



SHOP OF THE MONTH

# Finchley Pet Stores

By Pamela Kent

Did you know that the world's richest man is a regular customer of one of East Finchley's small shops?

Well, the Sultan of Brunei does not exactly call in person at Finchley Pet Stores in Lincoln Road.

But every month his staff takes delivery of 12 boxes of cat food, four bags of rabbit food and a large cylinder of food for the carp which reside in palatial comfort at the Sultan's mansions in The Bishops Avenue and Winnington Road.

Never mind the mega size of the Sultan's empire, which processes thousands of bills every month; those from Peggy Darvill's pet shop always get paid on time!

**49ers**

Peggy and her husband opened their first pet shop in East Finchley 47 years ago, renting a very small area of another shop just past Barclays Bank. When the business grew they moved to Lincoln Road where Finchley Pet Stores has become one of the longest-trading establishments in the area.

The shop is stacked with every kind of pet food imaginable from bird seed to dog biscuits and, if she doesn't stock a particular item, Peggy will always point her customers in the right direction.

Apart from pet food, Peggy sells treats, toys and all kinds of accessories including a wide variety of dog leads, feeding bowls, cages, baskets and bedding. There is also a medical section to cater for the more common pet ailments such as worms and fleas.

Tropical fish are a very popular commodity and the shop stocks a wide variety, all kept in carefully controlled conditions with each breed separated to avoid confusion and fighting! Also in the livestock area are young budgies and, depending on what's available, kittens, gerbils and hamsters. But don't ask for mice! These are about the only animals Peggy has an aversion to.

**Simon stays**

Until a few years ago the shop had a resident cat named Simon who appeared one day and stayed for five years. He actually belonged to a lady in Leicester Road but decided that it was more convenient to live



(Pet) Food for thought - Peggy Darvill. Photo Sue Holliday.

where the food was. Peggy agreed with the owner to keep him. It was obvious that, after returning him on a number of occasions, he had really decided to dig his paws in.

Members of the cast of EastEnders often pop into the shop and Katie Boyle was a frequent customer before moving out of the area.

Everyone is welcomed into the shop with a smile and some just call in for a chat. Peggy's most unusual recent enquiry was for dry cleaning a pair of trousers - of course, as usual, the customer was pointed in the right direction.

**High on the hog**

Another unusual request came from a television presenter who wanted a collar and lead for a hedgehog. This was duly supplied but, Peggy hastens to add, not personally fitted.

Peggy has managed to look after the business almost single-handed since its beginning in 1949 and all the well-fed pets in the area will be pleased to know that she has no intention of retir-

ing. She has seen many changes in East Finchley over the years, but pets are increasingly a feature of family life and there will always be a need for shops like the Finchley Pet Stores. 1 Lincoln Parade, Lincoln Road. Open Monday to Wednesday and Friday from 8.30am to 6pm; Thursday 8.30 to 4pm and Saturday 8.30 to 5pm.

Editor's footnote: Surely the shop should qualify for the sign: "By appointment to the Sultan of Brunei" and carry his symbol?

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

# Hypocrisy begins at home...

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility  
These are mean and vicious times as our immoral leaders wrap themselves in the Shroud of Turin and rant on and on about how much more "Christian" they are than their opponents. The sound of John "Oh dear" Major pontificating about how only the Tories are on the side of righteousness when his government is up to its ears in sleaze gives hypocrisy a bad name. Saint Anthony of Blair claiming that God would vote "New Labour" just proves my point. Basically, politicians have less morals than the average cat. All they are after is another load of votes and a chance to screw it all up for the rest of us.

It's not as if they've got any ideas either. The whole moral agenda is being driven along by the tabloids and is being set by the widow of some school teacher who, quite clearly, has touched a chord with the complaining classes. What bugs me is what gives this woman some unique insight into modern society? Is it because she was married to the headmaster of a Catholic school? I hope not, but I do hear the sound of moral elephants trampling over our civil rights in the name of some spurious self-righteousness. The Tories are trying to seize the moral high ground and are going to set morality lessons in schools. Gillian Shepherd has already insisted that such things as the family and marriage should be central to this whole scam which would be further proof of their hypocrisy if it wasn't so frightening. She even went further and called for caning to be reintroduced and the only thing that surprised me about all this, was that Jack Straw didn't decry it for being too weak and demand public flogging for not doing your homework.

These moral elephants are probably going to advocate capital punishment, the outlawing of abortion and promote the hounding of gays and lesbians as part of building a whole new moral order. In other words, they are going to find scapegoats for what they have done in promoting in-

dividual greed above all else. Alright, so society as we used to know it is up shit creek and something needs to be done, but let's not return to the repressive 1950s, let's make damn sure that civil rights aren't eroded to win elections and let's remember Margaret Thatcher said there was no such thing as society and then set out to make sure that it was true.

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