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THE ARCHER



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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.



The chopper lands in Cherry Tree Wood. Photo by John Dearing

Air Ambulance in Cherry Tree Wood

By John Dearing

On Thursday 12 February, there was an accident in a house in Summerlee Avenue whereby a workman fell off the roof he was working on. The Police, Ambulance Service and the Air Ambulance attended, the helicopter landing on the playing field in Cherry Tree Wood.

The Air Ambulance doctor examined the man and he was taken to the Royal Free Hospital by road. The helicopter left about 45 minutes later, watched by a fair crowd of local people. The latest report on the workman is that at 8 pm that evening his condition was stable.

The Health and Safety Executive are now taking up any investigation.

It's That School Again!

By Diana Cormack

Over the last twelve months regular readers will have noticed that Holy Trinity CE School has consistently been featured, not only in *THE ARCHER*, but also in other local papers. Now the Borough's own magazine *Barnet First* has taken up the story of the school's success and carries a picture on the front of some of its pupils with David Bell, the Chief Inspector for OFSTED.

Front Page News

The magazine reports on a year of accolades that began with an outstanding OFSTED

report, then an Investor in People Award followed by a National Quality Mark Basic Skills Award. Holy Trinity became one of the few schools to receive the Sport England Activemark Gold Award, before becoming the first Sporting Academy in the country for primary age children. Last month readers may remember that it also became the first school to perform at the annual conference of senior OFSTED inspectors.

Cover Story

Now the school in Eagans Close has been further honoured, for photos taken of children at work there are featured not only throughout the official annual OFSTED report, but also on its cover! In the report David Bell has named the school as outstanding.

Head teacher Duncan Mills said, "The school is very proud of its successes and this is a great boost for the staff, governors, parents and children who have worked extremely hard over the last four years."

It has been a year of accolades for the school of which the local community can be extremely proud.

The row over plans to develop the former Neurological Hospital site continues. See page 3.

Brookland Scores

Brookland Junior School, on the edge of the Suburb, joins Holy Trinity in a glowing report from Ofsted inspectors.

The school was praised for well above-average annual curriculum test results and a positive and caring environment. Teachers, staff, governors and pupils were commended for their enthusiasm and sense of responsibility to the community.

As well as Holy Trinity, whom *THE ARCHER* has already congratulated, the Ofsted report gives a special mention to four other Barnet schools – East Barnet, Annunciation RC Junior School, Mill Hill County High School and Queen Elizabeth's Girls' School.

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a meeting place.*

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people who give up their
spare time, in all weather,
to deliver the paper for us.*

If you have a news item, memory
or anecdote please send it in to us
at the above address.

*14 March is the copy deadline
for the April issue.*

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Community Services

- ❖ Credit Union, Green Man Community Centre 020 8883 4916
- ❖ Careers advice, Green Man, Community Centre 020 8883 4916
- ❖ Toy library, Muswell Hill 020 8444 0244/ 8489 8774

Fears for Missing Man

Police are appealing for information and assistance in locating a missing 93-year-old man from East Finchley. Vivian John Darby of Chapel Court was last seen at approximately 3 pm on Sunday 8 February on the High Road N2. Relatives have not heard from him since shortly before that sighting.

Mr Darby is described as white, about 170cm tall of fragile build with balding grey hair. At the time of his disappearance Mr Darby was wearing a plain green cardigan, grey casual trousers and a plain grey overcoat and has taken his bus pass with him.

He is believed to be healthy for his age, but is partially sighted and is hard of hearing, he also requires a prescription medication.

Mr Darby has never gone missing before and it is said to be out of character for him to be out all night.

Anyone who has seen Mr Darby or has any information

as to his whereabouts is asked to call Barnet Police on 020 8733 4421



Vivian John Darby. Photo courtesy Metropolitan Police Press Bureau

Up, Up and Away

After three years as borough commander, Chief Superintendent Sue Akers is leaving Barnet. Ms Akers is about to embark on a training course that will see her promoted to the rank of commander and make her one of the highest ranking women police officers in London.

Her replacement as borough commander will be Mark Ricketts, who has been promoted and was previously a superintendent in Haringey.

CRIME ROUNDUP

Water Board Scams

The following two cases relate to elderly East Finchley residents who have been robbed by a thief posing as a water board official to gain entrance to their properties.

Cromwell Close

On Sunday 1 February an 82-year-old woman from Cromwell Close was robbed while in her own home. A man called at the victim's house at approximately 2 pm stating that he was from the water board and had come to turn off the water supply.

Once inside, he kept the victim talking in the kitchen whilst, it is believed, a second suspect entered the address and stole £130 cash and £1,000 worth of jewellery. After a short while the suspect left and the victim noticed the jewellery and money missing and called police.

The suspect is described as a white male, aged 30, 5ft 10ins tall, medium build, short, dark-brown hair. He spoke with an Irish accent and

was wearing a navy jacket and trousers.

New Ash Close

In a very similar case the following day, an 80-year-old female from New Ash Close was also robbed in her own home. A man called at the victim's home at 5 pm stating that he was from the water board and had come to turn off the water supply. He asked the victim to go upstairs and turn on taps in the bathroom. After a few minutes the suspect called out to the victim that he was going to check the water supply next-door and left. The victim then noticed that her purse containing £75 cash had been stolen.

The suspect is described as a white male aged 24, 5ft 6ins tall. He was wearing a blue bomber style jacket.

Purse Snatch

Sippy Azizollah, whom readers will know from recent reports of her fund raising efforts for North London Lupus/ Lupus UK, was recently the unfortunate victim of a carefully carried out robbery in Muswell Hill.

Distracted

She was in her wheelchair when two women approached her in a shop. One stood in front of Sippy and pointed to the other woman standing behind who indicated that she wanted Sippy to move backwards, presumably to enable her to pass by the wheelchair. As Sippy manoeuvred, this woman kept gesticulating to her face, thus holding Sippy's attention. The women then left

the shop.

When she next went to get her purse from the handbag on her lap, Sippy was horrified to discover that it had gone. She has no doubt that she had replaced it after paying for some goods and that the two women had worked together to rob her.

The police told Sippy that there are gangs of criminals at work in many areas of London.



Fury Over Plans

By Daphne Chamberlain

Local residents at February's Finchley Forum protested vehemently about the latest plans for large residential blocks, housing 600 people, plus accommodation for the HGS Institute on the former Neurological Hospital site. Their representative, Mr Stein, claimed he was speaking on behalf of a very large proportion of his neighbours.

They wanted to know why the Barnet Planning Officer's report now accepted key factors which had been rejected in four previous and very similar plans. These included access from The Bishop's Avenue and the height of the proposed buildings – over half as much again as neighbouring houses.

Although the Victorian Society, English Heritage, the HGS Trust and Barnet's own Conservation Department considered the plans unsuitable, the Officer's Report made no objection. The residents have commissioned their own expert reports, and were prepared – albeit reluctantly – to engage in litigation.

