



Homage to O'Henry

Part 2: A winter's tale, Fortis Green

By Anthony Tuck

I am seasonally reminded of the film *Full House* and O'Henry's poignant short story by a horse chestnut tree in the garden of 62 Fortis Green. In autumn the magnificent tree yields an abundance of fresh shiny brown, pungent smelling conkers that takes me back to my childhood and revives fond memories. In deepest winter, when the rest of the huge tree is bare, the leaves of one single branch steadfastly resist the merciless force of nature and refuse to yield and fall.

One night two years ago as I watched by the powerful light of the street lamp, the branch violently tossed and thrown about in the strong wind, I had a sudden inkling as to why those leaves clung on so tenaciously to life. The following day I took photographs of the tree so that I had visual proof. That last cluster of leaves, yellowed and brown, curled and fragile, eventually blew away or fell to the ground in January 2000 after days of vicious gale force winds and rainstorms.

Last winter I watched to see if the same phenomenon occurred. Sure enough, not a leaf on that branch budged. Fluttering bravely, they again defied the cold winter winds and heavy rains. It was weird, 'unnatural.'

Cocooned in light

A heavy fall of snow at Christmas finally proved too much for the leaves and laid the tree bare. But, after two winters of observing the tree, it confirmed for me the reason why the leaves on that solitary branch survive for so long. During the day the cluster of leaves responded to the pale winter daylight, while in the evening and at night, illuminated by the powerful street lamp, they were warmed and kept alive long after all the others had fallen. It is as if that small cluster of leaves existed in a cocoon of constant, life-affirming sunlight.

I have a truly great short story writer, O'Henry, to thank for bringing this miracle to my attention. For, had I not seen the films *Full House* and *The Last Leaf* which so captured my imagination, I doubt I would have taken any notice of what was happening on that conker tree on Fortis Green. *To be continued...*

LETTERS

Try harder

Dear Editor

In reply to Andrew Witek (December Soapbox), try harder. One of the nicest pubs in East Finchley is the Windsor Castle. NO FOOTBALL SHOWN, NO TV and five or six cask ales.

Seems like the answer to his problem. The Windsor Castle is at 2 The Walks, Off Church Lane, East Finchley.

Cheers.

Brian Davies
Collingwood Avenue, N10

School Reunion

Dear Sir,

As a one time resident of Leslie Road, East Finchley, from 1935 until 1961, my recent discovery of *The Archer* has given me much pleasure and stimulated many memories of childhood days. Like Muriel Lowe and Jessie Tanner, I was one who spent too much of his formative years in the Martin School air raid shelters.

However, the most traumatic experience of my years at the Martin School was receiving the 11+ exam results. Those who passed were given them in a long brown envelope whereas the unlucky ones received small brown envelopes. I, with many others,

elected to go to the Finchley County School opposite the then, open-air swimming pool. This was in 1946, and now some of the members of this entry to Finchley County School are arranging a reunion for June 2002. We already have acceptances from two old pupils who will be coming from Australia! I am trying to trace those from East Finchley who received the long brown envelopes and am currently searching for:-

Audrey Jackson, Blanche Smedley, Jill Billington, Mary Lowen, Shirley Pinnock, Brian Bandy, Colin Honess, David Bellevue, Don Hampton, Don Wakefield, John Lawrence and anyone else who joined FCS in the autumn of 1946, in Forms IA and IB. I can be contacted by telephone at 01442 259498. Alternatively, e-mail: pamlence@23hpg.freemove.co.uk,
Yours sincerely,
Jim Williams
Leverstock Green, Herts.

Waitrose please!

Dear Editor

Waitrose - Yes, yes, please!!! It's what we need desperately.
Mrs. B. Weil
Ossulton Place, N2

Calling all Williams

Dear Editor

I am trying to do some family history for the name "Williams" and hope you can help.

I am trying to track down any descendants of my great aunts and uncles who were all born in the Barnet/Finchley area from 1907-1921. Unfortunately, the family split up around 1918-1925, with some of the children ending up in homes, being fostered and given away. My grandfather, Henry (born 1916) was one of them, and was given away as a toddler. He never knew about his real family and died in 1977. The parents of the children were William and Florence Williams, (nee Owen) born mid 1880s. Could you be related to: Eric, born 1907; Margaret born 1910; Alan, born 1911; Doris, born 1914; or Cyril, born 1921.

