



Say it with flowers

By Ann Bronkhorst



Display by Jennie Mann at the flower festival. Photo Ann Bronkhorst

We can express ourselves by various means – through words, movement, music, art . . . and even plants and flowers. At the All Saints' Flower Festival last month I saw how a theme, *Our World*, could be interpreted in many imaginative ways. All Saints' Church in Durham Road drew in gardeners, flower arrangers and perhaps some theatre designers who have

missed their vocation! With more than 22 displays filling the church only a few can be mentioned here.

The 'worlds' of children were much in evidence. One display of children's paintings and flowers was called 'All I ever needed to know I learned in kindergarten'. Scribbles nursery, Hertford Road, contributed paper flowers made and painted by the children. All Saints' Early Church created an evocative beach scene: sand, pebbles and a Punch and Judy show. Holy Trinity School's Reception class made four mini-gardens: cottage, desert, water and rainforest, accompanied by poems from Years 5 and 6. One touching arrangement was by Mia's Wish, a charity set up in memory of a baby girl to help develop hospital facilities for bereaved parents.

Inventive

Some displays were remarkably detailed and inventive. One packed a wealth of information on herbal healing into a small space, with essential oils, books and pots of many different herbs. An 'English Garden' showed a familiar scene: deck-chair, garden tools, a trug of vegetables. As someone said, it was as if the gardener had "just popped indoors for a cuppa." Nearby, 'The Teddies' Picnic' had a family of bears relaxing in a setting full of witty details – grapes hanging from a mini-pergola and tiny honey jars.

Colour and design were often used dramatically. The text 'Thou burning sun with golden beam, Thou silver moon with softer gleam' was complemented by gold and white

flower arrangements against a dark backdrop scattered with a few stars. Sri Lankan spices, carvings and richly-patterned fabrics were combined with red, purple and white blooms in another colourful display. Jennie Mann, the florist, contributed a stylish arrangement of linked transparent bowls and flower heads subtly illustrating the *Our World* theme.

Sheila Waring, the main organiser of the Flower Festival, was delighted with the enthusiasm of those involved. "People have brought in what's important to them," she said. During the three days of the Festival many people visited All Saints' and found there not only flowers but also an insight into a community.



Not quite Cheltenham, but great fun. Photo by Kevin Finn

Festival success

By Kevin Finn

The Muswell Hill Street Festival adapted to its new venue at Cherry Tree Wood to great effect, producing a well-attended success for all involved. The festival was held between noon and 6pm on a cloudy, blustery but dry Sunday, 12 September.

With some 80 stalls a broad range of international representing local charities cuisine and plenty of fun and and voluntary organisations, games for children, there was,

surely, something for everyone. A good-sized sound stage had performances from bands playing everything from good old fashions Rock through to jazz funk and Ska Punk. Not all the music was to everyone's taste but I'm sure there was a healthy audience having a great time throughout the day.

On the donkeys

Some brave but inspired events were the donkey derby and the dog show. The former allowed volunteer adults (recruited from the attending crowds) to race in the donkey-powered traps while everyone else had the opportunity to make a modest wager on the 'tote'. To say that the donkeys were frisky might be an understatement; I believe I may have witnessed the first outing of a new breed of thoroughbred, such was the enthusiasm to run. The crowds massed on either side of the course to secure a suitable vantage point for this popular attraction.

Doggy do

The dog show was both amusing and charming. The light-hearted event was hardly on a par with Crufts, but everyone enjoyed watching the various collections of bewildered yet excited pets strutting their hearts out for their proud owners. I don't think I have ever seen such a variety of sizes and shapes in a single 'class', but it was excellent fun.

Trek no problem

I was concerned that the residents of Muswell Hill might find the trek to East Finchley too daunting to attend; but judging by the volume of pedestrian traffic entering the event from the Muswell Hill end, I need not have worried. The organisers, The Hornsey Trust, put on a great event, which I hope will return for many years to come.



A lucky winner in one of the Dog Show classes. Photo Kevin Finn

Roller-coaster ride at the library

By Hannah Eiseman-Renyard

This summer, from 24 July to 4 September, children across the country took part in the Nationwide Reading Roller-coaster summer reading scheme every Saturday. Locally, this took place at the East Finchley Library, with over 120 participants.

Children taking part could read absolutely any six books they wanted, fiction or non-fiction. They would then report back to the group after they had completed each book, talk about what they had liked, or didn't like, and recommend books for each other.

Popular books included the children's penny dreadfuls *A Series of Unfortunate Events* by Lemony Snickett, the *Horrid Henry* series by Francesca Simon, and *Lion Boy* by Zizou Corder. Meanwhile, old favour-

ites such as *Artemis Fowl* and Dr. Seuss were still going strong in the top ten recommended reads.

Children's efforts were rewarded with a set of stickers for each book they completed and told the group about – the stickers adding to a 'reading roller-coaster' scene in their folders. The scheme also included arts and crafts when the children made a roller-coaster poster for the children's room. Computers were regularly used to write and read reviews on the kid-friendly website (www.readingrollerco

[aster.org.uk](http://www.readingrollercoaster.org.uk)) The website also contains book quizzes as well as facts and tidbits about favourite authors.

In its fifth year, this is part of the National Reading Scheme, aimed at getting kids interested in books at an early age, and using precious resources like our local libraries. The initiative will continue in East Finchley with the Orange-sponsored Chatter Books in October, run by Rachel, the children's librarian who also facilitated the Reading Roller-coaster.