



Chair's Roundup

National politics

The new government is looking reasonably good for libraries. Almost the first thing the **Secretary of State for Culture, Jeremy Hunt**, did was assert that his department's budget should not be cut by a greater proportion than other departments. This is a great improvement on cuts in the past, when culture was more-or-less automatically expected to suffer disproportionately. **The junior minister responsible for libraries, Ed Vaizey**, has given a lot of attention to the concerns of library campaigners over the past couple of years, when he was the shadow minister. He appears to be genuinely supportive and has come up with some fairly specific policy proposals. These look distinctly more promising than the previous government's Modernisation Review published shortly before the election. www.culture.gov.uk



Local Politics

The election results were much as expected. In particular, our supporter, **Carol Boucher**, was elected as one of the Herne Hill Ward councillors. She has already mentioned that she looks forward to working with the Friends, of which she is a long-standing member. The only real surprise locally was in Thurlow Park Ward, where **Irene Kimm** was not re-elected. She has worked extremely hard on behalf of the community. Your committee have written to thank her for her past support of the library and the Friends.

Your committee, along with many, many other people involved in culture in Lambeth were hoping that **Rachel Heywood** would continue to be the Cabinet Member for Culture. That hope has been disappointed. In the new administration, Rachel has the Communities and Community Safety portfolio and **Florence Nosegbe**, who is a councillor for Brixton Hill and not, I think, well known in Herne Hill has the Culture portfolio. Your committee look forward to getting to know and working with her.

**Florence
Nosegbe**



Council officers have put a lot of work into preparing a strategy document for cultural services in Lambeth. This is due to be considered by the new administration shortly and will then be published for public discussion. Your committee expect to be active in the discussions in so far as they relate to libraries. This may all sound terribly boring but it is important for Lambeth to have a proper strategy for libraries to provide some stability of approach and to minimise the possibility of half-baked initiatives like the Transformational Review, of a couple of years ago, being sprung on us. The current indications are that the new strategy will not involve major changes to the library service. It has been made clear from the outset that the new strategy will “not address well” the poor physical condition of the council’s buildings, which will have to be tackled separately.

“Lambeth’s Edwardian Splendours”



This gorgeously illustrated book about Lambeth’s Edwardian buildings has been published by Lambeth Archives and an organisation that the Friends belong to, the Lambeth Local History Forum. It was launched on Wednesday 19th May at an enthusiastic gathering at the Carnegie, which is, of course, one of the Splendours. After a witty and informative introduction by Jon Newman of Lambeth Archives, the book’s main author, Edmund Bird, gave an excellent slide presentation about the book. The launch was preceded and followed by a soirée for which the Friends provided much-appreciated wine, soft drinks and nibbles. We had a lot of compliments about the Friends’ work to improve the library, especially the creation of the Reading and Wildlife Garden. About 105 people attended. They all seemed to enjoy themselves and about three dozen copies of the book were sold, confirming that they were genuinely impressed.

Gardens

The gardens look really good and the Friends can look forward to proudly showing them to visitors on the Saturday of Open Garden Squares Weekend (12th June, 10am-5pm). Other local gardens taking part include Windrush Square, Brockwell Park Community Greenhouses, South London Botanical Institute and Dulwich Picture Gallery. All are well worth visiting. Details can be found at www.opensquares.org and on our notice board in the library’s entrance lobby.

Our regular gardening sessions continue on the first Saturday of each month and we also need volunteers for a rota to water the garden over the coming months.

Volunteers

More helpers are always needed for other activities including events, so if you can find some time to spare, please let me or another member of the committee know. As well as Open Garden Squares Weekend, coming up on Saturday 26th June from 1 to 4pm is the Friends of Ruskin Park Fete and Sports Day, at which we will need people to man a stall to give out publicity about the library, the Friends, our clubs and other activities.

My email is foclchair@gmail.com and my telephone number is 020 7274 7008. Notes can be left for me in the Friends’ tray in the library.

Contributions to the newsletter e.g. writing up an event you attend, would also be greatly appreciated. In this connection please contact Liz, the editor, whose details are on the back page.