Reticence

Cllr John Marshall replied that the Planning Committee was actually not recommending acceptance, and agreed that height measurements needed to be re-checked. Residents, however, were concerned that the Committee was not recommending the plans on only one point. This, they said, implied acceptance of the others. They also resented having to keep informing the Council of their objections to almost identical plans.

Another spokesman said that the silence in which this is being put through is unacceptable, and the consultation period was too short. He objected to

loss of light and privacy, and to noise from a plant-room which would be sited 22 metres from his home.

Cllr Marshall said that comments from the HGS Trust received after 19 February would be considered, and that he would recommend that other comments should be too.

Chair, Councillor Leslie Sussman, agreed with residents that the consultation should be widened, saying that increased traffic was an important issue in this area. He also directed the Planning Department to respond "properly" to residents' objections.

See the rest of the Forum Report on page 4.



The Thomas More Centre. Photo by Tony Roberts

Parking Fears at Thomas More

By Sophie Leighton

Residents of the area around Thomas More Way were informed at the end of January by the Planning department at Barnet Council that a new prefabricated building is proposed to go on the site of the Thomas More Centre car park, putting nearly three quarters of the existing parking provision out of use.

This is intended to provide temporary office and teaching space for Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute, ostensibly for an initial three-to-five year period. However welcome the extra teaching provision may be in theory, this proposal is causing great concern to local residents because of the practical implications for access to the site. Residents believe this proposed development will add substantially to what is perceived to be an already a severe problem with parking in the surrounding area.

Thomas More Way is the only access route to six

closes, which include sheltered housing for the elderly and disabled and a day care centre for those with special needs – for all of which fast access for the emergency services could be critical. There is also concern that restricted visibility at the junction of Thomas More Way and East End Road is a traffic hazard.

A petition against this building proposal has been organised and submitted by Janice Wagner of Helen Close. Anyone wishing to add further support to the local campaign against this can contact Janice Wagner on 020 8343 0704.

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EFCDT – Two years on

The East Finchley Community Development Trust was launched by a group of local organisations in February 2002 to support the substantial amount of voluntary activity undertaken in East Finchley.

Early in 2003 the Trust assumed responsibility for the East Finchley Community Festival and this formed the key focus of activity. This successful annual two-day community festival, has been running for nearly 30 years. On the Saturday of the last Festival (21 June) activity focussed on Strawberry Vale where the football competition took place and the Green Man Community Centre hosted a number of events. On the Sunday the main Festival took place in Cherry Tree Wood when over 8,000 people attended.

Through the employment of the Trust's development worker, the Barnet College 'LearnDirect' centre at the Green Man Community centre has been able to extend its hours of opening, benefiting many local residents.

The Trust is developing an

innovative project to tackle financial and social exclusion in East Finchley. Money has been raised for this scheme through Peabody Housing Trust, the Hadley Trust and Barnet College. This has enabled the Community Trust to extend the opening hours of the Finchley Credit Union and work on the idea of extending access to Internet shopping to the local residents who do not currently have this facility.

The Trust is party to a £110,000 bid to the Housing Corporation to bring together the credit union, advice agencies and others to advise and support local residents who do not have access to good quality financial advice. This project has the go ahead and should start in April 2004.

For more about the work of the Trust contact their Development Worker on 020 8883 4916.



East Finchley Library photo by Tony Roberts

Library Future Remains An Issue

By Daphne Chamberlain

There is growing speculation about the extent to which East Finchley Library will be refurbished, and concern that it could eventually be replaced by a mobile service. This is the threat which our South Friern neighbours are facing at the time of writing.

Appeal for Collision Witnesses

Police are appealing for witnesses following two rent traffic collisions.

Missing Driver

At approximately 02.45 on 27 February a Ford box van was in collision with a Honda Accord, which was stationary at the traffic lights on the A1 Great North Way, Hendon, at the junction with Parsons Street. The Honda then collided with a silver Mercedes in front of it.

The Honda was carrying four passengers, all of whom were taken to hospital, where one, a female in her twenties, is described as 'critical.'

The male driver of this vehicle left the scene for an

unknown reason. Police are urging him to contact them as he is a witness and also because they are concerned that he may have suffered substantial injuries in the collision.

The driver and passenger of the Mercedes and the driver of the van all suffered minor injuries but did not require hospital treatment.

Anyone who can assist police with their enquiries should contact the Collision Investigation Unit at Alperton Traffic Garage, tel 020 8246 9820.

Tree smash

At 02.30 on 3 February, a grey Fiat Marea collided with a tree on the A41 Watford Way

between Apex Corner and Mill Hill Circus. No other vehicle was believed to be involved.

The driver, a male in his mid 20s, sustained serious head injuries and was taken by ambulance to Barnet General Hospital where he remains in a critical condition.

Police are appealing for witnesses who may have seen the incident or the car shortly before the incident to call CIU at Alperton on 020 8246 9855.

At January's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cllr Kathy McGuirk asked for an assurance that East Finchley would continue to have a building-based library. Cllr Peter Davis (lead person for libraries) replied that there will be library provision in East Finchley. When Cllr McGuirk asked whether this meant that there were no plans for a mobile service, she was ruled out of order.

No confidence

Cllr Alison Moore said she had no confidence that the existing building would be

refurbished, to which Cllr Davis stated that Barnet Council would abide by the consultation. He said it was not possible to give a timescale for refurbishment because of the involvement of English Heritage.

The South Friern experience

In the last year, South Friern library has undergone both refurbishment and the threat of closure. A regular user told *THE ARCHER*, "This is very much a community library, with story-times, school visits and a Saturday craft club. Not to mention, of course, a first-rate selection of books to suit all needs and ages."

"Last year, South Friern closed briefly for renovation. It opened with new shelving, new books and more computers. My 12-year-old daughter and her school friends often call into the library on their way home from school to research homework. The library is well-used, and there is no other Barnet library within easy reach."

"We are being offered a mobile service which will in no way compensate for what this library offers."

No plans for closure

A Council spokesman told *THE ARCHER*, "There are no proposals to close any libraries other than Totteridge and South Friern, and a decision on their future will be made on 2 March. Following consultation with residents, the Council will begin talks with English Heritage as soon as possible to get their views on refurbishing East Finchley Library."

FORUM REPORT

By Daphne Chamberlain

Deansway Traffic Calmers Will Not Go Quietly

Deansway residents told the Finchley Forum they were appalled that traffic-calming humps were to be removed from their road while re-surfacing is carried out. They fear that the humps will never be replaced, even though Transport for London statistics show that accidents in the road have gone down since they were installed. The humps were put in by Transport for London because Deansway is parallel to a Red Route.

Squires Lane Traffic Management

Residents asked for traffic management, citing the high number of accidents there. The Council will look into the matter in June or July.

Causeway Camera

A man whose daughter had been accosted in The Causeway asked whether a CCTV camera could be installed there.

