooke Bond PG Tips advertisements and the very first commercial, in black and white, featured chimps gathered round a tea table in a stately home. The voice over was by a relatively unknown actor – Peter Sellers. Later on, of course, the chimps featured in their own mini stories all told in 30 seconds (remember Mr Shifter? “Dad, do you know the piano's on my foot?” “You hum it son and I'll play it!) The monkeys were given sweets to eat and their lip movements made them appear to speak. Many hours of editing and alterations to the original script resulted in a perfectly synchronised playlets.

It seems almost impossible nowadays, with a choice of hundreds of channels and lots of different devices to view programmes on, to think that in the 1950s and early 1960s we were in on the start of a revolution that would transform the world and bring pleasure (and the Eurovision Song Contest) to millions.

A VICTORIAN RAILWAY ACCIDENT

The Daily News of 18 August 1869 carried the following article:

“SHOCKING ACCIDENT ON THE GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY.

The night before last, an accident, the circumstances of which, in a minor degree, recall the terrible tragedy at Abergele last year, occurred on the Great Northern Railway. A passenger train which leaves King's-cross about eleven o'clock p.m. had reached Barnet, which was the limit of its course. It should have been then shunted down to the up line, but owing to a mistake made by the pointsman, it was driven on to the same line by which it had arrived. Meanwhile, on passing the signal-box between Colney-hatch and Barnet, the driver of a goods train from London was told that the line was clear whilst his engine was remaining under the box, and accordingly proceeded on his way. On reaching the passenger train, which, as we have said, had been shunted on to the wrong line, the goods train darted into it with tremendous force. The details of the event are very melancholy. It appears that Arthur South, the guard of the goods train, was in the van in which the gas tank was kept, and when the collision took place the contents of the tank exploded, and the unfortunate man was killed. The driver and stoker of the passenger train were found on the embankment of the railway when the knowledge of the occurrence was conveyed to the officials in the vicinity, and they were forthwith removed to the Royal Free Hospital, which they reached at 5 a.m. yesterday. On inquiring at the hospital last evening, our reporter ascertained that the driver Henry Murfitt, who remains in the institution, has sustained injury to the right hip, and severe contusions of other parts of the body. John Castlesdine, the stoker, who was wounded in the right wrist and cut in the lip, was sufficiently well to be able to leave the hospital yesterday, though the surgeon would have advised him to remain a day or so longer. The reports that spread regarding the amount of damage done seem to be exaggerated. The signalman who told the driver of the goods train that the line was clear, and the two pointsmen, have been suspended from the company's service.

The following account is supplied by Mr Oakley, the Secretary of the Great Northern Railway:- The 11 p.m. train from London to Barnet arrived at its destination at 11½, and safely unloaded its passengers on Monday night, and in the ordinary course would have returned empty to Southgate, the next station nearest London. Here it usually remains all night, proceeding to London the following morning with passengers. It consisted on this occasion of six or eight carriages, 1st, 2nd and 3rd, two guards or break vans, one in the front and the other in the rear, and the engine and tender. It was preparing to return. The engine had been reversed, i.e. it had been detached from the front of the train, passed down to the up line, from which at some distance it had again returned to the down line, and so reached the tail end of the train, to which it was again attached. The break van at the tail end was that in which the gas supply of light to the several carriages was stored. It was contained in a reservoir, which occupied about two-thirds of the space in the carriage. All being now ready for the train to proceed from the down to the up line by a link which runs diagonally across the six-foot way, the signalman gave the order for the train to start. The signalman is stationed in a signal-house, which is elevated above the buildings of the station at Barnet, and is closely contiguous thereto. It is surmounted by the ordinary telegraph apparatus, and has a communication with the Whetstone signal station which lies between Barnet and Colney-hatch, about a mile – that is nearer to King's-cross than Barnet. As soon as the signalman had advised the guard of the train to proceed he likewise advised the signalman at Whetstone that the down road was clear, in the one case by word of mouth, by