Stephen Carlill, Chair

LETTER FROM AMERICA

A little while ago the committee received a very supportive letter from Dr Tom Madden, who is one of the Friends although he now lives in the USA. Some of the matters he mentions will be of interest to many other members and we are therefore setting out extracts from the letter together with comments from our Chair, Stephen Carlill.

Tom writes:

"... regarding the chairman's page in the current issue, it seems unlikely that supporters of the Carnegie could raise the funds to make up the loss of funding; but could surely make a decent fund for a skilful advertising campaign. We would contribute.

When I was in practice in Queens Road, there was a Carnegie Library at Nunhead, with similar architecture. There was one in Paddington. I suspect many, if not most of London's villages, had one. I can't help wondering if your library could unite them all to get together to preserve a common legacy.

Also I wonder whether Carnegie's vast fortune doesn't still exist as a foundation or charity which could be appealed to for major help (financial and/or prestigious support).

PS it would be nice to see the Carnegie become the community centre for green initiatives, community gardens, slow food, environmental concerns. It already has many characteristics of this at the moment. Perhaps, on library days, local gardeners, bee-keepers, artisans could reserve time and space for meetings?"

Stephen writes:

Andrew Carnegie paid for 660 public libraries in the U.K. The money for every single one of these was given to a local authority on the strict understanding that that local authority would thereafter provide all the funds needed for the library. His will provided substantial endowments which still exist but these do not benefit libraries. If memory serves me correctly, their main purposes are promoting World peace and expanding university education.

The Friends' committee share Carnegie's view that it is for Lambeth Council to budget the money needed to provide a good service at the Carnegie and we continually express this view to local politicians and senior council officers. We do this direct and through two umbrella organisations. These are the Friends of Lambeth Libraries, which comprises the Friends' groups of individual Lambeth libraries, and the Lambeth Local History Forum, which is concerned with heritage matters throughout the borough. This is time consuming but costs very little. Additionally, your committee keep funds in hand for expenses in the event that we have to fight to keep our library.

The main focus of our attention has to be Lambeth Council. Carnegie libraries in other boroughs are not directly relevant. All nine of Lambeth's public libraries were originally built with money from private donors. All the donors had the same aim of establishing libraries which Lambeth

would then run at the public's expense and so no real distinction can be made between the various donors when working for the future of the libraries. Every Lambeth library is a bequest to be celebrated by adequate public funding and good stewardship for the benefit of current and future generations.

We aim to make the library as much of a hub of the community as we possibly can, consistent with its character as a library. Small groups of people happily meet and chat both in the building and in the Reading and Wildlife Garden. More would be welcome, and doubly welcome if they will help with the gardening. They do not need to book space or make any payment.

SHAKESPEARE UNITED



The last newsletter informed Friends that we had become involved with the organisation known as 'Shakespeare United' and that there would be a gathering in the library to launch what we hoped would be a series of events leading up to the Shakespeare-oriented celebrations in Olympic year. It was, like all our events, well publicised and an encouraging attendance resulted with two visitors coming from the wilds of Hammersmith!

In the gallery, information about Shakespeare's life and work was displayed, with a groaning tea table in good view to encourage maximum participation. At 2.30, the programme began with one of the advertised 'silly games', in which guests formed groups of different sizes when the titles of his history plays were called out, so that a call of 'Richard II' called for groups of two and 'Henry V' for fives. Don't ask about 'Henry VI, Part 2'.

After the first nervous moments, the visitors began to scamper from group to group with subdued squeaks and a good deal of pushing and shoving, finishing in groups of eight to tackle questions about Shakespeare's life and work, in which cheating took place on a large scale. Favourite and less popular characters and plays were chosen, but only two brave or foolish people got round to illustrating his more unlikely phrases, for example 'Gentlemen, we sit too long on trifles'.

After a tea break, in which the garden could be viewed, the group re-convened and became a little more serious, spending about half an hour discussing future activities, which proved very fruitful. Several interesting and practical suggestions were collected for future consideration, which, with the guests' interests, recorded in the visitors' book, could form the basis of our three-year programme.

