



Donkey Festival comes to Cherry Tree Wood

The date for this year's Muswell Hill Festival has been changed from 13 June to Sunday 12 September, with the new venue of Cherry Tree Wood. The changes will enable it to run alongside a major new attraction – a Donkey Derby in aid of the Hornsey Trust for Children with Cerebral Palsy.

Earlier attempts to hold it in a Haringey park failed because of a rule banning animals, but Barnet was more accommodating.

As well as the Donkey Derby, the event – which

will run from 12 - 6pm – will include a dog show, a performing arts festival and a children's entertainments area, plus stalls featuring a variety of produce and arts and crafts, with many local organisations, including the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association, also well represented.

Sponsors sought

The search has already started for sponsors to lend their names to the Derby and the dog show, plus other aspects of the afternoon's attractions. It is hoped that many local celebrities – Muswell Hill and the surrounding area has more than

its fair share of TV, radio, music and film personalities – will turn up on the day to make the event in aid of this local charity a big success.

The Hornsey Trust runs the conductive education centre for children with cerebral palsy on Muswell Hill itself, and is a neighbour of Muswell Hill Primary School.

For further information, contact Alison Wynn, the Hornsey Trust, on 8444 7242 (Tues and Wed) or 8340 2524 (Mon and Thurs), mobile 07808 364 033 or e-mail alison@onlib.com or info@hornseytrust.org.uk

YOUNG ARCHER

May flowers and good luck

By Diana Cormack

This month hawthorn bushes are covered in masses of beautiful "may" blossom, but don't be tempted to pick any to take home, for it is supposed to be very unlucky to have it in the house. It is also said to be unlucky to chop down a hawthorn tree. Could this be because legend says the crown of thorns, which Jesus wore when he was crucified, was made from its branches?

After the Crucifixion, Christians believed that they could get special protection by touching pieces of wood that were supposed to have been part of the 'true cross'. But to 'touch wood' has been a way of asking for good luck since pagan times, when people worshipped tree gods. They used to touch or knock on trees as a way of seeking protection from the spirits living inside them.

Secret signs

Crossing fingers for luck began when early Christians used it as a secret sign for protection against evil. Another once secret sign goes back to ancient days when people worshipped the hare, which was the sacred animal of Eostre, their goddess of spring. When Christianity arrived and people were not supposed to continue with their pagan beliefs, they got around it by carrying a hare's foot. After the Normans

brought rabbits to this country, the rabbit's foot eventually replaced the hare's, which had become a sign of good luck.

Probably the best-known animal to be linked with luck is the black cat. However, they can be connected with both good and bad luck, depending on when and where you see them and how many times they cross your path. Of course, it also depends on whether or not you are superstitious!

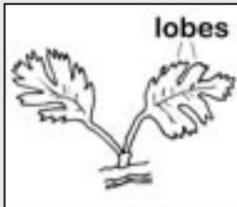
Checking for May blossom

By Tony Roberts

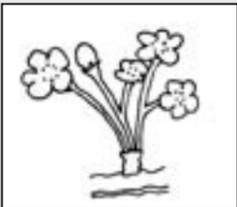
So, it's May and you have found a bush covered in leaves and white blossom, but is it May blossom, is it Hawthorn? A closer look will tell:



Be careful as you pull back a branch – hawthorn has long sharp thorns, well hidden!



The leaves are smallish and divided into parts called lobes – you should be able to count between 3 and 7 of these.



The flowers grow in clumps and have five white (or pink) petals. They have a sweet smell.

If your blossom passes these tests it almost certainly will be May blossom. There is another variety of hawthorn with smoother and less noticeable lobes and larger flowers; it is up to

you whether to call this May blossom! Later in the year you will find that the flowers turn to red berries called haws; together with the thorns, this explains the name.

Clever Clogs Corner

If you break a mirror you're supposed to get seven year's bad luck!

This superstition dates from Roman times when mirrors were made from flat polished stone. Presumably it took that long for the poor servant to make a new one? Can you work out these mirror image words from their definitions? The first one is done for you.

1. married / drops of water which appear on plants early in the morning **wed / dew**
2. One more than nine / used to catch fish ---/---
3. Rodent / sticky black stuff on roads ---/---
4. Wild dog-like animal / movement of a river or stream ---/---
5. Part of a hospital / to sketch ----/----
6. Animals we keep at home / one foot forward ----/----
7. Something you drink through / little growths on the skin ----/----

Jokes

Mary: Mum I got into trouble in school today for something I didn't do.

Mum: That's not fair. What was it you didn't do?

Mary: My homework.

Pupil: Sorry I'm late sir. I was dreaming about football.

Teacher: How does that make you late?

Boy: They played extra time.

Answers

2. ten / net, 3. rat / tar
4. wolf / flow, 5. ward / draw
6. pets / step, 7. straw / warts

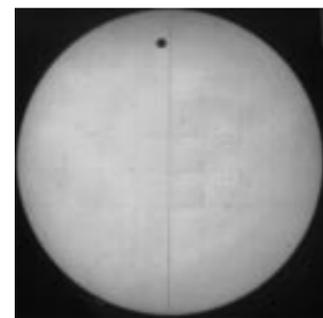
Venusian transit

By John Dearing

The planet Mercury crossed the face of the Sun last summer and was observed in East Finchley and reported in *THE ARCHER*. This summer a much rarer event will take place: there will be a transit of the planet Venus across the face of the Sun, which, weather permitting, will be visible from here. Venus, being much larger and closer to us than Mercury, should be visible to the unaided eye through an appropriate dark filter.

On 8 June, between approximately 6.20am and 12.20pm BST, Venus will be seen as a small, dark circle silhouetted against the bright disc of the sun; its path will be a chord, about three-quarters of the way from the centre of the solar disc.

This took place last in 1882 and will occur next in 2012. Previously astronomers used Venusian transits to improve their measurements of the distance between the Earth and the Sun, and expeditions were sent across the world to observe and



The Transit of Venus in 1882
courtesy US Naval Observatory

time the events. The astronomy section of *THE ARCHER* will be doing its best to record this unusual event for you!

Under no circumstances look directly at the Sun without using an approved filter – you will damage your eyes, probably permanently. Solar filters purchased in 1999 for the eclipse, may be used provided they have no scuffs, scratches or pinholes. The safest way to use binoculars or a telescope is to project the Sun's image onto a piece of white card.

RSPCA news

In Springtime it is common to find young birds sitting or hopping on the ground at this time of year. They seem to be on their own but their parents are probably watching from a distance or busy seeking food for the family.

Do not touch them; go on your way, then return in an hour or so to see if they are still there. Any bird that is injured or sick will be left, and has a very low chance of survival, even given the most tender care. The kindest action is to quickly put them to sleep, or call for the Animal Collection Officer at the RSPCA on 0870 5555 999 who will deal with the situation.

Much less common is to

see fox cubs playing or learning to hunt on their own. They are pushed out of their 'earths' at about four weeks old to see the world. The best time to find them is early morning and, again, the parents are watching from a distance.

If you find one sick or injured, call the helpline as above. Do not attempt to give any first aid but some water and dog food could be left nearby.

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

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>