

Friern Barnet *Newsletter*

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STAGE COACHES

by David Berguer

Having vowed to curb my book buying habit, I was caught in two minds when I learned, late last November, that Martin Gladman's secondhand bookshop in West Finchley was going to close before Christmas. Should I just ignore this information or should I go along and see what was on offer? Being somewhat weak willed, I chose the latter course and came across a few gems at greatly reduced prices. Amongst them were two books on stage coaches, a subject about which I knew little.



The postillion, with post horn, and the coachman confer outside The Griffin after their journey from Market Harborough in 2001

Our area played an important part in the history of stage coaches. The Great North Road, which was known as the First Road in the Kingdom, runs through the western side and there was a toll gate at Whetstone, outside the *Griffin*. The first stop on the journey north was invariably made at Barnet, which was then about an hour's journey from the inns in London, such as the *Bull and Mouth* in St Martin-le-Grand, the *Saracens Head* in Snow Hill or the *Swan with two Necks* in Lad Lane. Although the *Tally Ho* pub in North Finchley only dates from 1927, it was named after three stage coach services to Birmingham that ran through Finchley. One was called the *Tally Ho* and was operated by S A Mountain & Co and the other two were both named *The Independent Tally Ho* and were run by W Chaplin & Co and B W Horne & Co. In 1836, at the height of the stage coach era, the 109 miles to Birmingham were covered in 11 hours.

These coaches carried either 12 or 15 passengers, four of whom would be seated inside; the rest rode on the roof along with the coachman and the guard. On an average day there would be 48 stage coaches heading north for various destinations: Bedford, Birmingham, Boston, Daventry, Halifax, Hatfield, Hertford, Hitchin, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, Luton, Manchester, Northampton, Nottingham, Potters Bar, Shrewsbury, Stamford, Uppingham, Wellingborough, Welwyn and York. There would, of course, also be 48 stage coaches heading south through Barnet, Whetstone and Finchley, so the Great North Road, and the turnpike at Whetstone, was very busy. In addition, local stage coaches made one return journey a day between Bank and Finchley, Holborn and Hadley, Aldgate and Hadley and Tottenham Court Road and Hadley.

There has always been an air of romance surrounding stage coaches, with images of heavily laden coaches thundering through moonlit landscapes; of gentlemen highwaymen stealing kisses from lady passengers; of jolly innkeepers offering travellers foaming tankards. The reality, of course, was somewhat different. Travelling on the outside would be uncomfortable and cold; highwaymen were nothing more than vicious thugs and at many inns the passengers did not even have time to disembark. Because of the intense competition on certain routes, coaches would often travel at breakneck speeds and coachmen would think nothing of trying to run a rival off the road, so accidents were common. One of the most famous rivalries was between the *Tally Ho* coach, driven by Captain Baring, and the *Derby Mail*, driven by Captain Douglas, which resulted in a serious accident when the *Mail* ran into the *Tally Ho*. This, apparently, led to the expression: "a local derby", a phrase much used by sports journalists today. It had always been the practice of horsemen to travel on the left side of the road in order to leave their right hand free to deal with unfriendly strangers by way of the sword. Stage coach drivers preferred to hold the reins in the left hand, leaving the right hand for the whip, and this led them to continue the practice of driving on the left.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of coaching was the introduction, on Monday 2 August 1784, of the Mail Coaches. A theatre proprietor from Bath, John Palmer, suggested to the Post Office that they should themselves run coaches which would carry the mail. Prior to this mail was carried on horseback by postboys, many of whom were very young and unreliable and were also subject to being robbed. Palmer won the contract and instituted an efficient system of regular and punctual services between all the major towns and London. The coaches were painted red and black and were specially designed to offer a smooth ride and each one carried an armed guard, dressed in red, and equipped with a horn which he would blow as the coach approached an inn or a turnpike gate. The innkeeper would have to have a team of horses ready and waiting for the changeover, and the turnpike gatekeeper would have to have the gate open so that the Mail Coach could pass through without stopping and without having to pay a toll. All other traffic on the road had, by law, to give way to the Mail Coaches, so it was easier to maintain a strict timetable. Just to encourage punctuality, the Post Office levied a fine on the coach operator if the mail arrived late.