South Friern Library

A request had been made before the meeting for this subject to be included on the agenda, but it had not been registered. The petitioner spoke privately to the relevant Officer.

North Finchley CPZ

This continued to provoke angry debate. The Council was accused of killing the area.

Next Forum

The next Finchley Forum will be held at Northside School, North Finchley, at 6.30pm on Wednesday 21 April.

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Martin Infant Head Moves

By Diana Cormack

At the end of March Pana McGee, head teacher at Martin Infant School, is moving on. Mrs McGee took up her present position in 1995, having been acting head at her previous school and also an equal opportunities advisor in Islington. She is to become head of Ashmount School, N19, a large mixed primary.

It has a modern building and Pana says she will miss the Martin building, which she loves, describing it as a beautiful place for children to work in with its wonderful light and atmosphere, safe internal playground, plus a lovely school field alongside neighbouring allotments.

But what Pana particularly loves is the fantastic mix of children and the community feeling they all share, despite their differences, of belonging to and feeling responsible for Martin Infant School.

"We celebrate our differences," she told *THE ARCHER*. "This is a microcosm of what the world should be. We should all be treated with respect and acknowledge that we're different."

In her time at the school Pana has played a part in helping to shape its identity. The pupils are proud of it, find it good to be there and the school community as a whole talks about Martin Infants



On to pastures new - Pana McGee photo by Erini Rodis

with a sense of ownership. In hoping that this would continue, Pana paid warm tribute to all those she feels privileged to have worked with and who have helped her to develop both personally and

professionally. She described the love and support she has received from the whole school community, saying that she has been so well looked after that it feels like home to her now.

"They're a wonderful bunch," Pana said, "I would like to thank them all, particularly the staff. People here really put their heart into it."

Smoke Alarm Saves Life

A local Senior Citizen probably owes her life to her smoke alarm. When fire broke out overnight in her St Pancras Court flat she was alerted by her alarm and managed to escape.

She was taken to hospital suffering from smoke inhalation, but was later released.

The London Fire Authority stresses both the importance of having an alarm and of installing it in the correct place. Correct siting means an earlier warning. It is also vital to check the battery if it is battery-operated.

Free safety checks

Free fire safety checks and advice, plus smoke alarms, are available from the London Fire Authority for Senior Citizens. For more information, ring 08000 284428 (this is a free phone-line).

Mystery Fire Victim Named at last

In a shared pauper's grave in East Finchley's St. Pancras and Islington Cemetery a body has lain unnamed since the King's Cross fire of November 1987. At last, after the other 30 fatalities have been named and mourned, this final victim has been identified.

Alexander Fallon, from Falkirk in Scotland, was a homeless widower. A few years before the fire a metal clip had been inserted in his head during brain surgery. This proved to be a crucial detail for the forensic scientists.

Mr. Fallon's daughters,

supported by their MP, became convinced that *Body 115* – the number on the mortuary body tag – was their father. Now that the coroner has accepted the identification the family can have the body cremated and the ashes brought home to Scotland.

Domestic Violence is a Heartbreaker

On 11 February new Met *heartbreaker* radio adverts were launched just ahead of Valentine's Day to send a warning to domestic violence perpetrators.

One evening of romance cannot make up for weeks, months or years of emotional or physical abuse. Domestic violence abusers can no longer hide behind a partner's silence. The police are able to and will take action.

Convictions

Last September over 70 charges were brought against offenders, following a pan-London operation that demonstrated the Met's determination to tackle domestic violence in the capital. Six months later, offenders have been convicted and sentenced whilst over 30 others await trial. Verdicts range from community rehabilitation orders to jail sentences as well as civil resolutions through injunctions and other means.

Wide-ranging consequences

Chief Supt Rod Jarman, from the Met's Diversity Directorate said, "Last year's raids were a snapshot of the work that police officers are doing daily to tackle domestic violence in the capital. Domestic violence can affect any relationship. The majority of cases we deal with have male aggressors and female victims but this is a crime that transcends gender, ethnicity, age and culture. We recognise men can be victims as can people in same sex relationships. We want to safeguard all victims so I would urge anyone suffering to have the courage to contact police."

"I feel particularly strongly

that we must not forget the impact on generations of children who are experiencing their parents or their parents' partners abusing each other and the long term damage this may have on their own future relationships."

"Although domestic violence happens in the home we know that it is not just the victim who is aware of it. Family, friends, neighbours and colleagues have a responsibility to stop this abuse happening. By ringing the police you could save their life."

Dedicated officers

Over 500 dedicated officers from the Met's Community Safety Units, handle over 7,650 domestic violence incidents each month. The crime of domestic violence ranges from emotional abuse, controlling your partner's finances and social life, including cutting them off from family and friends, to rape and physical assault.

The campaign supports a new domestic violence protocol signed by the Metropolitan Police Service and the Crown Prosecution Service to bring perpetrators to justice. Since the new agreement was signed there have been a number of successful prosecutions of this kind. Research shows that almost 85 percent of domestic violence abusers are men. Nearly 67 percent are aged between 21 and 40 and this advertising campaign is specifically targeted at them.

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HISTORY

East Finchley's Religious Heritage

By Ann Bronkhorst

In the late 1970s, the United Reform Church in Muswell Hill Broadway faced demolition. Local people campaigned to save the building as an arts centre or a library – and they were half successful. It wasn't demolished; it became a pub.

Since 1997 nearly 150 London churches (of all denominations) have been 'secularised'. In Islington the Union Chapel is now a rock music venue as well as a church and the United Reform Church in Muswell Hill Broadway became a pub. In Shaftesbury Avenue the Welsh Presbyterian Chapel became the Limelight Club and is now a Walkabout pub.

More reforms on the way

At last month's Church of England General Synod they discussed selling off parts of church naves or crypts to coffee shops and bar chains, to raise funds. And once church law changes, even nightclubs will be possible. Until now, only a redundant church could have its use changed. Developers

profited from the conversion of former churches into restaurants or flats. Now church buildings that remain primarily places of worship can be partly leased to commercial enterprises and the profits ploughed back for church funds.

In East Finchley, our own churches, chapels, church schools and halls have been through many changes of use over the last century. Congregations have grown, sometimes dramatically, and later have dwindled; fire and wartime bombs have played a part. None (yet) has become a pub or a nightclub but who knows what may happen in the 21st century? This series of articles will chart the on-going course of those originally religious buildings.



The methodist centre on the corner of Park Road Photo by Alison Roberts

Non-conformist Beginnings

By Ann Bronkhorst

In the mid-nineteenth century East Finchley was still a patchwork of small settlements within the Parish of Finchley, bordering what remained of Finchley Common and all sharing Finchley's parish church at Church End.

