



Photo by Jonathan Blackstaffe

The most exciting team in north London?

By Jonathan Blackstaffe

Just a short ride north from East Finchley tube station to the end of the Northern Line is Underhill, home of Barnet FC. Although if the football team's current form continues throughout the season, Underhill might be re-named Over-the-moon.

In the years that followed the departure of two of the biggest characters ever to throw their weight around lower league football – former chairman Stan Flashman and manager Barry Fry – Barnet FC seemed in terminal decline. That was until this season when manager Paul Fairclough and his young side turned the Conference division into their own personal springboard.

With a record that would keep even Arsenal happy and playing the sort of football their fellow north Londoners seemed to have copyrighted, there is now a definite buzz about the Bees. The team plays all-action attacking football which has resulted in goals flying in at a rate that even Kevin Keegan would love.

These days, a visit to Underhill is an exciting affair, and somewhat like travelling in a time machine back to an earlier era. The majority of the fans still stand. Most of the players are English. And the pitch even has a tendency to water-logging in one corner, an amusing sight which has all but disappeared from football with the advent of such new-fangled technology as drainage.

The day your faithful reporter went was miserable – rain was falling in sheets, driven by an icy wind blowing in straight off the cold, empty expanse that is London's Green Belt. Still, 2,501 supporters turned up, attracted by a successful side, a genuinely community-focused club and reasonably priced tickets.

The serious fans stood under cover in the East Terrace and sang with all the joy and tunefulness of a contestant on the X Factor. The hardier folk

huddled under umbrellas on the green seating of the South Stand, giving it the appearance of a field of giant mushrooms. And the many families reclined in the comfort of the Main Stand.

All were rewarded with yet another exciting performance as their team beat York City 4-0.

Everyone went home happy. But then, at Barnet these days, the crowd always goes home happy.

Remember, Remember

By Helen Drake

"Spectacular" and "great value for money" were some of the comments of those in the throng who gathered on Martin Schools' playing field on Thursday 4 November to enjoy the annual fireworks display. For the second year running, volunteers from Martin Schools PTA, the Green Man Users Committee and the East Finchley Development Trust banded together to organise, set up and steward this much-loved community event.

Approximately 1,500 adults and children from across East Finchley enjoyed the twenty-five minute professional display, with many new crowd-pleasing fireworks added to the repertoire. Children clutched their brightly coloured glow sticks, while their parents enjoyed the warming hot chocolate with marshmallows and cream, one of the many comforting offerings from the Blue Bird Café.

Councillors Colin Rogers, along with Councillors Alison Moore and Phil Yeoman, who acted as stewards on the night, observed that this second annual fireworks display was what the East Finchley Development Trust was all about – voluntary groups working together for a common purpose,

using the unique talents of each organisation.

Catrin Dillon, Chair of Martin Schools PTA, said, "We're so pleased that we have the space, in the shape of our fantastic field, to put on an event of this size. I want to thank all the volunteers from the community groups involved, who, together, made it such a success."

100 not out

By Daphne Chamberlain

East Finchley's Dorothy Ditcham celebrated her 100th birthday at the end of October – amid general disbelief. "It seems extraordinary to me too!" she said, laughing heartily.



Dorothy Ditcham on her 100th birthday with Twiggy

Photo by Daphne Chamberlain

"She giggles a lot," said neighbour Margaret McAlister. "Dorothy always laughs, even when things go wrong. She's my

role-model – our local legend."

Dorothy herself has never had a role-model: "I've never wanted to be anyone but myself. I've done a lot of interesting things and met a lot of interesting people, and I had a marvellous husband."

Forced to give up chicken farming 80 years ago because carrying heavy buckets had strained her heart, Dorothy turned her talents in other directions, including 50 years in the WVS. More recently, still active and energetic, she has been supplying *THE ARCHER* with information about East Finchley, which she has known since her family moved here in 1911.

Dorothy retains her interest in her garden, and enjoys reading (preferably accompanied by some chocolates and her beautiful cat, Twiggy).

Does Dorothy have a message for the people of East Finchley? – "Just keep laughing."

Do it yourself

Among her birthday cards was one from the Queen. To arrange a birthday or special anniversary message from the Queen contact Buckingham Palace Anniversaries Office – tel. 020 7930 4832 or write to Anniversaries Office, Buckingham Palace, SW1A 1AA. They will send an application form, which must be returned to the Palace three weeks before the required date. In the case of a 100th birthday, a copy of the birth certificate should be returned with the form if possible. If that is not available, the Anniversaries Office will check details with the Department of Works and Pensions.



Members of Martin School's PTA with their families. Photo by H. Derraji