

Friern Barnet *Newsletter*

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WELCOME

Since our first Newsletter, 30 new members have joined us, bringing the total to 103. Welcome to:

Ms Jenny Baker
Mr Dennis Blairman
Mrs Frances Briars
Mr Norman Burgess
Mrs Betty Burgess
Ms Angela Carrington
Mr Daniel Collins
Mr Anthony Crawley
Miss Patricia Daisley
Mrs Valerie Dickinson
Ms J A Foster
Ms Joanna Graham
Mr Robert Hall
Mr John Heathfield
Mr Michael Jack
Mrs Bing Jack
Mrs Christine Keenan
Mrs Eswyn Lyster
Mrs Shirley Perritt
Mr P E Pickering
Mr Percy Reboul
Mr Victor Rowe
Mr Karl Ruge
Mrs Merylyn Russell-Stretten
Mr Len Saunders
Ms Kate Sweeney
Mr Trevor Taylor
Mrs Mary Taylor
Mr Robert Winton
Mrs E M H Winton

FRIERN HOSPITAL

Following our successful Public Meeting on 1 November 2000 on "Friern Hospital - the Early Years", when 72 people attended, Ollie

conducted a walk around the site of the hospital on the afternoon of Sunday 12 November. Over 30 people took part, including residents of Princess Park Manor and former workers at the Hospital. Everyone enjoyed themselves and there were



some fascinating reminiscences, all of which were stored away by Ollie for future reference. Because Friern Hospital is such a big subject we are including a second talk by Ollie later this year, that will include slides that Ollie did not have time to show the first time around.

SAVING THE PAST

By John Donovan

About twenty-five years ago I began taking photos of buildings that looked in danger of being destroyed. I would take a 'before' picture, incorporating some fixed object such as a tree or a lamppost. Once the building had been pulled down and replaced, I would go back and take the 'after' photo, taking care to include the tree or lamppost as a reference point. The hobby started off very modestly; I did not belong to a Historical Society, and it was all done on the basis of personal curiosity.

Because I worked alone, I missed one or two sites whilst, on the other hand, I took pictures of buildings that I had thought were threatened that are still untouched to this day.

After a few years I began to look on my hobby as a vocation. I was working for posterity really, wasn't I? I widened my scope to include any aspect of my neighbourhood that seemed to be in danger - a patch of wild flowers, a line of trees, an open view. I even took pictures of parades of shops; they were not in danger of demolition, but the traders came and



Before: 91 Oakleigh Road North in Dec 1985

In 1971/72 the Council decided to redevelop the area around New Southgate station. Five streets full of houses were demolished and replaced with modern, redbrick houses; the street plan was changed and the main road was realigned. Over a period of about two years I took some 70 photographs, 'before' 'middle' and 'after'.

went and sometimes one shop would change hands several times.

The buildings I used to photograph were often derelict or had been allowed to fall into disrepair. Spike Milligan tried to stop the demolition of what he claimed was "the last Victorian house of Finchley". He failed, but then it had lain empty for

years and excited little public interest. Nowadays, however,

grant to finance this project, and once this comes through we will be



After: 91 Oakleigh Road North in June 1987

perfectly good houses are being bought up at astronomical prices and demolished to make way for blocks of flats; the character of whole streets is being changed. One of the Society's main projects is to record every building in Friern Barnet. This will then act as a database that can be continuously updated and will be of immense interest to future generations. We have already started making a photographic record of some of the streets, but there are 260 of them, so the task is a large one. This is where you can help. All we ask you to do is take pictures of the houses in your road. This won't take much time and you will find that once you start looking closely at buildings you will discover things about them that you had never noticed before!

We hope to be able to obtain a

able to reimburse you for the cost of film and processing.

If you would like to help, please contact David Berguer on 020 8444 3089 or John Donovan on 01707 642 886.

WARTIME ON TV

A new television documentary series features a family of five who were sent to live for nine weeks in an authentic Forties house. As well as doing without such 21st century necessities as a washing machine, TV and central heating, they had to survive on wartime rations and endure mock air raids in their own Anderson shelter. This promises to be fascinating viewing and should set the scene for our Meeting on Tuesday 9 October when the subject will be Wartime. The 1940s House starts on Channel 4 on 2 January.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Our first Christmas Party on 8 Dec was a great success and 46 people came along and had the opportunity to get to know each other. It also gave the Committee the chance to canvass everyone on our progress so far. Although the two quizzes caused a few problems, Barbara Gilks' knowledge of the history of Friern Barnet earned her the prize of a book on World History while Mel and Helen Hooper tied for first place in the Picture Quiz with Mary Fairbrother. The almost unanimous decision was that their tie-breaker answer "I like belonging to the Friern Barnet & District Local History Society because it makes us feel young" was exactly right. We hope that the framed picture that they won is hanging in pride of place in the Hooper house!

