

Friern Barnet *Newsletter*

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DISCOVERING A LOCAL SCHOOL

by Colin Barratt

Serendipity is a strange word. My dictionary defines it as “The faculty of making happy discoveries by accident”. I have a recent example of this. From time to time I look on *ebay* to see if there is anything of local interest, such as photos or artefacts. On this occasion I spotted a school photo, which was captioned The High School, New Southgate-July 1927. I was immediately intrigued as, being born and brought up in New Southgate, I had never heard of this school. The starting price was cheap (£2) so I bid for it, on the basis of ‘buy first, ask questions later’. No-one else bid for it, so I won it at the asking price.

When I received it I was able to examine it more closely. It was excellent quality, and it was a whole school group, from a small school, with only 60 pupils in it, 47 girls and 13 boys, plus 7 female staff. There was no building behind them, only a fence, with trees behind this. There was no obvious local candidate for this school so I contacted the seller of the photo, to see if he could tell me where he obtained it. This is where serendipity comes in again. The seller replied that he didn't know any more about it.



The former High School, New Southgate in 1965. The High Road is on the left

He found the photo at the bottom of an old box of ephemera he had bought at an auction, and was going to throw it away, but then decided to keep it, as someone may want it, luckily for us.

I sent the photo to our committee, and to former New Southgate residents, without success to begin with. I thought the best hope was to find the school in *Kelly's Directory of Finchley & Friern Barnet* from the 1920s and our Chairman did just that! From the Society's extensive collection of *Kelly's*, he discovered that in 1929 the school was called New Southgate High School for Girls, and was located at number 2 Friern Barnet Road, which was at the junction with High Road, New Southgate. The name must have changed soon afterwards, as in the directories from 1932 to 1938 it was called Betstyle School for Girls. In 1939 the address appears to have become a private one, so the school must have closed down by then. When David gave me the address, I realised that I had a photo of this school, taken in 1965, during its demolition. The photo on page 1 is in Jackie Foster's book *A History of New Southgate*, and I had previously put it into the Photo Gallery on our website (you can find it by typing 2927 into the Search box).

The building was a large one, as were all the houses between High Road and the Bank Parade shops. When I checked my Ordnance Survey map of the period I could see that it had a large garden, probably converted to a playground, which ran down to St Paul's Parish Hall. The 1965 demolition photo shows mature trees down the side of the High Road, and I think the 1927 photo was taken in the school playground, with the group standing in front of the boundary fence with the High Road, with these trees behind it. Although this was a High School, the ages of the girls appeared to range from about 5 to 16. The boys, however, were no older than 11, so maybe there was a mixed junior school also. Jackie Foster's caption for this building in the demolition photo was that it was once a private school, so the pupils at this school were fortunate to have parents who could afford to pay the fees to send them there.

I wondered whether it would be possible to find out who these children were. At the bottom of the 1927 photo I could see that the names of two of them had been written on it, and their location in the photo. The names were Richard Crispin Postans and Eleanor Louisa Postans. It looked like these were brother and sister, so perhaps this photo was once owned by their parents, who recorded their names here. Being interested in family history, I have a subscription with the *Find My Past* website (www.findmypast.com), so I searched for the two children, and the unusual surname helped. The birth records show that Richard was born in 1916, in North Finchley, and Eleanor was born in 1911, registered in Barnet. The latest census available is 1911, and I hoped that Eleanor was born before it was taken, so I could see who the family were and where they lived. Luck was on my side again and there she was, born 3 months before the census, the first child of Frederick and Gladys Postans, living in Victoria Grove, Friern Park, North Finchley.

Continuing with the birth, marriage and death records, I followed Richard, to find he married in 1941. Could I perhaps find some missing relatives? Sadly, these hopes were dashed, as his daughter died aged 18, and his son, twice married, died aged 47, and I could find no children. Going back to this elder sister, Eleanor Louise, I could find no marriage or death records for her. This indicated that she may have moved abroad (or was still alive, unmarried, at 103!). A search of ship passenger lists

online brought up Eleanor L Postans, aged 43, travelling to Canada in 1954, so she must have emigrated.

It would be good to know more about the school and its pupils. The Enfield Archives don't have anything. Perhaps the London Metropolitan Archives are worth contacting. There may be more to discover here. Perhaps some of our members remember the school, or know people who went to it. If so, please let us know. You can find the school class photo on our website, numbers 6979 and 6980.

