



Well Presented, Mr Khan

By Daphne Chamberlain

Did you know that East Finchley Station has a secret passage? Can you guess where to take the best photo of Archie the archer?



Tour guide Mo Khan

One of our readers found out about Open House day in September. Afterwards she rang us up. She had been impressed by the presentational skills of guide, Mo Khan, a station supervisor. She was so enthusiastic that I went along to see him.

"It was great fun," he said, "we had about 75 visitors, in spite of the pouring rain. There was a couple of experts who knew more about railways than I did. Everyone joined in and talked together, which I liked. This station is a listed building; it's history and we should respect it."

Where was the secret passage? "I'll show you" said Mo and he took me on my own private tour. From the windows of the staff mess room, Archie is almost close enough to touch. He was once the insignia for

the entire Northern Line. Dave Thompson, East Finchley's chief clerk in 1988, proposed him as the emblem for staff badges, and he only lost his position last year, when Underground lines were re-organised.

It's an open (house) secret

Mo, himself once a bookings clerk, has worked on the Northern Line for 14 years. When he was asked to guide the Open House tour he researched the Underground archives for historical photographs and text, some of which have been displayed in the station. After the tour and refreshments, each visitor was presented with copies of this material made up into little books.

This is a man who takes pride in his work, but without complacency. Flies in the ointment for him are long queues for tickets* and the spreading prevalence of graffiti.

Mo left East Finchley in October, after only three months as supervisor, to become a staff trainer, but we will still have the secret passage. It's been there since 1873, when the original railway station had only one platform. The passage, now blocked in the middle, runs underneath the platform from The Causeway to the front hall.

**The Archer will be looking into the problem of the queues next month.*

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Going to pot

After the fun filled farce of the party conferences the moral elephants have come out to play. Led by 'Big Annie' Widdecombe and ably supported by P.C. Straw and the Reverend Blair, they have vowed to fight the un-winnable fight, smite the unseen foes and continue with the mad idea that cannabis should be banned forever and ever amen. 'Big Annie' wants £100 fines for smoking a spliff and Straw and the Bishop are knee-jerking in sympathy, so the only thing a man like me can do is roll a serious joint, chill out and give you some facts.

The lethal dose for cannabis is about two kilos, dropped on your head from a height of fifty feet. It is far less dangerous to smoke a couple of joints than to pour fourteen pints of beer down your throat like the 'Boy William' used to do. In fact the most damaging thing that cannabis can do to your health has nothing to do with smoking it and everything to do with being locked up in our Victorian prisons for getting illegally high.

The idea that a couple of joints leads to mainlining heroin ranks alongside such madness as claiming that your first illegal pint will turn you into a derelict drinking meths under Waterloo Bridge by the time you're thirty. Cannabis is not addictive, it's just something worth repeating, like sex, or shopping.

The worst thing about it is that it is illegal and some of the people who sell you cannabis might also be able to sell you other drugs if you ask them nicely. Go Dutch and turn a blind eye to a bit of the wacky baccy while concentrating on the hard stuff and the man who sells you your smoking mixture will tell you to get lost if you ask about something nasty. Believe me, I know, I've been to Amsterdam.

It's about time the moral elephants got off the case, made cannabis legal and let us get on with chilling out without the threat of 'Big Annie', Constable Straw or the Bishop sticking their oar in. Meanwhile, I'm going to lock the doors and roll myself another one. As the late, great Bob Marley used to say, 'Legalise it!'

Blooming Good Show

By Daphne Chamberlain

In September, we reported that the Windsor Castle had been placed first in the "Barnet in Bloom" competition. In recent years, it has also taken second and third prizes in "London in Bloom". Now meet the man responsible - Brian Davies.

It was the beer that led Brian, from Muswell Hill, to the Windsor, but when David and Carole Shephard took over the pub eight years ago he became their gardener. "I took on the job because of the heated greenhouse. I'd never had one of them to play with before."