The visitors had been asked to bring readings from Shakespeare's works to share and at the end of the session six extracts were performed, much admired and applauded.

The Friends of Carnegie Library hope to host three or four more gatherings this year, to coincide with tea-stall and gardening days, building towards something special in 2012, when the sporting Olympiad will just have to take second place!

Our heartfelt thanks to all who helped before and on the day, particularly to Frances Lamb for the publicity, and Ceres Dandridge for the mountain of work she got through. We regret that Annie Gelly could not attend as she was organising another Shakespearean

event in St Paul's, Covent Garden, but we think she would have been pleased. We wish the Bard a very happy 446th birthday, and are confident he would have enjoyed his party.

Look out for more information about forthcoming events. We will advertise them as they are planned and hope you will attend, 'Complete Works' in hand.

Bob Goodrich, with interventions from Ceres Dandridge aka 'Shakespeare's Apprentice'

SUMMER EVENTS

Friday 4th June 11am-12pm: **Children's songs, dancing and stories about the Gypsy, Roma and traveller traditions** – Carnegie Library

Wednesday 9th June 7.30pm: **Magnificent Maps: Power, Propaganda and Art (Herne Hill Society)** – Herne Hill United Church Hall, Red Post Hill.

Saturday 12th June 10am-5pm: **Open Garden Squares Weekend** – Carnegie Library Garden. Details in www.opensquares.org.

Saturday 26th June 1-4pm: **Friends of Ruskin Park Fete and Sports Day** – Ruskin Park. Fun and games, stalls and music in the bandstand.

Sunday 1st August 2.30pm: **Herne Hill Heritage Trail, Historic Highlights (guided walk by Robert Holden)** – meet Herne Hill Station.

Every Saturday starting 5th June 3-4pm: **Bandstand Concerts** – Ruskin Park bandstand.

First Saturday of the month 2-4pm: **Garden Work Days** – Carnegie Library. (5th June, 3rd July, 7th August). Followed by free tea and cake.

First Saturday of the month 2.30-4.30pm: **Teatime** – Carnegie Library. (NB 12th June, 3rd July, 7th August). Tea, coffee, soft drinks and delicious home-made cakes for sale.



First Monday of the month 7-8.30pm: **Book Group**, Carnegie Library. (7th June, 5th July, 2nd August). Ask the librarians for the current book.

Third Wednesday of the month 10am-12pm: **Silver Surfers** – Carnegie Library. Come to this 50+ group and learn how to use the internet with free tea, coffee and chat too.

Every Friday 10.30am-noon: **Storytime for under 5s** – rhymes, stories and crafts – Carnegie Children's Library

Every Saturday - 3-5pm **until 10th July: Chess Club** – Carnegie Library Gallery. For experienced or novice players of any age. Free entry and tuition.

VISIT THE LIBRARY!!

Don't forget 'Use it or Lose it'.



OPENING HOURS:

Mon	1-8pm
Wed	10am-6pm
Fri	10am-6pm
Sat	9am-5pm

188 Herne Hill Road, Tel . 7926 6050

BOOK ORDERING SERVICE

If the book you want is not on the shelf, use the ordering service in the library or via <http://libraries.lambeth.gov.uk/TalisPrism/>

DVDs

There is a good selection of DVDs for adults and children to rent.

CDs and TAPES

The Carnegie stocks a good range of talking books, language courses etc.

INTERNET

Don't forget that the Carnegie has free internet access for all! First fifteen minutes without booking but see librarian for longer.

INFORMATION AND EVENTS

Browse through the comprehensive selection of leaflets in the entrance hall and look out for useful information on the notice boards.

THE GALLERY SPACE

June: exhibition about the work of Ruskin Readers. To book the space see library staff.



Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors or quoted sources and not necessarily those of the FoCL Committee. Contributions to the Newsletter are always welcome. Please send letters, articles or information to 139 Herne Hill Road, SE24 OAD or email elizocho@hotmail.co.uk