calling out, "Right away!" and in the other by dropping the telegraph arm. The guard thereupon called from his van to the driver, "Go ahead, Harry!" Henry being the Christian name of the driver, and the driver accordingly sounded his whistle and put the train in motion. Neither driver nor guard appears to have noticed that there was no one attending the points through which it was necessary to pass in order to leave the one road and reach the other. The points not being turned, the train of course ran, as soon as put in motion, towards London, on the line upon which it had just come from London. The signalman saw the mistake and was panic-stricken. He shouted at the top of his voice, with a view to a rectification of the error. Whether or not he was heard or his gesticulations perceived in the noise and darkness is not as yet known. It has not yet been learnt whether any attempt was made by reversing the engine or putting on the brakes to stop the train. It was running at a good speed, and had got over a distance of 400 yards or so when the front approaching lights were perceived. These were attached to a goods train, as it afterwards proved, which had been waiting at Whetstone during the operation of shunting at Barnet. One of the purposes, if not the main purpose, of the Whetstone signal station is to detain the trains there in the event of there being any obstruction at Barnet. When the signalman, therefore, received the signal from Barnet that the down line was clear, he permitted the goods train, which by the way was very heavily laden with general merchandise, to proceed. The engine driver and stoker of the "goods", seeing what must inevitably happen, leaped from the engine, and the next moment the collision took place. At what rate the goods was travelling may be judged by the circumstances of its having run nearly a mile when the shock took place. The effect of the collision was to crush the guard's van, in which there was the storage of gas. The reservoir was fractured. The gas escaped in volume, came into contact with the blaze which rushed out of the open fore-hole of the engine, and ignition was the instant effect. The guard's van, and two passenger carriages immediately in its rear, having been torn and crushed to splinters, caught fire, and before assistance could be rendered, were literally consumed. The charred remains of the guard who had occupied the van were picked up, hardly, if at all, recognisable, out of the dying embers, and conveyed to Barnet.

At the inquest at the Railway Hotel, Barnet, John Livingstone, M.D, said he saw the body of the deceased lying on the engine. The body was lying just above the buffers of the engine on the sand-box. The body was very much charred. The head was off and the limbs all separated. The thigh bones only were attached to the body. He could not say positively as to the primary cause of death as the body was a charred mass when he first saw it."

Footnote: For those of you unfamiliar with railway workings, the 'up' line is one that leads towards London, while the 'down' line heads away from London. It is interesting that this accident bears similarity to Britain's worst railway disaster at Quintinshill near Gretna which occurred forty-six years later on 22 May 1915 when trains on the same line collided and the subsequent fire, caused by ruptured gas tanks, led to 230 soldiers being killed and 246 injured.

THE SERVANT PROBLEM

by John Heathfield

I'm not sure how far *Downton Abbey* is accurate but I think life below stairs was quite harsh. Mrs Beeton says: "No well-trained servant comes down in the morning without having washed her hands and face."

The nearest resemblance we had to Highclere Castle was Woodside, the home of the Baxendale family. According to the 1871 Census Joseph Baxendale, head of Pickfords, aged 83, lived there with his son-in-law, Robert Butler. The rest of his family were presumably on holiday elsewhere. To look after the family were the following servants:

Robert Holmes (age 75)	Butler
William Bailey (age 27)	Valet
George Green (age 20)	Footman
Annie Lewis (age 30)	Cook
Mavis Newland (age 40)	Ladies' Maid
Annie Wilkinson (age 24)	Housemaid
Elizabeth Gidwell (age 39)	Housemaid
Sarah Hill (age 21)	Housemaid
Jane Butterly (age 21)	Kitchen Maid

Robert Holmes lived in Totteridge Lane with his wife while the rest of the servants lived on site.

The other well-off family were the Miles's living in the Manor House (now North Middlesex Golf Club clubhouse) The 1881 Census shows John Miles, bookseller & publisher, Sophia Miles, wife, Francis Edinger, nephew, and Branston Miles, grandson. Their servants were:

Louisa Rudland (age 56)	Nurse, born Essex
Charlotte Patterson (age 32)	Ladies Maid, born Germany
Jane Ailby (age 28)	Upper housemaid, born Essex
Olive Abesy (age 17)	Under housemaid, born Reading
N Hancock (age 30)	Cook, born Somerset
Rose Simmons (age 17)	born Harrow
Thomas Godfrey (age 32)	Butler, born Leicester
Herbert Meredith (age 17)	Footman, born Middlesex
Richard Chapman (age 19)	Groom, born Kent

This clearly illustrates that servants came from a long way away to find work. Working in service is viewed by some as degrading to human dignity, but others point out that it was indoors in the warm and food and clothes were provided. Until offices came along, there were very few other opportunities for employment for women; before the First World War there were some 1,600,000 women employed in domestic service and most middle class families had a live-in Maid.

