



Coldfall Wood - Natural Beauty

by Daphne Chamberlain

East Finchley has London's best woodland walk! Coldfall Wood is the first choice of the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, taking pride of place above better-known and more glamorous spots.

Let's not beat about the bush. When I read this recently in the Evening Standard, I was astounded, incredulous, gob-smacked. Were they really referring to the same wood remembered by me as dark, gloomy, and visited only by dog walkers? I said as much to Will Farmer, one of Haringey's Conservation Officers. "Coldfall Wood!" he exclaimed. "It is a wonderful place!"

What are its wonders then? The answer is that there are many, but that they are only just being revealed again. Seven years ago it was indeed a sunless, overgrown and featureless spot, but it had become like that as a result of neglect.

Great Colefall, alias Finchley Coldfall near the common" is how it was described in 1645, "fall" at the end of its name means that it was a "managed" wood. Providing raw materials for building, tools and fuel.

Managing or coppicing of woods has been going on since the Iron Age. Selected trees and shrubs are cut down to ground level, the cut wood is used, and the stumps are allowed to regrow for several years before being re-cut. This is not only an economic practice. It also lets in light to the woodland floor, encouraging the growth of wild flowers and plants.

Flower Power

In 1990, when the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and Haringey's Conservation Unit inspected Coldfall Wood, no management had been carried out for more than 50 years. (all that had been done was the removal of dead wood.

Last, year after annual coppicing, they listed 140 species! Flowers growing there now had not been seen since last century. Some have germinated from long buried seed. "Look for the St. John's Wort," says Will, "And also for the pale sedge. That's very rare in London. Patches of bluebells are returning too." (N.B. Bluebells do not survive being picked or tramped on!)

Bird Life

Local gardeners get some indirect credit too. Ornamental speedwells and evening primroses probably migrated into the wood from outside, and then thrived in the new high light level. Bird and insect watchers may like to study woodpeckers, nuthatches, tree-creepers (birds which walk down tree trunks) and the very uncommon jewel beetle. This lives in dead oaks. The D shaped hole it makes in the wood gives it away.

Fired by Will's enthusiasm, I re-visited Coldfall Wood and was instantly converted. Yes, we do have an asset to shout about! It's now a pleasant, peaceful and interesting place and should be respected as part of our local history.

The main entrance to the wood is in Creighton Avenue. There is a local group called Friends of Coldfall Wood. If you would like to join them, or if you would just like to know more about London's ancient woodland, contact:- Will Farmer or David Bevan London Borough of Haringey Parks service, Bruce Castle Museum, Church Lane, London N17 8NU Tel: 0181 348 6005.

LETTERS

Lord Haw Haw

Dear Sir

I am currently researching the life of the wartime broadcaster, William Joyce ("Lord Haw Haw"). I would be grateful to hear from anyone who remembers listening to his broadcast's and the effect his speeches had on them or their families, or who knew him or his family when he lived in the London area. In fact any information, no matter how insignificant it may seem, would be appreciated. All replies will be acknowledged.

Derek Denton,
19 Butterworth St,
Chadderton, Oldham,
Lancs., OL9 0JL.

Young Talent

To The Editor 'Young Archer' Madam

What pure pleasure to read the delightful poem, 'Day and Night' by Myrto Williams. It is charming and such a contrast to the roughly chopped up sentences of the modern blank verse! More power to your pen Myrto. Let's have some more.

Miss Gwendolen Dale
Leopold Road, N2.

Editor's note:
Your wish is our command: See page 6 for more of Myrto's work.

Gardener Wanted

East Finchley Charity requires a Part-time Gardener for seasonal work. Own transport preferred £6.00 per hour plus expenses Phone 0181 444 1162.

Hospice Support

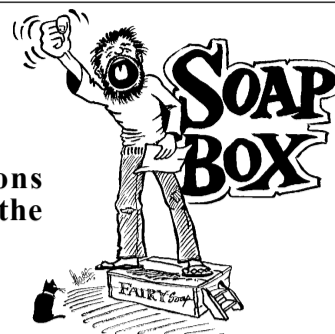
New members are needed by the North London Hospice for their Support Group to assist with plans for fund-raising events. Members meet every six to eight weeks. For information call 0181 346 6818.

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Any reader who feels strongly about any matter is invited to use this "Soapbox" column.

Please note that opinions expressed are those of the writer alone.



Car Boot Sales -

Who needs 'em?

By Neil Barnes

Can anybody explain to me the fascination of car boot sales? I mean, what is it about normal, sensible people that drives them to this collective insanity every weekend?

Perhaps a walk around a car boot sale can be really instructive. If nothing else, it can reinforce your sense of good taste - after all, you wouldn't really buy that hideous pottery, would you? You would? Oh...

Boot Scraps

Maybe it's a subtle way of recycling. After all, if the council tip won't let you dump something (on grounds of taste alone, some of that junk must qualify as toxic waste), it must be a wonderful feeling to persuade some misguided soul to pay you for it! And once you've got rid of your junk (I mean, disposed of your assets) then you can refill that empty place in your life with a 1964 Blue Peter Annual (no covers or pages 56-72), a crossword book with all the words filled in, a mid-seventies game with most of the plastic bits missing and no instructions, or a 'nice' teapot - slightly cracked but it still makes good tea. Then, when you're tired of these new possessions, you can come back next week, and start the cycle all over again! On the other hand, there's always the possibility that the organisers don't like road travel. Surely there can't be any other reason for encouraging so many vehicles so that nothing can move on the High Road? The organisers have this sorted out - they have a large sign on the entrance announcing 'No Car Park'!

Dawn Patrol

There's also something strange about the time-keeping of these booting types. They all seem to be operating about five time zones before the rest of London. I can't for the life of me think why it should be necessary to arrive before six in the morning, with all the attendant revving of engines and slamming of car doors. Surely if a thing is going to sell at six a.m., it will sell just as well at noon. Please, let me sleep a little later ONE Sunday this year!

Okay, now I've got that off my chest, there's just one little question I'd like you to think about. Consider:

- a) Car boot sales were invented in the USA.
- b) One in five Americans have been to a Boot Sale.
- c) One in five Americans claim to have been abducted by aliens.

Is there something we should be told?

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Tel: 0181 883 4316. Opening times: 1 pm - 6 pm.

CONTACT CONTACT, the East Finchley Neighbourhood Group, who support the elderly and housebound in the area, are appealing for **VOLUNTEERS** with an hour or two to spare to help with shopping and odd jobs. Expenses will be paid.
If you are willing to help a neighbour, please telephone co-ordinator Christine George on 0181 444 1162.

East Finchley Neighbourhood Centre
42 CHURCH LANE N2 8DT - TEL 0181 444 6265
EAST FINCHLEY ADVICE SERVICE NEED VOLUNTEER ADVISORS
Do you enjoy helping others?
Could you give advice?
Are you a sympathetic listener?
Can you spare two and a half hours a week?
Training given
If you are interested contact the co-ordinator on 0181 444 6265.