



Unzip Your Lips - Take the Read Route

By Daphne Chamberlain

In other words, read to your children and take them on outings.

London Libraries Development Agency, in association with Booktrust, has supplied a joint guide for both activities. Like other local libraries, East Finchley Library has a stack of shiny new lists of recommended stories for children. The lists are roughly divided by age (under and over eight), with a brief illustrated description of each book and an often longer description of related London places to visit, plus how to get there.*

It's an ingenious idea, and working out the connections must have taken even longer than waiting for some local buses. Some of the links are obvious, a good many are

unexpected but interesting, though a few seem to have been scraped from the bottom of the barrel. Some I suspect will have more appeal to adults, but that's for East Finchley families to find out. Enjoying a good story does stimulate interest in subjects and places the reader would otherwise never have thought about.

The booklists also include web sites for travel, events and museums. Visit the library to find out more.

* Read Routes cover only inner London. It would be interesting to compile our own list of books - for adults as well as children - which we could link with places in Barnet.

Chain Reaction

by Diana Cormack

The following letter from a Whetstone resident appeared in a local weekly newspaper:

"Barnet Council - you should be thoroughly ashamed of yourselves at the state of this borough.

On 3 March, the North London Hospice Fun Walk left East Finchley tube station. About 1,400 took part. We walked across to Cherry Tree Park and wood. The toilets there were absolutely disgusting. They put Barnet to shame - all other toilets on the seven mile walk were in good order."

Public Shame

I have just taken a walk to look at those toilets and, whilst I have seen worse, I have also seen a lot better. At the time of writing there was only one excuse for a toilet roll for the three cubicles in the ladies' section. It was lying crushed up on the windowsill and had obviously seen better days. Each door had an empty metal toilet roll holder screwed on to its back, which seemed quite a long way to stretch. Nearer, on the sidewalls, were equally empty holders.

There was a ragged piece of rope replacing a toilet chain, which I pulled to see if it worked before realising I would feel the need to wash my hands after touching it.

There was one metal wash-basin with a cold tap, but no means of hand drying. There was no provision for the disabled (even if they could somehow have negotiated the steps down to the building or got up them again). The whole place had a bleak and abandoned air, making me feel as if I had stepped back in time.

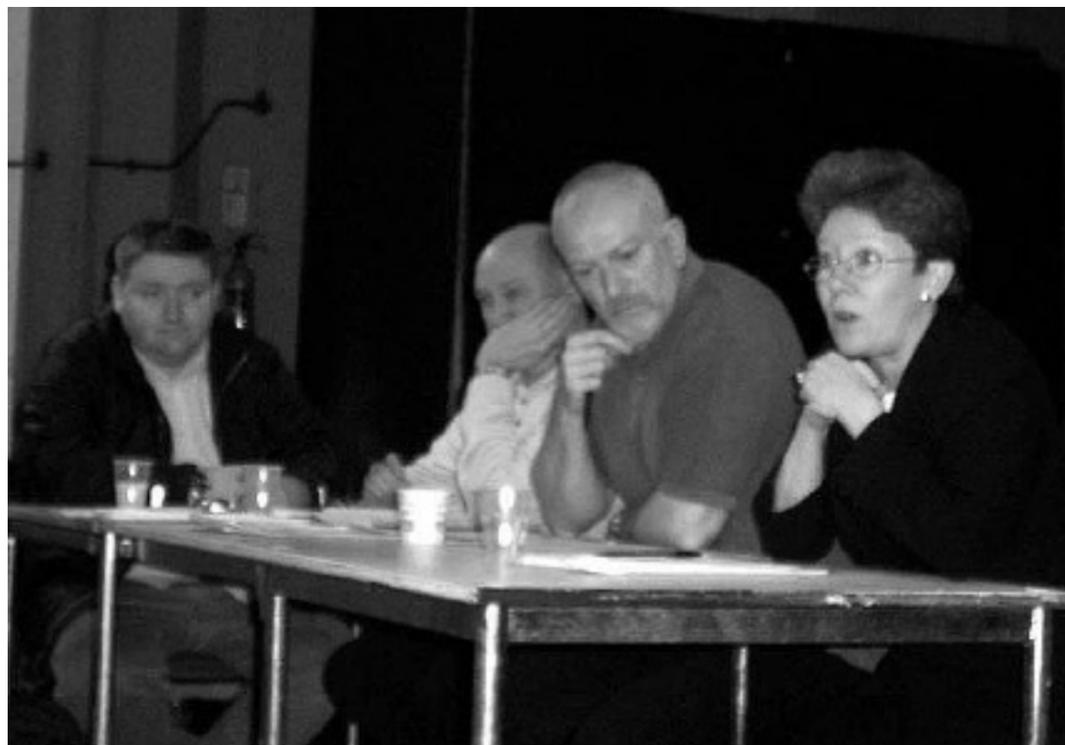
It is rumoured that the council has directed people to these toilets when asked where East Finchley's public

conveniences are situated. They are a long way away when you are in the High Road, particularly if you are desperate, pregnant or have young children with you. I remember when the East End Road ones were closed: just what is going to replace them on that small but convenient site?

Do readers feel we need public conveniences in the main shopping area? Perhaps Local Agenda 21 could take up the idea? The pigeons obviously regard it as the perfect place to squat!

Community Development Trust

The East Finchley Community Development Trust was launched on Saturday 2 March at the Finchley Youth Theatre.



Martin O'Donnell (left) with the Community Development Trust Committee

The Trust steering group has been meeting for about a year, with representatives from many organisations working in East Finchley, such as Finchley Credit Union, the New Old Barn Community Centre, Friends of Cherry Tree Woods, East Finchley Community Festival, LA21 Partnership, Barnet College and the Peabody Trust. Membership is open to any voluntary or community based organisation which supports the Development Trust's aim of promoting the interests of the community of East Finchley.

The Development Trust came about from a realisation that East Finchley has an extraordinary amount of volun-

tary activity but local organisations often miss out on funding because East Finchley is viewed as an affluent area.

Not so affluent

Most sources of regeneration funding are aimed at the 2000 most deprived wards in the country. East Finchley is 3606 in the DETR's index of local deprivation. However the Peabody Trust successfully applied for funding for a UK Online Centre at the Green Man by arguing that simple ward boundaries did not show the whole picture.

If a new ward were created which ran from Squires Lane in the north to Church Lane in the south and had East End Road as its western border and

Strawberry Vale its eastern, it would be one of the 2000 most deprived. With 27.9% of children in households with no working parent, and 70% in social housing it would be the subject of a major regeneration programme. A key goal of the Development Trust must be to make funders aware of the pockets of deprivation that exist.

I hope the Trust will act as a generator of opportunities for community development in East Finchley. If your organisation would like to join or you would like to receive updates on its activities, please call me, Martin O'Donnell on 020 8883 4916 or email on martino@peabody.org.uk.

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