AGM AND FINANCIAL REPORT

The fourteenth Annual General Meeting of the Society took place at North Middlesex Golf Club on Wednesday 28 May 2014. Our Chairman, David Berguer, was unable to attend as he was recovering from a minor operation so the meeting was admirably chaired by Richard Testar. For those of you who were unable to attend, a copy of the Report and Accounts is enclosed with this *Newsletter*. A copy of the minutes of the meeting will be distributed in April 2015, before the next AGM.

A LITERARY MENTION

by David Berguer

Back in May I received the following email from our member in York, Pamela Ellis:

“I have just been reading Madeleine Bunting's book *The Plot: A biography of my father's English acre*, which is about her father, the sculptor John Bunting, and the chapel he built in the North York Moors as a memorial to some of his fellow pupils from Ampleforth College who were killed in the Second World War. I was intrigued to discover that there is also a connection with Friern Barnet. Although Bunting fell in love and chose to make his home in North Yorkshire, he grew up in the 1930s in North London, specifically a house in Friern Barnet Lane.

His daughter describes the house as “a handsome Edwardian house” with thick solid oak bannisters and newel post” and “panelled doors and pretty stained-glass windows.” The house looks over the North Middlesex Golf Club and has a 250 foot garden with fruit trees planted by his parents. From his bedroom, Bunting would have been able to see the construction of new houses in Church Close, Church Crescent and Church Way.

This may of course already be known by Society members, in which case I apologise for bringing it to your attention! Is it possible to identify the house from the particulars in the book? For reference, they are on pp 202-4 of the paperback edition.”

I checked with our copies of *Kelly's Directory of Finchley and Friern Barnet* and discovered that a Mr Bernard L Bunting was living at number 193 Friern Barnet Lane from 1932 to 1939. The Church Farm Estate was built around 1936 so his son would have been there around this time.

Pam is right in thinking that the house is known by some of our members, as two of them, Murray and Jenny Cornes, live there. There is also a connection with the North



Numbers 193 (on the right) and 195 Friern Barnet Lane, a fine pair of Edwardian houses

Middlesex Golf Club – both Murray and Jenny are members and former Captains of the Club. The house is certainly Edwardian. Murray told me that the deeds date back to 1906 and that the house was originally called ‘Kildare’. Number 195 was called ‘Airedale’.

A LINK TO WILTSHIRE

by David Berguer

In early June Patricia and I had a weekend break at a Warner Leisure Hotels site in Wiltshire with a link to Friern Barnet. As well as the usual Warner facilities such as archery, rifle shooting, bowls, croquet, swimming and night time entertainment, our time at Littlecote House was much enlivened by being allowed a free run of the Grade 1 listed house, complete with a haunted bedroom, a long gallery, medieval chapel, Tudor great hall and even a Roman mosaic in the grounds.

The link with Friern Barnet comes in the form of Sir John Popham. Littlecote House started life as a medieval mansion around 1290 when it was owned by the de Calstone family who had come over with William the Conqueror. A Tudor addition was added by William Darrell who married into the family in 1415. An Elizabethan addition was completed in 1592 by Sir John Popham who had bought the house in 1589. The house remained in the Popham family until 1762 when Anne Popham, the sole heiress (there being no male offspring), married General William Leyborne and their son Edward William Leyborne subsequently took the name Leyborne Popham.

The house remained in the Leyborne Popham family until 1929 when it was bought by the Wills family of tobacco fame. They sold it to entrepreneur Peter de Savary in 1986 and it was later sold to Warner Leisure who built a 400-bed hotel in the grounds.

Notable visitors to the house included Henry VIII who courted Jane Seymour there, Elizabeth I, James I, Charles II and William of Orange. During the Second World War the house was used by the the 34th Army Tank Brigade, the American 101st Airborne Division and 1st Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, all of whom were involved with the D Day invasion of Europe on 6 June 1945.

Sir John Popham was born in 1531 in Somerset, the son of Alexander Popham and Jane Stradling. In his hugely successful career he became Speaker of the House of Commons between 1580 and 1583, Attorney General from 1581 to 1592 and Lord Chief Justice of England from 1592 until his death in 1607. It was during this latter period that he presided over several important trials including that of the Jesuit Robert Southwell (hanged, drawn and quartered in 1595); Sir Walter Raleigh in 1603 (sentenced to death but was incarcerated in the Tower instead) and Guy Fawkes (hanged in 1606). Earlier he had sentenced Mary Queen of Scots to death in 1587.