The presence of an armed guard guaranteed the safety of the mail and, in fact, they were so little troubled that some of them, who were ex-soldiers, took to firing their blunderbusses at livestock en route, to keep their hand in! The guard was in charge of the Mail Coach and, in the event of an accident, or delay due to bad weather, he had to take the mail bags and continue on foot, or on horseback to the destination.

The Mail Coach system was the envy of the world and was copied by other countries, but the rapid growth of the railways meant that its days were numbered and the last Mail Coach ran in October 1858. For a time after the switch to rail, Post Office mail guards would ride on the trains with the mail but this practice did not last and they were replaced by railway employees, but even today the person in charge of a train is still called a guard. The last Turnpike Trust in Britain closed in 1866 and with the passing of stage and Mail coaches, towns such as Whetstone suffered due to reduced demand for stabling and coach repairs and inns, such as those in Barnet, lost a large part of their trade.

With the current concern about the world's diminishing oil reserves I wonder how long it will be before the sound of hooves is once again heard along the Great North Road? But to return to today, I shall continue with my resolve to cut down on my book buying, but don't be surprised if you are regaled by articles from me on a new subjects that I have found tucked away in the pages of secondhand books.

1268 HIGH ROAD WHETSTONE

by John Heathfield

Sylvia Stilts' article in the September 2005 Newsletter set me looking at my notes. What is now the *Popular Café* (1268 High Road, Whetstone) is part of the oldest surviving occupied house in Whetstone, though it has been substantially altered over the years. It was originally a timber-framed aisle house with a central fireplace covered by a smoke hood; this later became a substantial chimney.

The records begin in 1485 when the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's became Lords of the Manor and the new Lord asked everyone to prove their ownership. The Fox family, who also owned land in Southgate near Fox Lane, owned the property and Richard Ffoxe of Bowes produced a court roll from 1483 showing his ownership of: "*A parcel of woods of ½ an acre abutting Longcroft of R Copewood on the W and Goodyere's land on the N. Also a cottage, curtilage and garden formerly belonging to Margaret Burton and before that to John Piper.*"

The fact that there had been at least two occupants before 1483 suggests that it could date back to 1450 or even earlier. The *Bull and Butcher* pub site almost opposite is mentioned in 1375 and that is a reason to suppose that some kind of building existed at 1268 High Road as early as that.

By 1589 Robert Fox was dead and the property was split into a tenement in the occupation of William Page and another in the occupation of John Fox, son and heir. By 1613 it was a pub called *The Fox* and was sold to John Reeve. The

name had changed to *The Crown* by 1662, when it belonged to John Taper. There were various owners until 1787 when *The Crown Inn* belonged to John Cooper, collar maker of Whetstone. In 1835 John Cooper left to his nephew Thomas Cooper: "*my two copyhold messuage in which I lately resided situate on the East side of Whetstone near the Turnpike gate and opposite Totteridge Lane.*" In 1838 it was "*a messuage formerly called The Crown but long since converted into two tenements, one with a stable and the other in the occupation of James White.*"

In 1871 it was mortgaged to Robert Gilmour as "*three messuages in Whetstone, one of which was a stable, washhouse and coal sheds is in the occupation of Joseph Burgess and the other two of (blank) Evans and Robert Cannon.*"

NOT A GHOST STORY, BUT A FREAKY FUNERAL

by Patricia Richardson

I worked for six years with an artistic, creative man called Tony, who tragically died at the young age of forty. He loved to collect those small snow globes, you know the kind – when you shake them, they make a snow scene. He loved these, and when friends went on holiday he asked them to look out for unusual ones to bring back for him. He kept his collection in his bathroom and there were over a hundred of them.

On the day of Tony's funeral the weather was cold but sunny and many of his friends were gathered in the chapel in the Crematorium in Hoop Lane, waiting for the service to begin. Suddenly, the double doors we were facing blew open violently and outside in front of us was a blizzard of snow, swirling madly so we could see nothing else. No one moved for a while; we were transfixed. Then somebody slammed the doors shut and we all sat there, stunned. Had Tony sent us his own snow globe; was he trying to say goodbye?

The service commenced and when we left the chapel there was no sign of snow; the day was the same as when we went in, cold but sunny. We went to the Old Bull in Barnet for the funeral get-together and there, on the tables, were all his snow globes, put there by his partner. Everyone was invited to choose one and take it home as a reminder of Tony; I took one of New York.