The principal duty of a Housemaid was to clean the house. The Kitchen Maid prepared the vegetables and did the washing up. The Ladies Maid, who was at the top of the Maid's pecking order, kept the mistresses' clothes in good order and so she had to be a good needlewoman. The Footman waited at table but also did the heavy cleaning. The Butler superintended the other servants and was also responsible for the security of the silver and the wine store. In 1880 Maids' wages were £10 per year (about £585 in today's money) with food and clothing found.

The big disadvantage of domestic service was the limited amount of free time – they would perhaps have half a day off a month which left little time to socialise. After the Great War things were even worse, as Rose Harrison described in her book, *Rose, My Life in Service*: “After the war men were scarce, the demand far outweighed the supply and a maid’s limited and irregular time off was an added disadvantage. Then there was having to be back by ten o’clock which made every date like Cinderella’s Ball, only you didn’t lose your slipper, you lost your job. There was no status in being a servant, you were a nobody; marriage was the way out of it.” However, some employers looked after their servants well; both the Baxendale’s and the Miles’s looked after their retired nurses after their children had grown up.

You need to decide for yourself whether or not they were “The good old days.”

Tailpiece. From the Barnet Press of 1883: “Wanted for respectable family, a good plain cook. Cow and other staff kept.”

FRIERN BARNET CHURCH BOYS’ CLUB

by Brian Lee

With regard to the article on page 7 of the last Newsletter, I was a member of the Boys’ Club in the early 1950s when the club was in Friern Barnet Road and was still a member when they moved to a building in Goldsmith Road. Friends that I used to go with were Terry and Kenny Wren, Teddy Richardson, Lenny Lee and Peter Bird. I think the people who ran the club were Geoff Cole and Brian Nunn. I think it was Geoff Cole who told us, while we were camping in a field near Roydon, that the Friern Barnet Road club was haunted. He said that he went in one day and the piano was being played but he wasn’t playing it and he was the only person there! I also seem to remember that he said he spoke to the ghost. I don’t know if he was having us teenagers on or not, but at the time he said it was true.

Brian Nunn, I believe, was a Director of Williams Brothers grocery stores and when we went camping for a weekend he would take us in the back of a small pick-up truck and often let some of the boys drive this around the field. I also remember playing football for the club and being taken by Mr Nunn up to Blyth in Northumberland, by train on a Saturday, to play there on a Sunday. We slept in a local hall and after the game went with our opposite number for lunch with his family. I don’t remember having to pay for any travel. Brian Nunn also ran the local Boxing Club in Holly Park Junior School which some members of the Boys’ Club also attended.

There used to be a week called ‘Boys’ Club Week’, Frankie Vaughan used to be a prominent member of the Association of Boys’ Clubs. I was also a member of the Hampstead Harriers Athletic Club, along with Peter Bird. We were asked to open Boys’ Club week by running from Bedford Square in London to Friern Barnet Town Hall with a scroll to hand to Frankie Vaughan. Peter and I ran the whole distance but we had a team of relay runners with us. We also had a car escort and in the car was Jim Peters the marathon runner remembered for collapsing just before the finish line when in the lead at the 1954 Commonwealth Games in Vancouver.

Brian Nunn also collected up to ten of us in Russell Lane, I think on a Tuesday, and took us in his large Ford car to Squires Lane swimming pool, it was quite a squeeze if we all turned up!

OUR NEW WEBSITE

by David Berguer

Back in April last year our website suddenly crashed with the loss of most of our data. This turned out to have been a blessing in disguise as we were contemplating making a few cosmetic changes to it anyway. So we sat down and designed a completely new site which would be much more user friendly. In the fifteen years that the Society has been going we have accumulated a vast amount of information on the area and we decided that, rather than keep this tucked away in our archives we would share it with the world. This is in line with the philosophy of our President, John Heathfield who has always maintained that “Knowledge is for Sharing”.