One settlement had grown up around the northern tollgate of what had been the Bishop of London's mediaeval hunting park. There (just north of its modern successor, the Old White Lion), the Dirthouse was a coaching inn for waggoners and travellers. Further north was Market Place, the real centre of East End, as the hamlet was known. Further north still were the cottages around Red Lion Hill, once called Cuckolds Haven. Rapidly the little settlements spread, joined up and filled the long V-shape between the Great North Road and East End Road.

Methodist missions

Through the second half of the century East End was the poorest part of Finchley and the one with the highest birth rate. Nonconformists were active in setting up mission chapels mostly to the west of the Great North Road.

By the 1890s there was a Wesleyan Methodist chapel and Sunday School at Red Lion Hill. The Primitive Methodists (theologians may understand the distinction) built a small iron chapel on East End Road in 1872 which is still a place of worship. On a 1911 map it's called a Gospel Hall, the Primitive Methodists having moved in 1905 to a prime location on the now bustling High Road. There they built a chapel 'roughcast in a Gothic style'. By the mid-twentieth century it had become a secular building, a Youth Hall; now it's



Finchley Youth Theatre on a sunny day Photo by Alison Roberts

Finchley Youth Theatre – and a Polling Station. Meanwhile the Wesleyan Methodists were also on the move. In 1897 they built a large red-brick church at the corner of Park Road and the High Road quite near the Baptists' and Salvationists' buildings.

At the western end of Creighton Avenue on a Sunday in, say, 1905 the cheerful noise being made unto the Lord must have been splendid. The Wesleyans' new church became a

centre for the community in the twentieth century.

It has hosted many activities: dance classes, playgroups, Weight-Watchers. Now the complex of buildings also houses a school of English and a firm of chartered accountants. The church has never ceased to be a place of worship, however.

Part 2 will cover the Baptists and Salvationists to the east of the High Road



Gospel Hall, East End Road Photo by Tony Roberts

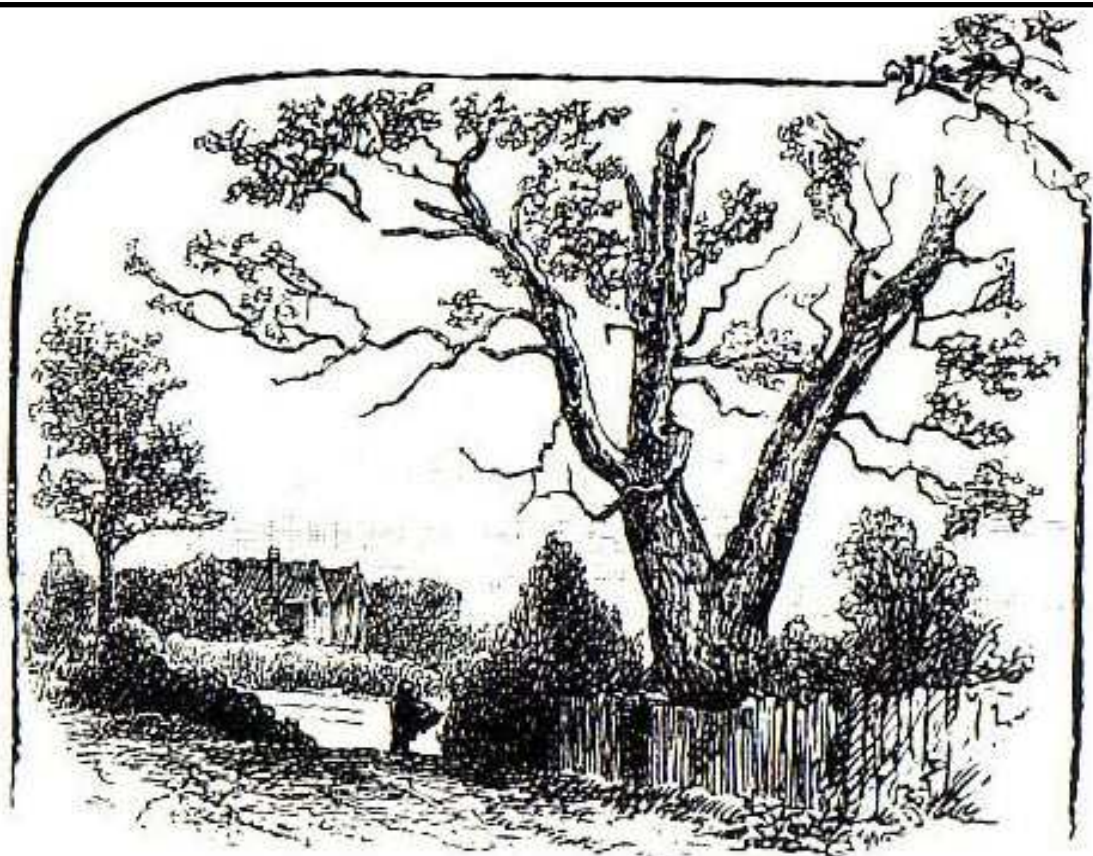
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or by e-mail to howard.fertleman@barnet.gov.uk



Turpin's Oak illustration from the Local History Collection

Dick Turpin, the Man, the Myth, the Oak Tree

By David Hobbs

In April 1739, Richard Turpin, a pockmarked Essex Butcher, was hanged at York for crimes against His Majesty's Highways. He smiled, swaggered, gave keepsakes to the crowd and caused a stir by giving a married lady a gold ring before throwing himself off the hanging platform and dying immediately. It was the way a highwayman was meant to behave. However, as James Sharpe shows in his book *Dick Turpin: The Myth of the English Highwayman*, it is probably the only time that reality matches the myth.

Gregory gang

Born in 1705, the son of an Essex butcher and innkeeper, Turpin was a member of the Gregory Gang and progressed from poaching deer to raiding farmhouses around London, stealing valuables and terrorising the occupants. Justice moved fast and, by late 1735, all but Turpin and a coin clipper called Thomas Rowland had been caught.

The pair now turned their attentions to highway robbery, staging hold-ups on the main coaching routes out of London, concentrating on the rich pickings of Barnes, Putney and Richmond. These were not the glamorous encounters, but scrappy, violent ambushes where you could lose far more than just your dignity.

Little evidence

According to Sharpe, there is little evidence that Turpin even owned a horse called Black Bess let alone made an epic overnight ride from London to York. Instead he drifted north in search of fresh areas for his criminal activities. Despite using the pseudonym, John Palmer, his pocketfuls of cash

and careless boasting attracted attention and by February 1739 he had been arrested.

Revival

Turpin was all but forgotten until 1834 when William Harrison Ainsworth published *Rookwood*. Ainsworth relocated Turpin's story to Yorkshire, adding a gypsy lover, spooky mansion and disputed inheritance as well as Black Bess and the epic ride to York. This Dick Turpin was a handsome gentleman, not the pockmarked Essex butcher of reality.

The success of *Rookwood* and the growth of the Turpin myth was all about timing. By the 1830s, with highwaymen a thing of the past, it was becoming safe and fun to read about a time when jaunty young men ruled the road and the Dick Turpin myth fitted perfectly.

