



The Friends of Church Farmhouse Museum

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2010
No. 48



175 YEARS OF BRENT RESERVOIR

This exhibition on the Welsh Harp was very well-received, as it revealed the fascinating story of what was in the late 19th Century one of the most popular recreation areas for Londoners, and which is now a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The exhibition was augmented by the fine wildlife photographs of local resident Liz Barrett.

The show was something of a new departure for Church Farm, as it was designed, by Hugh Petrie, as a travelling exhibition. In the past, our exhibitions have always been 'one-offs', to be seen only at Church Farm. This pattern is changing. *175 Years of Brent Reservoir* is currently on loan to the London Canal Museum, and it will be shown in the Summer at the Welsh Harp Environmental Centre and later at Brent Museum. Our current main exhibition, *Dreams of Flight*, (see over) could also easily transfer to other venues. We intend to revise and expand two previous travelling exhibition - *Black History in Barnet* and *Roma and Traveller History in Barnet* - and make those freely available to other organisations, too. Hugh is also planning a travelling exhibition on *Middlesex and Domesday Book*, which will also be offered to other Museums in North London.

We hope that these exhibitions will help to raise the profile of the Museum outside its immediate area.

'A HOST OF GOLDEN DAFFODILS...'

The front flower-beds at the Museum looked particularly attractive this Spring, thanks to the efforts of the very small but very enthusiastic gardeners of St Mary's (8th Hendon) Beaver Scouts, who planted daffodils here last year, under the supervision of Irene Hennessy. Well done, Beavers!

TEDDY BEAR TRAIL

As popular as ever, this has grown to include thirteen bears, now including 'Bertie'. Bertie was given to us by a little girl who loved the trail so much that she wanted her second-best bear to be part of it.

PRIVATE VIEW:

175 YEARS OF BRENT RESERVOIR

Held on Sunday 17 January, this was quite a grand affair, featuring not one, but two Mayors - Cllr Brian Coleman, Mayor of Barnet, and Cllr Jim O'Sullivan, Mayor of Brent, councillors and officers from both boroughs, and representatives of many organisations connected with the Welsh Harp. There was a very good turn-out from the Friends, as well. As ever, the private view was admirably catered by Irene Hennessy, and our guests from Brent complimented the Museum on the high standard of its hospitality. Altogether, a most enjoyable and successful event.

NEW ARRIVALS

Congratulations to Hugh Petrie who became the proud father of twin girls in January. Hugh, his wife Zoe, and daughters Abigail and Rose, are all doing well, although Hugh has resigned himself to having no sleep for the next few years..

WELCOME...AND FAREWELL

A warm welcome to Mike Fahey, the new Divisional Manager of Barnet's Adult Library Services, who has responsibility for the Museum and the Archives. Mike has already attended meetings of the Friends' Committee, and Friends can look forward to seeing Mike at future Museum events.

Welcome, too, to new Friends Ms Amanda Peri, Ms Margaret Holman and Cllr John Hart.

All good wishes to Ann Taylor, who, as Heritage Assistant, worked at both the Archives and the Museum. Ann has moved on to be a Library Assistant for Barnet.

GRANT

Church Farm has been fortunate enough to win yet another grant from the MLA - this time for £6,000. The money will go towards the Summer events, the creation of new travelling exhibitions, and the updating of the Museum's outreach programme for schools and for old people's homes.

RIP

Graham Hutchings (1921- 2009)

It is with deep regret that I must report the death of Graham Hutchings, former Deputy Chairman and Chairman of the Friends. Friends will remember him with fondness. After Graham stepped down from the chairmanship, commitments to his church and to community work, and, latterly, increasing ill-health, meant that he could only rarely attend Friends' events. However, I know that Graham, a dedicated local historian, never lost his enthusiasm for the Museum. Our sincere sympathies go to his family. (At Graham's memorial service in February, David Bicknell represented the Friends, and Yasmine Webb attended on behalf of Barnet's Archives & the Museum.)

Martin Cragg (1961- 2010)

Martin Cragg, who has died tragically young of cancer, really should have been a full-time employee of the Museum. Friends will remember meeting Martin at Museum events. For the past twenty-five years he carried out all Church Farm's transportation (Martin and I shifted everything from 1920s gas-cookers from Neasden to 18th Century oil-paintings from Warwickshire) and he organised the many moves of the Museum's stores. Martin built displays for exhibitions (including the copper in the Museum scullery) and refurbished our well in the garden, installed the memorial benches, and constructed the Maze. Martin could, with unflinching good humour, turn his hand to anything, and his contribution to the Museum is all around. He was a remarkable man, and he will be much missed. Our sincere sympathies go to his widow Alison and son Charlie.

BARNET & CHAVILLE: TWIN TOWNS FOR 50 YEARS

Barnet is twinned with eight towns abroad, and the twinning with Chaville, a small town on the edges of Paris, near Versailles, is one the oldest of these arrangements. Our small exhibition showed not only the municipal connections, but also the many and varied educational, cultural, sporting and indeed, personal, links between the two places over the past half-century, and which still thrive today. (Barnet has a road named 'Chaville Way'; in 2012 there will be a 'rue Barnet' in Chaville!)

DREAMS OF FLIGHT: HENDON AERODROME 1910-1925

The exhibition marks the historic victory of Louis Paulhan in the London-Manchester Air Race of 1910. Paulhan, who took off from Hendon, covered the distance in little more than half the specified time of 24 hours, and won the £10,000 prize. One of Paulhan's rivals in the race was Claude Grahame-White, and *Dreams of Flight* reveals how Grahame-White's vision and energy made Hendon the centre of British aviation in the early 20th Century. The exhibition features striking photographs from Barnet's Archives, the Royal Air Force Museum, the Royal Aero Club, and 'Memories' picture shop in Hendon. (Due to unforeseen problems *Dreams of Flight* started late, and it must end on 9 May, but I do hope that you will get a chance to see what all our visitors are calling an enthralling show.)

350TH ANNIVERSARY

Plans for the anniversary celebrations during the Summer are falling into place. The core exhibition, on the story of the building - as centre of a busy hay and dairy farm, as dwelling and as museum, and tentatively entitled *A House on a Hill: 350 Years of Church Farm, Hendon* - will run from 29 May to 18 October.

Supporting the exhibition, we shall have a 'Living History Day' (generously funded by the Friends) in the garden in July, with re-enactments of scenes from everyday life in the 1600s; a series of talks, placing Church Farm in the context of national and local history; and, we hope, an evening of 17th Century music.

Hendon & District Archaeological Society and University College, London Institute of Archaeology will once again, with pupils from local schools, be digging in the Museum garden in July; then HADAS & UCL (using CFM as a base) will move on to excavate the WWII public air-raid shelters close by in Sunny Hill Park.

Children visiting will be invited to draw or paint the Museum, and we shall display their pictures during the exhibition. Thanks yet again to Brenda Faris, there will be new displays within our exhibition of playthings past, *The Moving Toyshop*.

It will be a busy and, I trust, an interesting Summer. Please keep your fingers crossed for decent weather.