

Friends of The Durning Library

NEWSLETTER

No 68, November 2015

Check out our website: www.durninglibraryfriends.org.uk

e-mail: friendsofdurning@gmail.com



Future Monday Events

Normally the third Monday in the month **6.45 for 7.15pm** at the Durning Library. Light refreshments. Everyone welcome. No admission charge, but a £2 donation towards costs is invited.

Monday 7 December: Winter party. Music starts at 7pm – we are to be entertained by a young brass ensemble from Archbishop Sumner School with carols. Drinks and nibbles, and raffle.

NOTE earlier start time of 7.00pm

Monday 18 January, 2016: Life in Valhalla: a scientist at the World Bank

When long-term Kennington resident Dr Josephine Hykin joined the World Bank in Washington, she found it was challenging, exciting and rewarding work. She helped universities, research institutes and civil servants to realise their projects in 18 countries. Her stories give a flavour of the diversity of work in this multi-faceted development agency.

Monday 15 February: The Maverick Mountaineer

Local author Robert Wainwright will inspire us with tales from his new book on the maverick mountaineer, chemist, inventor George Finch (father of the actor Peter Finch). In 1922 Australian born George Ingle Finch successfully reached the highest point of Everest, a record held for 30 years, and saved his climbing companion. Despite or perhaps because of Finch's unconventional character and his obsession with oxygen for climbing, he was removed from Mallory's tragic 1924 attempt on Everest.

Monday 21 March: The River Effra's vanishing act

Jon Newman from Lambeth Archives uncovers the sorry story of the River Effra, once a sparkling stream running the length of Lambeth but long since downgraded to underground storm relief sewer. He maps its course from the high ground of Norwood through Herne Hill, Brixton and Kennington to the Thames at Vauxhall.

Monday 18 April: AGM

2016 Diary dates: 18 Jan, 15 Feb, 21 Mar, 18 Apr, 16 May, 20 June, 18 July, 19 Sep, 17 Oct, 21 Nov, 12 Dec

FORTHCOMING LIBRARY EVENTS

Reading Group. The Durning Library Reading Group normally meets in the library on the fourth Wednesday of the month from 7- 8.30pm. All adults are welcome to discuss the book of the month, which is available free from the Library, in a very informal atmosphere over wine and nibbles. A contribution of £1.50 towards refreshments is suggested. **For further information and future dates, contact Dale Arndell on 020 7926 8682 or e-mail: Darndell@lambeth.gov.uk.**

Future Dates: 27 Jan 2016.

Junior Chess and Board Games Free, every Saturday 2.30-4.30pm.

Computer workshop Every Friday, 10 -12.00. Please pre-book at the Library. **2015 dates:** 4,11 & 18 Dec. **2016 dates:** 8, 15, 22, 29 Jan, 5,12,19, 26 Feb, 4,11, 18 Mar.

Tea & coffee Mornings: Tuesdays, 10.30 – 11.30 for an informal cuppa, a chat and some books **Contact the Library for further information.**

Over 50s Group. Every 3rd Wednesday from 3.00 – 4.00pm. 16 Dec

**167 KENNINGTON LANE
SE11 4HF Tel 020 7926 8682**

Friends' Committee

Priscilla Baines *Chairman*
Kay Coombs *Secretary*
Jeremy Orme *Treasurer*

Elizabeth Barrott
Ruth Briant
Veronica Ledwith
Val Parker
David Tisdall

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Opening Hours

Monday 1.00 pm – 6.00 pm
Tuesday 10.00 am – 6.00 pm
Wednesday 10.00 am – 8.00 pm
Thursday closed
Friday 10.00 am – 6.00 pm
Saturday 9.00 am – 5.00 pm
Sunday closed

Library Staff

Michel Merson *Area Library Manager*
Dale Arndell *Durning Manager*
Audrey Hudson *Library Service Manager*

Friends of the Durning Library is a voluntary organisation which exists to promote and support our local library

Chairman's News

Update on Lambeth's Culture 2020 plans.

We emailed our members shortly before Lambeth's Oversight and Scrutiny Committee met on 10 November because two councillors – Tim Briggs (Conservative) and Scott Ainslie (Green) - had asked for the Culture 2020 report to be called in. That Committee decided by a narrow majority not to refer the report back to Cabinet, which meant that action to implement the report could go ahead. The first step for the Durning relates to the promised consultation about the choice of the Durning rather than Tate South Lambeth to be the interim 'town centre library' for the north of the borough for the next five to seven years.

On 12 November, Jane Edbrooke, the Cabinet member with responsibility for libraries, met representatives of both sets of Friends involved in the consultation (Durning and Tate South Lambeth). We were told that the consultations would be held from 23 November to 21 December, but the councillors and officials present could not answer our specific questions about the purpose of the consultations, who would be consulted and how, and who would take the relevant decisions once the result of the consultations was known. We were told on 19 November that, based on 'strong legal advice', there would be no further prior discussion on the consultation questionnaire, but that 'as a courtesy' we would be sent a copy 24-hours ahead of the start of the consultations. We actually received an electronic version on the day the consultations officially started (23 November).