What then of Turpin's Oak? Although in the eighteenth century Finchley Common was a highwayman's haunt and highwaymen probably did hide behind the tree while waiting to ambush travellers, there is very little to link Turpin himself to Finchley. The tree, like much else popularly associated with

Dick Turpin, probably owes at least as much to myth as it does to history.

(*Dick Turpin: The Myth of the English Highwayman*, by James Sharpe, published by Profile, £15.99)

Good Food, Good Company

Park House's future may be uncertain but in the past it had a valuable function for local elderly people. In November 1975, the forerunner of *THE ARCHER*, then published by East Finchley Neighbourhood Association, carried the following article and letter:

"Park House has opened its doors to the senior citizens of E.F. The atmosphere is congenial with the attraction of food, television and good company. Lunch is available for 25p but they can only cater for 15 people at a time. Obviously we need somewhere larger to cater for more people. Here is a letter from George and Lily Jarman."

"It is now three weeks since Park House has been available to senior citizens of East Finchley: comfortable surroundings, excellent food and relaxation from 10 till 4, Monday to Friday. . . The cheerfulness of all the staff here has to be seen to be believed. Our humble thanks to the warden, Amos Santalaya. . . The needs of the elderly in East Finchley far exceed the number of meals available. I look forward to the time when we will have a dining hall somewhere in the High Road where 40 or 50 dinners could be served. Old people's welfare is priority no. 1 in East Finchley."

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boar.

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university.

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and Knights Templars.
Taken by Henry

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its gardens a refuge.
Gifted by Henry.

Epilogue

Two Henrys:
one crowned,
the other, "the uncrowned King of Finchley".

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*Avenue House & grounds, bequeathed to the people of Finchley by Henry C. "Inky" Stevens 1841-1918

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YOUNG ARCHER

March

The Romans named this month after Mars, the god of war, because fighting was so important to them. It was once the first month of their year, bringing better weather, which meant they could begin fighting again. During this month it can also be very windy (there is an old saying that March comes in like a lion but goes out like a lamb) and the roaring of the wind reminded the Romans of the roar of battle.

They believed that Mars protected them from their enemies. He was supposed to have sent them a shield as a sign that he would always watch over them. Priests in the Temple of Mars in Rome guarded this shield. Before they set out for battle, the generals went and touched the shield with their spears and asked Mars to watch over them. They believed Mars fought alongside them and helped them to win.

There was a great festival held in March in honour of Mars. His special shield was carried through the streets of Rome with the priests performing war dances. The celebrations ended with a feast where people sang songs of battle.

PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS

By Diana Cormack

Holy Trinity

Theatre Visit

The Image Musical Theatre visited the school to give a performance of *The Happy Prince*, which the children thoroughly enjoyed, particularly as they were able to join in with the acting and singing.

Basketball Coaching

Coaches from Barnet Basketball Club are helping the children to develop their skills during weekly sessions with each class in the juniors.

Building Work

The new extension project is progressing well, with the giant cement mixer having proved to be the most popular machine so far for onlookers!

World Book Day 4 March

To celebrate this event there will be a Book Week during which one of the planned activities is a sale of books after school each day.

Martin Schools

Blue Peter

As in previous years, Year 6 pupils have taken the initiative to organise and run a Bring and Buy Sale in response to the annual *Blue Peter* Appeal. The PTA kindly helped by holding a cake stall and selling teas. The children's hard work succeeded in them raising £200 for this year's charity Mencap.

Mad Hair Day

The Junior School supported Unicef's *Day for a Change* by holding a Mad Hair Day, when the children (and some staff) adopted an amazing range of hairstyles and fashions. The event raised over £150 for children in Ghana who lack drinking water and for those in Vietnam unable to reach school because of flooding.

Spring Time Clubs

The school is bursting with clubs and extra curricular activities. Sport is catered for with football, netball, gymnastics and Greek dance along with a new multi-sports group incorporating tag-rugby, football and hockey. Music thrives with individual flute, violin or keyboard lessons while groups learn the recorder or steel pans. The deputy head has introduced a music appreciation group. There are now two chess clubs, plus French, drama, sketching and sewing clubs. The homework and maths groups provide even more learning support. *Teamy*, the after school club, takes place every evening and during school holidays, whilst before school there is a Breakfast Club provided by the Infant School.

On 5 March there will be an exhibition of the work that both infants and juniors have produced during the National Gallery's *Take One Picture* project. This year British schools were asked to focus on *The Stonemason's Yard* by Canaletto. Martin Infant and Junior Schools are open for you to view on 10 March, 1.45–3.30 pm.

Digging In

Staff members Tracy Hills, Jackie Coghlan, Wendy Diamant and school keeper John Mitchell have been preparing the ground for the infant school's allotment scheme. In their own time they have been digging the ground over in preparation for planting. Meanwhile, the children have been working on graphs about what they want to grow and deciding on which vegetables to plant.

Educational Visits

Year 2 went to The Transport Museum as part of their project on travel. The school is making good use of the Northern Line under the free public transport scheme. This is available to schools that have registered and who book in advance.

Scent of Saint David's Day

By Diana Cormack

Certain smells can easily evoke memories of our schooldays. The newly polished corridors in September or chalk dust in the classrooms or the odour of the science labs come to mind, not to mention school dinners! But how many of us would mention the smell of leeks?

When we moved to Wales I didn't know why my new school friends so looked forward to 1 March. I did know it was a special day for David, the country's patron saint, but in England nobody seemed to remember Saint George's Day, let alone celebrate it!

On Saint David's Day the school held an eisteddfod. Competition was strong amongst the pupils, who performed traditional Welsh songs, played musical instruments and recited poems and stories. Everyone was keen to take part and nobody appeared without wearing a daffodil or a leek.

National emblem

The stories explaining why these plants are the national emblems usually involve David. One claims that, as a boy

studying in a monastery, David cured his teacher Paulinus of blindness and the first thing he saw were daffodils in bud. These suddenly opened into flowers that the wind shook, making the music of thousands of bells. Some people still believe that the wild daffodils of Wales flower on Saint David's Day.

After becoming a priest and preaching in many other lands, David eventually returned to Wales and set up a monastery. With his monks he worked hard farming their land and giving food and shelter to the poor. He followed a simple diet but, because it included a lot of leeks, people believed that David got his special qualities of understanding and compassion from that plant.

Take a leek

Another story tells how the Welsh, fighting an invading army, found it difficult to distinguish friend from foe. As they were fighting in a field of leeks David, their leader, told them to wear leeks in their helmets so that they could recognise their fellow countrymen. His death in 589 brought great sorrow. Where Welsh tears hit the ground, leeks sprang up!

We shed no tears on Saint David's Day for, after the eisteddfod, we had the afternoon off. However, the following morning the stench of leeks, which had been hidden in desks, stuffed behind blackboards or rammed into radiators, was enough to bring tears to everyone's eyes!!