This all happened in 1996, but I will never forget that extraordinary moment in the chapel.

STARRY, STARRY NIGHT IN GOLDERS GREEN

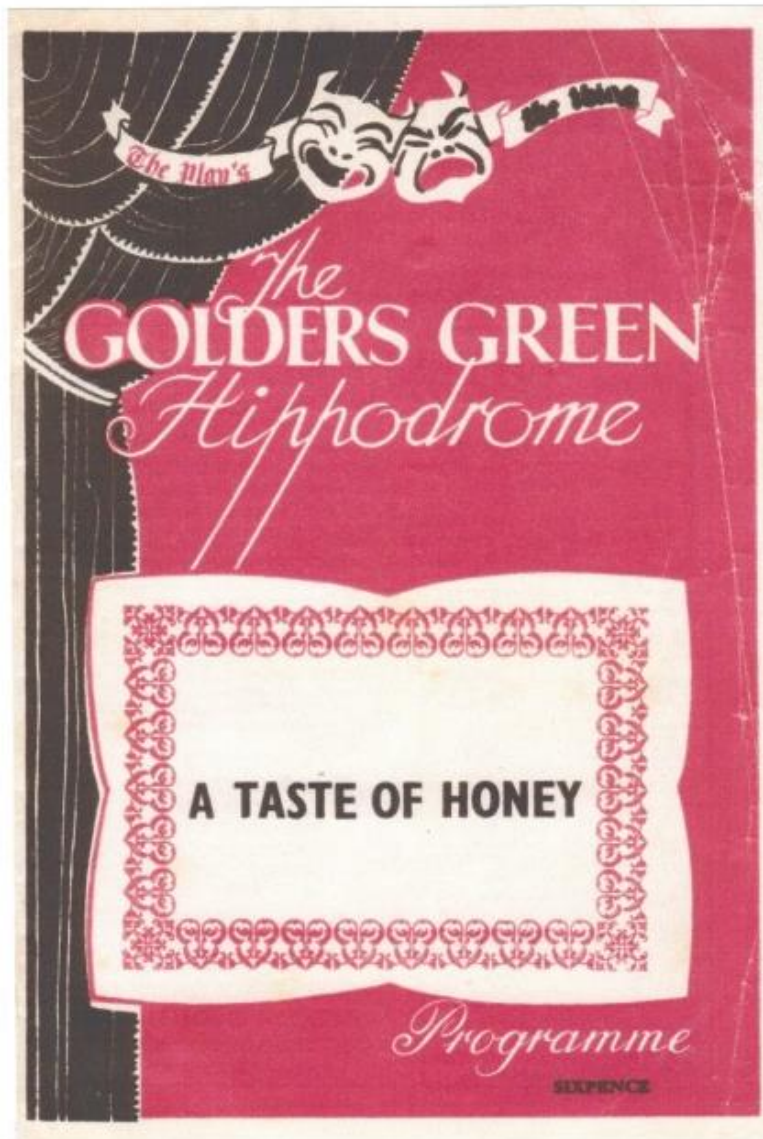
by Mel Hooper

"*Ladies and Gentlemen, Friday night is music night!*" Say those words to millions of people and they will think of the long-running radio programme broadcast every week from the Golders Green Hippodrome. However, before the BBC took responsibility for that building in the late 1960s, it had an illustrious career as a live theatre venue. I believe it was the nearest large theatre to Friern Barnet and many of you may have seen shows there over the years.

Eighteen months ago I acquired a selection of programmes from various productions at The Hippodrome, nearly all of them now more than forty years old.

In that dead week between last Christmas and the New Year I decided to revisit them and here share with you some of the things that stand out.

From 1957 till 1964 the actual programme design did not change at all. Priced at 6d, it consisted of twelve, handbag-sized pages, black and white with a pinkish-red cover. Inside there were some small advertisements for local businesses and the cast list in the centre pages. The only way to distinguish one from another was the name of the production in a panel on the front cover. Also, frustratingly, the information inside included words such as "week commencing Monday, April 23rd", but not the year!!



