



# Have fun for the Hospice

By Daphne Chamberlain

If you've never done the Big Fun Walk before, why not give it a go on its tenth anniversary? Entry and refreshments are free. All you have to do is to raise at least £25 in sponsorship for the North London Hospice. This year's walk is on Saturday 20 March, checking in between 9.15 and 10.15am at East Finchley Underground Station.

## Fancy free

Wheelchair users, children and well-behaved dogs are all welcome, and dedicated fun-lovers may choose to wear fancy dress. The full distance – ending at Westminster, via as many green spaces as possible – is seven and a half miles, but you can do just as much as you can manage. The organisers provide refreshments en route and at the end.

It is possible to register

on the day, but signing up beforehand makes the start much less chaotic. You can apply for a registration form by phone on 020 8202 5586, or do the whole thing online at [www.bigfunwalk.co.uk](http://www.bigfunwalk.co.uk). The Hospice gains maximum benefit if you tick the Gift Aid box on the form. Claiming sponsorship money under the Gift Aid umbrella brought the Hospice an extra £10,000 last year.

# Real charity begins at home

For the compulsive collector or bargain hunter, charity shops have in some ways replaced junk shops. And certainly we all seem to have an excess of possessions now – stuff. And if this stuff is still in reasonable condition it's good to be able to pass it on to your local charity shop. Trouble is, a lot of it is way beyond the pale and can't be sold. And as most charities will tell you, their shops are often used as dumping grounds by those who just want to get rid of everything in one drop, leaving the shop to dispose of unsaleable items. This costs them quite a lot of money as councils charge all shops for rubbish removal.

## Could you recycle?

Consider checking through your donations first and sort them into things that can be recycled either in your black box or at the recycling centre. Certainly electrical goods should be taken there: shops are not allowed to sell them for health and safety reasons. Clothes that are too ragged or dirty might also go there. Or your favourite charity shop may accept them separately in a black sack labelled 'rags' as there are textile firms who will pay the charity for them, either exporting them to the third world or sending them for shredding. Ask in the shop.

## Would you buy this?

In January when a large proportion of the population seems to have a big turn out, charity shops are inundated and may have to refuse some things, causing bad blood all round. Best to leave it till the rush is over – February or March. But please don't leave things on the doorstep after hours as the bags always get plundered.

Charity shops do get wonderful donations – clothes

that were 'mistakes' or no longer fit, unwanted gifts, bric-a-brac and collectables, books, videos and all manner of saleable things. Just a bit of forethought will ensure money for charity, bargains for the punter and space in your home. The bottom line is: would you buy this?



After the Deluge. Photo by Frank Tymkow

# Tenant left high and dry in flooded flat

By John Dearing

Life for Eric Dean, who lives in Foskett House on The Grange Estate, changed abruptly last October when a deluge of water cracked the bathroom and kitchen ceilings and poured through the flat, ruining everything and damaging the lighting circuits, which have not worked since. He has no idea what caused the leak, but said that there had been a number of minor leaks in the past, which had always (apparently) been fixed. The flat was cleaned up by housing services in November but there was a subsequent inspection by a surveyor and a housing officer, who decided that the flat was uninhabitable. Thereafter nothing of consequence happened until the beginning of February, when another housing officer visited Mr Dean. He has now been provisionally offered another flat nearby, which is said to be vacant at the beginning of March, and it is to be hoped that this will be concluded successfully.

## Months of misery

Mr Dean, who was invalided out of the RAF, and subsequently moved to Foskett House about ten years ago, has had to endure a dark, sodden and mouldy flat for over three months.

Barnet Homes said that Mr Dean had reported a leak in late October. A housing officer was sent to look at the problem. It was decided that the flat needed to be

cleaned up before a surveyor's visit and that a welfare officer should also visit. The surveyor determined that it would take several months to dry out the flat. It was necessary for two written reports to be submitted to the rehousing group, which took six weeks. During this time the housing officer responsible left, but Mr Dean was kept informed

of progress throughout, and they are now looking to rehouse him.

Councillor Colin Rogers said that the root cause of the delay is that Barnet Homes seem to have a problem getting and retaining front-line staff; they are a top-heavy organisation, and tenants like Mr Dean end up losing out.

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