



Media revival at Alexandra Palace

By Paul Chapman

The latest proposal for making use of Alexandra Palace is to develop a centre for the broadcast media and the public. This "big idea", unveiled in August, is the result of a feasibility study commissioned by the Palace Charitable Trust and the BBC's Heritage Department.

The BBC involvement with Alexandra Palace dates back to 1935 when corporation engineers first leased part of the site for early TV trials of the EMI-Marconi and John Logie Baird television systems with preparations for the first TV service in 1936. The BBC stayed on the site until 1981.

The huge potential of Alexandra Palace was the focus of a recent meeting hosted by Ofcom with interested organisations such as Sky TV, Channel 4, ITV, and Channel 5. The proposal is to develop the south-east wing as a centre to offer education, training, heritage and entertainment facilities. No single proposal has emerged but the ideas will inform the team of consultants appointed by the Trust in January.

Thinking creatively

Richard Hooper, deputy chair of Ofcom, explained that the meeting served to crystallise the challenge. Alexandra Palace covers seven acres and using the facilities would depend on a substantial project.

He said: "Even if UK broadcasters all came together in a joint training facility here they wouldn't achieve the critical mass of activity that the site demands in order to be viable. It

is going to take some very creative thinking, and perhaps some unlikely partnerships, if we are to find the answer. Time is of the essence."

Mark Thompson, BBC Director-General is also behind the new project. He said: "It would be fitting, nearly 70 years on, if we could bring the industry behind another big idea that underlines the continuing role of the British media as a standard setter for broadcasters everywhere."

Causeway closure

By Diana Cormack

The Causeway footpath between the entrance to East Finchley station and its junction with Great North Road is to be closed for eight weeks from 26 September.

During this time pedestrians will be given an alternative route via a diverted footpath through the underground station's staff car park.

The closure is to facilitate the excavation and rebuilding of the car park wall and maintenance of the footpath lighting.

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

Summer of sport

In the weird world of patriotic overkill, the English have a stupid grin on their faces and cricket is the new rock'n'roll. There is a new pin-up boy. Yes, Freddie Flintoff is the Mick Jagger for the Ashes generation.

Oh yeah? Get off my cloud, because this hasn't been a summer of sporting triumph, it's been the average, mediocre failure, brightened by the strange scent of success.

Let's start with the rugby and the Lions tour. Lions? This was more like the Flabby Tabbies. They went, they saw, they got trashed. The star that was Jonny Wilkinson is fading fast. Mediocrity was the best that Great Britain and Ireland could manage. No change there then, it was what we always expected before England fluked the World Cup.

Wimbledon was our next chance to whip up unnecessary patriotism as Timid Timmy let everyone down as he does every year. We even found a new Timmy in some Scottish kid, so we can go on feeling disappointed when Timmy retires.

The World Athletics Championship was not a great success. The only gold medal came when Paula Radcliffe ran out of excuses and finally won something. The rest of them were more of an excuse than anything else.

Let's not forget football in our quick trip round sporting mediocrity. Sven's children, led by 'Thick Spice', scraped a win over Wales and then reverted to type by losing to Northern Ireland. Nice one, boys.

So, to the cricket and the sound of lager being drunk by people who think a yorker is a chocolate bar and who are going to order a googly next time they visit the Taj Mahal Tandoori. Yes, England won the series 2-1 and won back the Ashes after 16 years in a dramatic finish, but it wasn't great cricket that won it - it was the rain. And the rain at the Oval meant that the Aussies didn't have the chance to win the match.

Oh, and don't forget the 'sporting Brits' who cheered the rain and then called themselves fans. A true fan wants a good match, not just a result, unless it's against the French and London has just won the 2012 Olympics. There was no better place to celebrate than somewhere named after another victory over the French, Trafalgar Square, especially on the 200th anniversary of Nelson's greatest triumph. Ok, so it's not cricket, but who cares?

To the woods, to the woods

Story and photo by Sheila Armstrong



East Finchley residents are fortunate in having several woods almost on the doorstep. In the past two months, the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), the UK's largest practical conservation charity, has organised two walks, in Highgate and Coldfall Woods.

Michael Hammerson from the Highgate Society gave 30 of us an informative overview of the Wood's history one sunny September evening. We looked at Victorian photographs and maps to understand the wood's development. An ancient woodland, it originally provided both fuel and food. Michael showed us evidence of coppicing and pollarding, and signs of the Great Storm of 1987. Wildlife thrives in this well-managed wood, which has been awarded the Green Flag for sensitive environmental management every year since 1997.

In late August 60 people enjoyed an informative guided walk around Coldfall Wood, led by former Haringey Conservation Officer David Bevan. This is also ancient woodland, known to have existed before 1600.

The walk circumnavigated the wood, taking in oaks, hornbeams and indicators of ancient woodland such as the wild service tree, named from the Spanish word for beer, cerveza, where it has been associated with beer making. Near the playing fields, the ancient ditch and bank boundary can still be seen, which once separated the wood from Finchley Common.

The traditional good woodland management through coppicing - cutting trees to near ground level to allow re-growth - was highlighted by a day-long charcoal burn in the woods. Tracey Dorman of BTCV, who led the display, said: "Hornbeam would have been used to create charcoal as it burns at such a high temperature. Emissions released from the burn are absorbed by the tree re-growth; it is a truly sustainable fuel source."

For information about volunteering for the BTCV telephone Catherine Perry on 07764 655724 or email c.perry@btcv.org.uk.

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