St Patrick's Day on a far off Emerald Isle

By Sonia Singham

The island of Montserrat, also known as the Emerald Isle, in the Eastern Caribbean was brought to the attention of many when the volcano erupted in 1995. However, its colonial history dates back to 1493 when the island was given its name by Columbus and settled by the British in 1632.

During the period when Britain was sending convicts to many of its colonies, Irish convicts were transported to Montserrat. Today many of the islanders still bear some of the well known Irish surnames such as O'Garro, Murphy, Maguire, to name a few.

One of the most interesting facts of this island of 39 square miles is that it is the only island in the Caribbean which has 17 March, Saint Patrick's Day as a public holiday. The flag of the island has the Union flag in the top left hand corner,

as it is still a British colony, and the emblem of the harp of Erin to the right. If you ever have the opportunity of visit-

ing this island you will find that the immigration stamp in your passport is that of the shamrock.



The flag of Montserrat

End the Year with Interest?

By Daphne Chamberlain

March may be the end of the financial year, but never borrow or lend on the last three days of this month. At least, not if you are seriously superstitious.

It used to be said that anything borrowed then could be used in witchcraft against the lender. This is linked with another old saying that March borrowed its last three days from April, which is why they are often stormy (must check this!).

Something special

So what can you do in March? Well, if you are a 'domestic' or an au pair, and providing you don't live in an alehouse, you can enter a dice-throwing competition in Guildford on the 2nd. The

winner gets £10, and it's been going on most years since 1674.

Until recently, if you lived in Deeside, in Scotland, you could celebrate Tallie Day on the 13th by attaching a tail to the seat of somebody else's pants.

Feasting and fasting

If you are dieting, or just giving up something for Lent, you might celebrate the rather oddly named Feast Day of St Nicholas von Flue on the 22nd. This fifteenth-century farmer became a healer, and allegedly cured himself of "intestinal

discomfort" by not eating for 30 years.

Perhaps it's coincidence that Nicholas's Feast immediately follows St Benedict's Day. Benedict is the patron saint of poisoning victims.

Not just St Patrick's Day

By the way, the 17th is not solely St Patrick's Day. It is also the Feast Day of Joseph of Arimathea, said to have brought drops of Jesus's blood to England in the Holy Grail. Joseph is a patron of undertakers and pall-bearers.

Have a happy March.



Bus Action Group Proposed

By Daphne Chamberlain

"I've had enough of all this hot air. We need to do something." Agenda 21's Hazel Burnett has had enough of talking about the 263. She wants to see it actually running as a frequent and reliable service. Any like-minded people, prepared to put in a bit of work to bring this about, are invited by her to form an action group.

Local resident Peter Crockford has monitored running times for some years (see last month's letters). Barnet's Public Transport Department told *THE ARCHER* they would be interested in seeing his work extended. At present, the only other statistics are those collected by Transport for London, which cover no more than one day a week, are restricted to certain hours, and do not give any background information.

Volunteers needed

The proposed action group would need volunteers to run an organised survey. Other tasks envisaged are collecting petitions and encouraging exasperated punters at bus stops to register official protests.

Exasperated punters could get into the habit of checking the exact time when they arrive at the stops.

Already, Bus Watch West Haringey has sent practical advice and information towards setting up an activist group. Anyone who uses or has kept an eye on buses running through Muswell Hill will be aware of the success achieved by the Bus Watch volunteers.

Copy West Haringey

Anyone who wants to work for similar success for East Finchley should go along to the Neighbourhood Centre in Church Lane, from 8.00 to 9.30pm on Wednesday 24 March. Hazel Burnett can be contacted on 020 8444 6824.



Nuff said! Photo by Erini Rodis

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Britain's Worst Drivers

It's that time of year again, time to forget Christmas cheer and Valentine's Day romantics and get down to the serious business of being rude and offensive for Lent. Let's start with anyone who drives a gas-guzzling 4WD in London, they don't deserve an even break.

The idea behind 4WDs is go anywhere, anytime, any place, preferably a place that is knee deep in mud or sand or mountains. Take the Land Rover Defender, it's perfect for bogs, farms and armies, just as the Nissan Patrols used by the UN are perfect for deserts. They are the real thing. So is the farmer's friend, the Daihatsu Fourtrak and if you own half the county the only choice is a Range Rover. The rest, from BMW to Volvo, are just pointless metal mountains.

Worse and worse

The BMW X5 is big, brutal and offensive, especially when double-parked outside the local school, and usually driven with a total disregard for everything else on the road. The Jeep Cherokee and Grand Cherokee are proof that Americans can do irony; the Lexus is tasteless, the Mercedes is more Sacramento than Stuttgart; the Toyota is just way too big; the VW is obscenely arrogant and the Volvo, well, it's a Volvo. Even then you have not got to the worst part of it. In the pointless, tasteless, tacky world of the 4WD, the 160mph Porsche Cayenne is the new king. This combines the estate agent arrogance of the average Porsche driver with the tank-like pointlessness of an off-roader designed for the King's Road. It is perfect for footballers, their wives, managers, agents and all the other 'D' list celebs who think that double parking an eyesore on the High Road is the epitome of cool.

Everyone who owns these things has one thing in common; they don't understand them and haven't got a clue about driving them. They didn't buy a 4WD for its rugged versatility because they aren't rugged and versatile themselves. The average owner is small-minded and selfish and cares nothing for the environment but believes that they and their children are only safe if transported in several tons of badly driven, inappropriate metal. They are, quite simply, Britain's worst drivers.

Sippy's Second Round

By Diana Cormack

Over a thousand people turned up for the second round of the Michelob Ultra competition "How Far Will You Go for £50,000?" which took place at the Hackney Community College in Shoreditch. One of them was East Finchley's Sippy Azizollah, hoping that her New Year's Resolution of trying to raise £10,000 for North London Lupus/Lupus UK would find favour with the judges.

But before she got to them Sippy, like all the contestants, had three tasks to perform. Unfortunately, the first two proved to be rather difficult for someone in a wheelchair as they involved physical dexterity, though Sippy scored well on the last one, where she had to catch small foam balls being blown out of a wind tunnel. Each of charity fundraisers was filmed doing this.

Impressed

The panel of six judges seemed impressed with Sippy's plans for involving the local community in her venture and with her proposed target of £1000 a month. At the time of writing, sales of her Rainbow Quiz plus some

friends' fund raising coffee mornings had almost achieved her first month's target. Plans for a Bring and Buy Sale, a cryptic quiz and an Easter event for children are under way.

Another future event is The London 10 K Run in July, where Lupus has places available for individual or team runners, who will be provided with tee shirts. If you are interested in taking part, email Sippy on sippya@hotmail.com or phone *THE ARCHER* Voicemail on 08717 33 44 65.



