



A net success

By Diana Cormack

Throughout the summer holidays, Barnet Bulldogs Basketball Club has been holding free courses on the court in Cherry Tree Wood. Supported by funds from the council, Connexions and the Milly Apthorp Charitable Trust, many local children were able to benefit from these training sessions out in the open air.

"I thought it was really, really good because they teach you how to do it properly," eight-year-old Gabriel Antoinette of Prospect Ring told me. His twelve-year-old sister Daniela agreed. "The teacher was really good and gets your attention by doing

different things with the ball," she said. They wish it could be a permanent fixture in East Finchley.

Beginners aged around seven to twelve were schooled in the basic skills of the game on Mondays to Fridays from 2.00pm to 4.00pm and could

show what they had learned by competing for prizes, culminating in a tournament at the end of the week.

Older children up to the age of eighteen were offered training from 4 to 6pm, with various competitions and a three-on-three tournament, also with prizes.

Organiser Ted Polson told me that this session had not proved to be as popular as the earlier one, for which over fifty children were registered.

Perhaps that's because it wasn't advertised in *THE ARCHER*! However Ted has said he will contact us before the next basketball training sessions in the park, scheduled for Easter 2005, so that *Young Archer* can pass on the details. They should start just after the schools break up and continue throughout the holidays.

If you can't wait till then, you can find out about other courses in the borough by phoning him on 020 8449 4883



Not just a passing phase for these young basketball players.
Picture by John Dearing

A four-legged friend

by Kathryn Salomon

Sam (my Greyhound) refused to race even once, but he's a real star as a PAT dog. PAT dogs have to pass the Pets as Therapy Temperament Test which ensures that they are gentle and well-behaved. References are taken out on their owners, and they are insured by the charity. PAT dogs and cats visit hospitals, residential homes, hospices, anywhere that needs them. Some help phobic patients overcome their fear of dogs.

Sam and I make regular visits to Jewish Care's Rela Goldhill Lodge, a residential home for younger people with physical disabilities. Sam is also a regular visitor at the residential home where my mother-in-law lives. We also visit a Special School. All the children are in wheelchairs and most of the pupils are terrified of dogs. This is particularly sad because Assistance Dogs could bring them independence when they grow up. Sam is helping them to overcome their fears.

Friendly visitor

People in hospital or a residential home who miss their own pet or are lonely welcome a visit from a friendly pet. A few have become so isolated and depressed that they no longer speak, sometimes they suddenly start talking to their PAT visitor. Others find stroking a friendly pet comforting.

Giving Sam a (low calorie) dog-treat enables those who are used to having everything done for them the chance to give something to someone else.

They love to introduce Sam to their visitors and recount his exploits. Instead of just listening to news from the outside world they have something interesting to say.

Sam benefits too

Sam also benefits from the visits. When he first came to us he was very timid but now he is much more relaxed and outgoing, he loves to be the centre of attention. He has had a bad shoulder for most of this year and became very depressed because he

couldn't go for walks. His PAT visits have really kept him going. As for me, I find it really rewarding sharing my lovely pet.

So, if you have a friendly, well-behaved dog, of any shape or size or a friendly cat (yes, there are PAT cats too) and you would like to know more about Pets as Therapy, or if you know somewhere that would benefit from visits, please contact Pets as Therapy, 0870 240 1239 or www.petsastherapy.org



Marietta Adami and Sam at Rela Goldhill Lodge
Photo by Vic Aboudara

Women's self defence classes

By Sheila Armstrong



Lucy Evans gets into "forward" position. Photo by Erini Rodis

Lucy Evans is running women-only self defence classes at the Green Man Centre, Strawberry Vale every Wednesday from 18 August. The classes start at 7.30 and last two hours. They are open to all women from 12 to 60. No levels of fitness are required so anyone can join.

She stresses that everyone works at their own pace, and will be working mostly on their own with occasional pair work. The best sort of clothing to wear is tracksuit bottoms and T-shirt. Training is in bare feet.

Kixa classes

Lucy already runs Kixa classes in Swiss Cottage. Kixa is a non-contact form of self defence from East Java, involving kicks, punches and blocks. It helps promote fitness, weight loss and relaxation and is essentially non-aggressive. The classes include advice about when to fight and when to run and about increasing your own

awareness of the surroundings you find yourself in.

Women only

The reason Lucy is running a women only class is that she feels the martial arts tend to be dominated by men. It is hoped that this sort of class will encourage abused or vulnerable women to join in and women who may be unable to train with men for cultural or religious reasons.

Details are available from Lucy Evans on 07929 203 129, from Martin O'Donnell at the Green Man Centre on 020 8883 4916, or www.pat@kixa-international.com.

RSPCA autumn fair

This year the fair will be held at the RSPCA Clinic in Park Road on Saturday 9 October between 11am and 2pm. There will be a selection of bric-a-brac, books, toys, clothes and home made sweets.

Try your luck on the tombola and buy a raffle ticket for a chance to win a gorgeous cake. Refreshments will be on sale and volunteers will have a wide range of RSPCA leaflets to hand out covering all aspects of animal welfare.

All proceeds go to maintain the Clinic, which has served East Finchley pet owners for so many years.

Ann Owens redundancy

Re Ann Owens Centre 'steams ahead'

Following last month's article on the future of the Ann Owens Centre, *THE ARCHER* has been informed that Assistant Manager Linda O'Neill was made redundant.