



# Memorial Hospital ward threatened

Barnet Primary Care Trust states that it has increasingly, in recent years, been placing patients in a nursing home environment rather than in hospital and, finding that this type of placement has often proved preferable, they would now like to see all their continuing care patients benefiting from this arrangement.

According to figures in their consultation document entitled *Improving NHS Continuing Care Services*, issued in September for comments by mid January, only about 10% of such services are still met by hospital-based care, mainly in the 20 bed Dickens ward at Finchley Memorial Hospital, which is said to be out of date and not conducive to the best of patient care. They list four options: do nothing, refurbish Dickens ward (with a reduction to 12 beds, some patients going elsewhere), transfer services to another PCT, or transfer them to the private sector.

The preferred option is transferral to the private sector, a tender should be sought to provide 20 beds in a single, local, private care home or for blocks of places (say) five per home to give a spread and therefore choice of location. As a consequence of the proposal, Dickens ward would be closed, and staff on the ward would be redeployed within the trust,



Finchley Memorial Hospital. Photo by Tony Roberts

seconded to the private care home, or transferred to them under TUPE regulations. Other options for continuing care services are considered, and judged inferior. The document puts this all in the context of the population of Barnet who are 65 years or older, which is projected to fall by 9% over the next five years.

The PCT has advised *THE ARCHER* that the results of the consultation will not be available until after it has been completed next year.

## Supporting the North London Hospice

By Diana Cormack

After thirteen years of trading, the North London Hospice Shop at 123 High Road has been revamped. Mary Boylan who has worked there since the start, first as a part-time volunteer and now as joint manageress, told *THE ARCHER* that the North London Hospice itself actually opened 14 months after the shop.

During those years, the charity shop has raised well over £1million but the time to pay attention to the premises was well overdue. There were problems with the walls and floor and some flooding had not helped the situation. But there were plenty of volunteers willing to help with the improvements, as well as to donate much of the shelving and internal equipment which has been installed.

In paying tribute to them all, joint manageress Eugenia von Piccardio gave maintenance man and driver Bob Donce and retail manager Michele Maroni particular praise, describing their work as "well beyond the call of duty." They freely gave of their time to the task, which necessitated the shop being closed for two weeks. Only the crucially important job of floor laying was left to the professionals.

With its pale yellow paintwork, the place looks lighter and bigger and the new hanging space makes it less cluttered. There are now two changing rooms for shoppers instead of one and the volunteer helpers haven't been forgotten, for they have been provided with a rest area at the back where they can make a cup of tea and put their feet up.

Despite suffering from Parkinson's Disease, one former volunteer, Bernie Stephens of Cherry Tree Road, decided to organise a pre-Christmas bric-a-brac sale in the Finchley Youth Theatre. With the help of long-term hospice supporter actress Carolyn Pickles (of Bedford Road and ITV's *Emmerdale*), plus family, friends and her carer, Bernie was delighted that the event raised over £400.

If you would like to help at the hospice shop, drop in for a chat or phone 8883 6493 for details.

## A visit to the Brownies

By Mary Atkinson

of East Finchley RSPCA The 4th East Finchley Brownie Pack are working to gain badges in Animal Welfare, so last month their leaders, Barn Owl and Snowy Owl, asked the local branch of the RSPCA to come along to a meeting and tell the girls about the work we do.

Anne Lewis and I went along with a plentiful supply of magazines and leaflets to hand out. I began by talking about how our Inspector responds to calls made to our helpline about animals in distress. Then they heard about our Clinic in Park Road, raising money to subsidise it (don't forget our Christmas Fayre on 11 December at the Clinic) and the home checking we do to place unwanted animals in new homes.

I finished with the happy story of a stray kitten who found shelter in a house near mine. I put up FOUND notices in the neighbourhood and a day later it was reunited with its owner.

Then Anne took over and distributed the literature she had brought and answered lots of questions from the girls.

They also talked about their pets and how they looked after them. They gave us a Brownie 'Thank You' for coming along, we wished them luck in their work for a new badge and said goodbye at the end of a happy evening. The Brownies have since given the local RSPCA a donation of £20.

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