



# Friends and neighbours

by Diana Cormack

**This Christmas, residents of Summerlee Gardens will be going to a pantomime. You might say "So what? People in my road go to pantomimes as well". The difference is that for the people of Summerlee Gardens it is an annual outing organised by their Neighbourhood Watch.**

When Neighbourhood Watch began a few years ago, the idea was for participants to be vigilant and aware of what was going on in their area. Anything unusual could be reported and investigated, with locals being warned where necessary of potential problems. Volunteer coordinators came forward to oversee each street, produce newsletters, organise meetings and liaise with the police.

### Community Spirit

While some Neighbourhood Watches have fallen by the wayside, others continue in their community-spirited role, but the one in Summerlee Gardens has flourished in a remarkable way. Being a cul-de-sac, the road is an ideal setting for street parties and the first one of these was held during the VE Day celebrations of 1995. It is now an annual summer event, with neighbours supplying food, drink and activities.

Guy Fawkes Day is marked by a marvellous firework display, along with competitions for the children. There is a small fee to cover costs and adjacent road dwellers are invited to participate, sharing food and drink contributions

while meeting people they may have at sometime passed by on the pavement.

### Children's input

This year's pantomime is *Cinderella* at the Richmond Theatre. Neighbourhood Watch coordinator Joyce Arram says they are so well known there that Summerlee Gardens gets a mention on the day! Joyce works hard to produce a regular and informative newsletter for the street and she has been in no small way responsible for the way things have developed there. However, she is quick to pay tribute to those neighbours who strive to make these events so successful and there is a special mention for the children, who often organise events to raise money for charity. Hopefully, when they grow up, those children will continue to be involved in their local community activities.

### Celebration

With the Queen's Golden Jubilee next year, the residents of Summerlee Gardens will doubtless shortly be making plans to celebrate this event in their usual neighbourly way.

If you want to set up a Neighbourhood Watch in your street, phone 8200 1212 for help.



Four-year-old Aurora of Strawberry Vale (above second right and below) gets arty. Photo by Femke van Iperen.

## Tots make pots

By Femke van Iperen.

**Young children of East Finchley are given artistic opportunities in a project designed to teach 3 to 4 year olds creative skills. In the Green Man Community Centre every Tuesday afternoon between 1.30 and 3, children are busy recreating ceramic characters and objects from children's stories. "A lot of the ideas are from nursery teachers", explains Cecilia Holmes, a professional ceramics teacher who has a four-year old herself.**

Mothers get to use their artistic abilities as well, as they accompany their children to help the teacher with the group. Assistance hardly seems needed though, as the children are all concentrating hard in spans of more than an hour, before they want to play with other toys provided.

### Time for skills

Cecilia started the project on an individual basis. "I applied to the Peabody Trust for a Millennium Award,



to teach a younger generation creative and productive skills that many children are missing at school now, where a tight curriculum tends to be more information- and computer- based. "Pottery requires a lot of preparation for which most teachers don't have the time", Cecilia said. She is planning to pursue her project into local schools around the area, many of which have shown an active interest.

There is space for more children currently and Cecilia, who works with all ages, is planning to start an evening class for adults in December. People who are interested can phone Cecilia on 07970-731631.

which focuses on individuals with community projects. They paid for the hire of the hall, materials and the kiln." Normally teaching adults, Cecilia decided

## Local Idol

**Many viewers of the ITV hit programme *Pop Idol* expected 22-year-old Nicola Thomas to make it to the final.**

Despite an admirable performance using the full range of her incredibly powerful voice, the pint-sized blonde didn't quite make it. Afterwards she felt that her choice of song had let her down.

However Nicola, who lives with her parents in East Finchley, is still set on becoming a pop star. With her talent and determination, we should be hearing a lot from Nicola in the future.

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The Archer's Sue Holliday presenting the cheque to Colin Norris, Laurence Lewis and Helen Lewis. Photo by John Dearing

## Phoenix presentation

**The Archer presented the Phoenix cinema with a donation for their Reelers fund in October.**

Phoenix Trust Directors Colin Norris and Laurence Lewis and member Helen Lewis accepted the cheque on behalf of the trust.

The Phoenix, which closed at the end of October for extensive refurbishments, is due to re-open in March 2002.

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