Having researched the dates I found that the earliest was for a production of *Coppelia* by the Royal Ballet. Helen then proudly told me that she remembered going to see that on a school trip from Summerside Junior School. Now I'm no balletomane, but with direction by Ninette de Valois (later Dame) and choreography by Frederick Ashton (later Sir), I bet that was worth a top price of 8/6d of anyone's money. The Royal Ballet and the D'Oyley Carte Opera Company appear to have been annual visitors to the venue.

The majority of the plays put on had either just completed West End runs or were previews of productions about to transfer there. I won't list the titles, but some of the actors' names will certainly bring back memories:

- 1960 Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies, Edith Evans, Felix Aylmer, John Stride, Flora Robson, Richard Briers, John Clements, Margaret Lockwood, Jack Hulbert and Ciceley Courtneidge, Robertson Hare, Beryl Reid
- 1961 Derek Fowlds, Anna Massey, Leo McKern, Diane Cilento, Nigel Stock, Michael Redgrave, Renee Asherson, Jeremy Kemp, Claire Bloom, Julian Glover, Joan Sims, Timothy West, Leslie Phillips, Kenneth Williams
- 1962 Alan Badel, Phyllis Calvert, Lockwood West, Michael Bryant, Mark Dignam, Evelyn Laye, Trevor Howard, Peter Sallis, Nigel Hawthorne, Bernard Lee, Billie Whitelaw, Ian Bannen, Freddie Jones
- 1963 John Gregson, Peter Wyngarde, Patrick Troughton, Cyril Luckham, Sheila Hancock, George Baker, Sybil Thorndike, Michael Bates, Anna Neagle, Miriam Karlin, Michael Dennison and Dulcie Gray, Susan Hampshire, Ray Barrett, Moira Lister, Yvonne Arnaud

All of the above appeared in "serious" plays but, of course, the highlight of any child's theatre year would have to be the pantomime. Although I do not have any of the programmes from these, I know the following took place:

- 1957 *Goody Two Shoes* starring Jimmy Wheeler and Tommy Fields with The Tiller Girls
- 1958 *Dick Whittington* starring Arthur Askey
- 1961 *Cinderella* starring Arthur Askey again
- 1962 *Babes in the Wood* with Terry Scott and Hugh Lloyd
- 1963 *Aladdin* starring Jimmy Clitheroe and Yana
- 1964 *Dick Whittington* starring Tommy Cooper and Beryl Reid
- 1965 *Cinderella* with Dickie Henderson and Danny la Rue

In addition to the regular diet of week-long plays and the pantomimes, there was a variety of one-off special performances. For example, in November 1961 the full-blown television hit *The Black and White Minstrel Show* took to the stage for a week, "complete with all its speed, colour, fabulous spectacle and hi-fidelity sound".

In February 1962 there was a special one-week run of the play *Doctor in the House*, with the unique sales pitch that all the cast had appeared in the TV soap *Emergency – Ward 10* (Charles Tingwell, Desmond Carrington, John Barron, Jill Browne etc.)

A 1965 programme advertises a night of international all-star wrestling, featuring Doctor Death, Zoltan Boskic, Johnny Williams and The Wild Man of Borneo. On Sunday 10 January 1965, pop music fans could see The Bachelors and on Sunday 21 March they could watch The Moody Blues, Brian Poole and the Tremeloes and Twinkle.

Between 1957 and 1965 the top price of a stalls seat rose to 13/-. However, in October 1966 you would have paid nearly three times that amount (35/-) to see a living legend. The 65 year old Marlene Dietrich played for a week at the Hippodrome. Perhaps the grandchildren of that audience feel justified when they now pay £90 for a Rolling Stones ticket!

Returning to the programme advertisements, the back page was almost exclusively booked by North Thames Gas and Mr Therm in various guises. Several of the local firms booked consistently throughout the years, though Gilberts Furs may have got short shrift these days. Mme. H Lieberg's corsetry shop still exists in Temple Fortune, though I'm not sure what she meant when she said that she "*specialises in the difficult figure.*" Having sorted that out, ladies were urged to have their hair styled by "*world championship winner*" Kurland's Continental Salon.

In 1962, suitably attired, sculpted and coiffed you could then book a six-day passage from Southampton to New York aboard the *SS Hanseatic* for £82. Bon Voyage!

