



Teddies sitting pretty

Story and photo by Daphne Chamberlain

Never trifle with an Oak Lane teddy, because underneath his armchair is half a brick. The sewing club members at Ann Owens Centre in Oak Lane can't make enough of these door-stops.

Mabel Scanlon's husband provided the first lot of bricks, but "they just haven't got a wall left now", I was told. Mabel is the club's instructor. She is not a professional teacher, but has always been interested in crafts, and enjoys sharing her expertise.

Some members are experienced needleworkers, but others went along originally for the company; one who said she couldn't sew on a button when she started. The motto is co-operation, not competition.

On display at the Centre is one of their joint ventures: a patchwork of collage pictures, each depicting a different month of the year; a lovely piece of work which was exhibited at the



An Oak Lane teddy with owner.

Old Bull Arts Centre at Barnet.

It's in the bag

Bags are big too. I saw shopping bags, bags to store carrier bags, peg-bags as well as Christmas stockings, padded coat hangers, long scarves and ornamental greetings-cards. I suspect that one lady's little granddaughter will be delighted by a birthday card incorporating her own photograph.

Money from sales is used to replenish their materials and any donations of new material scraps - please, no old clothes - would be put to good use.

Started three years ago, the sewing club now has 10 members, which Mabel feels is just about the right size.

A lot goes on at the Ann Owens Centre, which is run by Age Concern. To find out more, ring 8346 8736.

Paolo's progress

By Diana Cormack

In his latest newsletter from South Africa, where he is a Project Trust volunteer, 18-year-old Paolo Macis tells us about his latest term at the Ikhwezi Lokusa Special School.

The pupils have cerebral palsy and severe learning difficulties, but part of Paolo's task this term has been to train and prepare them for the National Disabled Championships. Paolo has also been given a class of pupils between the ages of eight and 14, as well as a practical junior class in English for those unable to cope in the mainstream. It sounds like hard work, so it is good to learn that Paolo has been taking advantage of his free time.

More than a good sport

Amongst other things, he has hiked and played golf in the Southern Drakensberg Mountain range, learned how to surf, watched Test Match cricket in Cape Town and played it in Port Elizabeth. Taking the children by minibus to watch their local football team caused him to come across former Liverpool goalkeeper Bruce Grobelaar!

If you would like to read and see the photographs in Paolo's newsletter, call in on his father Toni at "That's It Dry Cleaners," 44 High Road, N2.

East Finchley Festival

By Helen O'Toole

The Millennium Festival starts with a parade leaving from Martin Schools at 11.30 am on 18 June.

This year the Millennium Festival is going to have two stages at different ends of the field. Each stage offers live entertainment from 12pm when the festival starts until 6pm when it finishes.

In the London Borough of Barnet Arts Tent there will be opportunities to have your face painted, henna tattoos and portraits as well as various activities for the younger children.

Five-a-side football is always a popular feature at the festival. It offers an exciting match between local primary schools and after school clubs with at least a dozen teams being entered.

There are always a few surprises amongst the 70-or-so stalls, which are run by the local amenity groups. Some stalls even offer their own attractions like lucky dips, treasure maps and other games.

Many stalls make and sell home-made food. The beer tent is a firm favourite; it is a place to quench your thirst if you're too hot or shelter from the storm on a rainy day. It is also relatively cheap so you don't have to delve too deep into your pockets to buy a can of beer or glass of wine.

Why not come to the Millennium Festival yourself - it is a great day for people of all ages. If you want to help the Festival Committee please phone Helen O'Toole on 020 8444 8461.

EAST FINCHLEY PEOPLE

The truth about men in kilts

by Paul Savill

When local residents ask Francis Coulson what he wears under the kilt he proudly wears, he answers with one word: "Lipstick". "It usually stops most conversations, that joke," he says. "Not perhaps the sort of thing to put in *The Archer*..." The shimmer of Francis' kilt can be seen on local streets most evenings and weekends. For these are the times he goes awalking.

Francis is a civil servant. Every workday he dons a suit and tubes it to the Export Credits Guarantee Department at Canary Wharf. Dispensing with the constraints of such clothing is a major relief when he returns home to Durham Road. Francis believes the kilt to be a very healthy form of clothing, allowing a freedom not allowed in trousers. Very good for the soul, in fact.

His tartan of three colours is that of the Clan MacColl who come from Mull. Francis describes himself as a Gael and can trace his ancestry back 13 generations. He was brought up in Sloane Square, London. "I'm a bit of a Sloane Ranger really", he adds. He is a barrister by training, can speak five languages including Gaelic, is married to Carole and has two children, Oliver and Matilda, aged 13 and 11.

He knows a lot of fascinating stuff about the tartan, the kilt and the plaid, that garment worn over the shoulder - pronounced 'pladjer' by the way.

Did you know:

Today's kilt, consisting of neat, light pleats, uses eight yards of 18oz cloth, so a kilt weighs nine lbs.

The kilt may have disappeared forever as a result of the 1745 Disarming and Dress Act, which forbade its wearing. Fortunately, a few Scottish regiments were allowed to wear it provided they supported the Hanovrian King George.

In World War II there was an uproar among Scottish regiments when the War Office in London decreed that the kilt was not suitable for campaigning.

Today there are over 1,800 tartans in the world and new ones are developed all the time. It is believed that the American 7th Cavalry commissioned its own tartan shortly before General Custer's last stand.

The safety pin was introduced in the nineteenth century on the insistence of Queen Victoria - for modesty reasons of course.

This brings us back to that old conundrum about what a Scotsman wears under his kilt. Here is the serious answer: In the past men wore nothing because underwear is a modern development. Some Scottish regiments still do not wear anything except when they are dancing. Now you know.



Coulson in colour. Photo by Paul Savill

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