

YOUNG ARCHER

The Foxes of East Finchley

It is no longer unusual to see foxes in cities, for they have gradually become part of the urban wildlife scene. Perhaps it is easier for them to scavenge for food here, when we seem to have so much to throw away. They certainly appear to be quite at home around our gardens, parks and streets and many have been spotted by local children.

Nine-year-old Collette Smith McAllister of Strawberry Vale, writes: -

"I was playing a game of run-outs with a couple of mates. It was my run, so I decided to hide on my balcony. As I ran along, something caught my eye. It was a big fox with three little cubs following behind. I saw this at the end of my estate in the graveyard."

Ten-year-old Aimee Hancock Gough of Chandos Road writes: -

"Because we were going to France, we had to get up early at 4am. There was a hole in the hedge. We were sitting in my car warming it up when a fox came out of the hole in the hedge. It went back in, then it came out again. It stayed for a moment, then it went into my garden. My mum had to drive very slowly in case it ran out again. I looked back and another one came out



Fox by Aimee Hancock Gough with a little one - a cub."

Purvi Doshi, aged ten, was at her gran's in Elmshurst Crescent one afternoon.

"I went to stand on the balcony. I looked around and I saw a couple of cats. Alongside, I saw a wild fox run across. I saw the cats and stared at them as if it was so hungry. Then the cats ran away through the windows. Then the fox ran away through the large, creepy bushes. When I went to bed I peeped out of the window and I saw another fox sniffing for food in the long grass."

Josephine Taylor, also aged ten, writes: -

"My dad has seen a fox in our garden a lot of times. He said it looked starving and straggly. He saw it three days in a row. One day it came right up to our back door. He tried to take some photos, but they didn't come out very well. In the night my mum and dad say they can hear the sound of a baby crying, but they found out that it was foxes.

We found the foxes' den in our next door neighbours' garden and they said that the foxes used to live under their house.

I have also done a whole project about them for Holy Trinity School called "Finchley Foxes." I did a survey on foxes for my project and I asked everyone on my street if they had seen or heard a fox and they all had, except one lady who had, but in Croydon."

Foxy Facts

by Diana Cormack

People living in the countryside have learned to be wary about the fox. Over the years he has been the main killer of the birds and animals which people raise for their own use, either to eat or to sell to make money.

Despite this, country folk also developed an admiration for the fox's cleverness and the cunning way he went about his work. His sly skills have been reflected in many old stories and legends, where he is often called Reynard and it was believed that he had special powers.

To protect his animals from the evil eye a farmer would nail a fox brush (tail) over the door of his shed. People believed that if they wore a fox's tongue it would bring them luck and protect them from evil. A fox's tongue was also used to get thorns out of flesh. If one was left on the wound overnight, the thorn would be out by the next morning.

There are many sayings about foxes, showing how clever and

sly they are: -

"He that will get the better of a fox must rise early."

"An old fox need learn no craft."

"The fox may grow grey but never good."

"The wiles of a fox will never enter a lion's head."

Clever Clogs Corner

Can you answer these cunning questions about foxes?

1. What is a male fox called?
2. What is a female fox called?
3. What is a baby fox called?
4. What is the special name for a fox's home?
5. Who wrote "The Fantastic Mr Fox"?
6. What is a foxglove?
7. Why do humans need foxgloves?
8. What part of the fox is called a brush?
9. Where would you find Fox Mulder?
10. What name is often given to a fox in old stories and myths?

1. A dog, 2. A vixen, 3. A den, 5. A foxglove, 6. A foxglove, 7. A foxglove, 8. Its tail, 9. In *The X-Files*, 10. Reynard.

ANSWERS

SCHOOL NEWS By Diana Cormack



Rita, Rosie and Michelle on the Blue Peter bring and buy stall. Photo by Diana Cormack

Martin Junior School

Following their recent success at the Voices of Promise regional concert, the school choir and staff have been invited to the Millennium Dome. They will be in the audience at the final concert. Everyone is looking forward to this very exciting occasion.

Several children asked if they could hold a bring and buy sale in aid of this year's "Blue Peter" appeal. The PTA offered to help the children organise the event. Two children from each junior class were in charge of publicity and organised stalls for the hall. The whole event was videoed by a parent to be sent to "Blue Peter," along with the money raised from this sale and a sale of cakes, which amounted to £205.38. Well done children!

To celebrate the Chinese New Year, actors from the Chinese Cultural Centre were invited to come and perform "Fire Dragon 2000". The actors presented three stories using a mixture of mime, dance and music. The costumes were spectacular. It was a wonderful occasion and all the children enjoyed it enormously.

The Football Club played their first match against a team from Holy Trinity. Although the Martin School pitch was extremely muddy, both teams played very well. Holy Trinity won 5-2, but both teams showed excellent sportsmanship. Martin Junior School Club team is now keen to play more matches.

A new before-school gymnastics club has started. It is held on Wednesdays at 8am and is proving to be very successful.

Year 6 spent a wonderful day visiting the National Gallery.

Special events are planned to mark World Book Day on 10 March, including a "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" quiz on books. Children and staff will carry a book all day and will stop to read whenever a whistle is blown! Videos of books will be shown and there will be a sponsored spelling session. Parents will be invited to read their favourite children's story to a class - in English or in another language.

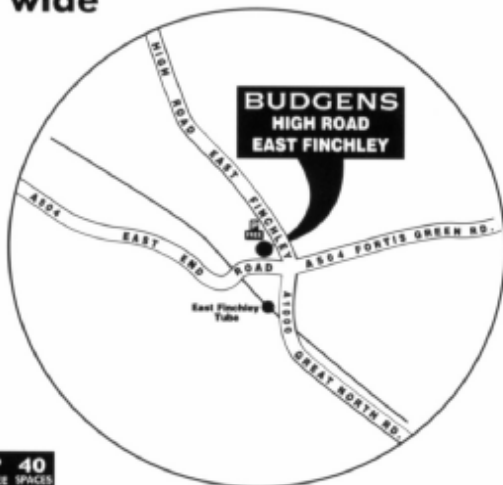
Martin Infant School

The school held an Art Day when children could paint, use pastels, sketch and do collage work. The theme was fruit and vegetables and the colourful results are on display in the main hall.

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