Some of them may have lived, or been connected with people who lived in The Walks, N2. I know Alan was fostered in Barnet and went to sea aged 13, but nothing of the others. If you think there may be a link, please contact me.

Yours hopefully,
S Williams,
35 Southall Close,
Ware, Herts, SG12 7PE

What's On...

By Sue Holliday

Sport, Health & Fitness

Body control Pilates classes, 1-to-1 and small mat-work classes contact Deanna Wisbey 020 8883 7029.

Tennis Club off Southern Road, East Finchley. For details phone the membership secretary on 020 8440 6953.

Aerobics Ladies only Every Tuesday 6-7pm at The Green Man Community Centre.

Yoga and Meditation Classes, Holy Trinity Church, Church Lane, N2 on Sundays (yoga 5.30pm; meditation class 6.45pm) and Thursdays (yoga 7.45pm; meditation class 9pm). For details phone 020 8444 7217.

Alexandra Palace Ice Rink holds skating classes and ice hockey for all ages. For info call 8365 2121.

Cycling

Barnet cyclists hold meetings on the last Thursday of every month at Carey Hall, Trinity Church, Nether St and have rides at least once a month. Call Charles Harvey 020 8455 5174.

Walks & Tours

The Ramblers Association (Finchley & Hornsey Group). For further details contact Vivien Mallindine 020 8883 8190.

Art & exhibitions

Art Classes Tuesdays 7.30 - 9.30pm at St Peter Le Poer, Albion Ave N10. Thursdays 10am - 12.30pm & Fridays 2.30 - 5 pm Portrait & still life classes at The Old Railway Station (Cufos) The Avenue N10. Call Henry on 020 8888 5133.

The Jewish Museum, 129-131 Albert Street London NW1, has an exhibition entitled '*Gentleman scholars and scoundrels*' a story of the Spanish and Portuguese Community until 7 April.

Adult pottery classes - a chance to make your own handmade gifts. At the Green Man Community Centre every Tuesday 8-10pm - contact Celia Holmes on 020 8349 9315 or 07960 713 631.

What's On is free to advertise in for non-profit making organisations. Entries are limited to a maximum of 30 words. Leave a message or fax your details on 08700 292 407 or e-mail the-archer@lineone.net

Dance & Drama

Chipping Barnet Folk Dance Club, meet Monday evenings at Church House, Wood Street Barnet. Call Vivien Mallindine 020 8883 8190 for further info.

Club Dramatika, the drama club for kids. Wednesdays after school and Saturday mornings at King Alfred School, Hampstead. Also summer holiday workshops and Drama Parties for all ages. Contact Vicky on 020 8883 1554.

Country and Barn Dancing on the first Wednesday of each month at Christ Church Whetstone Oakleigh Park, Call 020 8349 0754 for details.

Incognito Theatre workshops for children and young people on Wednesday evenings during school terms at St. John's Church Hall, Friern Barnet Road, N11. For info call 020 8883 0911 or email: ITGYouth@IncognitoTheatre.com

Easy Salsa etc., Colombian Party Dancing - a 6-week course for beginners at Martin School. Various start dates. Contact Nelsy on 8444 2012.

Old Time dancing and modern sequence is held every Wednesday night at St Mary's Church Hall Hendon Lane, N3, at 7.45-10pm.

Over-60s - Come dancing at Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane. Every Wednesday, 10.30 am - 12.30pm. Ring 020 8346 8736 for more information.

Music - clubs/classes

Barnet Schools Music Centre meets Sat mornings Finchley (strings), East Barnet and Hendon (woodwind/brass) call 020 8445 6831 for details.

Learn to sing at the Finchley Methodist Church, Ballards Lane on Tuesday 2-4pm. Wednesday 7.30 - 9.30pm and Friday 1-3pm call 020 8455 2403 for more information.

Symphonic Wind Orchestra of North London seeks wind and percussion players. Rehearsals on Tuesdays 7.30-9.45pm at Brookland Junior School, Hill Top, NW11. £6 adults, £3 unwaged/students. Info from Stephen Kersley 020 8883 3365.

