



Hugh L'Estrange producing the current edition of the Talking Newspaper. Photo by Kathryn Salomon

Our local Talking Newspaper

By Kathryn Salomon

Barnet Borough Talking Newspaper (BBTN), first recorded in January 1978, is produced by 60 active volunteers and 20 reserves. BBTN is a registered charity serving the visually impaired and blind community. Listeners find out about the service by word of mouth and possibly through Barnet Council.

Although BBTN does not receive a grant from Barnet they lease the recording studio in Wetherill Road from the Council for a peppercorn rent. The Hendon Times Group have generously made a grant towards the new digital recording equipment.

The newspaper is produced every Thursday. In the morning the Administrative Team unpack the tapes of last week's issue which listeners have returned, check they are suitable for re-use, re-label and clean them. Thursday afternoons find the Editorial Team choosing articles from a proof copy or early edition of the Hendon Times. Material is also included from the Jewish Chronicle, and sometimes RNIB and Disability

Action in Barnet. Two sets of copy are pasted onto A4 sheets; white for the Readers and blue for the Technical team.

At about 7pm the Reading and Technical teams arrive. They are drawn from a bank of eight frontline technical and sixteen frontline reading volunteers. The four duty readers (normally two men and two women) sit around a table in the studio; a console with lights in front of them relays instructions from the control room. In the control room the producer presses a switch on his console to instruct each reader when they are on air, and informs the sound engineer when each speaker is

about to finish and the new one is about to commence. The engineer uses the computer to produce the recording digitally. The session lasts one hour.

When the recording is finished, it is transferred to 180-220 tapes by fast-copiers. Each tape is checked for sound quality. They are then packed into the addressed envelopes and taken to East Finchley sorting office. The Post Office delivers the tapes free and the listener receives their copy on the same day the local paper hits the newsstands.

For further information please contact Victor Corney, 020 8449 0176, jcorney@fish.co.uk.

Don't get by, get on

By Deidre Anthony and Bob Facer

With the start of the New Year do you feel that you are in a rut and want to make a new start? Well, help is available in the Green Man Community Centre, courtesy of Barnet College in the community. A new careers advice service as well as new classes to help you brush up on your reading, writing, maths and spelling have started.

Our free classes are small and friendly, with qualified tutors. You can get a confidential skills check, to help you make a start towards your goals.

Classes at the Green Man Community Centre

Literacy: Monday, 12 noon to 2.30pm

Numeracy: Tuesday 9.30am to 12 noon
Basic skills with computing: Thursday 12.30pm to 3pm

Interested? Then contact Deidre on 020 8266 4286

The new careers advice service can help you with CV

writing, choosing a course, job applications, interview preparation, and looking for a job. Bob, your new community guidance worker, can provide you with expert, practical help that is free and impartial. You can have a one-to-one confidential session to help make you decide what to do next. The service is available on Mondays from 10am to 4pm for adults who are twenty or over.

Just drop in to the Green Man Community Centre or call 020 8815 0703 to make an appointment.

Jackie improves South Bank

By Daphne Chamberlain

Last month we wrote about Shape – the agency which helps disabled theatregoers to enjoy a night out. This month, East Finchley's Jackie Levy tells how her reaction to a traumatic evening at the South Bank may have made disabled access there easier in future.

Before Christmas, Jackie booked herself and two disabled companions into a Queen Elizabeth Hall concert. They encountered inadequate and misleading signing, leading to a locked door, steps, and a long walk in the cold.

Her complaint to Malcolm Young, South Bank's Director of Planning, brought an apology and an assurance that her next visit would be as relaxed and stress-free as possible.

Double check

Speaking to *THE ARCHER*, Mr Young said that Jackie had identified a problem with signage that had not been apparent to him, and this would be addressed. He said that building works, which will continue this year, were creating continual disruption.

Arrangements change at short notice, and his advice is to double-check before setting out. The South Bank has published an advisory leaflet, which is sent with tickets through the post. Jackie's tickets were bought through Shape, who say they did not have these leaflets at the time. However, they have them now.

Be prepared to fight

Mr Young recommended explaining particular disabilities when booking tickets. Jackie also passes on this general advice for all venues:

* If tickets have not been sent, ask where the collection point is, and if it is accessible. Ask if there are special access arrangements.

* Audio-descriptive performances are available at some venues

for selected performances.

* Ask for plenty of legroom. Many venues, including cinemas, offer two tickets for the price of one, allowing a companion to go free. Jackie warns that you may have to negotiate though – possibly going through several staff – if you are not in a wheelchair.

"Be prepared to fight," says Jackie, "and also to ask for help. Do join Shape as well. I've been a member for years."

Shape: 020 7619 6160 / www.shapearts.org.uk / info@shapearts.org.uk

Cutting edge

Push your way past all the discs in Alan's records and you will find that Martin Henham is still running his key-cutting business at the back of the shop.

Although he retired from the antiques trade a few months ago Martin decided to keep on cutting keys. He's not open Mondays but can be found there most other days including Saturday from about midday. He's still among the best value key-cutting services around and will make house calls if needed.

Phone him to check that he's in the shop on 020 8444 5274 or call in to Alan's Records, 218 High Road.

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Elvis plays Finchley!

By Carole Lateman

On Saturday 11 December last year, Swamp Rock was delighted to present a rare London gig from the Kings of Staffordshire Cajun, Elvis Fontenot & The Sugar Bees.

The enthusiastic crowd kept the dance floor jumping at The Wilf Slack Sports Club, Finchley, the new home of North London's Louisiana dance music. Elvis and the boys played their usual eclectic mix of Cajun, Zydeco and Swamp Pop, with a few new numbers thrown in, such as *Promised Land*, a personal favourite. The band played with their customary humour and verve, and a fun, if steamy, night was had by all.