



L-R: Helen Mortimer, Janice Kerr, Martin O'Donnell and Colleen Etem. Photo by Toni Morgan

Big Breakfast

By Daphne Chamberlain
Cancer Research's All-Day Breakfast Campaign came to the Green Man Community Centre, Strawberry Vale, on 1 March and raised £200. This will increase the total of £800,000 already accrued from similar events all over the UK in the last three years.

Behind the event was Colleen Etem, Chair of the Green Man User Committee, who lives at Strawberry Vale and works for Cancer Research. Colleen and fellow-members of the committee did all the cooking, producing full English breakfasts for anyone dropping in to the Centre. Breakfasts cost £2, and all the money raised went to the Charity.

This Big Breakfast wasn't televised, but visitors could use the screens at the Green Man's UK Online Centre, which provides IT courses for local people with no previous IT skills.

Now the Green Man manager, Martin O'Donnell, is hoping to find someone willing to run a community café at the Centre, maybe starting on a one-day-a-week basis. Anyone interested should contact Martin at the Green Man Centre.

Spike

By David Hobbs
The death of Spike Milligan brought to an end the era of the Goons.

Milligan, one of the most innovative and original writers and comedians of the twentieth century, was a long time resident of Finchley and in the early days of the Goons shared a flat with Peter Sellers in East Finchley.

He was also involved in the Finchley Society and contributed to the local community throughout his time in the area. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him and by those millions influenced by his unique sense of humour, not only in *The Goons*, but also in his TV shows and numerous books.

Cherry Tree Wood - Greenspace Action Plan

By Martin Earl

"If we do nothing, Cherry Tree Wood will eventually fall down" is the stark message from Rachel Keen of the Countryside Management Service and the reason she has been asked by Barnet Council to help draw up a five-year Greenspace Action Plan for the park.

As Rachel explained to a meeting of the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood in February, although the wood is very ancient it was managed until about 100 years ago for its timber, with the oaks being left to grow tall while the hornbeam were coppiced to allow new shoots to grow from the stumps. But now the trees are all the same age and the canopy is stopping any new saplings from getting started.

Five year plan

Over the next five years the plan is to plant new trees and shrubs and to coppice a few of the old ones. An exercise like this was carried out next to the tube line several years ago and the new trees that have since grown will now be thinned to allow the strong trees a chance to spread out.

As the wood is small the only large trees that will be

coppiced are three hornbeams that have extensive squirrel damage, but some additional coppicing of hawthorn and elder scrub will take place. Two of the coppiced areas will then be fenced to reduce trampling and allow natural regeneration.

The plan starts in April but, as the work takes place over five years, changes will be gradual. Anyone who wishes to see the plans, which are presented as five maps - one for each year - can contact Mark Evison, the Parks and Countryside officer on 020 8359 4478.

The Chair of the Friends of Cherry Tree Woods, Ian Cormack, has welcomed the plans and said, "We are very pleased that Barnet is caring for the future of the wood, otherwise we could eventually lose a very precious amenity from East Finchley".

THE ARCHER SHOWCASE

Featuring work from members of local writing-groups

Daphne Chamberlain introduces Shirla Philogene

This month, we bring you the beginning of an autobiography.

Shirla Philogene is writing here for a new generation. Recently she re-visited her native island of St Vincent, and found it had changed so much she "felt like I was dreaming." People born 20 years ago know nothing about the life she remembers.

She started telling her own story in a group run by U3A (University of the Third Age), but the first version seemed to her "like a report". Since then she has been re-writing, but not in a chronological sequence. She puts down the different pieces of her life as they occur to her.



My Early Days

By Shirla Philogene

St.Vincent that 18 by 11 Caribbean island, so often excluded from maps of the world, is my homeland. It is special. It belongs to me and I belong to it.

Colonarie, the village where I grew up, lies on the windward side. It is approximately 3/4 mile long and is wedged between the Red Cliffs and the Sea, or, as the villagers called it - *the bluff and the bay side*. The Atlantic Ocean washes the windward coast. The sea is rough, the coastline rugged. Black sandy beaches, a feature of volcanic islands, together with huge black rocks jutting out of the sea, and mountainous waves that splash against the rocks, send sprays high into the surrounding atmosphere to create a scene that is frighteningly dramatic.

And yet I was not afraid, for our house was built on the *bay side*, where the shore was covered with stones and boulders, not sand. I claimed it as an extension of our yard. The stones and boulders were my friends. I hid behind them, climbed on top of them. I was their teacher, they were my pupils. I flogged them when

they made me fall. I plaited their green mossy hair. They were real playmates. I think they knew that. I liked them, and they in turn liked me. Life for my imaginary friends and me was magical and full of fun when I was four years old.

The sea from time to time produced its own peculiar magic. At least, so it seemed to me. This magic would appear three or four times a year, and brought with it delight and restriction. Delight, because on waking up in the morning I would find that the entire beach was covered with shining black sand. Restriction, because my

playmates were hidden, and local children would invade my space, intrude into my extended playing-field, and force my parents to restrict my freedom to wander along the seashore. I was always delighted when the sand disappeared and my friends became visible once more.

I think I heard that the children from the village went to a school, but this was of no interest to me, for I was already a teacher with my own school and my own pupils. I had the freedom to explore, to dream, and to be happy. Little did I know that these happy days were soon to end.

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