

# Freshly ground heaven

MARIE-CHRISTINE O'CALLAGHAN

I grew up in a country where adults seem to drink qahwa morning, noon and night. This fragrant drink was served in pretty small cups and saucers and required magical preparation and skillful drinking. The preparation involved an unusual small pot with a long handle, and a spout, in which were mixed water, finely ground dark qahwa and sometimes sugar. These ingredients were carefully measured and even more carefully heated as a lack of care could result in the whole potion overflowing. The finished result was then delicately poured into the cups. There was also an art to drinking this qahwa as one sip too many would leave you with a mouthful of dregs.

The whole process was very much a social affair, while you could drink alone, you usually did it in a group, and, occasionally, someone in the group would be able to predict the future and the magic would continue. The saucer would be placed on top of the cup, and three horizontal circles would be executed then, a quick movement would turn the whole thing upside down thus bringing the qahwa grounds down the cup in interesting patterns which allowed the reader to interpret the shapes and see, perhaps, a meeting with a tall dark stranger.

Qahwa is Lebanese coffee. The Lebanese are the descendants of a long line of Arabic coffee drinkers. The word 'coffee' is itself ultimately derived from the Arabic qahwa. There is some debate as

to the origin of the Arabic word. One theory is that it can be traced to the Arabic verb qahā, meaning 'lack of hunger', a property attributed to coffee. Another is that it comes from the Kaffa region of Ethiopia where coffee plants thrive in the wild. Ethiopia is indeed considered to be the birthplace of the coffee plant and of coffee culture. It was discovered there as long ago as the ninth century and today, over 12 million people in Ethiopia are involved in the cultivation and picking of coffee.

Coffee was always controversial. In the Islamic countries they tried to declare coffee an intoxicant forbidden by Islamic law, but the moralists fought a losing battle, they were opposed by well-educated coffee-drinkers from the highest ranks of the religious and political hierarchy and so, in 1857, Sheik Ansari Djezeri Hanball Abd-al-Kadir, could write: "Coffee is the common man's gold, and like gold it brings to every man the feeling of luxury and nobility."

Coffee first came to Britain in the 16th century and I, for one, am very grateful as mornings would not be the same without an ambrosial cup of coffee which as Talleyrand puts it is 'Black as the devil, hot as hell, pure as an angel, sweet as love'.



## WHAT'S NEW IN THE VIRTUAL MUSEUM?

# It's people that make the Suburb

JUDY SMITH

In the past few months, we have been putting together our Suffragette Collection to go into the Museum and by the time you are reading this it should be there for you to explore. We discovered, whilst exploring the lives of the remarkable people involved in the universal suffrage movement, that most of them also were leaders in other fields of achievement. Whether it was Rebecca West, the author and international journalist, Edith How Martyn who became the Director of the Birth Control Centre, Charles Vickery Drysdale, co-founder of The Institute of Physics or Margaret Grace Bonfield who became a Labour MP and the first female cabinet minister – along with many others.

We found that Henrietta Barnett's dream of a creative-lived

environment encouraged artists, writers, architects, actors, sporting personalities, academics, inventors, politicians and people of so many more professions to choose Hampstead Garden Suburb as their home.

We decided to concentrate and highlight the lives of the vast number of individuals using the People section of the Museum. You can search by the various categories and key facts on each person will be there, including where they lived in the Suburb.

Each category will have a full introduction and this will be an open collection of material which we can add to as we discover more remarkable residents and more information on their lives.

If you know of a Suburb resident who you think should be featured in our People section, do please tell us about them at [info@hgsheritage.org.uk](mailto:info@hgsheritage.org.uk).

Can you identify the former Suburb residents in the photos below? Answers in the next eNews.



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## Welcome to St Jude's

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