A LEAFY SUBURB?

by John Donovan

Recently, I drove up Cat Hill and paid a visit to the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture (MoDA) to see their exhibition, *In Search of Suburbia* (well worth a visit!) The exhibition looks at six developments in North London, built at different times over the past century (Palmer's Green, Oakwood, Southgate etc). On display are old photographs; tenants' handbooks; house plans; estate agents' brochures; and maps, starting at 1905 and moving on decade by decade up to the 1960s. The exhibition seeks to chart the almost imperceptible changes to the appearance of a place over time, using an impressive selection of images and ideas. I suppose that, by definition, a sub-urban area is one that is outside the urban area, away from the hustle and bustle of industry and commerce, and 'suburbia' still conjures up a picture of semi-detached houses and spacious streets, in pleasant leafy surroundings.

As a rider to the exhibition, MoDA had a display of first-class photographs taken by young artists, showing their (modern) view of the suburbs, and there were some surprises. Oddly enough, it was the text that accompanied each image that has stayed with me. Talking about the 1930s Laing Estate at Oakwood, Robert Parkinson notes "...the disappearance of green to suit the car", while Ben

Norman noted that time had, "...changed front gardens into a mass of block paving and concrete, and previously quiet roads into linear car parks." In Palmers Green Savvas Petis saw "...how the green has bled grey, and the battle against concrete is lost."

As I drove home, I thought about the changes to *our* local districts over the last hundred years, and what *they* will look like fifty years hence. What I have always valued about this area are its open spaces and wide skies, the architecture of its houses and shops, and its trees, grass and general 'greenery.'

Some years ago I saw, in a 1930s newspaper, an advertisement for new homes in the North Finchley area, and their description of our district as a 'leafy suburb' has stayed in my mind. I suppose it *was* leafy, once. If you were to stand at the top of Barnet Hill years ago, on the corner of Milton Avenue, and let your gaze sweep across the southern aspect, you would have seen a predominance of trees, mostly in back gardens; it was all green.

I remember when a lovely little red-brick house (early Victorian) stood on Whetstone High Road, in its own large grounds, absolutely full of trees. That was no 1441, almost opposite *The Black Bull*. The house was eventually demolished (and all the trees cut down) to make room for a large development, *Fairmead Court*. The flats look absolutely luxurious, but we lost all those trees. We have lost green areas in other ways too; front gardens bricked over to form parking for cars, and back-land development that puts new houses into folks' back gardens. Of course, our biggest loss of green open space has been at the Friern Hospital site with the creation of 24 new roads, all full of houses and flats.

When it comes to architecture, we do have some really attractive Victorian and Edwardian houses and shops; the Oakleigh Park group for example, and the St John's Avenue group, and Goldsmith Road, and the Holly Park area, and (long my favourite) the Friern Watch Avenue group. Furthermore, the buildings in our area are, for the most part, on a *human* scale. Not many of them are above four storeys high, which is why *Barnet House*, *Northway House* and the block of flats on top of *artsdepot* are so intrusive (you can see *them* from Barnet Hill, too).

I well remember my first view of that fine stretch of 'thirties' houses along the southern side of Oakleigh Road North (Nos 84 to 144), and how horrified I was when I found that a couple in the middle of the row had been sold off for 'development'. Fortunately, no more than two houses were sold, but the small block of flats that replaced them, while not ugly in itself, did break up the line of that 1930s row (thus our suburb slowly changes). Further east along the same road, we noticed that an empty bungalow and the empty houses next to it (Nos 136 to 138) were both up for sale, at the same estate agents, and with identical, new net curtains up at the windows; sure signs that they were doomed. Those two dwellings and the large patch of grass to their rear have now gone and another block of flats is going up on the site, to join *Purbeck Court*, *Bredon Court*, *Quantock Court*, *Malvern Court* and *Chiltern Court*. Across the road, blocks of flats are slowly marching from Oakleigh Park South westwards towards Whetstone.

On Whetstone High Road, just south of Farnham Close, there once stood a beautiful little detached Georgian house (*Whetstone House*) with a redbrick front and a white wooden porch; *that* became a block of flats, which then joined the other blocks stretching northwards to Barnet.



