



Parakeets Reach Kenwood

By Daphne Chamberlain

Last year we told you how hundreds of parakeets were living wild in Southeast England. Now we can bring you more news of these descendants of 'escaped exotics' - now listed as British indigenous birds.

Exotics in N2

THE ARCHER'S Tony Roberts recently spotted two of them in Kenwood. Head Ranger Jake Williams confirmed that a pair was first sighted there about two years ago. He told me, "We can't be certain, of course, but we think there are now about four. They are no problem to us at all. They don't appear to be disturbing the balance of nature. As they are fruit and nut eaters, the main part of their diet is probably wild berries."

For the birds

Some people, being born sceptics, still insist that the sightings are all of

woodpeckers, but Mr Williams has an answer for them. "You can identify them by their sound - they squawk! Also, they tend to flock, whereas woodpeckers are mostly solitary birds." Doubters who are out and about this summer could visit Richmond, where there is apparently a large flock.

However, it would be much more fun to spot the Kenwood residents - maybe on one of the walks, talks or other events being planned for that part of Hampstead this year. Contact the Kenwood Estate Office on 020 7973 3893 for details.



Photo by Tony Roberts

Jason... Who???

By Irene Zevallos

When you wait for a person to interview, you might know what to expect, depending on his/her profession. But, what happens when it is a comedian you are going to meet?

Jason Harley a 32-year-old comedian from Liverpool, has been in London for 13 years (two in East Finchley), has a full-time job in a drug company, a mortgage, a car... like most people. He started doing comedy two years ago, after a workshop in the City-Lit.

He has been pretty active from the start, performing in different locations besides London. "Another comedian and I performed in the Half Moon, Putney. We had a Sunday evening show, but, after a while, they decided to change it for folk music nights. So, now we are performing at The Torrington in North Finchley, every Friday night, for as long as we can..."

It is difficult to imagine how someone starts doing comedy, so I asked for any background in the family... "My dad is funny, with a plain-black sense of humour. He would sometimes say things he might not laugh about, but people would turn around and say, 'Hey!'... My dog is also funny, maybe I got it from him!"

Making 'em laugh

What if you are telling jokes and nobody laughs? "Well, that happens, at first I used to keep going, but as you go along, you learn to stop for a second, realize something is not working and change your way a little, to get to the public".

"The venue is very important. You need a stage, good lighting and the people facing you. It can be hard when you perform in a place where the bar is next to you, or your voice mixed with music or other noises".

At the end, he tried to convince me to do a five-minute gig in his show... no thanks! Anyway, he said he would help writing the material - as he takes most of it from real life - and even offered to play a tape with laughs, just in case... But the writing-side seems safer, or at least that is what I want to believe...

For more information about Jason and his show, contact The Torrington, on 020 8445 4710

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