Sippy Photo by Daphne Chamberlain

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 ❖ **Finchley Jazz Club**, Monday 8 & 22 March at Wilf Slack Cricket Pavilion, East End Rd, N3.
 ❖ **Over 60s come dancing** at Ann Owens Centre 020 8346 8736
 ❖ **Pottery Class** at The Green Man, Call Celia Holmes 020 8349 9315
 ❖ **Learn to sing** at Finchley Methodist Church. Call 020 8883 4070 for info.
 ❖ **Symphonic Wind Orchestra** of North London, Contact Caroline Egan 020 8340 2706

Clubs & Social

❖ **Bingo**, Green Man Community Centre, 020 8883 4916
 ❖ **Contact Lunch Club** at the Green Man. Call 8444 1162 to book a place. Every Thursday. 12.30-2pm
 ❖ **East Finchley National Childbirth Trust**, Contact Sophie Spence 020 8444 1890
 ❖ **East Finchley Writers** meet weekly at the Old White Lion. Contact Lillian on 020 8444 1793.
 ❖ **Fairacres Monday Club** for Jewish people, Rene & Reuby Hyams, 020 8883 0448 or Sylvia Lee 8958 7878
 ❖ **Finchley Philatelic Society**, Contact Brian Merryweather 8444 3251
 ❖ **Friendly Rubber Bridge** at The Old Barn, 020 8349 4613
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Friern Barnet School is also an Arts College

Friern Barnet School has become Barnet's first specialist performing arts college.

The 750 pupil school, which has already been awarded the Artsmark Silver Award by the Arts Council, has a tradition of excellence in drama, music and dance. To achieve its new status, the school has raised £50,000, which was match-funded by another £100,000 from the Government for capital works.

Facilities provided by the extra money that specialist status brings will be available to local primary schools, drama and arts societies. The school will also develop links with

the new Arts Depot. Projects which can now be considered include recording and dance studios.

Headteacher Geoff Gosling said, "We have a comprehensive intake of pupils, and are not trying to create a 'Fame School'. We will continue to function as any other, offering the full National Curriculum, but we want to develop in all our children an appreciation and understanding of the arts that they will be able to carry with them throughout their lives."

Binnie's Great-Nephew Contacts The ARCHER

By Daphne Chamberlain

Remember our pursuit of Binnie Barnes? Binnie was the girl who spent part of her life in East Finchley and most of the rest of it in Hollywood. She was the 1930s-1970s supporting star who married a film tycoon and seemed to live happily ever after.

Quite a few of you have heard of her and of her East Finchley connections, but tracking down the details has been unexpectedly difficult. Then, out of the blue a few weeks ago, *THE ARCHER* received a phone call. It was from Binnie's great-nephew, Brian Cook, an Essex policeman tracing his family history.

Ben Hur

Brian's grandmother was one of Binnie's sisters. She sometimes accompanied her abroad, on one occasion staying with her on the set of *Ben Hur*.

Brian himself visited her several times as a child, playing with her two sons, Peter and Michael. He remembers her house in Sunningdale, with its own cinema, and another palatial home in Belgravia. "I thought I'd died and gone to heaven when she gave me a big

box of toys", he said, chuckling too at the thought of another present – a proper two-piece suit when he was about 12.

Bubbly

Shortly afterwards Binnie settled permanently in America. He describes her as "bubbly, fun, with a good sense of humour and a lovely complexion".

After talking to Brian, the hunt for Binnie's East Finchley roots is on again in earnest. He remembers being told that she lived above a shop in Market Place. This may have been in her childhood, before about 1918, when the family moved to Kent, or during the 20s or early 30s, when she was back in North London.

Brian is hoping this will jog a few more memories, and if he finds out any more from other sources he will let us know.

12 Things You Didn't Know About...

Each month we grill a member of the local community with 12 quick-fire questions.



This month it is the turn of GLA member Noel Lynch, whom many will have met in the past as proprietor of The Bargain Centre or at The Advice Centre.

1. **Name:** Noel Lynch.
2. **DOB:** 20/1/1947.
3. **Marital status:** Long time divorced - still looking.
4. **Star sign:** Capricorn the mountain goat. Tenacious and determined.
5. **Where are you from:** Kilmallock in Co. Limerick, Ireland.
6. **Occupation:** Full time politician. Elected member of The London Assembly plus the Metropolitan Police Authority and The London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority.
7. **Best part of the Job:** Being able to grill people like Ken Livingstone, Richard Rogers the architect, Sir John Stephens (Met. Police) and Barbara Cassini of the Olympic bid.
8. **Worst part of the job:** I miss working in the shop and volunteering in The East Finchley Advice Centre.
9. **Any famous lookalikes?** A member of the public once asked me if I was Dr. Kelly- This was a few weeks after he died!
10. **Peculiar hobbies?** I'm making a rap CD. It's being produced by Charles Bailey who was responsible for putting Tony Benn on CD.
11. **Proudest moment?** Being one of the founding fathers of London's Premier local newspaper – *The Archer*.
12. **Claim to fame?** My shop supplied the props to Channel 4 hit comedy – Father Ted.

What's On...

E-mail your listings to the-archer@lineone.net

Sunday 14 March: Live music at East Finchley Methodist Church High Road, N2 (opp. Creighton Ave) at 8 pm from the **Lauderdale Guitars**. Featuring solos, duets and ensembles – including music by Debussy, Sarti, Piazzolla & Napoleon Coste. Free admission. Collection in aid of the Multiple Sclerosis Society

Tuesday 16 March: Hampstead Garden Suburb Horticultural Society presents, **How does your garden grow?**, an illustrated talk by Patricia Liechti on the making of her garden at Campden Cottage, Amersham. The talk starts at 7.30pm at Fellowship House, Willifield Way, NW11. Members free, non-members £2. Tel 8455 0455.

Saturday, 27 March at 7.45pm: **Finchley Choral Society & Orchestra Nova** present Schubert's Mass in G Major D167, Haydn's Stabat Mater and Mozart's Divertimento in D K136 at Church of St Jude-on-the-Hill, Central Square, NW11. Tickets: £12.50 (£10 concessions) available on the door or from the FCS Box Office on 020 8445 9666.

Sunday 25 April: Cromwell Hall Residents' Association are holding their annual **'Garage Sale' in Abbots Gardens** from 11am to 2 pm. Residents will set up their 'Stalls' in their front gardens up and down the road. Bring your friends and family and enjoy going round the stalls to see what bargains there are to be found.

All Saints' Church, Durham Road, East Finchley Church of England

Sunday masses at 8.00 a.m. and 10.00 a.m.
Weekday masses at 10.00 a.m.
 Prayer requests are gladly accepted.

The Parish has a flourishing social life.
 Contact the Vicar, Fr Christopher Hardy,
 on 020 8883 9315.

All Saints' also has a strong musical tradition and an enthusiastic choir of both adults and children.
 Experienced singers are always welcome.
 Contact Geoffrey Hanson on 020 8444 9214.