The very latest loss is in Torrington Park. No 96 was a large, splendid, detached house (with a huge back garden). Built of red brick, with black and white squared-bay windows, a couple of Edwardian roof extensions and a large 'vicarage' porch, it was completely unique. Only a few months ago the house was demolished and the whole site cleared to make way for a block of flats. These are just some of *my* examples; I expect you have your own.

No one knows how much more of our small patch of suburbia will be covered in blocks of flats and parking lots in the decades to come, but we in FB&DLHS will carry on taking our photographs and keeping our records for future historians. Going back to MoDA; the Suburbia exhibition will continue until 26 March

2006, and there is always something of interest going on there. I really think you ought to pay it a visit, and if you phone me, I'll send you a brochure, or you can look on their website www.moda.mdx.ac.uk.

LIFE IN THE MODERN SUBURB

by David Berquer

The other day, with nothing better to do, I decided to pay a visit to the Visitor Centre at Barratt's Osidge Park development, on the site of the old Barnet College in Russell Lane. The site will include 36 4-bedroom houses, fronting on Russell Lane and Church Hill Road and eleven blocks of flats, a mixture of one bed and 2-bed – a total of 154 flats. There will be two gated entrances to the site and the usual landscaping. Prices range from £217,500 for a 1-bed apartment to £263,000 - £288,000 for a 2-bed and houses from £435,000 - £449,500. I calculate that the whole development will be worth not less than £54,000,000 when it is all finished at the end of 1997! Barnet Council should benefit to the tune of over £200,000 p.a. from Council Tax, plus, of course, Section 106 money.

The show apartments are nicely designed and finished but most of them lack one important feature: there is absolutely no storage space, not even room to put a Hoover or a suitcase for the holidays! I was discussing this with Mel Hooper who pointed out that this trend in minimal living would account for the rise in the big

self-storage buildings that are springing up everywhere. On the A1000, just opposite the Leisure Park there is already a Big Yellow self-storage facility and another one is being completed, about five hundred yards away to the south, just beyond the bridge over the North Circular. These are presumably to cope with the new development on the old TA site and the new flats on the site of Finchley Grammar School. This raises the question of where the new residents of Osidge Park will be able to store their treasured possessions; will we see a self-storage facility being built in the vicinity?

It also makes you wonder if the new generation of home owners will forsake all the collectibles that we cherish. Will books, CDs or records, DVDs or tapes, stamp collections and stuffed animals all disappear or will there be legions of people sitting quietly in storage rooms somewhere listening to Mozart, reading Dickens or cataloguing their Penny Blacks? If this is the future, give me the 1950s or 60s anytime.

A NEW SUBURB?

by David Berguer



**New Whetstone, N11
£154,950**

2 bed top floor flat - Chain Free.

Road, so those of you who live in Whetstone can rest easy; your cherished address thankfully remains unsullied!

This advertisement from Barnard Marcus appeared in the *Barnet* 19 Jan 2006 issue of *Barnet Press*. I thought I knew all the names that estate agents dream up for suburbs in order to make them sound more attractive and I had, of course, heard of Friern Village (a bucolic name for the new development on the Friern Hospital site), but *New Whetstone*? The N11 postcode indicated that it was more likely to be New Southgate and a quick telephone call to them indicated that this was the case.

They admitted it was their mistake and the property was in fact in Brunswick Park

LAMAS LOCAL HISTORY CONFERENCE 2005

by Colin Barratt

The London and Middlesex Archaeological Society (LAMAS) is 150 years old and celebrated this at their annual conference last November. The theme chosen was "When LAMAS began: London in 1855".

Following an introduction by Dr Simon Thurley, President of LAMAS, the first talk, by Eileen Bowlt, discussed the early activities of the Society. Its aims then were to preserve and record important items and protect ancient buildings. They were not interested in lower status sites, but had regular outings to places of historic value around London and Middlesex.

Barney Slone of English Heritage spoke of the many luminaries of the time who supported LAMAS; the architects Sir George Gilbert Scott and Sir William Tite, and antiques collector Charles Roach Smith (who irritated workmen on building sites in London by turning up uninvited. They sometimes deliberately smashed unearthened Roman pots in front of him to annoy him!) However, he still managed to gather a huge collection, now in the British Museum.

