



Training for 2012

By Adam Justice-Mills

In quiet corners of East Finchley, while many of us are still asleep, children are up and working hard to achieve their dreams. It may seem like many years until the 2012 Olympics but some kids train for many hours a week, determined to be the best they can.

"I was very excited when we won the Olympics bid, and when Ellen McArthur went round the world," says Louise Latham, aged 12. Louise, of Creighton Avenue, sails her Cadet dinghy every weekend and in competitions around the UK.

She has sailed for a couple of years and is already making an impression on her coaches through her performance and determination. It is a family affair taking Louise and boat on long trips and buying equipment means everyone is involved.

Meanwhile, swimmer Alice Pearson of Hertford Road reckons the training she puts in is worth it. "I have to train all the time if I want to win a gold at the nationals, so I swim 40,000 metres a week - and I need to grow more!" Alice, 12, eats loads more than her friends to keep her strength up and says taking part in the competitions costs several thousand pounds a year. "It's repetitive but never dull - our coach gives us targets and makes it fun."

Gymnast Esme Girling says, "Good coaching is very important, but so is having fun, and the people you train with." Esme, 11, of Lincoln Road, came fourth in a recent London-wide competition. A pupil at Fortismere, she trains 13 hours a week plus competitions - more in the school holidays - with Barnet council's club, hoping to reach national level in the next two years.

East Finchley boy Josh Deraji, 12, has a difficult question about his future as an athlete. He started running cross-country to improve his football fitness but did so well he's been scouted to the Haringey & Enfield Athletics club. "I really want to do my best - my hero is Hicham El Guerrouj - but I love football as well."

All these kids, and many others, were inspired by the Olympic bid. Let's hope their national sports organisations can match their commitment and give them the support, encouragement and finance to go for gold.

Christmas, the Swedish way

By Louise Wikstrom

In December, Sweden is mostly a country in the dark with the sun only peeking out for a few hours a day. Perhaps it is no wonder then, that when it comes to celebrating the big holiday of the season, Christmas, it is centred on the return of light.

The most important decorations are lamps, put in all windows and kept lit all day. In the middle of December the Queen of Light, Saint Lucia, is celebrated and, over time, the celebration has developed into something quite unique.

Early on 13 December, people gather in schools, hospitals and at work to watch Lucia stride into the dark room with up to 100 maids following her. They all wear white robes with red silk bands around their waists and hold candles. Through singing, the maids explain that Lucia has come to bring light and hope to the people in the dark north.

Christmas itself is celebrated a couple of weeks after Lucia - but on Christmas Eve, not Christmas Day. Families gather and spend the whole day together, with Christmas food, gifts and a Donald Duck cartoon on TV at 3pm that it has become traditional to watch.

The food is usually a smorgasbord of different dishes. Traditionally, you start with all the cold food - herring, slices of ham and salads - before moving on to the warm food: meatballs, sausages and gratins. Finally, it is time for dessert that, according to tradition, is rice pudding. As for drinks, a special fizzy Christmas drink named julmust is the favourite.

In the evening, someone in the family goes out, saying they need to buy a newspaper or post a letter. A few minutes later, an old man in red clothes, a hat and big beard knocks on the door and asks, "Are there any good children here?" It is Santa Claus, come to hand out the gifts - the children have been waiting for him all day.



Bringing the light: Lucia with candles on her head

Christmas Services

St Mary's Catholic Church

Sunday 18 Dec: 8.30am, 10am and 12 noon, Fourth Sunday of Advent Mass; 6.30pm, Advent Carol Service.

Monday 19 Dec: 9.50am, Morning Prayer and Mass.

Tuesday 20 Dec: 9.50am, Morning Prayer and Mass, followed by Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

Wednesday 21 Dec: 9.50am, Liturgy of the Word & Holy Communion; 7.30pm, Penitential Service.

Thursday 22 Dec: 6.50pm, Evening Prayer and Mass.

Friday 23 Dec: 9.50am, Morning Prayer and Mass.

Saturday 24 Dec: 9.50am, Morning Prayer, followed by Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament & Confessions; 6.30pm, Children's Mass; 9.30pm, Carols & Readings; 10pm Mass.

Sunday 25 Dec: 8.30am, 10am and 12 noon, Mass.

Monday 26 December: 9.50am, Morning Prayer and Mass.

Holy Trinity Church

Sunday 18 Dec: 6pm, Carol Service.

Saturday 24 Dec: 6pm, Blessing of the Crib; 11.30pm, Midnight Mass.

Sunday 25 Dec: 10am, Christmas Day Eucharist.

East Finchley Baptist Church

Sunday 18 Dec: 11am-12.15pm, All Ages Together Carol Service (with a presentation by the children & young people), creche

provided; 6-7.15pm, Carols By Candlelight.

Sunday 25 Dec: 10.30-11.15am, Christmas Morning Family Service.

All Saints' Church

Sunday 18 Dec: 6.30pm, Christmas Carol Service, followed by mulled wine and mince pies.

Saturday 24 Dec: 3-5pm, Children's Christmas Service with Carols and Christmas Party; 11.30pm, Midnight Mass of Christmas with Procession of the Christ Child and Blessing of the Crib.

Sunday 25 Dec: 8am, Mass of the Dawn; 10am, Mass of Christmas Day with Christmas Carols.

St. Johns Christian Spiritualist Church

Thursday 22 Dec: 7.30pm, Candle Light Carol Service. All are welcome.

East Finchley Methodist Church

Sunday 11 Dec: 10.30am, Gift Service and Christmas Play.

Sunday 18 Dec: 6.30pm, Carols by Candlelight.

Sunday 25 Dec: 10.30am, Christmas Day Family service.

Will East Finchley get more 263s?

By Daphne Chamberlain
Despite having been officially identified as a problem route, the 263 has got worse. This was revealed at a London Transport Users Committee meeting at Avenue House in October. But there are signs that something may be being done about this at last: At the same meeting, a Transport for London representative revealed that TFL is reviewing the 263 schedule.

Extra buses requested

Confirming to *THE ARCHER* that they have made an informal request to TFL to consider extra buses on this route, Barnet Council also told us they have appointed consultants to study the problem.

East Finchley Buswatch wants to ensure that the problem of the long "solo stretch" between East and North Finchley is dealt with promptly. Buswatch convenor Hazel Burnett told us, "It's all very well looking at difficulties in turning round at Barnet General Hospital. We know that could cause a knock-on effect, and we acknowledge traffic difficulties, but what we want is action on the part of the route where there is no alternative bus."

143 not forgotten

The Users Committee also noted the high level of complaint about the 143 service, and another survey has found that this service has also worsened.



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East Finchley Clinic
Unit 2/3 Bedford Mews
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