Popham became an extremely wealthy man and had many estates throughout the country including Publow in Somerset, Hemyock Castle in Devon, and Friern Barnet. John Norden's description of Middlesex in 1593 includes: "Fryarne Manor, Sir John Popham knight, Lord chiefe Justice of England, sometimes maketh there his abode."

ANOTHER WALK TO THE SHOPS IN 1951

by Richard Testar

In issue number 40 of the *Newsletter* I took you on a walk to the shops in North Finchley in 1951 when I was seven years old. Since my last article a number more shopping memories have come to mind. I've tried to avoid mentioning those which featured last time.

We lived in Torrington Park and this was in the days when housewives would go on a daily shop with their wicker basket on wheels. The idea of supermarkets had not yet materialised (although I do recall the first one, the Premier supermarket, which opened locally in about 1951). In the school holidays I would accompany my mother on her daily mission, which to her was as much a social occasion as a shopping trip. She would meet an endless parade of friends, neighbours and relatives (she had four sisters and a brother who all lived in the Finchley area).

The first job of the day might be to book a hair appointment (for her, not me) at DeWinters on the corner of Friern Watch Avenue. Moving down the High Road she would buy 20 Kensitas from Miss Frisby who occupied a half shop next to the Gas Showroom on the corner of Ravensdale Avenue. Miss Frisby was a demure little old lady with nicotine-stained hair who would appear silently from the back of the shop when the bell on the door tinkled.

Then it was time to pay our monthly TV rental at Radio Renters (not *Rentals*) which was opposite the end of Woodside Park Road and is now the Romania Relief charity shop. This was in the days when the first television sets were unreliable and the tubes often broke, thereby encouraging people to rent rather than buy. There were

other rental shops in the area including Derwent who were on the corner of Castle Road (this later became a milliner's). Continuing to walk in the direction of Tally Ho, past the Co-op, H A Saunders and Jones the Bakers (which I mentioned last time), lay a wool shop called Needlecraft run by a Mrs Betty Lundy. My mother worked part-time at the Needlecraft branch in Barnet High Street. I should mention that I was enthralled by a motor cycle dealer called George Grose (where the Hi Sushi! Restaurant now is) and vowed to save up all my sixpences to buy a super Triumph when I was old enough to ride one. I think the total savings in my jam jar after a year was about £2, and I have never ridden a motor bike yet!

Near W H Smith was a greengrocer called Mayers, which lay opposite Booth Bros, also greengrocers. Beyond Woolworths was Timothy Whites & Taylors, the general store and very close by was a hardware store called J Salmon, selling all sorts of pots and pans. There was also another post office in the same block which closed

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when the existing one opened. Across the road was the Tally Ho Bookshop which sold greeting cards, stationery and lent out books (my mother-in-law worked there part time later on). Past Priors, the only local department store with its fascinating system of handles and pullies which were linked to a central cash desk, lay Marshalls the fish shop at number 734. Almost on the corner of Woodhouse Road was a tobacconist which displayed a large slogan *Player's Please!* Above the door, and like so many tobacconists it housed a barbers at the rear. I never liked the barber, I thought he was miserable and I was much happier when I went to Thornton Parry in Friern Barnet.

Just a few yards down Woodhouse Road on the right and opposite Farwells the ironmongers was a furniture store called Leonard Harris which later became

Perrings. Above Harris's was a warehouse with a loading bay at the rear. The family on my mother's side ran a wholesale children's clothing business from there called Glennie Rolfe & Co. Most of my local aunts and their husbands were involved (as was my father who was always proud to declare that he was a traveller in baby clothes!). They used to buy their sandwiches in Toto's on the corner of the High Road, and a little further down towards Churchfield Avenue was the Lavender Lady, a café painted in mauve. It was reincarnated a few years ago but didn't last long. More recently there was a lawnmower shop next door, which rather oddly also sold prams and cots.

Back through the Grand Arcade which in the early 1950s was indeed quite grand. In 1970 I bought my wife's wedding ring from Arcade Jewellers. There was Ace Tones Music Shop and opposite that a large toy shop at the end. Through the Arcade into Ballards Lane we found a men's shop, E H Paine (now Braggs) and nearby was Hazelwoods, a ladies dress shop which my mother patronised. There was Janes & Adams, which I recall was one of two electrical shops in the area, selling radios, TVs, gramophones and so on. They had a service depot up the High Road next to the Wall's ice cream depot and opposite the current Audi dealer. The other electrical shop was Sadd & Halsey, sited next door to the electricity showroom with its strange arrangement of mirrors inside the entrance.


