



# East Finchley's religious heritage

## Part 7 - Music in the woods

By Ann Bronkhorst

A local map of 1894 shows a semi-rural Durham Road backing directly onto Coldfall Wood and, extending eastwards into the woodland, a newly-built All Saints' Church. Coldfall Wood was owned by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners who gave some of the land for the new church. In 1892 it was consecrated as 'a Chapel of Ease in the Parish of Holy Trinity'. By the end of the century All Saints' had its own parish, vicar and rapidly growing congregation.



All Saints Church, Durham Road. Photo by Alison Roberts

### Expansion and development

Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 was celebrated by the purchase of an organ. Gradually the building was enlarged by a chancel, a Lady Chapel, a north transept and vestries. In 1935 a parish hall was built; now housing has replaced the hall and, inside the church, other changes have taken place.

### Major alterations

After the last war a new organ, made by the great Alfred Hunter, was acquired from a bombed church. In 1977 what are described by the Victoria History of the Counties of England as 'High Church fittings' – the Stations of the Cross and a Rood over the chancel screen – were installed. A major re-ordering of the building took place in 1990, creating a large area for meetings, art exhibitions, and so on. The Rood screen now divides that area from the main body of the church; above is a gallery for the Hunter organ and the choir. Luckily the remodelling did not damage the famous acoustics.

### Music-making

Geoffrey Hanson, church organist and director of the East Finchley Arts Festival, cannot explain the excellent acoustics. Father Hardy, the

vicar, himself a musician, believes that the 'sweet spot' for musical performance lies just in front of the chancel steps. Certainly music has flourished in All Saints', from rehearsals by local choirs and orchestras to commercial recordings. The first London performance of Britten's Noye's Fludde and the foundation of the Finchley Children's Music Group took place here. Among the renowned musicians who have performed at All Saints' are James Bowman, Jennifer Bate and the London Mozart Players.

### A parish church

For all the specialised music-making, however, even the tone-deaf would be welcomed at All Saints'. Coldfall Wood has been banished beyond Creighton Avenue and housing now surrounds the church, but for over a century it has been a much-loved parish church in a changing East Finchley.

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*This is the final article in this series. Inevitably there has not been space to cover all the historical and social information available about local buildings serving faith groups. There is plenty of scope for readers to do some research of their own! My thanks to all those whose help and information made the series possible. AB*

## Landmine action

This year's Landmine Action Week will be 1-7 November. It will mark the halfway point for states which signed the Ottawa Treaty in 1999 to clear all their mined areas. For further information, including help in organising local campaign events, call Clare Argyle on 020 7820 0222, fax 020 7820 0057, or e-mail [clare@landmineaction.org](mailto:clare@landmineaction.org).



**What happened in March 1918 at Martin School? Why did the entire school, plus mounted police and flags, assemble for this photo?**

The photo belonged to one of the pupils, the late Nellie Margaret Coombes of Leopold Road, and was sent to The Finchley Society Archives by her daughter, Hazel Astley. Hazel, who now lives in Australia, is one of the East Finchley Aussies who keep in touch with life back here through the pages of *THE ARCHER*. If you can tell us any more about this picture, do let us know.

## RSPCA news

By Mary Atkinson of East Finchley RSPCA

### An early warning for 5 November

Fireworks will be let off at the end of this month and during November. Your pets may be frightened, so keep them indoors during the evenings. Why not give extra protection by having them micro chipped for £10 at our Clinic? (Open Monday to Thursday 6.00–7.30pm at Park Road, opposite the children's playground). Then, if they take

off, you have a better chance of being re-united with them.

Another tip for Bonfire Night. If you have been building up a bonfire, check underneath before you light it. Small animals, particularly hedgehogs, often burrow into such places for shelter.

### Autumn sale

Don't forget the Autumn Sale on Saturday 9 October from 11am–2pm at the Clinic. Have

a light lunch, buy a raffle ticket and look for a bargain in books, bric a brac and clothes. Also sign the petition for restrictions on fireworks and upholding the Animal Welfare Bill.

The RSPCA had a very welcome donation of over £13 raised by the 8th West Finchley Guides who organised a sale of cakes which they had made themselves. Let their effort encourage others.

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