



## Old Park House

Kathryn Scorza concludes her history of the original Park House

The original Park House (pictured), which stood next to GLH House and opposite East Finchley Station, was an elegant villa in extensive grounds. Demolished in the 1960s to be replaced by the local government building that now occupies its place, it became a landmark in the 1940s because of the Spitfire parked on the lawn. This belonged to the Royal Airforce Association, which was based in a building in the gardens behind Park House.



The original Park House in the 1940s. Photograph supplied by Nigel Wilds

Maureen Betts - still an East Finchley resident - lived on the top floor with her parents for around 10 years from the mid-1940s, after the council had acquired the house and divided it into two flats. She remembers huge grounds, in which two tennis courts had been turned into allotments. Each flat also had a separate garden.

Park House is clearly visible on the parish map of 1841, and on the slightly later map of the late 1860s (see August ARCHER), where it is labelled 'Park Cottage' (GLH House was named 'Valona House' at that time). Park House is thought to have been built by Neville Smart, the developer who built 'Fairlawn', 'Cranleigh', 'Park Hall' and 'Summerlee' villas on Fortis Green, probably in the 1820s, possibly to live in himself.

By the 1880s, 'Park Cottage'

is listed as 'Park House'. Kelly's Directories and the Electoral Rolls show it was occupied for decades by medical men, who lived and ran their practices there. For many years from the 1890s, Dr William Hicks, 'Surgeon, Medical Officer and Public Vaccinator for the East Finchley district' owned the house, which became known as 'Hicks' house'. In 1938 Grays Brothers' Coal Office, based at the station, set up a temporary office in the grounds at the front (just visible in the photograph).

The local government building that replaced the original house in the 1960s (also called Park House, and currently let to the Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute) is itself now due for development, marking the start of another chapter for this historic corner of our neighbourhood.

## The story of Stanley Road playing fields

By Hugh Petrie

Stanley Road Playing fields was originally three fields. The oldest was Home Field (1) which was left to Finchley by Thomas Sanny in 1506, and was a part of Finchley Charities. It ran from East End Road to the Market Place in one long strip, until split in half by the Great Northern Railway (1865).

The second field (2) was owned by the Arrowsmith family. The Great Northern Railway purchased the severed section of the Arrowsmiths' land, and gave it to the Finchley Charities; it became "Railway Field". Between 1911 and 1939 the field was used as tennis courts, first by the Finchley Presbyterian Lawn Tennis Club and then, from 1927, by the Redbourne Lawn Tennis Club.

The last field (3) had been the gardens of a house called Park House\* and since the 1940s had been allotments.

In 1939 the Borough of Finchley leased Home and Railway fields for use by Alder



Alder Sports Day in 1947. Reproduced by kind permission London Borough of Barnet copyright

School as a sports field but the Fields were unsuitable during the football season due to poor drainage. Finchley Borough Education Committee decided in 1954 to put in a 'Redgra' all-weather surface. Redgra is made from a mixture of crushed shale and rock, which acts like a clay surface when wet and a sand surface when dry. It requires only regular raking with a tractor to stop the whole surface setting.

The Council purchased Home Field and Railway Field in March 1956 with money from Middlesex CC. The bor-

ough engineer realised that the drainage system would require the council to buy the allotments as well. It was here during the football season of 1975 - 76 that Alder School won the Barnet Schools' football league, a sporting swan song as the school was about to merge with Christ's College. The land was subsequently rented to various clubs and groups, including The Five Bells FC, but now seems to be returning gently to the wild.

\* Footnote: not the Park House opposite the tube station.

## What is The Finchley Society?

By Robert Winton

**Have you noticed how East Finchley has managed to avoid the worst of the building developments? How is it done? You can thank the people who keep an eye on the plans of building developers and of the Borough of Barnet.**

One of the most eagle-eyed organisations is The Finchley Society, set up in 1971 to save cottages in Lodge Lane N12, from demolition. The poet Sir John Betjeman was its first president, succeeded by Spike Milligan.

The Society is now active in protecting, preserving and

improving buildings, transport, roads and open spaces in Finchley and Friern Barnet, and in investigating the history of the area.

The society has some 450 members, and is run by volunteers. It is non-political, and is supported by subscriptions and donations, without any outside grants.

Through information from Barnet Council, the press and the public, the society constantly reviews building developments and problems with the environment, such as graffiti, and with public transport, such as the 263 bus route. It gives its reasoned views, which are well respected, to those concerned.

The society strongly opposed the development of a Waitrose supermarket opposite East Finchley underground station and the proposed moving of East Finchley Library, and is aware of concern about the dangers of radio masts and the effects of supermarkets on local shops.

Each year the society sends members 10 newsletters, and holds nine talks at Avenue House, N3, on local issues and on subjects of wider interest. The society welcomes new members. The annual subscriptions are £9 for individuals and £16 for families.

More information and membership forms are available from Robert Winton, 224 Creighton Avenue N2 9BD. Tel: 8883 2633.

## Silent dog training

*These classes are advertised in East Finchley's Animal Aid shop. Linda Soper went to see one in action.*

**Silent dog training is a simple yet effective method, based on rewards, to get dogs to sit, lie, wait, and come when called.**

Roland has been a trainer for twelve years and explains his methods with enthusiasm. If you ignore a dog, he says, it will stop jumping up and demanding attention. If you take notice of it, it thinks it is the boss.

To get a dog to sit, the owner holds a treat and moves it towards the dog's head. Then the dog will sit and its reward is given. When the action is performed one hundred per cent then the command is introduced. Once the puppy understands what is wanted, rather than being forced to obey, it becomes more at ease and enjoys its training.

### Not regimented

I spoke to Carol who had a Labrador. She said, "I've been to other training courses and they have been very regimented. Roland has children in his classes and we go to Trent Park. This way reality is brought into the classes."

Diane from East Finchley said, "My dog Sheba has learned many new things in a fun, stress-free atmosphere."

Roland's classes take place on Saturday afternoons in New Barnet. Each six-week course, takes six to seven dogs and costs £50 plus £5 per class. Contact 020 7689 0630 or 07748 558782.

## Finchley Christian Fellowship

(An Elim Pentecostal Church)

### 'A Church for EVERYONE'



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This Sunday 11:00am The Finchley Youth Theatre  
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