

ILFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2011-12

It's been a good year for the Society in spite of President Peter Wright not being around and we said a sad farewell to long-standing members May Gullen and John Smith and excellent local author and speaker Pat Heron. Our membership is steady at 61, finances are good with £1,800 in the bank, the Committee has worked well and with the addition of our new Vice-President and Newsletter editor Georgina Green we've been able to revamp it, improve its presentation and we've even chosen a new Society logo. Doreen Weller edited the Newsletter - thanks to her and David- improving it and increasing its size, for over five years. It's still free to members and visitors - three issues a year, along with refreshments. We had three mayoral visits to our talks - a record for one year.

Improvements have been made to the Chapel including the opening of a rear wheelchair entrance named for Peter Foley. It opens onto the cul-de-sac and we hope members and visitors can make use of it.

The main theme for this year's programme was forests with talks by Georgina Green, Peter Adams, and Stephen Pewsey to come. The highlight of the talks was undoubtedly Roger Backhouse's multi-media Edwardian extravaganza in January featuring on-screen 'strictly come dancing' Edwardian style, and Martin Fairhurst tinkling away at the piano with sing-along a hymn. 78 were present - our best audience for 2 years, which was followed up by 49 in February for Dickens and 50 in March for Redbridge's Railways - with the trainspotter experts out in force checking every word! For a small membership this is excellent and shows the success of our member-speakers, keeping costs down and knowing their topics, good publicity and tapping into popular, well-supported subjects.

Our successful visits, organised by Secretary Janet Seward, were to All Hallows church by the Tower in October, the Fan Museum at Greenwich ("the loos were fantastic!"- Janet exclaimed) and the Jewish Museum in NW1, a report of which is in the April Newsletter along with a report from Roger who led a joint historical walk (5 miles!) with the Ramblers from Woolwich to Eltham.

Together we manned a stall at the East of London FHS fair at Stratford (Janet is their Secretary as well ours and organised their fair) and we will attend Chadwell Heath's, and Valentines Mansion's fairs. Our London trips are going well but it's about time we spread our wings a little with a trip exploring deepest, darkest Essex.

Currently we are organising **Olympic talks: Monday 11th June 7.30pm at the Chapel - The 1908 and 1948 London Olympics**, a talk by **Janet Seward; Monday 9th July, Valentines Mansion 7pm, The 1936 Berlin Olympics, speaker Jef Page**, each talk **only £2**. We hope members support our events through the summer.

Our new web site is well on the way to being completed. It is being created at no cost and it should benefit everyone by publicising us and what we offer.

Our 2012-13 programme is ready and strong on local topics: Aldborough Hatch, Barking Abbey, Seven Kings & Goodmayes, Sir Charles Raymond and Valentines, with national subjects featuring Jane Austen, and The Italian Boy.

Great Thanks to all the committee: Treasurer John Sharrock for sorting out past rent problems and looking after our money ensuring that subs' need not rise, Janet for arranging the visits, Membership Secretary Sadie Gomm for keeping track of our visitors and members on meeting nights and Martin for providing his digital projector for speakers to use. We need a better way of solving this irritation. Thanks to Doreen Weller for being our electrician ensuring we had light and power for our February talk! and Richard Beckford and Pat Chisholm for making the refreshments, making our evenings a social event.

Best Wishes to everyone

Jef Page, Chairman, IHS.

April 2012