



To The Manor

By Sonia Singham

Born to be a glutton for punishment I was encouraged by my friend to attend a fitness class. I must admit I came away favourably impressed, if a trifle 'achey', as I hadn't taken part in strenuous exercise for many years.

My interest in The Club was rekindled by a promotional offer of one month's free membership with a discounted membership if one joined for the year. This seemed too good an opportunity to miss so I signed up for a year at The Manor Health and Leisure Club in Fortis Green.

Inch perfect

The club has been in existence for six years and club coordinator, Demos Philiastides, and his staff are all very friendly and helpful. The highly qualified instructors constantly up-date their skills by attending courses. Classes throughout the day cater for every inch of the body and, of course, there's the gymnasium. Membership also includes the

free use of the luxury ozone-treated swimming pool and spa and separate single-sex steam rooms and saunas.

For a small fee, members also have the facility of a crèche, open from 9.30am - 1.30pm from Monday to Friday and 10am - 1pm on Saturday.

Survival of the fittest

With so much emphasis these days being put on keeping fit, it isn't surprising that The Manor, with its affordable membership fees and easy accessibility to those of us who live in East Finchley, is so popular.

New members are always welcome so why not drop in and find out some more about belonging to the manor born.



Hands up for exercise! Oak Lane Friendship Group members during a regular session. For details of the group call 8346 9343. Photo by Daphne Chamberlain

My role in the Festival

By Helen O'Toole

I was chosen to be festival secretary this year. Back in September when we had the first meeting I didn't know what I was letting myself in for.

I have to attend all the committee meetings, which we have around once a month, take and write up the minutes and keep a list of all the volunteers and helpers who turn up to help on the East Finchley Millennium Festival day.

It's only the middle of April and already I've written and sent out quite a few letters. I'm surprised at the number of people who have phoned me to offer their support.

Barn dance

On 6 May the committee is going to have a very busy day as

we are holding a jumble at the Finchley Youth Theatre in the High Road from 12 - 3pm, then we have to somehow summon up the energy to hold a family dance at the New Old Barn, in Tarling road from 5 - 10pm. I'm sure a lot of ARCHER readers will come along to one or both of these events.

I'm extremely excited about the Festival as we have kindly been offered a grant of £1,000 from Barnet Council's Millennium Fund. This money will help fund some of the fantastic acts which we have lined up this year.



The Archer gets everywhere! East Finchley entertainer Chris Mathewson at the Venice Carnival in February

Venice - the carnival unmasked

By Chris Mathewson

Alas and alack, the Venice Carnival is not what it used to be. Well of course not. Originally, Carnival in Venice belonged to a different century and lasted for six months in each year. In those days, no doubt, it really was a carnival, rich in mystery and decadence. Until, that was, Napoleon came along and put a stop to the shenanigans.

Then, in the 1970s, the tradition was revived as a way of livening up the Venetian winter and the economy by drawing in extra tourists.

In February 1993, when I first went to Venice, I was initially stunned but then quickly bewitched and enchanted by the sights and sounds that bombarded my consciousness in the magnificent Piazza San Marco.

Over and above the unutterably strange but beautiful masked figures who wandered about the great square, a variety of outdoor theatrical stages had been erected, wherein would be enacted all manner of traditional Venetian entertainment.

In the year 2000, in the gondolas and on the crowded bridges, in the alleys of Venice and in its little squares, the Venetian masks continue to haunt the carnival and remain, for me, its greatest attraction. But, alas, the other charms of this event have now gone from the Piazza: the troupes of the Commedia dell'arte no longer perform here and the dancers and the puppeteers have long departed.

Venice itself, however, the city, retains all its magic for me even after eight visits. Above all

perhaps this is because the city contains no cars, lorries or buses. The only traffic is on the water, in the form of gondolas and vaporette.

Overhead the sun shines bright out of a uniquely blue Venetian sky which seems to pale into gold at the horizons, while beyond San Marco the gorgeous turquoise of the Adriatic provides a sparkling backdrop for the silhouettes of the gondolas and motorboats. All told, this is a piece of heaven.

Don't misunderstand me... The city does have disadvantages too, but I'm not inclined to dwell on them at present! Despite my somewhat jaundiced view of the carnival, I have a suspicion I shall return to Venice for next year's event. I enjoy wearing that mask and flirting with the crowds too much to miss it all.

Sailing down the river

By Jack Davey

As it was a golden dawn heralding a gorgeous day, I elected to sample the new boat trip from Charing Cross Pier to Greenwich, which had been widely praised on radio and TV.

At Charing Cross Pier there was a long and tiresome queue. On the multi-level pier were two Catamaran officials too busy talking to bother with the public, so I made my way down to the river side level where I was shouted at and ordered back above.

"Can I go into the waiting room and sit down?" "Sorry mate, the door's broken".

Eventually I got aboard the two-level launch and went to have a restorative beer.

"Sorry dear, I'm not open for ten minutes". Oh well.

The trip down river to Greenwich was very pleasant with stops to off-load and to pick up passengers. There was a commentary by someone who merely read out the descriptive pam-

phlet. He did not mention that the replica of the Golden Hind, which was built at Appledore in the small dockyard there, was the last ship to issue from there in the 1970s. Nor did he point out at Greenwich the two glass domes that cover the ends of the Greenwich foot tunnel under the river.

After leaving Greenwich, the boat went downstream toward the Thames Barrier and only turned back upstream when we reached the old eastern entrances to the Millwall and East India Docks - a delightful and unexpected excursion.

Here, then, is a wonderful day trip. If you are, like me, an old codger it will only cost about £6 for the day. But take your own grub and drink. Go soon, because with the gross inefficiency and indifference of Catamaran Cruisers, I cannot see that the service can long survive!

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