In fact, he had sat at an office desk for 30 years. He was a senior director in an advertising business, but indulged his love of growing things in an allotment at the end of his road. After he was made redundant in 1988, the allotment went too. It was too difficult to combine with freelance work.

Now, he is officially contracted at the Windsor for seven and a half hours a week, but he reckons he works about three times as long as that in May and June. "It takes eight months effort to put on a four-month display. Deadheading, too, is a time-consuming business, but you need to do it for plants to grow new blooms."

Growing generosity

I'm an amateur, learning on my feet, but I know the right people to ask."

Richard Baldwin, from



Brian Davies tending his blooms. Photo by Daphne Chamberlain.

Camden and Islington Cemeteries, is one of these. He gives Brian a lot of advice, as do Patrick and Charlie O'Donovan at Manor Nurseries. "They've got huge greenhouses at Manor Nurseries, with lots of interesting things. Finchley Nurseries, off Partingdale Lane at Mill Hill, are also worth a visit. The staff are very helpful. The nice thing about gardeners is their generosity. They don't clam up."

How about the gardeners' tradition of taking cuttings from

other people's plants? "Yes, I'll even knock at doors to see if I can get some, and I'll help out with cuttings at the Windsor, but customers shouldn't take without asking."

If Brian likes something, he'll try to grow it. The "Barnet in Bloom" judges had never seen his type of nicotiana in a container before. For next year, he's thinking about lobelia cardinalis. "They grow higher than a table, with pillar-box red blooms and dark red leaves. Sensational!"

The Thanksgiving Story

By John Larimer

The Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock on 11 December 1620. Their first winter was devastating and by the beginning of the following fall, 46 of the original 102 who sailed on the Mayflower had died. But the harvest of 1621 was a bountiful one and the remaining colonists celebrated with a feast and invited 91 Indians who had helped them survive their first year.

The feast was more of a traditional English harvest festival than a true "thanksgiving" observance. It lasted three days. It is not even certain that wild turkey was part of their feast. The term "turkey" was used by the Pilgrims to mean any sort of wild fowl. Another modern staple at almost every Thanksgiving table is pumpkin pie. But it is unlikely that the first feast included that treat. The supply of flour had run out so there were no bread or pastries of any kind. There were no domestic cattle for dairy products either and the newly discovered potato was still considered by many Europeans to be poisonous. But the feast did include fish, berries, watercress, lobster, dried fruit, clams, venison and plums.

This "thanksgiving" feast was not repeated the following year. But in 1623, during a severe drought, the pilgrims gathered in a prayer service, praying for rain. When a long, steady rain followed the very next day, Governor Bradford proclaimed another day of Thanksgiving, again inviting their Indian friends. It wasn't until June of 1676 that another Day of Thanksgiving was proclaimed.

Although there were occasional days of thanksgiving in

the following years, it was Sarah Josepha Hale, a magazine editor, whose efforts eventually led to what we recognise today as Thanksgiving. Hale wrote many editorials championing her cause and, after a 40-year campaign, her obsession became a reality: In 1863, President Lincoln

proclaimed the last Thursday in November as a national day of Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving was proclaimed by every president after Lincoln and in 1941, Congress finally sanctioned Thanksgiving as a legal holiday, on the fourth Thursday in November.

LEVERTON & SONS LTD

Independent Family Funeral Directors since 1789

Owned and Managed by our Family for Eight Generations

**1 Denmark Terrace, Fortis Green,
Muswell Hill, N2 9HG.**

020 8444 5753



Peter Byers, M.B.I.F.D & Mrs Jean Leverton -
Muswell Hill's Only Independent Funeral Director.

We are pleased to recommend Golden Charter Pre-Paid Funeral Plans

020

020

Mike, Tricia & Jimmy welcome you to

flowers by

Josephine's

58/60 High Road, East Finchley
London N2

Tel: 020 8883 3598 & 020 8444 9569

EST 35 Years



GARDEN SUPPLIES

PLANTS