In the meantime, the campaign to persuade the council to re-consider its decisions about libraries has continued. In advance of the OS Committee meeting, the march scheduled for 7 November took place and was attended by about 600 people. The Scrutiny Committee meeting itself was well attended, and the pressure from those opposed to the Culture 2020 report, while not succeeding in persuading the Committee to refer the report back to Cabinet, undoubtedly contributed to the Committee's formally asking questions about aspects of it, particularly the contract with Greenwich Leisure Ltd to manage three neighbourhood library buildings and the handling of the bid, led by Susanna Barnes, head of the library service, for a staff mutual trust to run the service. Since 10 November there have been numerous local meetings and a petition was presented by Laura Swaffield, as chair of the Friends of Lambeth Libraries, at a full council meeting on 18 November.

The council shows no signs of changing its mind; Councillor Edbrooke, and others, have continued to insist that savings have to be made and that there is no other source of funds for libraries, so the changes are essential. There is nothing to suggest a realistic prospect of a wholesale change for the better in Lambeth's finances nor in the council's high-level decisions about its priorities for allocating scarce resources.

The proposal for the Durning in the Culture 2020 report, that it should become the 'town centre library' for the north of the borough for the next five to seven years, funded and managed by Lambeth, and with some welcome improvements to access as proposed in the Options Appraisal, is a significantly better prospect for the Durning than was originally proposed. However, it remains subject to the council's commitment to a further consultation on its change of mind from the original proposal that Tate South Lambeth should be the interim town centre library for the north.

The consultation started on 23 November. The questionnaire is available on-line at www.lambeth.gov.uk/durning-and-tate-south-lambeth-librariesconsultation. Copies of the document with the questionnaire are enclosed for those who receive this Newsletter in hard copy. **We urge all our members to respond to this questionnaire, expressing support for the choice of the Durning, and to encourage all other library users to do the same, by the deadline of Monday 21 December.** If the outcome of this further consultation should lead to the council's reverting to its earlier decision, the prospects for the Durning will be grim.

Committee membership

Following the Cabinet's decision on the Culture 2020 report, Laura Swaffield, one of our founding committee members as well as chair of the Friends of Lambeth Libraries (FoLL) and vice-chair of the Friends of Tate South Lambeth, foresaw the possibility that conflicts of interest could arise from the various positions she holds. She therefore offered to resign from our committee, an offer that with great regret the Durning committee agreed to accept. Laura's resignation took effect on 18 November. She will be very much missed, but she will continue to chair FoLL and we hope she will continue to attend Durning events whenever she can. We owe her huge thanks for all she has done for the Durning over the years. **Priscilla Baines**

Recent Events

Monday 21 September: Beneath the water and the mud by Dr Fiona Haughey.

In September Dr Fiona Haughey advocated the attractions of Archaeology as a means of escaping life with teenagers. The Thames is a vibrant waterway which has changed its tidal range from 2m in Roman times to 8 m now and continues to give up its secrets, from hundreds of swords to medieval Pilgrims' badges and the shards of pottery which, of no economic interest to dredgers, were rejected by them and have become a boon to archaeologists. The joys of mud-larking are clearly many and various.

Monday 19 October: Meet Allan Wilmot.

At our October meeting we welcomed Mr Allan Wilmot who, with the help of Arthur Torrington, told us about his fascinating and varied life. Born in Kingston, Jamaica, in 1925, like many of his fellow countrymen during the Second war, he sailed to help the "Mother Country" and served in both the Royal Navy and the RAF, undertaking dangerous duties on a mine sweeper and with Air Sea Rescue. After a short post-war visit home he returned to England in December 1947 and encountered the changed world of "No blacks, no Irish, no dogs". Happily his life was transformed by music and the success brought by songs such as "I am a mole and I live in a hole", which are still remembered today.

Monday 16 November: The Duchy of Cornwall's estate in Kennington – Adshead Revisited

Nicholas Long's talk covered the history of 19th century redevelopment of the Manor of Kennington up to the completion of St Anselm's Church in 1933. He clearly explained how the Duchy Estate felt it was important to replace the old unsuitable buildings in the early 1900s with stylish flats to encourage appreciative tenants. He referred to the fascinating Fabian Society book "Round About a Pound a Week" by Maud Pember Reeves and Charlotte Wilson, 1913; a study of Lambeth families' relentless struggle to survive. The audience enjoyed recognising their own street from the many clear images that he showed us, such as Denny Street and Crescent, Chester Way, Courtenay Square. He outlined the designs of architects such as the Lutyens-influenced Coleridge, Adshead and the Regency- inspired Ramsey.