This was the first time that we had had a meeting in the Old Fire Station and the atmosphere, facilities and ease of access were so right that we have decided to hold all our future meetings there. Details of these meetings are contained in a separate Calendar which is enclosed with this Newsletter. Please keep this Calendar in a safe place (this is where your fridge magnet comes into its own)!

OLD NEWSPAPERS

W H Smith are able to provide authentic copies of virtually any issue of a number of national daily and Sunday newspapers, ranging from The Times to the Daily Mirror and from 1800 to the present day.

Prices range from £2.50 each and they can be dispatched within 24 hours. To find out more phone 01988 402222.

FRIERN HOSPITAL LATEST

Local residents have been urging Barnet Council to obtain 10 acres of land fronting the old Friern Hospital for a public park. We are pleased to report that agreement has almost been reached with the developers, Comer Bros. We will give you further details as soon as we have them.

COLLECTING EVIDENCE

By David Berguer

Whilst chatting to one of my neighbours, I mentioned that I was investigating the history of our road and she mentioned that she had some old photographs and would I like to look at them? These turned out to be very interesting as they showed gypsy caravans (and the resultant litter) on a plot of vacant



land, and the subsequent building of houses on the site. So, in a few photographs, the history of part of the road was revealed. She was also able to produce copies of correspondence with Barnet Council concerning the travellers, and even a copy of the court Summons that was issued against them and which led to their removal.

If you have any old photographs of your street, please don't throw them

away - we'll be happy to take copies of them for posterity.

Even the most mundane things can have an historical interest. Next time a leaflet from your local Chinese restaurant or Pizza emporium lands on your doormat, don't throw it away - bring it along to the next Meeting and we'll be glad to take it off you and file it away. Apart from anything else, it will give future historians an idea of prices in 2001 and a glimpse of our eating habits!

BIRD'S EYE VIEWS

It is now possible for you to see your home from the air! In 1999, over 90%

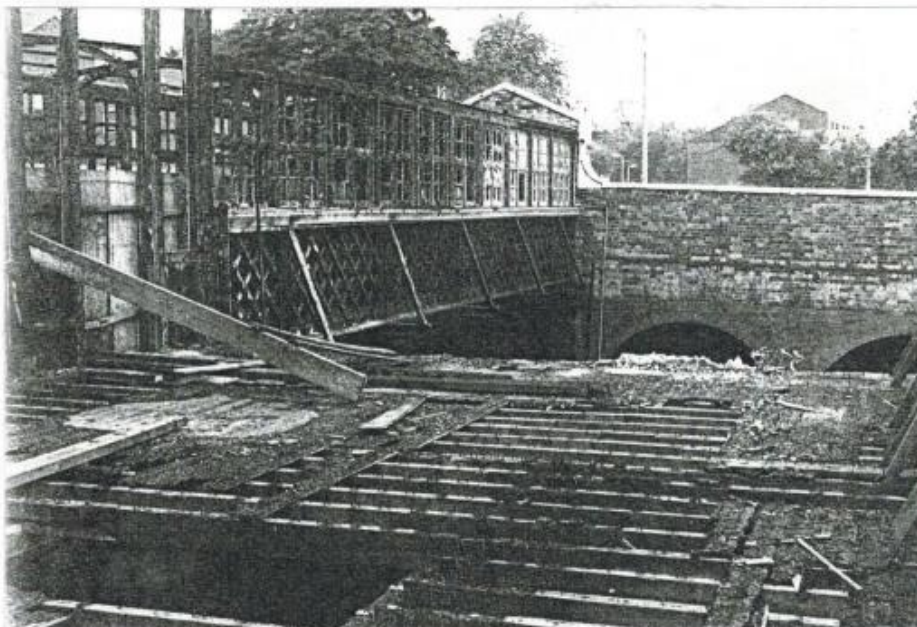
of England was photographed from four Rockwell Aerocommander aeroplanes flying at 180 knots at a height of 5,500 feet. Over 60,000 individual photographs were taken and these were then converted to digital images which are now available on the Internet, on www.streetmap.co.uk. Just type in your postcode, and up will come a map and a photograph covering an area of 500 x 500 metres. If you want a copy of the photograph, you can purchase one for £15 + VAT.

Apparently the plan is to repeat this photographic operation every five years, so changes will be recorded almost as they happen.

NEW SOUTHGATE STATION

The photograph below was taken at New Southgate station after the fire in June 1978 which destroyed the footbridge. Until about 1971 there was another footbridge south of the existing one that led over the

line from the area of the old South Road and Alexandra Road to the lineside path alongside Friern Hospital. If anyone has a picture of this bridge, could they please contact John Donovan.



TRACING YOUR FAMILY

By Colin Barratt

The Society has had enquiries from members about how they can trace their family history. This is not strictly within our remit (although we are of course interested in the lives of notable local residents). Here is a brief resume of how to start, but beware, this hobby can be addictive! It can also be frustrating and unnecessarily expensive, if not tackled methodically.