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Then there was Victor Value which was probably the first discount store selling domestic products. Most of this site (numbers 815-817) is now occupied by Sweatshop, the sports clothing retailer. Returning along the High Road and next door to Booth Bros. was Ellmans which was a traditional tobacconist selling cigarettes and pipe tobacco and run by a couple of old ladies. At number 827 was Clarks the shoe shop. I can recall standing with my feet in one of those x-ray machines which glowed green, the latest thing for measuring feet!

The shopping trip seemed to last at least two hours, with not much in the basket to show for it, and was a daily occurrence. We were lucky to be home in time for lunch.

As soon as this article goes into print I'm sure other shops will spring to mind, but I will have to rely on your own many 'shopping memories' and trust you will be able to fill in the gaps with recollections which I have long since forgotten.

THE CHANGING FACE OF WHETSTONE

by David Berguer

For years Whetstone has remained as many of us remember it, a pleasant and relatively quiet area, albeit it with an inordinate amount of traffic and one of the most complicated junctions in London where the High Road meets Totteridge Lane and Oakleigh Road North.

In the past year or so several plans have been announced which will change Whetstone forever, and not necessarily for the best:

- In 2009 the office block at number 1230, next to Lawsons, was demolished and a six-storey development of offices and 28 flats is in the course of construction
- In 2013 a planning application was submitted to Barnet Council for the conversion of the 12 storey Northway House (number 1379 High Road) from offices to 145 flats.
- In July 2013 a planning application for the redevelopment of the Sweets Way estate was submitted which involved demolishing all the existing properties and increasing the number of dwellings from 150 to 360 (189 houses and 171 flats), with 572 car parking spaces. This was turned down by Barnet Council and revised plans have been drawn up by the developer for 291 dwellings (of which 203 will be houses) and with 455 car parking spaces. The earlier plan had provision for a new road leading from the estate on to Oakleigh Road North; this has now been dropped and the only entry to the new estate would be via Sweets Way off Friern Barnet Lane
- Number 1064 High Road (the former 'Coldharbour' and until recently the home of emc advertising gifts) and number 1072 (formerly Cameo Photography) are due for demolition and replacement with residential units, although the number is not yet decided. These are locally listed by Barnet Council but this would not prevent their removal
- In February 2014 the former Postmans' Sorting Office, and until 2009 the Oakleigh Carpet Warehouse, at number 25 Oakleigh Road North was demolished and a four storey block of nine flats will be built with parking for 14 cars
- In June 2014, plans were announced for the demolition of the B&Q store at 1187 High Road and the building of four blocks of flats (increasing in height northwards from three to four to five to six storeys) fronting on to the High Road. Behind these would be 25 three to four storey houses. So a total of 130 new homes would be built, but the surprising feature of the development is that only 117 car parking spaces would be provided. Access to the new development would be through a new road running parallel to Baxendale to the north and between the houses and the flats and exiting on to the High

Road directly opposite Friern Barnet Lane. When the initial plans were shown at a public consultation the overwhelming public opinion was that this was a seriously flawed plan because of its effect on traffic levels and parking problems in the area

- In July 2014 a planning application was submitted for the conversion of three further office blocks in High Road, Whetstone into flats. Euro House (number 1394-1400, Turnberry House (number 1404) and Brook Point (number 1406) would then have 40 residential units
- In July a planning application was submitted for the conversion of the first floor of number 1324-1326 (above Amy's Hardware) from office space to 3 residential units

It is worth noting that full planning permission is not required for the conversion of offices into flats, as it not deemed a "change of use" so there could be many more such schemes, particularly as the population of the London Borough of Barnet is due to rise from the present 361,000 to 394,000 by 2031.

Anyone wishing to exit from Friern Barnet Lane northwards on to the A1000 (the High Road) will know that this particular junction is notorious for congestion, with sometimes ten to fifteen cars at a time trying to perform this manoeuvre. The Sweets Way and B&Q developments could only exacerbate the situation. A proposal for the conversion of the former Whetstone Police Station into a Jewish school (without any parking spaces) could increase traffic flows even further in mornings and afternoons. It is believed that Barnet Council is considering the installation of traffic lights at this junction although the A1000 comes under the jurisdiction of Transport for London who would have to agree to this.