<http://www.allsaints-eastfinchley.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
 please contact the Church Office
 Tel: 8883 1544 (Minister: Simon Dyke)

Visitors always welcome



Spring into Step

By Diana Cormack

The Cherry Tree Wood Walk, which actually takes in part of Highgate Wood as well, is a good way to start the week. Led by park warden Chris Ward, the group sets off from the new cafe (which is still not open) opposite the tennis courts at 10 am on the first two Mondays of the month. It is also a very pleasant way of noticing the seasonal changes taking place and Chris is happy to point out interesting details en route.

Faster walkers keep pace with him, whilst Pat Orr of Park Hall Road acts as backmarker for the slower members of the group, so there is room for all standards. Both have been on training courses for the walks and carry rucksacks well equipped for any eventuality. The walks are free and form part of the *Walk for Life* scheme which aims to encourage people to walk regularly. Walking can improve your

health, relieve stress and help you sleep better. This way you can also make new friends and appreciate the beauties of nature right on your doorstep.

This particular walk lasts for an hour, but there are different ones available in the borough. Visit www.whi.org.uk or call 8359 7816 for more information. Otherwise, just turn up in the park at the appointed time and put your best foot forward.

Remembering D Day

6 June 2004 is the 60th anniversary of D Day.

► Were you there? ► Were you in the army?
► Were you at home? ► Were you at school?
If you or anyone you know has any memories of D Day, please contact *THE ARCHER* at the usual address.

Send your correspondence to:

"Letters Page", *The Archer*, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA.
(Due to space restrictions, letters over 200 words will be edited)

RSPCA News

This month RSPCA News introduces their new Inspector, Natalie Bartle, who joined the local branch at the end of last year.

Natalie has a long record of work with the RSPCA. Five years as a voluntary worker before becoming an animal collection officer and, before that, she worked at the RSPCA's Norfolk Wildlife Hospital dealing with casual-

ties such as deer, foxes and badgers. She then did six months training at the RSPCA's Sussex Headquarters to emerge as a fully fledged Inspector.

She says, "It's a fresh challenge to do this, as no one day is the same as the next and so far I have had no problems I could not deal with."

The helpline is manned daily, evenings and weekends so, if anyone has concerns or would like advice or help on animal welfare, they can ring 0870 555 5999.

HGS

Best Spring Garden

Competition

Hampstead Garden Suburb Horticultural Society is looking for the prettiest or most interesting garden on the Suburb, or within the boundaries of Garden Suburb Ward.

Entry forms (please enclose SAE) are available from the Events Secretary, 86 Willifield Way, NW11 6YJ. The closing date for entries is 30 April and the gardens will be judged during the first week in May.

The first prizewinner will receive £25 in garden vouchers and the Millennium Suburb in Bloom cup, and the second and third prizewinners will receive £15 and £10 garden vouchers respectively.

Notable Birds

By Jeremy Gaskell

Probably the most striking song heard at this time of year in East Finchley's woodlands, after the energetic singing of the Wren and the liquid notes of the Robin, is the repetitive phrase of the Great Tit. Similar, but higher pitched, is the ee-tu, ee-tu, ee-tu of the scarcer Coal Tit. Heard occasionally near Cherry Tree Wood, the song sounds remarkably similar to someone using a saw.

A second uncommon local bird is the Nuthatch, recognisable by its black bandit's mask. Recently in Coldfall Wood I observed one emerge from the cavity it had been preparing as a nest site, in order to confront a grey squirrel. The brief fracas resulted in the squirrel scampering up the tree as fast as it could.

The loud drumming of a Greater Spotted Woodpecker is typical of early Spring. However, hearing it on 1 January in Coldfall Wood reminded me how our expectations of the seasons have altered as global warming has gathered pace. This black, white and crimson bird is smaller and less shy of humans than its cousin the Green Woodpecker. The loud, laughing call of the Yaffle, to use its country name, may be heard in St Pancras cemetery where the bird is sometimes so engrossed in probing for ants that it fails to hear approaching footsteps and can be watched at close range.

Thrushes

A smaller bird than the Green Woodpecker, but one that looks similar from the rear, is the Mistle Thrush whose wild fluting song is often delivered from a high tree after a gale. A less obtrusive thrush, the Redwing, is quite numerous in the winter months. A blood-red patch on the flank gives this bird its name, but if you see a party of them in a field, or feeding on berries, it is probably the bird's prominent white eyebrow that is more noticeable.

THE ARCHER would like to make it clear that the photo of the dog that appeared last month alongside our article about Wrigley's Woody was not that of Woody but of Buddy, the dog belonging to the East Finchley resident featured in the story!



Coal Tit By Thomas Bewick

Seaside visitors

During the short, dark days of winter, seagulls frequent the recreation grounds. The smallest you are likely to see, with red legs, is the Black-headed Gull whose name becomes more appropriate as the Spring draws on. A larger gull, with olive legs and bill, is the Common Gull, a bird less numerous than its name suggests. Occasionally these two gulls are joined by the Lesser Black-backed Gull, which has yellow legs. Recently this handsome species has been added to the list of London's breeding birds.

Increasingly our songsters will establish breeding territories; however, northern birds that winter with us have a longer wait till their breeding grounds are sufficiently thawed.

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Working Lives – Fine Feathers

By Daphne Chamberlain

Dorothy Ditcham came to East Finchley in 1911, when she was six. She still lives here, but has spread her wings in the interim. In 1924 she was in Essex, learning to be a poultry farmer.

She still has a red exercise book, filled with hand-written notes, her own drawings and cut-out pictures. It's a comprehensive manual and a mine of information.

The ideal egg for marketing then weighed about two ounces, which is exactly the weight of the large free-range specimens in my fridge today. Certainly in 1924 though, there was a wide range of breeds, different types of fowl (specialist egg-producers, general purpose, or primarily table birds), and marked variations in egg-laying. Some hens managed up to 110 eggs during the winter, and others none at all.

Intensive start

Dorothy's red book notes the introduction of artificial incubators and the beginning of intensive farming – though this was light years away from the later horrors of battery farming. On the farm where she worked the birds ran around at will in a large barn, with separate breeding pens. There were about half a dozen

hens to a cockerel, and each group had its own grass run and carefully regulated housing.

She learned to select, breed and rear the chickens, to feed them (the red book has a selection of menus), and to nurse them through winter colds.

It was work where you had to muck in (and out), and carrying two-gallon cans backwards and forwards across 10 acres proved a little too much. Dorothy strained her heart, and had to find other work.

When she had recovered, she had a couple of stints as a governess – one in the South of France. That child was "a horror," she says emphatically, "and I much preferred poultry farming."

If you would like to share your early or unusual work experiences with us, please let us know.

- The illustration above shows an extract taken from Dorothy Ditcham's little red notebook.
- The photo right shows Dorothy with chicks, 1924
- Both pictures by courtesy of Dorothy Ditcham



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