Start by noting the names of all your family, and question your older relatives. You need **names** of your ancestors, **dates** (birth, marriage and death) and **places** (where people were born, got married, worked, lived and died). Photocopy any **certificates** or other documents and for any old **photographs**, try to identify who the people are, and when and where they were taken. If possible, make laser copies of them, which can be as good as the original. Note any family **stories, myths and gossip**, as these may be useful, and could have some truth in them. You should then be able to draw a rough family tree.

The next stage, to help fill in the gaps, is to check the **registers of births, marriages and deaths**. Indexes from 1837 are available to view at the Family Records Centre (FRC), Myddelton Street, EC1 (near Angel station).

The ten yearly **census returns** are also kept at the FRC, from 1841 to 1891. These are very useful - and free to view on microfilm. If you know where your ancestors lived, these will tell who was in the house, their ages and occupations. Apart from the 1841, they also show where the occupants were born. If you don't

know where certain ancestors lived, you will need an index to find them. These have been produced for some areas, but the 1881 is the only one fully indexed for the whole of the British Isles, and a CD-ROM set of this is now available, which can be searched by name. In a year's time the 1901 census will be released (on the Internet), which is certain to be popular. (See also the Public Records Office web-site www.pro.gov.uk.)

Before 1837 you will have to consult **Parish registers**, which are now kept at County record offices. Many of these have been copied and indexed, and compiled into the **International Genealogical Index (IGI)**. This can be searched either at various libraries or family history centres, or on the Internet (www.familysearch.co.uk)

It would be useful to join your local **Family History Society**. You will meet others tracing their ancestors, and hear interesting talks on the subject. They will also have books to buy and copies of journals from other societies which you can borrow to make a contact, if you have family from other parts of the country. Our local one is the North Middlesex FHS, which meets regularly in Barnet, Enfield and the City of London.

The hobby is now so popular that there are several **magazines** devoted to it. 'Practical Family History' is aimed at beginners, and there are also 'Family History Monthly' and 'Family Tree'. There are many books to help you, and **computer programs** which will not only organise and store your records and photos, but also draw your family trees for you!

If you want more details on anything mentioned above, contact Colin or Mary Barratt (020 8882 2246) or John Donovan, who all have some experience of Family History which which they will be happy to share with you.

HOUSE SURVEY

As part of our Recorder Group project, we are enclosing a Survey Form with this Newsletter. If you are able to complete this, it will greatly help us to start assembling a database on every building in Friern Barnet, which is one of our main aims.



Nice house, but what is its history?

We can help you trace the history of your home. It will involve a bit of work on your part, but it will be worth it!

CALENDAR FOR 2001

After a lot of discussions we have assembled what we hope is an interesting and varied programme of Meetings and Conducted Walks.

You will see that there will be a Meeting every month, except for July and August.

John Heathfield has kindly agreed to talk to us on **9 Jan** on the subject of **Oakleigh Road**. John is a very well known local historian and has written a number of books on Barnet.

The theme of the talk on **13 Feb** will be **London's Wild Flowers** and will be given by **David Bevan**, Conservation Officer for Haringey. David is also very involved with the Coppetts Wood nature reserve, so his knowledge of the local flora is second to none.

On **13 Mar** the subject will be **Memories of Friern Barnet**. This will be an open Meeting so we rely on you to come along and share your reminiscences with us.

The theme of the talk on **10 April** will be **The Three Barnets** and will be given by **Gillian Gear** who is County Recorder for Hertfordshire and is also involved with Barnet Museum.

Andrew Mussell, who is the Barnet Borough Archivist, will be talking on **8 May** about **Famous People in Friern Barnet**. A number of well-known people have lived here in the past, but we will leave Andrew to tell you who they were.

A topic that we are sure will release a flood of memories is **Shopping** (remember those days before supermarkets?), so we shall be covering this in our Meeting on **12 Jun**. Once again we will be asking you to share your memories with us. If you have got some mementoes, bring those along too!

One of our members, Yvonne Ruge, attended a meeting at which **John Brodrick**, who is a member of the Verulamium Trust, gave a talk entitled **Women in Roman Britain**. Yvonne said she was "on the edge of her seat", so we thought you would like to share her excitement! John will be talking to us on **4 Sept**.

For the **9 Oct** Meeting the talk will

feature **Wartime**, and we are delighted that this will be given by **Percy Reboul** and John Heathfield. Percy is a renowned local historian and his book **Barnet in Wartime**, is a classic.

Friern Hospital is such a big topic that we have asked **Ollie Natelson** to give us another talk on its history. He will be back on **13 Nov**.

HOW TIMES CHANGE!



Colney Hatch Lane, June 1991. Nine years later, all these shops have gone!

Friern Barnet & District
Local History Society

 **BARNET**
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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by Barnet Council*

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