



A life spent gunning for Arsenal

By Daphne Chamberlain

“Have you got any 70-year-old fanatics?” That’s what TV channel Five asked the Arsenal Supporters’ Club before this year’s Cup Final. June James didn’t quite qualify, but her older brother David did.



June James with the FA Cup, 2003.

So when the camera crew visited Leicester Road, it was David they filmed (in the ‘Arsenal room’). It was probably no more than he deserved, as he comes over from Australia virtually every year for the last two months of the season.

The beautiful game

June was 10 years old when David took her to her first match in 1946 and by the time she was 13 she was taking herself off to Highbury. Times have changed, but it was still unusual then. She used to stand in the West enclosure, arriving two hours before the game to get as near the touchline as possible.

“It annoys me,” she says, “when people think women only go to a match to ogle the players’ legs. It’s the game that interests me.”

Without a shadow of a doubt (as she didn’t say), June would have played herself if there had been women’s football when she was young, though she thinks her glasses might have hampered her. As it is, she watches

Arsenal Ladies, finding their standard very good.

Though she once had a picture of Denis Compton - double international cricketer and footballer - on her bedroom wall, she won’t single out any player. “The marvellous Thierry Henry always says he depends on service from his team-mates. It’s a team game.”

Fans not yobs

It’s also a game that has changed. June is “not sure” about the new light balls, and hates the gang culture among supporters. She believes that segregation has encouraged yobbism. “I used to like talking to supporters of the other side. All this silly chanting, taunting relegated sides and calling referees names is horrible.”

Health permitting, she still goes to every home game (wearing an Arsenal shirt), and she and David have been regular weekend visitors to Cardiff in the last few years. Nearer home, she often supports Barnet too.

Is June perhaps East Finchley’s No.1 sports fan?



East Finchley Old Boys’ Football Club - L-R, back: J Amot, A McMaster, H Taylor, A Norman, WJ Duke, F Pryor, W Porter, H Bower, T Brett. Middle: E Rooke, H Green, L Lee, F Heathfield, E Mayne, F Puddlefoot. Front: W Brydone

East Finchley football - a century on

More than 100 years ago, this was the face of football in East Finchley. A team of steely-eyed players stare out from this photograph sent into THE ARCHER by reader Maureen Betts. Her grandfather H. Bower is in the line-up for the 1903-1904 team of East Finchley players in Victoria Park, Long Lane.

Do you recognise any of the other names and faces in the picture or can you shed more light on the team around this time? Write to us here at THE ARCHER, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA.

Play as you learn

By Daphne Chamberlain

At the Old Barn in Tarling Road is a pre-school playgroup for two-year-olds up to reception class age. One mother brings her child from Hampstead, and she’s the not the only one from out of the area. I went along to their Open Day to find out why.

Stability is one reason. The four members of staff have been together for about 20 years, originally at St Mary’s, Church End, but for the last 11 years at the Old Barn.

“Treat others the way you would like to be treated” is the motto permanently on the wall, and I found a warm and friendly atmosphere.

The aim is to learn through play. One of the organisers, Tracy Lewis, told me that the group follows the Schools Stepping Stones course and has just had an “excellent” Ofsted report. Drawing, modelling, dressing-up, role-play, and lessons in things like ‘magic’ - magnetism to you and me - are on the curriculum, as well as simple gardening, where prime attractions are the insects.

Just outside the door is an enormous garden and play area,

but the children also have fun days further afield. Recently they have visited Capel Manor gardens, explored helicopters at the RAF Museum, driven round in fire engines at the Fire Station, and taken trips up the road to East Finchley Library.

The group is a non profit-making charity, which receives no grant and raises its own funds.

It runs from 9.30am to 12.30pm, Monday to Friday, during school terms. For further details, contact Angie on 07977 846922 or Penny on 07711 654669.

Young Brownies

By Diana Cormack

If your daughter is too young for the Brownies but desperate to join, help is at hand. A pre-Brownie group for five to seven-year-old girls is being held at St Mary’s Church Hall, 279 High Road, East Finchley.

Called “Rainbows”, it will run on Mondays from 4pm-5pm in term time only, starting on 12 September. For further details, contact Mrs Antoinette on 020 8883 5654.

Correction: The photo accompanying the article ‘Fashion show with a difference’ (THE ARCHER, June 2005) was taken by Iwona Susi. THE ARCHER apologises for crediting the photo to somebody else in error.

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