



Local business woman wins award

An East Finchley resident has received international recognition for her community work. The European Foundation For Black Women in Business gave Sandra Fox the award for 'social and humanitarian work within the community'. For the past five years, Sandra has been running *Tap In Computers*, which provides learning support for people with disabilities. Although the business's base is at Sandra's home in Elmhurst Crescent, Sandra prefers it to be a mobile service as she says, "It's best to teach on a one to one basis in your [the client's] own environment."

Her aim is to give people with disabilities more options. She likens it to an empty glass. She can't tell her clients what to put in the glass, but she can at least give them a glass – that is, she can give them opportunities.

Changing the format

As she is severely dyslexic herself, Sandra knows only too well that the 'normal' ways of learning don't always work. "You don't give me a pen; you don't give me a book. But if you give me technology, I am able to give you the meaning of life." She explained that because she finds reading and writing dif-

ficult, she uses her computer to do it for her. As well as literacy problems, Sandra has a very poor short-term memory. To overcome this, she has developed a method of making a visual picture when trying to remember something.

Working around her disabilities in this way is what she calls "changing the format", and it is what she believes is the key to teaching people with disabilities.

Being positive

Sandra also believes having a positive approach is very important. She teaches her students to say "I've lost focus" when they

start to struggle with a subject rather than the more negative statement of "I don't understand".

With *Tap In Computers*, Sandra can enable people to have something that she never had – a good education. She explained, "What I am trying to put across to people is – if I can do what I can do, what can you do with an education?"

Sandra would like to thank the Skills Council for nominating her for the award.

Tap In Computers – mobile: 07817 460 496, website: www.tapincomputers.com or email: sfox@tapincomputers.com.

Sandra Fox with her award last year. Photo by Andrew Box.



Petition halts development

By Ann Bronkhorst

The bulldozers and chainsaws must wait a little longer. Strathlene House and its old oaks and Scotch pines have won a temporary reprieve, thanks to pressure from local residents.

The large Edwardian house in Creighton Avenue, once part of Fortismere School, has been bought by Festival Care Homes Ltd for about £1.5 million. Their architects applied to Haringey for planning permission to demolish the house and put up a massive three-storey 94-bedroom care home. It would have over 100 staff but parking for only 21 cars.

Tree protection

The rear of the site is classified as Metropolitan Open Land. The grounds contain many mature trees, only ten of which are now protected by emergency Tree Preservation Orders. Five of these large trees border the gardens of houses in Ringwood Avenue. Earlier felling of other mature trees, some of which were bat roosting sites, has dismayed English Nature and the London Wildlife Trust.

170 local residents, supported by several Haringey councillors and by Barbara Roche, MP, signed a petition in December 2004 urging the council to reject the development plans. Concerns were expressed about an increase in levels of traffic. Cllr. Gilbert (Fortis Green) has said that the footprint and height of the proposed building would be "far, far too large". His colleague Lynne Featherstone (Muswell Hill) says she is "appalled at the devastation to trees" and intends to press for prosecutions

if any work has been carried out illegally.

Successful pressure

Just before Christmas Haringey council informed Barbara Roche that the planning application had been withdrawn, due to the objections. She comments, "This goes to show the power local people have over their own communities when they work together." A revised application, however, will be made later this spring; no doubt the residents of Creighton and Ringwood Avenues will be on the alert.

Peter Sellers in East Finchley

By Brian Timms

I've just read the book *Peter Sellers – the mask behind the mask* by Peter Evans, last published in paperback in 1980.

It refers to Sellers trying to book a room in a Norwich Hotel by claiming he was the Earl of Beaconsfield. His cover was blown and the author says that the fact that Sellers was carrying a down-market packet of Woodbine cigarettes didn't help his cause.

Evans goes on, "The Woodbines, of course, might have been a noble Lord's idiosyncrasy. But the address in the visitors' book – 211b High Road, East Finchley (where he lived with his parents) – although written with some flourish, did not seem appropriate for the nobility of England, even allowing for

the most punitive death duties levied on the rich."

The book also refers to Sellers advertising his talent in *The Stage*: "Available for production and Sunday concerts, all coms: 211b High Road, East Finchley, London N2. Phone Tudor 7621."

The date would be 1948/9, which is when his mum handed us kids from Martin Schools signed photos of Sellers piled up on her hall stand. "There you are, Love," she said, as she handed them out to the kids lining up on the flat landing.

(For those who have seen the film, *The Life and Death of Peter Sellers*, his mum in those days was quite petite. I remember her as trim, bright and perky, with a twinkle in her eye.)

Facing the Martin playing field, the first floor flat is, I believe, the penultimate one on the right hand side.

The book, which I bought from a second-hand seller in Melbourne, was published by NEL Books, New English Library Ltd., Barnards Inn, Holborn, London EC 1N2JR.

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