



Tuning in to Finchley

By Daphne Chamberlain

London Radio visited Finchley a couple of months ago for its lunchtime *Round Your Manor* series but reporter Maxwell Hutchinson came prepared to be unimpressed.

After looking at photos of Finchley past and present, he had written us off as "a sad story of an interesting suburb being eroded by poor quality buildings, bad planning decisions and urban neglect".

"Am I right?" he asked Bill Tyler, President of The Finchley Society.

"We battle for better architecture and planning", Bill told him, "But it's a hard struggle. Developers seem to have the whip hand."

A depressing start, but studio presenter Robert Elms looked on the bright side. Reeling off the names of Peter Sellers, David Jason, Norman Wisdom, Ronnie Barker, Charlie Chester, Eric Morecambe, Terry Thomas, Spike Milligan and more – all born in or residents of Finchley – he wondered what was so funny about living here.

However, what really mattered to Elms was the old open-air Lido. That was where – "like most of London" – he spent the long, hot summer of 1976. While he lamented its closure, Maxwell Hutchinson mourned the loss of cinemas.

Art deco star

He raved about photos of

North Finchley Gaumont, showing "one of the finest Art Deco cinemas in the whole of London, with a wonderful, wonderful restaurant - like the Atlantic Bar and Grill behind Piccadilly Circus". This was the cue for Elms and Bill Tyler to praise the Phoenix on the High Road, the oldest cinema in the country still operating.

Talk roamed on about the Naked Lady statue at Henry's Corner, our own statue of the archer on the station, the former mental asylum in Friern Barnet, Finchley Common, highwaymen and Turpin's Oak, and the number of good pubs to eat, with Bill Tyler supplying historical detail. He also had several good words to say about the artsdepot – "architecturally absolutely monstrous, but with a lot going on there".

The programme was broadcast opposite East Finchley station, which emerged as the star of the show. Calling it "marvellous, modernist, absolutely beautiful Art Deco", Hutchinson conceded that Finchley was not as dull as he had expected. In fact, he told us, he was definitely being won over.



Terry Stone of East Finchley Advisory Service (right) is handed a giant cheque for £1,000. Photo by Erini Rodis

Charity trust money for community project

By Terry Stone

Ladbrokes Charitable Trust has donated a grant of £1,000 towards East Finchley Advice Service's new project to help former recipients of the service to build and develop skills, break away from poverty, and make a positive contribution to the community in the process.

East Finchley Advice Service now wishes to deliver a volunteering project specifically for former users of its service and focus on increasing opportunities to progress them into jobs.

This project will target local people from local housing estates who have been out of work for lengthy periods: disabled people, lone parents, members of black and ethnic minority communities, and

people with experience of mental health problems.

East Finchley Advice Service, based in Church Lane, plans to recruit up to 10 local volunteers and offer them a structured programme of training, including office routines, dealing with the public, welfare rights and legislation, IT and advocacy skills.

People with no employment experience or who have been out of work for long periods

tend to have low self-esteem and low expectations. It is expected that volunteers' confidence will be boosted as they move from being at the "receiving end" of services to a position of providing a service that is needed and valued locally.

The aim is to provide volunteers with the necessary skills, experience and knowledge of the world of work, as well as the confidence to move on.

ST. JOHNS CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALIST CHURCH

Tele: 079 444 989 30 ~ Web: www.stjohnsfinchley.co.uk

Services

Sunday 6.30 p.m. Thursday 7.30 p.m.

Holy Communion 1st Sunday of the month 6.30 p.m.

Healing every Tuesday between 1 p.m. & 3 p.m.

Weddings ~ Christenings ~ Funerals (at the church or cemetery)

by arrangement with the Minister

All are welcome

4 Woodberry Grove N12 (behind Homebase)

EAST FINCHLEY ARTS FESTIVAL 2005

Friday June 25th - Sunday July 3rd

Art Drama Music Poetry

Friday June 24th London Ripieno Society a programme to mark the 500th Anniversary of Thomas Tallis and a performance of Geoffrey Hanson's recent setting of the Requiem.