Theatre & Comedy

A Slice of Saturday Night - A homage to sixties music - Upstairs at the Gatehouse (North Road/ Hampstead Lane), Highgate, until 27 January. Tuesday-Saturday 8pm, Sundays 4pm. Box Office: 020 8340 3488 or www: upstairsatthegatehouse.com

Clubs & Social

Bingo! Every Monday, 7-9pm, at the Green Man Community Centre, Strawberry Vale. 30p entrance, and £2.10 for 6 books. Refreshments available. Contact Martin O'Donnell on 8883 4916 for details.

East Finchley National Childbirth Trust. Are you a new mum? Join the East Finchley NCT for coffee and conversation, outings and events, etc. Contact Ann Sullivan on 020 8442 1941.

Fairacres Monday Club for Jewish people, 164, East End Road, N2. Every Monday at 1pm. For information, contact Rene or Reuby Hyams on 8883 0448 or Sylvia Lee on 8958 7878.

Finchley Victoria Men's Bowls Club would welcome new members to attend Victoria Park, Ballards Lane. Monday Wednesday or Friday afternoon at 2pm. For information contact Don Ridley 020 8346 4250.

Finchley Victoria Ladies Bowling Club, Ballards Lane. All are welcome; for information call Margaret on 020 8362 9951 or Eve on 020 8883 7148.

Finchley & District Philatelic Society 16 Jan Display and talk by Rufus Barnes 7.30pm at Carey Rooms, Trinity Church Hall, Nether Street, N12. Contact Brian Merryweather 8444 3251 or visit www.stampdomain.com/finchley.

Friendly Rubber Bridge at the Old Barn, Fallows Close, Tarling Road, Mondays 13.30 to 16.30. £1 including tea. For information call 020 8349 4613.

The Hampstead Social Group (includes East Finchley) meets most evenings, largely in members' homes for social events. Late thirties and forties age group. No membership fees, contact David Morris on 8455 0477.

The North London Bridge Club meets Thursdays at 1.15pm at Our Lady of Muswell Parish Hall, Colney Hatch Lane, N10. Call 020 8348 3495 for details.

Muswell Hill Synagogue, 31 Tetherdown, N10, has social events as well as services on Fridays and Saturdays. Call 8883 5925 Mon-Thu 9am-3pm, Fri&Sun 10am-12.30pm.

Muswell Hill Tetherdown Bridge every Friday 1.30 - 5pm. Tel 8883 4390 for details.

The Old Barn pre-school club for children aged 2 1/2 to 5 years. Term time, Monday - Friday 9.30 - 12.30. The Old Barn Community Centre, Tarling Road. Contact 020 8349 4613 or 020 8349 1961 eves.

Parent and Toddler Group meets Tuesday - Friday, 9.30-11.30 am, at Green Man Community Centre, Strawberry Vale. Families with special needs welcome. Call Julia on 8444 2276.

Single Solution, over 30s night every Friday at Sam's Bar, Fortis Green, call 020 8802 2326 weekdays, 020 8363 2328 evenings.

Barnet Plus is a social group for 18-35s. Meetings are held upstairs in the Bull & Butcher pub 1277 High Rd, N20 on Sundays at 8.30pm. Call Mark on 020 8361 2827 or see www.barnetplus.com for details.

Community

Finchley Credit Union is at the Green Man Community Centre every Wednesday 3-5pm and at the Neighbourhood Centre, Church Lane on Wednesdays 7-8.30pm and Saturdays from 10am-12 noon.

Careers advice on hand at The Green Man Community Centre, every Tuesday 10am - 12.30pm. Advisers will discuss individual employment and training needs, help with CVs.

Muswell Hill Toy Library, is open Mondays 2-3.30pm, Wednesdays and Thursdays 9.30am - 12 noon. Tel 020 8444 0244/ 8489 8774.



Majjo's is the place to buy your home-cooked Indian food - freshly cooked vegetarian food also halal chicken and lamb - with the best samosas!

Open Tuesday to Sunday from 10.30 am - 10.30 pm.

Please place your order for parties entertained in your house with home-cooked Indian food on 8883 4357.

Est. 18 years.
1 Fortis Green, London N2 9JR

For that special occasion ... or a simple meal



All your cuts of meat can be purchased from
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100 High Road, East Finchley, London N2 9EB. 020 8883 8472