



Working out - photo by Daphne Chamberlain

## Chair Aerobics

By Daphne Chamberlain

Every Monday afternoon a dozen residents of Stokes Court, most of them over 85, throw beanbags at each other. Then they practise punching (across-the-body uppercuts). They are members of a chair aerobics class which fellow resident Maggie McGhee has been running for the past two years.

Maggie, former physiotherapist, PE teacher and world prizewinner for Scottish dancing, coached badminton until she was 70, only giving up because her husband said she

was doing too much.

Some of her pupils have similarly athletic pasts, but others were unused to exercising. In the beginning one member found it very difficult

to move at all, which, looking at her now, I would never have guessed.

Maggie uses a tape called "Simple Exercises for the Elderly", a copy of which is available from the public library. Each weekly class is divided into four 15 minute sessions, with short breaks in between, and includes deep breathing, loosening up, stretching, hand-and-eye co-ordination (using the beanbags) and massage. I recognised some elements of yoga and T'ai Chi. The class may be sitting on their chairs throughout, but Maggie aims to get every joint working.

### Sing as you go

It's also a case of music while they work, with arms waving to "Hello, Dolly" and legs marching to "Lilli Marlene". David, the eldest at nearly 95, is a champion marcher, but there are no skivers. Everyone does what they can - and some of them sing along to the music as they do it.

Maggie expects her class to practise. She particularly recommends massage, which can be done while watching television. Pinching up the muscles of the arms, she explains, stimulates circulation. Classes end with self-massage around faces, necks, shoulders and knees.

At the end of a comprehensive and quite vigorous workout, I asked them how they felt. "Nice and tired" was one comment, echoed by the rest. As one of them said, "If you don't do much all week, this really does you good".

## I've Lost My Royal Super Gran!

By Emma Seery

The Queen Mother touched the heart of my own deceased grandmother, who used to recall the energetic monarch's wartime visits to the East End.

At twenty-something I remember a regal figure with a magical ancient face and smiling eyes. If I were to state that she had influenced my social attitude, political sentiments or religious disposition in the slightest, I would be romancing. Although she had no direct bearing on my personal life, I harboured an inexplicable affection for the royal matriarch.

### Last Respects

In fact, I was far from apathetic in reacting to the news of her death. I sorrowfully joined the eight-hour queue outside Parliament's Westminster Hall to pay her my last respects. Expecting to be one of the few young faces within a multitude of seniors,

I was pleasantly surprised to be mistaken.

Standing amongst the mourners I wondered which of the Queen Mother's qualities had caused me to feel some special affinity with her. On my left I overheard one young woman comment, "She was just there. It made the royals seem more human when you imagined the Queen asking her mum about stuff". Another young voice on my right whispered, "I don't give a damn. I'm here for some national drama".

Later that evening I met a local friend in Maddens. I asked her what she felt, if anything, about the Queen Mother's death. She sighed, "I've lost my royal super gran".

## British Sign Language

by Diana Cormack

On World Book Day, children at Holy Trinity School had a taste of different languages in a "many languages" activity. Parents and pupils with another language skill gave small groups of children an introduction to it, based on The Hungry Caterpillar story.

British Sign Language was included in this and was taught by local mother Lesley Chowen. In fact, Lesley herself is still learning the language. She is on a two-year part time course at Barnet's Wood Street College during which time she spends thirty hours working with deaf people in the community. Lesley is on Stage 2 of the course, having successfully completed the first stage.

It was through her other work in the community that Lesley was inspired to take up signing. She teaches dance to the disabled, some of whom are deaf, and became fascinated by the signers at various

events they attended. So Lesley decided to learn signing and is thoroughly enjoying it.

Amongst all her other activities, as well as bringing up two children, Lesley, of Sylvester Road, still manages to find time to deliver THE ARCHER.

### Town centre web High tech shopping has hit Barnet with the launch of a new web service.

The Towntalk pages include information on shops and services, special promotions, maps and links to other useful sites.

The site is jointly funded by Barnet Council and the DTLR and can be found at [www.barnet.gov.uk/shopping/index.php3](http://www.barnet.gov.uk/shopping/index.php3).

## KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

### Goodbye Ma'am

They say that everyone can remember where they were when they heard about Diana. Except I can't. Somehow I managed to miss the festival of wallowing in grief that followed the Parisian car crash. But I can tell you exactly where I was when I heard about the Queen Mother.

I was in my car, driving into Chislehurst, the tape had just run out and some plummy voice started booming out of the speakers. I can't remember the exact words, but it was something like 'she was great fun, tremendous really' and I wondered what on earth I had stumbled into. Then the middle England tones of Radio Four's finest cut in. It was the inevitable, the first of endless special programmes to announce that the Queen Mother had died peacefully that afternoon.

It was six o'clock, the news was fifteen minutes old, it was breaking news. I stopped the car, I needed a drink, I needed to think, I needed a break from wall-to-wall tributes. I just knew that we would be facing days of tribute TV followed by a grand funeral and final celebration of the Imperial past.

In the pub life was going on as usual, no one knew, no one noticed, people drank, talked and joked unaware that an era had ended. Buying another drink I told the barmaid what I'd heard on the radio. She didn't believe me, but I wasn't sure that I believed myself.

Now she is gone, interred next to her beloved Bertie in a chapel in Windsor and she has taken part of the past with her. She was born under Victoria, lived through two world wars, married the second son only to end up as queen when Edward opted for his thin American rather than the throne, saw her husband's health destroyed by the stress of it all and then went on to spend 50 years as the glue holding the edifice together. She saw society shift from deference to something approaching modernity, the decline of the aristocracy, the end of empire and the end of the old way of life. There will be no more Queen Emperors, no more empires and, if republicans like me are in luck, it won't be much longer before there are no more kings and queens.

She was the past, now it is time for a new century and a new future. Even I can feel sorrow for the dying bird, but don't expect me to pity the plumage as well.

### HEALING MEMORIES

#### Finchley Christian Fellowship

The Place to be - Every Sunday 11 am

What's on in May -

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> - Special Fellowship Service  
 Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> - Visit of Tanna Leslie Gospel Singer from Texas USA  
 Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> - Rev Jim Patterson will speak on Emotional Healing  
 Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> - Family Service

#### Finchley Youth Theatre

142 High Road East Finchley N2

For more information contact 020 8805 2867

[www.cityvoice.org.uk](http://www.cityvoice.org.uk) e-mail [fcf@cityvoice.org.uk](mailto:fcf@cityvoice.org.uk)

### East Finchley Baptist Church

just off the High Road in Creighton Avenue N2  
 Sundays at 11.00 am and 6.30 pm  
 for more information contact 8446 3571

Visitors always welcome