The following speaker, Anthony Burton, described the various museums in London in the 1850s. There were a number of small ones, with specialised collections, and a few larger ones. The British Museum had opened in 1759, although little *British* history was included, and its directors discouraged the lower classes to visit, fearing that "these vulgar classes would crowd in" and it would be "too much used." However, after the success of the Great Exhibition of 1851, which was guided by former civil servant Henry Cole, Prince Albert proposed a new museum in Brompton, and Cole was appointed to plan and run it. This new museum (the V&A) opened in the 1850s and was a great success, sometimes actually inviting visitors to handle some of the exhibits!

In a late change to the programme, Dr Ruth Richardson made a strong case for disputing the reputation of Edwin Chadwick, the celebrated sanitary reformer, whose major report in the 1840s on burials in London was considered to be instrumental in reforming burial practices in the mid 19th century. She concluded that Chadwick had only gathered together the works of others, particularly G.A. Walker, a surgeon and author of *Gatherings from Graveyards* (1839). Chadwick in fact may have delayed reform by widening the investigation too much.

Peter Street introduced us to Henry Mayhew (creator of *Punch* magazine in 1841). He was a journalist, writer and playwright, whose most well known work was a survey of the poor, called *London Labour and the London Poor*. In this he gave a voice to the poor themselves, interviewing many, and counting how many costermongers (street sellers) of various goods there were in London. His total was 30,000 to 40,000, including 200 bird sellers and 100 blind people (musicians or boot lace sellers). Mayhew was a social explorer, but disdained philanthropists who, he said, viewed the poor with pity.

In the final lecture Charles O'Brian discussed the architecture in 1850s London. The city was expanding and needed new buildings and public spaces. Many major projects took place at this time: the British Library Reading Room; the Thames Tunnel; the Palace of Westminster and Victoria and Battersea Parks. Some developments were associated with specific people: Bazalgette (main drainage system); Pugin (church buildings); and Peabody (housing). The speaker concluded that there was a rich variety of architecture in London. This provided a suitable end to the conference.

More time was allowed in the programme for looking at displays and publications on the tables of the various member societies. On our one we had our various *Brief Histories* for sale, and displayed photographs of the Friern Barnet area 150, 100 and 50 years ago, which attracted some interest.

During the conference there was a second annual awarding of prizes for local history publications. The winning book was *Gin and Hellfire*, submitted by our neighbours, the Hornsey Historical Society. Runners up were also neighbours, the Southgate and District Civic Trust with *Oakleaves 3*. This latter publication had contributions from two of our members, Rachael Macdonald and Colin Barratt. Both of these books were designed and prepared by Mike Hazeldine of Hornsey Historical Society. Well done Mike.

NORTH CIRCULAR HOLD UP

by David Berguer

Those of you who live in or around the A406 will know only too well that on most days the traffic on the stretch between Finchley and Palmers Green is at a standstill, particularly in the eastbound direction. The inevitable result is that vehicles divert on to local roads such as Woodhouse Road, Friern Barnet Road and Colney Hatch Lane and these become clogged up, affecting local traffic. One of the reasons that Barnet Council gave for refusing a planning application from Tesco for the expansion of their store at the Coppetts Centre was that it would lead to an increase in traffic on an already congested Colney Hatch Lane.

Back in 1970s the Department of Transport produced plans for a scheme of road widening with underpasses at the main junctions. This would have cost £266m and would have brought this stretch of road up to the level of most of the rest of the 25 miles of the A406. Although many properties were bought and subsequently demolished or boarded up, the scheme never went ahead and responsibility for the North Circular was passed to Transport for London (TfL) in 2000. Despite a public consultation in 2003 which overwhelmingly supported the old scheme, the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone decided that it would not be carried out and TfL produced a revised plan in 2005 with much reduced improvements and no underpasses. Despite strong representations from Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Councils and public criticism, this reduced plan was approved.

The latest scheme, which will cost only £30 million, has now been postponed by TfL until 2008, with completion due in the summer of 2010. So we have a further 4 years of delays, noise and pollution to put up with and no guarantee that at the end of it the traffic problems will have been resolved or even alleviated.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

Your subscription expires at the end of March. The rates remain the same - £6 for a single and £10 for a couple. A subscription renewal form is enclosed with this Newsletter.

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