Saturday June 25th Fidelio Piano Quartet. Acclaimed group of young players in works by Haydn, Brahms and a new work by James Francis-Brown

Sunday June 26th Thamyse String Quartet. A return visit of this popular Quartet in works by Haydn, Brahms & Britten

Monday June 27th East Finchley Open local artists exhibition open evening - admission free.

Wednesday June 29th Duo: Matsumi Hatano & Takashi Tsunoda, a recital of English Lute Songs.

Thursday June 30th Margaret Wolfit, daughter of Sir Donald, in a dramatized performance based on the journals and letters of Octavia Hill.

Friday July 1st Three Poets: Fleur Adcock, Jill Bamber & Alan Brownjohn read a from a selection of their works.

Saturday July 2nd London Mozart Players David Juritz Conductor/Soloist Mozart, Purcell, Hanson, Grieg & Piazzolla

Sunday July 3rd Finchley Children's Music Group. Musical Director: Grace Rossiter in a programme of music by Tchaikovsky, Verdi, Sallinen, Tippett & Hanson.

All events at All Saints Church, Durham Road, East Finchley, N2 at 7-30pm

Tickets: London Mozart Players £14; Concessions £10; Children under 16 £1

All other events except East Finchley Open £10; concessions £8; Children under 16 £1

Box Offices: Coral Travel, 50 High Road N2. 020 8444 7268

Les Aldrich, 98 Fortis Green Road, N10. 020 8883 5631

Visit our website www.eastfinchleyartsfestival.org.uk

Finchley Society history talk

John Heathfield will tell a meeting of The Finchley Society history group of his work and approach to local history in a talk at Avenue House, East End Road, N3 at 8pm on Wednesday June 15. Entry is free and non-members are welcome.

John is a well-known local historian who has written extensively about Finchley. He is about to publish a new book on the district in World War 11, written in co-operation with Percy Reboul, another well-known historian.

Common ground

The society history group is studying the enclosure of Finchley Common and its effect on Finchley and seeks help. Anyone interested should contact Tony Roberts on 020 8883 5954. Another project is photographing local shops for a survey planned for a repeat every two or three years. Anyone interested in helping should contact David Marcus on 020 8346 1734

By-gone Finchley

On Thursday 30 June Derek Warren will show slides of early

20th Century Finchley and its surroundings in Avenue House at 8pm. Entry is free and non-members are welcome.

Derek is a member of the society's archive team. He is familiar with the area and also

has an extensive knowledge of the local wildlife and environment.

Information on The Finchley Society and how to join from 020 8883 2633 and www.finchleysociety.org.uk.

Golden age

To celebrate its 50th anniversary, Church Farmhouse Museum is hosting an exhibition from 30 April until 4 September which traces the history of the museum and its collections.

From transport to Troika pottery and from gadgets to ghost stories, this celebration of the museum places particular emphasis on its past exhibitions, many of them based on the private collections of local residents and virtually all unique to Church Farm.

Built around 1660 but with many Victorian alterations and additions, Church Farm is Hendon's oldest surviving dwelling, now listed Grade II.

For nearly 300 years the centre of a busy hay and dairy farm, the building opened as a museum for Hendon in 1955, and then became the London Borough of Barnet's

museum in 1965.

The next half-century

Pam Usher, Barnet's Head of Cultural Services, says that for the past half-century Church Farmhouse Museum has played a unique part in the heritage of the borough, entertaining and informing hundreds of thousands of visitors: "The next 50 years should be just as successful; come and join us as we embark on them."

Church Farmhouse Museum, at Greyhound Hill, Hendon, is open Mondays to Thursdays 10am-1pm and 2-5pm, Saturdays 10am-1pm and 2-5.30pm, and Sundays 2-5.30pm. Admission is free.