

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2015-16 Ilford Historical Society

It's been a good year for the Society as our membership and finances have stabilized but this was due to generous donations and grants- which we can hardly always rely on. This success was tempered by the sad death and loss of President Peter Wright and Miss Sadie Gomm, Membership Secretary who both died in May 2015. They were long-time founder members of the Society and many of our members, current and past, attended their funerals.

In June this year we've organized a special evening and talk to celebrate Peter's and Sadie's lives: "Ilford Since 1945", Redbridge Central Library, Thursday 9th June 2016, 7.30pm.

We have 52 members and average around 28 being present for our talks, but we only average 5 visitors per meeting which is disappointly low. The most successful 2015-16 talks so far were Bill George's talk on Ilford's Victorian builder Henry Ashmole, and Agincourt given by me. The Questionnaire results (see Newsletter article, April 2016) show that members are satisfied with what the Society provides and Ilford historical talks are still the most popular topics. Our largest outlay is rent (£470). 2nd is printing the Newsletter and programmes (£355) both brilliantly edited by Georgina Green, but as the Newsletter is excellent we don't want to cut it to save money. One of our donations was given specifically to keep the Newsletter going. Speaker's fees are up this year at £269 (3rd highest expenditure) which includes William Tyler's talk which cost £85. Members always want outside speakers but they are expensive and I have a limit on how much I can spend. Member's subscriptions only raised £598.

At our last committee meeting we discussed charging for the Newsletter: £1-£2, but for the coming year it will be offered free- the same as refreshments. So at present we have £2,600 in the bank which is good and healthy- and the committee and Treasurer John Sharrock recommend no change to our subs this year (just £12), though we have discussed raising visitor fees.

But changes are afoot. John Sharrock has resigned as Treasurer (though he will remain on the committee) so we seek a new money man and the committee are inviting Alan Banner to join the Society's committee.

Our website is working well and professionally administered by Christine Black with photos provided by Alan, but our publicity is in need of improvement. We get good publicity and coverage in the Ilford Recorder, and an IHS Facebook page wouldn't go amiss. Janet Seward and I took part in the Chadwell Heath History Fair, and Valentines May Fair- where our publicity display was poor.

We have had some success winning grants, and missed one. Right now we have an application in for a Redbridge Arts Grant. How lucky we will be is debatable.

I've given many talks and guided walks on behalf of Redbridge library service and they are also offering voluntary work for anyone who is interested to work in their Information & Heritage Department. Our committee member Carol Franklin has already taken up the offer.

Martin Fairhurst, another of our committee is organizing a tour of Ilford Hospital Chapel on May 13th as part of Local History Month.

Events coming up:

Thursday 20th April 2pm, Fullwell Cross Library: Protest, Riots & Rebellion in Ilford & Essex, £1.50p. (Ilford people are revolting!) Speaker: Jef Page.

Monday 9th May 7.30pm; Ilford Hospital Chapel.

Valentines Mansion: Diplapidation, Trepidation & Restoration, speaker Nigel Burch- our last talk of this season, part of Local History Month.

'The Streets of Ilford and their meaning', Thursday 14th July 2pm, Goodmayes Library; & a tour around Wanstead on 18th August, 2pm starting from The George opposite Wanstead tube station. Free.

Also a guided tour around St Mary's church, Ilford tbc, and maybe a tour of the House of Commons.

Our new 2016-17 programme is ready and Secretary Janet Seward leads off in September with Shakespeare, Mary Austin- a woman of substance- in October, & in November we will show archive film clips of Redbridge.

I want to thank the committee for all their hard work and help: Janet, John, Carol our Membership Secretary, and Martin, Harold Moth and Laurie Ford our committee members who provide shelter for us to hold committee meetings in their homes. We also thank Newsletter editor Georgina who also gets the programme printed, and Martin, Doreen and David Weller for organizing the Chapel and along with Richard Beckford making and serving the refreshments.

Jef Page, Chairman
Ilford Historical Society
April 2016.