



The Friends of Church Farmhouse Museum

NEWSLETTER

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THE EYE OF CHILDHOOD

Our Summer exhibition (ends 27 September) looks at the many children's writers and artists, past and present, who have connections with Barnet Borough, from Lewis Carroll to Spike Milligan. The Private View for the exhibition, held on 7 June in the presence of Barnet's new Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayoress, was, despite quite appalling weather, a great success. Whilst enjoying the as ever first-rate refreshments provided by Irene Hennessy, Friends were pleased to meet authors and illustrators featured in the show: Katharine Holabird and Helen Craig, creators of the 'Angelina Ballerina' books; Constance Boyle, writer and illustrator of the 'Little Owl' series; Glen Petrie (father of Hugh) who wrote 'Lucy and the Pirates'; and local poet Robin Hanley. Descendants of the late artists Frank Horrabin and Raymond Sheppard also attended.

Do come along and see the exhibition, which offers youngsters the chance to write their own stories and poems, or illustrate their favourite tales, and find just how much our area has contributed to children's literature.

GR

HUGH GRANT?

We have just heard that the Museum's bid for a grant of £2000.00 from the MLA for a new project, to be run jointly by Church Farm and Barnet's Archives & Local Studies, has been successful. The plan is to provide local businesses with historic photographs of their premises, in exchange for them permanently displaying specially-designed posters publicizing both Museum and the Archives. The project is based on an original idea of Heritage Officer Hugh Petrie's. Congratulations to Hugh!

MIDSUMMER STRAWBERRY EVENING

Friends are reminded that this ever-popular event will this year be held on Thursday 25 June. I look forward to seeing everyone at the Museum - please bring some decent weather with you.

GYPSY ROMA AND TRAVELLER EXHIBITION

June is now celebrated nationally as Gypsy Roma and Traveller Month. Church Farmhouse Museum, in conjunction with Ethnic Minority Achievement, the Traveller Education Trust and other local organisations, mounted a small exhibition (on display simultaneously at Hendon and Chipping Barnet Libraries and at Edgware Hospital through June 2009) detailing the many historic connections between Barnet Borough and the Gypsy Roma and Traveller community. Barnet Fair has been a major event in the community's calendar since the 18th Century; in the 1880s Henry 'Inky' Stephens of Avenue House, Finchley, successfully campaigned in Parliament against a Bill which would have outlawed living in caravans; and Finchley was so regularly frequented by Travellers that the area once had place-names associated with them.

The exhibition will be made available for local schools to borrow, free of charge, during June 2010 .

HP

MEMORIAL TREE

The Museum garden has a new tree, paid for by donations from his friends, in memory of Hendon resident Rhys Davies, who died tragically young in 2008. At the suggestion of the Curator (a fellow Welshman), his widow has planted a mountain ash, as the valleys of our native South Wales are home to so many of these beautiful trees.

EXCAVATIONS IN THE GARDEN

HADAS and University College London Institute of Archaeology will be following up their fruitful excavations in the Museum garden in 2008 with a new dig this Summer. Do come along and see the archaeologists working with children from Hendon and St Mary's schools from 29 June to 10 July and again during the week of 13 July.

GR

RIP

Liz Holliday (1946- 2009)

Liz Holliday's abilities as a leader were recognised early when she was made Head Girl at Henrietta Barnett School. She excelled in music and literature and continued this interest all her life.

After school she followed her father's footsteps into librarianship. To her regret she was several decades too early to realise her secret desire to become a fighter pilot.

After qualifying she worked at Barnet library as a Reference Librarian but soon gained promotion becoming a Branch Librarian, then Librarian-in-Charge of the Housebound Reader service.

Later she took on management of the museum service, a role that dovetailed neatly her love of history and a strong creative talent. She really enjoyed this aspect of her career and worked hard with Gerrard on the design and display of exhibitions with the limited budget available.

The service was never far from her thoughts and I remember whilst on holiday on the Greek island of Samos we visited a local museum. Having viewed the exhibits I retreated to a shady courtyard and an ice cream where I was joined some considerable time later by a gleeful Liz waving a sketch plan of the museum's lighting system for their display cabinets: elements of which were duly incorporated into future plans for Church Farmhouse Museum.

Liz was instrumental in establishing the Friends of Church Farmhouse Museum. She served as the first Secretary of the organisation, but felt strongly that, as an independent voice of support for the Museum, it should not be represented by a serving council officer. Liz took early retirement from Barnet libraries in 1998 and was given a Life membership of the Friends in recognition of her work.

In retirement, she threw herself into the village life of Chipperfield, serving as Chairman of the Parish Council, Treasurer of the Evening WI and joint editor of the Chipperfield News. She enjoyed working on her allotment and walking her dogs, and had a fulfilling, and indeed hectic, life.

It was a shock to all when she was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in December 2008 but although the long-term prognosis was not good no-one expected her sudden death just days after she had performed in the spring concert of the Chipperfield Choral Society.

Friends, former colleagues from Barnet libraries (including Gerrard & Rose Roots, and David Bicknell who also represented the Friends of the Museum) and villagers, packed the Chipperfield Parish Church in April at a Thanksgiving service for Liz's life. It was a fitting tribute to such a talented individual who will be missed by us all.

Mary Ross

FILM FUN

The Museum was used as a location for BBC TV's The One Show in February for a piece about a new book on the history of 'Lonely Hearts' advertising. The dining room and garden featured two actors playing Victorian lovers who meet through newspaper personal ads. The book's author was also interviewed - actually in the sitting room of the Curator's own lovely north-west London home, as the original location plans for this part of the programme fell through at the last minute!

I still have no confirmed date for transmission of the episode of Cash in the Attic filmed at Church Farm last year. Watch this space.

DOLLS' HOUSES

Our Spring exhibition featured dolls' houses and furniture recently - and most generously - donated by Brenda Faris, along with two dolls' houses put on permanent loan to the Museum by a local resident, whose father made the houses for her in the 1930s.

This brief but charming show attracted lots of families during the Easter holidays.

THE MOVING TOYSHOP

The Museum's permanent exhibition of toys and games, based on the marvellous collections of Friends Brenda Faris and Irene & Mark Cornelius, has new displays for the Summer, and now offers older children the opportunity to make their own toys out of Lego or Lott's Bricks. (Lott's Bricks, once made just up the road in Bushey, were a famous construction toy of the 1930s.)

'IF YOU GO DOWN TO CHURCH FARM TODAY...'

Hiding in the Museum kitchen, laundry room and dining room are ten, named teddy bears, and children are invited to find them all (and so win a very, very small bear). This Teddy Bear Trail was originally just for the Easter holidays, but proved so popular with young - and not so young - visitors that it has been made a permanent feature.

GR