The new website www.friern-barnethistory.org.uk contains not only comprehensive details and the history of streets and shops but also lists the books, magazines and ‘paper ephemera’ that the Society holds. When all this information is taken in conjunction with over 7000 images on our photographic website: www.friern-barnet.com a pretty comprehensive record of Friern Barnet, New Southgate, North Finchley and Whetstone is available for anyone to view. This is fully in line with our founder, John Donovan’s intention when he started the Society back in 1999 that a record should be made of a small part of North London that, having been swallowed up into the London Borough of Barnet in 1965, was in danger of disappearing without a trace.

One thing we have managed to do is to digitise all of our past Newsletters, so if you have mislaid any, don’t worry – you can see them all by the click of a mouse.

The new website was designed by the people who look after our photographic website, Plexus Media, who are based as far from Friern Barnet as it is possible to get. Their offices are in Cromarty, in the far north of Scotland, not far from Inverness, but distance proved to be no problem as we were able to communicate with their helpful and friendly team by phone and email. Both Colin Barratt and myself did contemplate visiting Plexus but we decided that the Society’s funds did not run to a trip to the Highlands, no matter how much we would have enjoyed it!

We hope you like the new website and hopefully it will tell you a bit more of the history of Friern Barnet. Please let us have your comments, either by phone or via email: friernbarnethistory@hotmail.co.uk.

CROSSRAIL 2 – ITS EFFECT ON NEW SOUTHGATE

by Colin Barratt

As Crossrail 1 is now nearing completion, plans are already well under way for another new rail line, to serve London and the South East, linking Surrey to Hertfordshire via central London destinations - CROSSRAIL 2. At the northern end there would be two branches: one following the existing route through Tottenham and eastern Enfield to Broxbourne, and the other going through Seven Sisters and Wood Green and ending at New Southgate.

What are the arguments in favour of Crossrail 2? The Government believes that it will add capacity to existing rail services and support economic regeneration, creating the infrastructure for new homes and jobs. The advantages for New Southgate in having a Crossrail 2 station are listed as follows:

- 10-15 trains an hour into London, and fast, direct routes to south west London.
- Improved passenger facilities at the station, with a new step-free interchange between Crossrail 2 and East Coast Main Line
- Provide access to more jobs
- Encourage regeneration and redevelopment in the area

What route would it take into New Southgate? There are two route options being considered. One is from Seven Sisters via tunnels to two new stations at Turnpike Lane and Alexandra Palace, and the other from Seven Sisters via tunnels to a new station at Wood Green. Both options provide an interchange with the Piccadilly Line and should reduce overcrowding during peak hours. Both options would continue underground, following close to the existing route north of Alexandra Palace and emerge near Pinkham Way to a new surface station near to the Builder Depot in Station Road, south of the existing New Southgate station. Obviously, this would mean the demolition of the Builder Depot buildings (did I hear cheering?). Another large area south of Pinkham Way will also be taken over, for building the tunnels, including much of the Bounds Green Industrial Estate. During off-peak periods and overnight, areas for parking or “stabling” trains would be needed at the southern and northern ends of the routes, plus depots for cleaning trains and maintaining the tracks and stations. A preliminary suggestion for the northern depot is north of New Southgate Station, bounded by Oakleigh Road South, Coppies Grove and the tracks of the East Coast Main Line. This is a large area, and it may also need Friern Barnet Road bridge to be re-aligned.

If this project goes ahead, it will have a huge impact on the local area, with the loss and relocation of many businesses and some homes, and massive disruption to residents and transport. It's only in the early stages, and there will be much consultation over the next few years. The timetable is for the planning application to be agreed by 2020 and construction to take around 10 years. 2030 is probably the earliest it will be complete, so it may not be of much benefit to us. It will be our children – or more likely our grandchildren who will see the effects!

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

Your subscription runs out on 31 March 2016. If you wish to renew for a further year, from 1 April 2016 - 31 March 2017, please complete the enclosed form and return it with your cheque.

We are pleased to say that the rates remain the same - £8 for a single person and £14 for a couple or group.

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