So, to sum up, if all the plans were approved there would be provision for probably around 700 extra homes in Whetstone, with at the very least another 1700 extra population and an untold number of extra cars. When the developments taking place at North Finchley on the site of the former Furnitureland store (60 flats) and the Metropolitan Police Garage (139 flats and 10 houses) and the possible development of the former Old Owens Sports Ground in Chandos Avenue are taken into consideration the whole area is set for massive changes.

A FUTURE RAIL LINK?

With the largest construction project in Europe, Crossrail, due to be completed in 2018, plans are now being laid for Crossrail 2. While Crossrail itself runs west to east (from Reading to Shenfield and Abbey Wood) Crossrail 2 would follow a north-south route across London.

At the moment the exact route is still a matter of conjecture but it could run from Cheshunt to Tooting via Tottenham Hale and then via either Dalston Junction or Hackney and would include stations at Angel, King's Cross, Tottenham Court Road and Victoria. One proposal is that a branch of the line would connect Seven Sisters to Turnpike Lane and Alexandra Palace. Recent proposals are for an extension from Alexandra Place to New Southgate, using the existing Great Northern line. The Alexandra Palace station would be located underground, and a depot for trains for the new line would be sited on railway land at New Southgate.

If Crossrail 2 ever came to fruition it would considerably improve journey times from New Southgate to Central London. Experience has shown that new rail or tube lines lead to increases in property prices, so the local area could be in for even more of a boost. On the down side, Crossrail 2 is unlikely to be completed until the early 2030s, so most of us won't be around to see it!

HORSHAM AVENUE STREET PARTY

On Saturday 21 June 2014 the residents of Horsham Avenue had a street party to commemorate the fact that it was one hundred years since the first house was built there. Barnet Council had agreed to the street being closed from 12.00am to 5.00pm which enabled various events to take place down the centre of the road in complete safety. As well as children's games there was a tug-of-war, line dancing and Indian dancing and communal singing. Food and drink was provided by the residents themselves.



The tug-of-war was won every time by the team pulling downhill!

The Society had a stall and as well as displaying our various publications, we had prepared a special 12 page publication which not only gave a history of Horsham Avenue but also gave snippets of what life was like in 1914. The party was attended by Theresa Villiers, the local MP, and also the Mayor of Barnet, Councillor Hugh Rayner, and it was an excellent example of the community spirit at work with people from different backgrounds all joining in and having a great time.

PRONUNCIATION REVISITED

by David Berguer

You may recall that in the April 2013 issue of the Newsletter I was complaining about the incorrect pronunciation of Athenaeum Road on London buses. Well, I think I may have found the solution.

On Sunday 22 June 2014 Regent Street was closed from Oxford Circus to Piccadilly Circus to make way for the *Year of the Bus Cavalcade*. Transport for London had arranged for 48 buses to be parked along the middle of the street, ranging from an 1829 horse bus, complete with real horses, to the very latest hydrogen and hybrid electric vehicles, including the New Routemaster, otherwise known as the Boris bus.

It was on one of these that TfL had arranged for the public to meet Emma Hignett, who is responsible for making the recorded announcements that are now a feature on all of TfL's 700 routes in the capital. I took the opportunity of asking Emma where she got her strange pronunciation of "Atheeeeeneum Road" from and she explained that when she was doing the recordings she was sat in front of a computer screen and she merely read out the words as they appeared. Sometimes she did not know how to pronounce certain words but was told: "Say what you think it is and we can correct it later". She was actually recording something like 7000 street names in a two hour period, so time was critical.



Emma, the face behind the voice

After I pointed out how Athenaeum should be pronounced ("Atherneeum") she entered the details of the routes concerned into her smart phone and promised that it would be corrected, although she could not say when. I am glad to say we parted the best of friends!

A LOOK BACK IN TIME

One of the visitors to our photographic website, Robert Carter, has uploaded a number of photographs of Friern Barnet and district, some of which were taken in the

1880s. They give an idea of just how rural the area then was, when the population was a mere 6400.



Frenchman's Farm in Friern Barnet Lane around 1880

You can view all of Robert's images by going on to our photographic website (www.friern-barnet.com) and clicking on "Contributors" at the head of the page and then clicking on "Robert Carter". They are well worth looking at as most of them have never been seen before and they offer a fascinating glimpse of the past.

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